

# VILLIERS SCHOOL

## GUIDANCE PLAN

2024



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## **Section 1 Rationale and Context**

Guidance at Villiers School refers to the learning experience provided to assist students to develop self-management skills which will lead to effective choices and decisions about their lives. The key developmental areas of focus are: Personal/Social, Educational, Vocational.

Villiers School is a learning community which strives to grow as a caring, respectful, inclusive, and progressive school which supports the development of the whole person. All students are treated as unique individuals. The Guidance Plan reflects this respect for the individual in its student-centred approach. The enhancement of self-esteem and life skills and the development of potential, leading to greater personal autonomy for all students, are its central goals. This plan is not a rigid template and reflects the uniqueness of Villiers School in its own context and circumstances.

The Guidance Plan intends to reflect the needs of the students at Villiers School, describing the programme and specifying how the guidance needs of students are to be addressed. It includes reference to personal counselling, vocational interventions and educational guidance, of which all three components form an integral part of the work of the Guidance Counsellor and also strongly overlap with other staff members.

The school guidance counselling service is administered by professionally trained Guidance Counsellors. The Guidance Counsellor, as part of the broader school Student Support Team, focuses primarily on the personal, educational and vocational development of the students. The aim of the service is to professionally meet the guidance and counselling needs of the student in the context of the overall school mission.

The School Guidance Programme will:

- Be accessible
- Be student-centred
- Be inclusive
- Be balanced
- Be responsive
- Respect confidentiality

- Make full use of resources
- Be reviewed on an on-going basis

(NCGE, 2004)

Excerpt from - 'NCGE: A Whole School Guidance Framework' © National Centre for Guidance in Education 2017



Note: the listing of school programmes and staff in Figure 1 is not intended to be exhaustive as programmes/staff involved in whole school guidance will vary across schools. Figure 1 intends to highlight programmes / staff who may be involved in the delivery of a whole school guidance programme.

## **School Mission Statement**

*“Villiers provides a broad and balanced education within a caring community. Our aim is to develop life and learning skills in order to face the challenges ahead with awareness and integrity.”*

The Guidance Plan reflects this respect for the individual in its student-centred holistic approach. The enhancement of self-esteem and life skills and the development of one’s potential- academic, personal and emotional leading to greater personal autonomy for all students are its central goals. We believe that every student possesses aptitudes and abilities that need to be promoted. It is through the provision of opportunities that these qualities can be discovered and enhanced. Students have the inner ability to move towards reaching their potential through support & encouragement. The provision of an effective and efficient guidance and counselling service can be significant in assisting students reach this potential.

The adoption of a whole-school approach to Guidance allows a collaborative approach to developing skills for self-management and effective choice and decision making.

The Role of the Guidance Counsellor is to assist and work with the teachers and co-ordinators of; SPHE, Wellbeing and Guidance classes, Student Support Team, Form Tutors, Year Heads, SEN/Learning Support, Parents and Guardians, House Parents, School Nurse and School Management.

Through consultation with relevant teachers and programme coordinators, Guidance takes place on an individual, group, form and year basis.

This School Guidance Plan is a structured document that describes the School Guidance Programme and specifies how the guidance needs of students are to be addressed. It is a working document that looks at the provision of guidance in the whole school both now and in the future.

## Villiers School Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement

Villiers School is committed to promoting diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) both within our school community and in the wider community. Villiers School strives to foster a safe and inclusive culture with equality at its heart so that diversity can flourish. We embrace our diversity as a strength, and we work with sincerity to enable all in our community to grow and flourish equally.

We place inclusive principles and practices at our core and are fully committed to understanding the challenges that exist for our community under the nine grounds for discrimination identified under the Equal Status Acts 2000-2018, namely, gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, and membership of the Traveller community.

We seek to proactively address these, to the best of our abilities, whether this be in respect of recruitment, the curriculum or school culture:

- Through a DEI focus in our policies, practices, and procedure
- Through appropriate training, development and experiences
- Through promoting these principles across the curriculum
- Through a commitment to Global Citizenship Education (GCE)
- Through the lens of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Discrimination, in any form, is not accepted within Villiers School, we aim to be a leading voice for equity, diversity and inclusion in Irish education.

### **What is Guidance?**

Section 9 (c) of the Education Act (1998) requires schools to “ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices...” The provision of guidance is a statutory requirement for schools under this Act as “every student is entitled to appropriate guidance”.

Guidance Counselling in Villiers School apply guidelines which are relevant to the practice contexts, with due regard to statutory requirements, legislation and the codes of ethics of those professional bodies of which they are members. The guidance counsellor has a professional obligation to adhere to the policies of Villiers School and is required to familiarise themselves with same.

Students are informed to the limits of confidentiality which applies when dealing with minors, when issues of safety override those of confidentiality. The Guidance Counsellor will always make the student aware that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in any of the following cases (and that information of the nature described below must be referred to the DLP)

- 1) All things discussed are confidential between the student and the Guidance Counsellor except when the student or another person is at risk.
- 2) Any information which highlights that the student, or another person is in danger.
- 3) If the student is in danger of doing grievous harm to themselves or others.

The Guidance programme will take into account the needs of all students within the school, while recognising the need to prioritise certain groups of students during the school year (NCGE, 2004)

Guidance activities will continue to be developed, implemented and evaluated to assist students to:

- make choices and decisions
- to assist students make transitions:
  - from primary to secondary school
  - from Junior to Senior level
  - from school to the work or third level environment

## **Aim**



- Provide a framework for the delivery of the school's guidance programme
- Ensure a structured response to students' personal, social, educational and career guidance needs.
- Ensure guidance is inclusive of all students in both junior & senior cycles, students from minority identity groups, international students, and students with special educational needs.
- Ensure all staff have a clear understanding of the provision of guidance to students
- Clarify the role of the guidance counsellor and the role each partner in the school has in relation to the provision of guidance.

### **Objectives:**

To assist students with decision making, problem solving, behavioural change and the skills for coping with changing circumstances in their personal, educational and career development by:

- **Counselling:** Helping students to examine their thoughts and feelings thereby empowering them to analyse problems, change behaviours, make decisions and resolve issues in their lives. Counselling may occur on an individual or group basis.
- **Support:** Providing support to students, parents and guardians, teachers, the school principal, the board of management and referral agencies.
- **Assessments:** Helping students gain better understanding of themselves through the use of psychometric tests and other evaluative instruments, for example for incoming Form I students (facilitated by the SENCO).
- **Information:** Assisting students to obtain, understand and make use of information relevant to their personal, social, educational and career development.
- **Referrals:** Seeking assistance for students from non-school based professionals such as NEPS and supporting students who have been referred by teacher or parents and guardians.
- Develop an awareness and acceptance of talents and abilities.
- Identify and explore opportunities.
- Grow in independence and take responsibility for themselves.
- Make informed choices about the lives they wish to lead

- Enable students to make good personal and social choices as well as educational and career choices.

### **Student Support Team**

Ms Storey	Head of School
Ms Quinn	Deputy Head of School
Ms. Maloney	SEN Co-ordinator
Ms Sheridan	Guidance Counsellor
Mr Jones	Year Head
Ms Sexton	Christian Guidance Mentor
Ms Fiona Mulcahy	School Nurse
Ms Barbara Fitzpatrick	School Nurse
Ms Vivienne Long	Head of Boarding
Mr Shane Hanna	IB & International Student Coordinator

The Student Support Team meets weekly and keeps regular records, to maintain the highest possible standard of student-centered care. The Team reviews students' wellbeing needs at this weekly meeting and identifies those at risk or in need of additional support. During these meetings, the team may make referrals to the school psychotherapists.

## **Resources**

Guidance Counsellor: Ms Elizabeth Sheridan

Guidance Counsellor: Ms Sinead O'Sullivan

Guidance Counsellor: Mr Shane Hanna

## **Guidance Resources:**

There are various resources including personnel (guidance partners), time allocation, equipment, materials, physical locations and finance, needed for the performance of the guidance activities and the management of the school guidance programme.

The full time and part time Guidance Counsellors provide guidance for students from all year groups. This time is spent meeting students individually and, in their form and year groups. If the Guidance Counsellor needs to talk to a senior year group as a whole, they will, in consultation with the relevant teachers, meet students during a timetabled class period. The Guidance Counsellor varies the subject classes that they takes over as guidance classes so as no subject is affected more than twice in the year. The Guidance Counsellor delivers guidance to the junior students in the weekly timetabled Wellbeing and Guidance class.

There is an allocation of time to communicate and where necessary, meet with parents and guardians. Time is set aside for guidance planning at the start of the school term.

The Guidance Counsellor has a fully equipped office. Confidential guidance files on students are securely stored in guidance room. All computerised files are stored securely, and password protected. The Guidance Counsellor books appropriate rooms within the school to meet with students, depending on the size of the group and purpose of the session.

The SEN department has ongoing and regular consultation the Guidance Counsellor. The SENCO and teachers involved in SEN are included in this. This process is especially important at the time of DARE applications. University and College representatives are available to give talks to students on request. Talks on Wellbeing topics are also available to students.

National resources are crucial to ensuring the delivery of a comprehensive Guidance Programme. Therefore, networking is an integral part of the Guidance Counsellors' role. The

Guidance Counsellor liaises with external agencies such as; Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC), guidance colleagues within the IGC and in other schools, National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) Admission/School Liaison Officers/Access Officers/HEAR and DARE Personnel in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), Department of Education and Skills and Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST). The Guidance Counsellors are members of the IGC Limerick branch and meet regularly with guidance colleagues during supervision sessions.

## **Section 2 Guidance Curriculum**

The guidance curriculum can be divided into two components:

- Formal
- Informal

### **Formal Guidance**

The Formal Guidance curriculum is delivered through:

Individual contact of a personal counselling nature, and, careers and vocational guidance

### **Informal Guidance**

The Informal Guidance programme consists of liaising with teaching staff and school management to promote cross-curricular links and to enhance the development of a whole school approach in relation to the delivery of Guidance. Meetings with parents and guardians, teachers, house parents and school management are integral in informal guidance.

Guidance refers to a range of learning experiences provided in a developmental sequence that assist students develop self-management skills, which lead to effective choices and decisions

about their lives. It encompasses the three separate, but interlinked areas of personal and social guidance, educational and career guidance.

The following lists the methods by which Guidance is provided in each year group through a whole school approach in the form of Personal/Social, Vocational and Educational Guidance. This is an overview of the long-term planning and curriculum content covered for each year group.

### **Senior Cycle Guidance**

Form VI

- Guidance Newsletter: Options after Senior Cycle **September, October**
- 1:1 vocational guidance interviews plus ongoing 1:1 support as needed **September onwards**
- Monitoring of Form VI academic progress and liaising with class teachers and parents and guardians as required **Ongoing**
- Creation of individual career file with focus on course options and preferences
- Personal counselling as required (Self referrals, referrals from colleagues, parents and guardians, referrals to external professionals and organisations such as GP, Pieta House, Jigsaw
- Parents and guardians consultations and follow up with students **Ongoing**
- Educational trips, such as Higher Options, Open days, and Taster days **Ongoing**
- Guest Speakers from universities, agencies
- Advice on CAO- courses, process, points, matriculation requirements in addition to entry into Defence Forces, An Garda Siochana, PLC, Apprenticeships etc **Ongoing**
- Advice on DARE, HEAR, SUSI, PLC courses, NFQ **Ongoing**
- Ongoing support with subjects, levels, time management, study skills, goals, learning styles

- Provision of practical tools for study skills (charts, timetable) and uploading resources to Teams **Ongoing, daily and / or weekly**
- Support with interest assessments (Qualifax, Careers Portal), personality assessments (Myers Briggs) **Ongoing**
- UCAS applications- personal statement support, references, predicted grades, managing the process **September -January**
- Ongoing information on Teams about HEI Open Days, Taster Days, courses, careers, scholarship opportunities **Ongoing**
- Maintaining an appropriate careers library of brochures, applications, quick guides **Ongoing**
- Scholarship application support **Primarily January and February**
- PLC course application guidance **January and February**
- Mock interviews for **Scholarship applicants** and **PLC applicants** **February, March, April**
- CAO Parent and Guardian Information Webinar **November**
- Support with exploring courses (modules, assessments, aptitude) and transition to 3<sup>rd</sup> level **Ongoing**
- Support exploring ‘beyond course titles’ (career sectors, educational requirements, personal qualities, skills, day to day of work, environment of the job) **Ongoing**
- Provision of information on STEAM courses, including career and scholarship information **Ongoing**
- Support with ‘Restricted’ applications such as Medicine **September - January**
- Advice for H-Pat **Ongoing**

- Guidance on USA College applications, SATs and Sport Scholarships **September - May**
- Parent-Teacher meetings and subsequent individual consultations **Ongoing**
- CAO applications – 1:1 support **November - February**
- DARE applications – 1:1 support **February - April**
- Mindfulness and relaxation techniques **Ongoing**
- Eunicas information **Ongoing**
- Dutch and Danish university application support **Ongoing**
- Support with personal development, setting goals for success **Ongoing**
- CAO change of mind **May - June**
- LC and IBDP exam preparation and techniques **Spring 1:1 and Whole Year Group**
- Ongoing communication with colleagues
- Attending weekly student support meetings
- CV advice and review **Ongoing**
- Communication with HEIs, CAO, State Exam Commission - troubleshooting various queries and issues **Ongoing**
- Support with CAO Statement of Application Record **May**
- Conveying relevant CAO course alert list information via Teams **Ongoing**
- Assembly announcements
- Guest Speakers in areas including EUNICAS, Law, Engineering, Psychology (UL), Wellbeing and Mental Health, QQI/PLC Route, Apprenticeships, Colleges and Universities representatives (UL, NUIG, UCD, MIC), Local business representatives.
- College Awareness Week (November)
- Sexual Consent Workshops (Active Consent, NUIG)
- Study Skills Workshop (The Study Coach)

- Links with past students
- Wellbeing Initiatives

#### Form V

- Guidance Newsletter: Options after Senior Cycle
- 1:1 vocational guidance interviews **February - March (or sooner)**
- Monitoring of 5th year academic progress and liaising with class teachers and parents as required **Ongoing**
- Creation of individual career file with focus on course options and preferences
- Personal counselling as required (self-referrals, referrals from colleagues, parent and guardians' referrals, to external professionals and organisations such as GP, Pieta House, Jigsaw)
- Follow up consultations with students
- Advice on CAO, including courses, process, points, matriculation requirements in addition to entry into Defence Forces, An Garda Siochana
- Advice on DARE, HEAR, SUSI, PLC courses, NFQ
- Ongoing support with subjects, levels, time management, study skills, goals, learning styles
- Provision of information on STEAM courses, including careers and scholarships
- Support with interest assessments (Qualifax, Careers Portal), personality assessments (Myers Briggs)
- Ongoing information on Teams about HEI Open Days, Taster Days, courses, careers, scholarship opportunities
- Presented to whole year group: Options after Senior Cycle



- Presented to whole year group: Goals (including time management, organisation, study planning)
- Provision of practical tools for study skills (Study Skills booklet, charts, timetables) and uploading resources to Teams
- Organised guest speakers from NUIG, UL Dept. of Computer Science and UL ‘general’ talk, EUNICAS talk etc
- 1:1 Form V academic meetings with academic coordinator and follow up with students
- Study Skills Workshop (The Study Coach)
- Sexual Health Workshop (RCSI)

#### TY Guidance

- TY whole year group subject talk
- TY whole year group talk on ‘Preparation for Senior Cycle’
- TY Guidance Newsletter: Options after Senior Cycle
- 1:1 meetings to complete a vocational guidance interview- discussing subject choices, career aspirations, how to research courses and careers
- Guidance on how to prepare for Form V as well as advice on best practice for homework, time management, organisation and revision in fifth year
- Organised guest speakers from third level colleges
- Ongoing careers information uploaded to Teams including Open days, STEAM competitions, course taster days
- Bi-weekly WSC classes to include CV preparation, work placement preparation, mock interviews

- Personal counselling as required (Self referrals, referrals from colleagues, referrals from parents and guardians, referrals external professional agencies including GP, Pieta House, Jigsaw, parent and guardian consultations)
- Follow up with students
- CV advice and interview guidance

### **Junior Cycle**

- Weekly and Guidance Classes (Classroom Guidance)
- Personal counselling as required (self-referral, colleague, and parent and guardian referral)
- 1:1 meetings concerning exam preparation, study skills, academic progress, subject/level choices
- FUSE On-line safety Programme (Wellbeing and Guidance classes)
- A variety of resources are used, and topics covered, predominantly those offered through the Classroom Guidance website , which the school subscribes to each year.

### **Wellbeing and Guidance Classes**

Facilitated by The Guidance Counsellor

- Classes once per week for each year group from I-III
- Provided in addition to SPHE & CSPE classes
- Covering various topics related to holistic Wellbeing being and guidance
- Topics include, but are not limited to school transition, resilience, study skills, time management, exam preparation etc (Classroom Guidance Website)

### **Ongoing Actions and Initiatives**

- ❖ Form VI Higher Options, RDS Dublin.
- ❖ Taster days (University of Galway, Shannon College of Hotel Management, TUS etc)
- ❖ University visits/ Open days
- ❖ In-School talk from Defence Forces (Army, Navy and Air Corps)

- ❖ In-School talk regarding Apprenticeships (eg. Accounting Technicians Ireland, Atlantic Aviation etc)
- ❖ In-School talk EUNICAS, UL, Areas such as Law, Engineering, Psychology, Business etc
- ❖ In-School talk from PME Students
- ❖ In-School talk re PLC route
- ❖ Active Consent Workshop (Form 5)
- ❖ Study Skills Workshops
- ❖ Sexual Health Workshops
- ❖ Continued IGC Supervision
- ❖ Increased GC participation in CPD, networking opportunities and IGC related talks
- ❖ Analysis and feedback of psychometric assessments via 1:1 appointments (in collaboration with SENCO/SEN Dept)
- ❖ Up-dating of filing system, WSG Plan etc
- ❖ Proposed introduction of Guidance noticeboard and display area in school for prospectus, posters, announcements, booklets, general information etc .
- ❖ Proposed introduction of a whole school guidance questionnaire of teaching staff at the beginning of the year to identify the whole school approach to the deliverance of guidance in Villiers School.
- ❖ Proposed parent and guardian talks on their careers and career pathways

### **Planning for Students with Special Educational Needs (SEN)**

- Teachers are informed through the SEN Team as to the students who may require additional supports. Teachers are aware of students with additional needs and the

learning support team will advise teachers in strategies that might best assist students requiring additional supports.

- To provide appropriate guidance for junior subject choice and senior cycle career planning, in making sure that students with special needs are informed about the DARE (Disability access route to education- [www.accesscollege.ie](http://www.accesscollege.ie)) and the supplementary application process on the CAO website. DARE is a college and university admissions scheme which offers some places on a reduced points basis to school leavers with recognised disabilities meeting the DARE criteria
- Photocopy hand-outs for students with SEN
- Use Assessment for learning techniques
- Collaboration between class teachers, resource teacher, special needs assistants and team teachers.
- Students who may have SEN requirements are encouraged to use assistive technology where appropriate and have access to additional help in the form of Special needs assistant.

### **Support Structures for Students with SEN**

The Guidance Counsellor liaises with the SEN team and the role of the Guidance Counsellor is to:

- Assist members of this team in facilitating the provision for students with SEN and their inclusion in the school.
- Provide individualised guidance and support for students with SEN involving parents and guardians as required.
- Assist students with SEN at different stages of schooling transition from primary to post primary, subject choice, and study skills, post primary to further education and or higher education or to employment.
- To provide an inclusive learning environment where all are encouraged to achieve their potential
- To enable each student to develop social and personal skills, thus enhancing self esteem
- To encourage students with special needs to participate in the full range of school activities

- To offer an education which develops a variety of skills i.e. practical, artistic, musical and sporting
- Confidentiality of sensitive information is strictly observed.

Link Modules: Guidance forms an integral part of the Vocational Preparation modules of the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme.

### **Support Structures for Students Within the LGBTQ+ Community**

The Guidance Counsellor liaises with the relevant coordination lead staff members, such as the EDI coordinator, and the LGBTQ+ club staff coordinators. The role of the Guidance Counsellor is to:

- Assist members of this team in facilitating the provision for students within the LGBTQ+ community and their inclusion in the school.
- Provide individualised guidance and support for students involving parents and guardians as required.
- To provide an inclusive learning environment where all are encouraged to achieve their potential
- To enable each student to develop social and personal skills, thus enhancing self esteem
- To be an ally to all students
- To continually develop school culture to promote genuine belonging for all students in Villiers
- To assist, when needed, in any school activities, days, and events organised to support students, allies and parents and guardians within the LGBTQ+ community
- Confidentiality of sensitive information is strictly observed.

### **A Culturally Diverse School**

Creating a safe, culturally diverse society is very important in Villiers School. We have a diverse school population and we offer the Department of Education Junior Cycle, Transition Year and Senior Cycle programmes, the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme,

Cambridge First Certificate Programme, and others Senior cycle guidance students are encouraged to explore wide ranging options available to them through the UCAS and EUNICAS, as well as other international routes to study, work and / or volunteer abroad.

## **The use of literacy and numeracy in Guidance**

### **Literacy**

The aims of promoting literacy in Guidance will be focused on supporting students to learn about different terminology related to career and educational guidance specifically as well as helping them develop and improve their communication and decision-making skills. The aim is to also raise the students' own awareness of the importance of literacy in all subject areas. Engaging with the different resources in Guidance can help students to use and interpret language associated with this subject. The exposure to guidance terminology increases the student's ability to recognise the language related to personal, career and educational guidance. It also helps students to make informed choices about life and study at school and further education. Non-literacy resources that promote literacy in Guidance in school include the use of digital media, ITC, the use of films, college DVD prospectuses, posters, maps, graphics, illustrations, guest speakers and college open day visits, etc.

Methods used in to promote literacy include:

- Visits to Open Days/Visits in by Guest speakers/ College Spokespeople.
- Exposure to the LCVP programme in school enhances knowledge and skills related to career Guidance in the module 'Preparation for the World of Work'. Doing career investigations, Curriculum Vitae's, Work experience diaries as part of LCVP. Engaging in recorded interviews, mock interviews, role playing are all ways to improve the communication, problem solving and decision-making skills. These skills are all essential to improving the overall literacy within our departments.
- Standardised testing is used to assess the student's verbal ability on entry to Form I, in addition to primary school data and any other relevant data provided by parents and guardians. The SEN department assesses each student and plans for early intervention.

### **Numeracy**

Methods to promote numeracy in Guidance:

- Students are encouraged to set target grades within subjects. This helps focus students and set realistic goals when students are considering points allocation for senior cycle.
- Calculating CAO points: percentages / points allocation / maximum points considered / points calculated manually versus electronically (points calculator)
- Working out a budget for college
- Understanding the differences in salary
- The earning capacity of different occupations and employment sectors
- Hours of work and rate of pay for different categories of people.
- Study skills hours of study versus hours of work

### **SECTION 3 – Meetings with Students**

The Guidance Counsellor will work within their level of competence and that set out in the Institute of Guidance Counsellors Code of Ethics. This code sets out a responsibility to inform students the limitations of confidentiality and below sets out the Confidentiality Statement made to students.

Confidentiality Statement made to students:

*“The information we discuss in here is confidential, however, if I feel you or others are in danger, I will have to discuss the matter with the DLP who is the Head of School, Ms Storey”*

The guidance counsellor is not released from maintaining confidentiality because others have the same information. Where necessary the guidance counsellors will undertake to obtain consent of the student before communicating the results of any assessments or interventions with family members, colleagues, organisational or institutional management or other agencies. The guidance counsellor is responsible for and is aware of their area of competence and offers services within their area of training and expertise. Good ethical practice requires that a guidance counsellor consults on areas of concern or doubt and is prepared to refer on those cases which are beyond their area of expertise or training.

Additionally, the Guidance Counsellor will remain cognisant of Villiers School 1:1 Policy.

## **SECTION 4 – Meetings with Parents**

Meeting Parents: Protocols/ Procedures

- The Guidance Counsellor will attend all Parent Teacher meetings
- The Guidance Counsellor will be available to meet parents at Open Nights and at the Programme/Subject Choice Information Evening.
- The Guidance Counsellor will be available to meet or communicate with parents as and when required.

## **SECTION 5 – Testing**

Testing is a tool used to assist the Guidance Counsellor to acquire the relevant information to assist students in making important decisions throughout their academic journey. However, it must be understood that testing has its limitations, and may not always provide a reliable and valid understanding of a student's ability or efforts.

Guidance counsellors adhere to the IGC Code of Ethics and practice in accordance with the registered qualified test user guidelines of the accrediting body. The International Test Commission (ITC) Guidelines for Test Use describe a competent test user as one who will *“use tests appropriately, professionally and, in an ethical manner, paying due regard to the rights of those involved in the testing process, the reasons for the testing and, the broader context in which the testing takes place. This outcome will be achieved by ensuring that the test user has the necessary competencies to carry out the testing process, and the knowledge and understanding of tests and test use that inform and underpin this process”*. (International Test Commission, 2001. p93-94)



All test results are discussed with students on a one-to-one basis with the Guidance Counsellor.

## **SECTION 6 – Links/ Distributed Guidance**

The following links clearly demonstrate the whole school dimension of Guidance and the collaboration between the whole school community and Guidance Counsellor. The Guidance Counsellor links with multiple school staff members throughout the course of the working day.

- **Links with the Head of School and Deputy Head of School (Management)**

The full time Guidance Counsellor has regular formal and informal meetings with the Head of School and Deputy Head of School regarding any relevant issue. A scheduled weekly meeting in the form of the Student Support meeting is arranged with Management to discuss concerns relating to students and general issues or matters.

- **Links with Year Heads and Form Tutor**

The full time Guidance Counsellor connects with Year Heads and Form Tutors on a regular basis, both formally and informally, to discuss the circumstances of students which they feel may require support from the Guidance Counsellor, whether personal/social, educational or career based.

- **Links with Social Personal and Health (SPHE) Co-ordinator and SPHE Teachers**

Due to the nature of the subject, SPHE teachers are sometimes in a position where they may identify something in class that is a cause for concern. SPHE teachers may discuss

the issue with the Guidance Counsellor or refer the student to the Guidance Counsellor, if deemed appropriate. The Guidance Counsellor also supports SPHE teachers with the delivery of topics which are related to guidance (e.g. study skills).

- **Links with Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) Co-ordinator and Teachers**

The Guidance Counsellor links with the LCVP Co-ordinator at regular intervals throughout the year to keep one another abreast of new developments (e.g. changes in entry requirements and the new Leaving Certificate points system). The LCVP Co-ordinator and LCVP teachers frequently refer students to the Guidance Counsellor to confirm certain points of information or pathways to courses and careers, particularly when students are completing their Career Investigation. Many resources and materials located in the Guidance Library, are shared between the LCVP Co-ordinator/LCVP teachers and Guidance Counsellor, such as Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and College of Further Education prospectuses, techniques for preparing for interviews and information regarding HEI entry requirements, etc.

- **Links with Subject Teachers**

Subject teachers often refer students to the Guidance Counsellor if they notice any major changes in their students (e.g. withdrawal, an unusual deterioration in the student's work or grades). As subject teachers are in regular contact with students, they are an important source of referral for the Guidance Counsellor.

- **Links with Student Support Team**

The Guidance Counsellor is a key member of the Student Support Team. A weekly meeting is scheduled in the Guidance Office with other team members such as the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Co-ordinator, Head of School, Deputy Head of School, Year Heads, School Nurses and the School Counsellor.

- **Links with the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Co-ordinator/Resource /Learning Support Departments**

- The Guidance Counsellor has a close link and relationship with the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Co-ordinator. Both parties work collaboratively to try to

ensure that students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) are supported by the school in the best possible manner. The SEN Co-ordinator is a regular source of referral to the Guidance Counsellor, as sometimes students with Special Educational Needs may need to avail of additional supports and resources. The SEN Co-ordinator works alongside the Guidance Counsellor by assisting students who may qualify for the Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) scheme with their application.

- **Links with the Academic Coordinator**

The Guidance Counsellor has a very close link with the Academic Co-ordinator. Both parties work collaboratively to ensure students are achieving to the best of their ability. The Academic Co-ordinator is a regular source of referral to the Guidance Counsellor, as students with difficulties around subject choices, and/or academic performance may require additional vocational and educational guidance. The Academic Co-ordinator is an extremely valuable source of information regarding the academic progress and ability of each student.

## **SECTION 7 – Policies (Written)**

The guidance counsellor has a professional obligation to adhere to the policies of Villiers School and is required to familiarise themselves with same. The relevant policies are listed below.

Anti-Bullying Policy

Anti-Racism Policy

Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment 2023-2024

Code of Behaviour 2023-2024

Critical Incident Student Support Policy

Data Protection Policy

Inclusion Policy

Protected Disclosures Policy

Wellbeing Policy

## **SECTION 8 - Continuous Professional Development**

To maintain qualified membership of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC), a chartered member must complete 10 hours of in-service training annually (Code of Ethics of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors, 2012). In-career development is essential to the work of the Guidance Counsellor. The Department of Education and Skills supports the provision of in-service training for IGC members through the provision of funding.

The Guidance Counsellors attend the IGC Meetings held every month throughout the duration of the school year. Contact with other local Guidance Counsellors assists the practitioner in gaining valuable support, ideas, and information, thus contributing to continuous improvements in the Guidance Counselling Service. Branch meetings also provide access to informative and beneficial Continuous Professional Development (CPD) through the organisation and participation in relevant in-service training. Regular attendance at local IGC meetings and Counselling Supervision is facilitated by the school through sensitive timetabling.

The IGC National Conference provides a range of in-service training programmes through the provision of workshops and presentations relevant to the work of the Guidance Counsellor.

## **SECTION 9 – Action Plan 2024/2025**

The following is a list of the priority areas for development, which the school aims to address during the period 2024/2025:

- Development of a SPHE/Wellbeing Plan in conjunction with the SPHE Co-ordinator, teachers and management.
- Further develop the delivery of guidance to the Form I, II & III students, through Wellbeing and Guidance class
- Incorporating greater use of ICT in daily work with pupils in one-to-one counselling (e.g. Careers Portal, Qualifax, CAO, UCAS, SUSI, Studentfinance.ie, etc.)
- More strategic planning around the provision of effective study skills. This demands more cross curricular planning (e.g. Subject teachers, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, SPHE teachers and the Guidance Counsellor).
- Keep abreast of current issues in the area of Guidance Counselling and to encourage and support guidance and teaching colleagues in their work through programmes such as the value of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and Lifelong Learning. A log will be kept in the guidance office regarding the training of Guidance Counsellors each year.
- Review and evaluate Senior Guidance class contact.
- Continue delivering the One Good School Programme
- Continue to support the stakeholders of the schools EDI initiative on an ongoing basis.
- Continue to develop and facilitate the Wellbeing programme within the school and work closely with colleagues
- Host an in-house University Fair in Villiers School for College Awareness Week
- Complete updated Active Consent Workshop facilitator training and deliver to all senior students

## **Conclusion**

Guidance within Villiers School is carried out using a whole school approach. This plan is a document which will constantly change as we evaluate and plan for the coming year. It is with this evaluation, forward planning and collaborative approach that appropriate guidance can be provided to every student in Villiers School so that when they leave school, they will

be capable of making informed decisions about their vocational, educational, personal and social life. We hope through the guidance our students receive throughout their time at Villiers School they will have belief in their ability to reach the goals they wish to pursue, and lead happy and fulfilled lives.