



# **Guidance Policy**

**St. Catherine's Vocational School, Killybegs**

Amended: September 2015-June 2016

Submitted By: Guidance Counsellor

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N. Sharkey

## **Guidance Counsellor's Department Guidance Policy**

### **Introduction:**

**“St. Catherine’s Vocational School seeks to achieve a safe, respectful learning and working environment so that participants can achieve their full potential in partnership with relevant agencies.”**

The Mission Statement of St. Catherine’s VS sets out to define the ideals and values of our school and what we hope to pass on to our students in this educational setting. The Guidance Plan reflects this ethos and aims to deliver guidance to all students in St. Catherine’s VS in a holistic manner meaning that Guidance is seen as a community exercise and is the responsibility of the whole school community from teaching staff, management, parents, ancillary staff, board of management and also students themselves. In reinforcing this approach, the Guidance Plan has been drawn up by the Guidance Team in the academic session ‘2015 – ’2016 (see Appendix 1 – Team and Record of meetings).

### **Rationale:**

The Education Act 1998 Part 9 (c ) asserts the right of every student to appropriate guidance at every stage of their life in secondary school. The Guidance Plan aims to set out a programme which will deliver guidance to individual students appropriate to their individual needs and requirements. Essentially students need to feel that guidance is accessible and they need to know where and how to seek out appropriate guidance interventions within the school.

The Scope of the Guidance Plan and the definition of ‘Guidance’: Guidance in Second level schools refers to a range of learning experiences provided in a developmental sequence that assist students to develop self-awareness and self-management skills that will lead to effective choices and decisions about their lives. It encompasses three separate but inter linked areas: Personal and Social Development, Educational Guidance and Career Guidance.

Counselling is a key part of the school guidance programme offered on an individual or group basis at moments of personal crisis. Counselling may include personal counselling, educational counselling, career counselling or a combination of these.

## **The Guidance Policy:**

### **AIM**

To help all students in the school to :

- Develop an awareness and acceptance of their talents and abilities
- Identify and explore opportunities
- Grow in independence and take responsibility for themselves
- Make informed decisions about their lives and follow through on these choices.

### **Role of the Guidance Counsellor:**

- To assist students in their development socially, personally, educationally and in making informed career choices.
- To liaise with staff and Management on students' progress and individual needs
- To liaise with parents' on students' individual needs.
- To liaise with the wider community where appropriate and relevant to students' needs.

### **The Guidance Programme:**

- i) Personal Guidance by appointment encompassing personal counselling and vocational guidance. Students may arrange an individual guidance appointment with the Guidance Counsellor (See appendix 2 – Procedure for counselling interviews). The Class teacher must give permission for the student to attend the interview. If permission is withheld at the discretion of the class teacher, an alternative appointment is rescheduled for a suitable time. Parents are also welcome to attend meetings at the permission of the student.
- ii) Delivery of careers information during Classroom Contact.
- iii) Guidance involves working with other members of the staff and school community
  - - Fortnightly meeting with Principal/ Deputy Principal
  - - Weekly planning meetings within the Guidance department
  - - Weekly meetings with the Pastoral Care team
  - - Links with the SPHE teachers and programme.
- Resources available in St. Catherine's VS to deliver comprehensive guidance to its students;
- Personnel: Guidance Counsellor, Management, Board of Management, Welfare Officer, Pastoral Care Team, Tutors, Class teachers, Office and Ancillary staff, Parents and the wider community...
- Facilities: Careers Office for Guidance interviews, careers library, 1 computer room (24 Computers) , classroom with whiteboard and internet access in class;
- Materials: Careersportal.ie in Transition Year and 5th and 6th year classes.
- External: Open Days, Careers exhibitions, Visiting speakers, Specialised and student-targeted outings to Career information presentation.

### **Continuing Professional Development**

- Membership of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors brings with it many opportunities for In-career development. Regular counselling supervision and attendance at IGC Donegal branch meetings keeps the GC in touch with. The IGC AGM provides a wide range of in-service through provision of workshops and presentations relevant to our work.

## **Guidance Areas for Development**

- Study Skills: develop closer information links with Subject teachers with regard to subject appropriate study methods.
- Study Skills: develop further a cohesive approach to Study Practice with the subject teachers and SPHE teachers.
- Subject choice and allocation of more hours for personal counselling.
- Develop links with local businesses
- Induction of students from disadvantaged backgrounds

### **Summary:**

- While the Guidance Counsellor has primary responsibility for the delivery of the school's guidance and counselling programme, other members of staff have an important and worthwhile contribution to make: Guidance is seen as a Whole School activity.
- In St. Catherine's VS, the provision of Guidance is co-ordinated by the Guidance Counsellor and specific targets are set in the appropriate areas of guidance.
- The overall purpose of planning guidance in the school is to allow for the holistic development of all students in the school in a manner which includes all members of staff at St. Catherine's VS.
- This document and Guidance Plan presented to the Board of Management on:
- Sign: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_