



## St. Francis School

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# ***WHOLE SCHOOL GUIDANCE PLAN***

*Ratified by the Board of Management on 08/ 11/2022*

*Date of next reviews: 07/12/2022 & 07/11/2023*

## **GLOSSARY**

<b>CL</b>	<b>Circular Letter</b>
<b>DES</b>	<b>Department of Education and Skills</b>
<b>DLP</b>	<b>Designated Liaison Person (Child Protection)</b>
<b>DDL</b>	<b>Deputy Designated Liaison Person</b>
<b>DSGC</b>	<b>Directors of Studies in Guidance Counselling</b>
<b>ESL</b>	<b>Early School Leavers</b>
<b>ETB</b>	<b>Education and Training Board</b>
<b>FET</b>	<b>Further Education and Training</b>
<b>HPS</b>	<b>Health Promoting Schools</b>
<b>HSE</b>	<b>Health Service Executive</b>
<b>ICT</b>	<b>Information &amp; Communication Technology</b>
<b>JC</b>	<b>Junior Cycle</b>
<b>JCSA</b>	<b>Junior Cycle Student Achievement</b>
<b>LCVP</b>	<b>Lifelong Guidance</b>
<b>NBSS</b>	<b>National Behaviour Support Service</b>
<b>NCCA</b>	<b>National Council for Curriculum and Assessment</b>
<b>NCGE</b>	<b>National Centre for Guidance in Education National Council for Special Education</b>
<b>NEPS</b>	<b>National Educational Psychological Service</b>
<b>PDST</b>	<b>Professional Development Service for Teachers</b>
<b>PTR</b>	<b>Pupil-Teacher Ratio</b>
<b>SC</b>	<b>Senior Cycle</b>
<b>SEN</b>	<b>Special Educational Needs</b>
<b>SGH</b>	<b>School Guidance Handbook</b>
<b>SOL</b>	<b>Statement of Learning</b>
<b>SPHE</b>	<b>Social, Personal and Health Education</b>
<b>SSE</b>	<b>School Self-Evaluation</b>
<b>SUSI</b>	<b>Student Support Team Student Universal Support</b>
<b>WSG</b>	<b>Whole School Guidance</b>

## INTRODUCTION

St Francis' is a Catholic coeducational school with a Catholic ethos. The Bishop of Kildare & Leighlin is the Patron of this school.

*'Catholic schools are communities which are open, welcoming, and inclusive. Therefore, Catholic schools may include children who adhere to other religions or other stances for living. While mindful of their duty to educate in the distinctive beliefs, values, and practices of the Catholic community, teachers will bear witness to an attitude of respect for and appreciation of all'.*

*'The Catholic Preschool & Primary Religious Education Curriculum p15'*

Catholic Ethos in the context of a Catholic primary school means the ethos and characteristic spirit of the Roman Catholic Church, which aims at promoting:

- the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of
- the pupil, including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects; and
- a living relationship with God and with other people; and
- a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and
- resurrection of Jesus; and the formation of the pupils in the Catholic faith,
- and which school provides religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, and/or such ethos and/or characteristic spirit as may be determined or interpreted from time to time by the Irish Episcopal Conference.

In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Management of St. Francis School shall uphold, and be accountable to the patron for so upholding, the characteristic spirit of the school as determined by the cultural, educational, moral, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school.

The Whole School Guidance Plan is student-centred in its approach. The promotion and enhancement of self-esteem and life-skills and the development of potential – academic, personal/social and emotional – leading to a greater personal autonomy for all students are its central goals. All staff members have a vital role to play in student care and therefore have a role to play in the delivery of the Whole School Guidance Programme.

The plan is a structured document which describes the whole school approach to guidance and specifies the ways in which the guidance needs of students are to be addressed. It is an integral part of the school's overall development plan. As part of the Whole School Plan, it is not a rigid template and it will be evaluated, reviewed and updated routinely.

Development of the current plan began in 2022/23 with inputs from all staff and from the parent's association. A guidance group was established who have been involved in a step-by-step process of:

- Identifying guidance needs that are being met
- Identifying resources that we have for guidance
- Identifying guidance needs that are not being met
- Identifying resources that are needed for guidance
- Production of a Guidance Plan
- Guidance Plan Review, Evaluation and Update

## Scope

Guidance refers to a range of learning experiences, provided in a developmental sequence, that assist students to develop self-management skills which will lead to effective choices and decisions about their lives. It encompasses the three separate, but interlinked, areas of:

- Vocational/Career guidance
- Educational guidance
- Personal and Social Development

Wellbeing is a key part of the school guidance programme, integrated into the daily teaching and learning in our school.

The plan addresses social skills and independent learning needs of all students at all levels within St. Francis School. This plan applies to the entire community of St. Francis School. Its interventions and supports apply particularly to special educational or personal needs of all students as they progress through our school. As guidance is a whole school concern, the plan applies to school management and to all staff in a general way. In our context this is achieved through the IEP Process, as well as specifically planning for transitions.

### 1.1 Definitions

Guidance in schools refers to a range of learning experiences provided in a developmental sequence that assist students to develop self-management skills which will lead to effective choices and decisions about their lives. It encompasses the three separate, but interlinked, areas of personal and social development, educational guidance and career guidance.

With the absence of formal counselling hours, the emphasis is on the development of appropriate social skills, independent coping mechanisms, wellbeing and SPHE.

### 1.2 Requirements on Schools

This plan is being developed in response to relevant legislation and resource documents. Guidance is a statutory requirement for schools under Section 9 (c) of the Education Act 1998:

*‘to ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices’.*

The context in our school typically involves supported placement. Other requirements and guidelines include (note these are being adapted to our special school setting):

### 1.3 Relationship to Mission Statement

The school Guidance Plan supports the values of the school outlined in its Mission Statement:

### 1.4 Rationale for a Whole School Guidance Plan

St. Francis School ethos is based on a community of people who support, respect, and empower each other. It is a community of learning and teaching based on high professional standards and ethics. At the heart of our school is a deep respect for each individual, a sense of care, a sense of fairness and

justice, which in turn creates an environment where each student can develop spiritually, emotionally, physically, intellectually, and aesthetically. The DES (2005) Guidelines state that schools should

*"...develop a comprehensive guidance plan as part of their overall school development plan, taking into account the needs of students, available resources and contextual factors" (DES, 2005; pg. 4).*

NCGE (2004) defines the Whole School Guidance Plan as

*"... The document in which the school, in a systematic way, defines the guidance programme it offers, and states how resources are organised to deliver the programme." (NCGE, 2004: pg. 8).*

This Guidance plan has evolved for the purpose of providing guidance to students and their parents / guardians. In the context of our school, parents are key stakeholders in the guidance process. The plan outlines the school's approach to guidance generally and explains how students and their parents jointly are supported and assisted in making choices and successful transitions to adult and working life. It gives formal structure to a whole-school approach to this provision. Additionally, it informs parents, students and teachers that guidance will be delivered in an integrated and proactive way. The guidance plan focuses on the multidisciplinary approach which focuses on the development of independent skills alongside the provision of supports as appropriate. These supports are identified and planned for.

## **1.5 Aims and Objectives**

Our Whole School Guidance Plan aims to:

- Reflect the needs of our students with specific reference to their abilities and disabilities
- Achieve a balance in the provision of personal/social, and education offered to students.

The objectives of this Whole School Guidance plan enable students achieve the following outcomes:

- To clarify educational and social goals
- To address personal issues
- To identify and explore opportunities
- To grow in independence and resilience and to receive the relevant supports to achieve their respective potentials
- To make informed choices about their lives and follow through on these choices. In our context parents and guardians are part of the informed decision making process.
- To support the development of every student
- To acknowledge and support each person's role in the school community
- To provide an environment where each individual can develop self-esteem and a sense of personal responsibility
- To provide an environment where each individual can develop a place in society and a responsibility to society
- To nurture teaching and learning so that each individual can reach his or her full potential
- To monitor the well-being of all students
- To apply best practice in the protection of students and the promotion of their welfare, within the resources available in accordance with DES and School Child Protection Policy
- To work effectively with statutory authorities and outside agencies as and when required
- To ensure that any allegations of abuse are dealt with justly and promptly in accordance with current Children First Guidelines and Child Protection requirements.

## **2. THE MODEL OF PROVISION**

### **2.1 Incoming Students**

- Psychological Assessment report which fulfils the following criteria:
- Report dates from within the last year
- Report confirms that the child has a Mild or Moderate General Learning Disability,
- Report recommends that a special school placement is required.
- Applications will only be considered where the child has a Mild or Moderate General Learning Disability (as confirmed by an appropriate professional's report included in the child's application)
- Following on from enrolment Transition meeting with school principal, class teacher and SNA Teams
- Discussion of individual needs and professional reports
- Training provided by the school and or HSE to meet individual complex needs
- Liaising with feeder schools including teacher to teacher communication and School Passport
- Annual IEP devised and targets signed off by midterm break of the first term

### **2.2 Pupils Transitioning out of School**

Here the school plans to model its approach on the Gwent Transition model. The model sets out three key principles:

- **Unified Standards:** St. Francis school sets out to achieve this through a well developed IEP process that has a common template and approach for engaging the partners. The school will review the learning pathways on an annually to help broaden the opportunities for our school leavers. This process will be coordinated by an AP2 who will report to the principal and Deputy Principal.
- **Preparing and Empowering Service Users and Families:** St Francis School will engage parents in the compilation and review of IEP plans. Students will be engaged to the maximum level that is appropriate and feasible.
- **Single Integrated Transition Plans:** Transition Planning is a natural continuum of the IEP planning process that operates within our school. The Transition Plan to adult services will engage in a consultation process with adult guidance services which will include, the student, parents / guardians, class teacher, and representatives of school management. The aim is to provide a coordinated and inclusive transition process.

Within the proposed service delivery, the following key principles should be prioritised in order to have a substantial impact on the experience of transition.

- Unified Standards
- Preparing and Empowering Service Users and Families
- Single Integrated Transition Plans
- The Gwent Transition Service

The senior cycle takes a holistic approach towards the guidance and preparation of all our students towards further education or appropriate next step for their individual needs.

Throughout our senior cycle the subject areas lending themselves to guidance include Personal Care, Living in the Community and preparing for work. These modules are PLUs from the L2LP specifically and L1LP with the exception of Preparing for Work.

Guidance to our students is individual, specific and always in co-operation with parents/ guardians. The transition of students from our school really begins in their final school year which for our school is the year that they turn 18. The following process begins:

- (i) Final years Student Support Plan/ IEP with parents/ guardians.
- (ii) Initial meeting of student with occupational guidance officer. The occupational guidance officer will have received all relevant reports/ documentation pertaining to the student prior to the meeting.
- (iii) Teacher meeting with occupation guidance officer- initial contact regarding the student.
- (iv) Student profile meeting with Occupational guidance officer which also involves the student, teacher and parent/ guardian.

The above serves as a consultation with all parties to determine the most suitable placement for the student dependent upon their interests and ability.

It is important to note that there is a focus on transition, change and preparation for the next step through SPHE, SESE and all areas of the curriculum eg. Using money, timetables, social skills etc. Once consensus is reached with all parties the student is allocated a place in services – NLN, Rehab care, Muiriosa, IWA etc.

The focus for each teacher and for the school is preparing the student for their next steps. During the Spring term students are facilitated, usually for one week duration to sample the service they will attend. NLN and rehab care allow one week and often more if required. Muiriosa works one to one with the teacher and student's in brief stints to develop relationships, rapport etc. Focus within school is often on the maintenance of confidence and self esteem. Discussions re. change. Discussions on new routines and reassurance of the pupils safety, comfort and support through the next steps. Emphasis is placed on working through anxieties, fears or worries within lessons/ classes. Fears turn to opportunities, excitement for change, new friends and new opportunities.

### **2.3 Wellbeing**

*“Wellbeing is present when a person realises their potential, is resilient in dealing with the normal stresses of their life, takes care of their physical wellbeing and has a sense of purpose, connection and belonging to a wider community. It is a fluid way of being and needs nurturing throughout life.” (DES, 2018, 10)*

<https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/wellbeing-policy-statementandframework-for-practice-2018%E2%80%932023.pdf>

The pillars of Wellbeing include PE, SPHE and CSPE; with additional guidance related learning at our school being delivered as “Pastoral Care” weekly to all students. Wellbeing is linked to the Staying Well key skill of the Framework for Junior Cycle. The eight competences can be linked with five of the six indicators of Wellbeing – Responsible, Connected, Resilient, Respected and Aware. The wellbeing of our students is certainly a whole school concern, with the class teacher and the In-School Management Team having an important role in supporting planning for and delivery of the learning outcomes associated with Wellbeing indicators. To this end, we have designated an AP1 Post of Responsibility to co-ordinate a structured Wellbeing approach within our school.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT IN THE AREA OF PUPIL WELLBEING

### Objectives

- Promote a culture of improvement, collaboration, innovation and creativity in relation to pupil wellbeing
- In consultation with staff, draw up, develop, implement, monitor and review a school plan for wellbeing.
- Lead the school in a continuous process of self-evaluation in the area of Pupil Wellbeing.

### Roles and Responsibilities pertaining to the area of Pupil Wellbeing

- Lead the development and review of a School Policy on Wellbeing.
- Lead the whole school approach to the promotion of wellbeing.
- Input into the incorporation of wellbeing promotion into whole school policies and practices
- Use the school self evaluation (SSE) process to initiate a wellbeing promotion review and development cycle.
- In consultation with pupils, parents and staff set up and manage the working of the student council / meitheal prefect group (Student voice).
- Organise regular meetings and trainings to establish an effective student voice, and student engagement in leadership and responsibility roles within the school.
- Manage, lead and mediate change in relation to the evolving needs of the school in relation to pupil wellbeing.
- Promote and facilitate the development of pupil voice, pupil participation and pupil leadership in relation to pupil wellbeing.

### Whole School Overview

Within St Francis School Guidance is structured to provide a range of learning experiences in a developmental sequence, designed to assist students in conjunction with their parents / guardians to make choices about their lives and to make transitions based on these choices. These choices may be categorised into three separate but interlinked dimensions/areas:

- A. Personal and Social Development
- B. Educational Guidance
- C. Career Development

#### A. *Personal and Social Development*

Personal and Social development is largely delivered through the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) which is integrated into the respective teaching programmes. It comprises the following modules: Communication Skills, Physical Health, Friendship, Relationships and Sexuality, Emotional Health, Influences and Decisions, Substance Use and Personal Safety.

The Pastoral Care team include modules during the course of a school year e.g. Stress Management, Resilience Scales, Dealing with Anxiety, Internet Safety, Every opportunity is used in St. Francis School to develop the skills, potential and resilience of students.

#### B. *Educational Guidance*

In St Francis School School we hold Parent-Teacher-Student meetings where there is a three way dialogue in terms of educational guidance in relation to transitioning to adult services.



C. *Career Guidance*

Career development and investigation is vocational in nature and is planned for through the IEP process.

A strong emphasis is on pathways. Our current Pathways are L1P and L2P. Pathways are currently being inculcated into our in school management team with a view to extending or pathways to include further pathway courses such as QQI.

**Guidance: A Whole School Activity – Roles and Responsibilities**

Guidance is a holistic process that benefits from the synergy of many working together with a shared vision towards a common goal. Whole School Guidance Planning enables our School to identify, prioritise and respond to the guidance needs of students using the resources available. When one considers the three dimensions of guidance (personal, educational and career), all members of the teaching staff are involved in providing guidance to students. This may be in morning assembly, informally through supervision and substitution, advice given in homework club or class, lunchtime activities to stimulate personal and social growth, classroom interactions, general advice relating to the standards required of students, parent-teacher-student meetings, phone calls home, reports home, etc.

A Whole School Approach thus ensures that our school maximises its resources for guidance through the identification of roles and responsibilities for school management and staff in the provision of appropriate guidance to students.

A. *Board of Management*

The Board of Management has a responsibility to ensure that the provision and practice of guidance in the school is of the highest possible standard. The Board of Management manages the school in accordance with the Education Act (1998) and the Articles of Management for Voluntary Secondary Schools. Each school is required to comply with the Education Act (1998) and provide students with "access to appropriate guidance".

B. *Senior Management*

The Principal controls the internal organisation and management of the school, and exercises supervision over the teaching and non-teaching staff. The Deputy Principal is in charge of the school in the absence of the Principal. In the absence of the Principal and Deputy Principal, an Assistant Principal is placed in charge of the school. The Senior Management team also has a responsibility to ensure that Whole School Guidance is of the highest possible standard. This includes managing the process of guidance planning in cooperation with school staff and other school partners such as parents and disability services

C. *Class Teacher*

The class teacher takes a particular interest in the activities and progress of the students in a class group, and helps the students to be positive in their behaviour and work. In our school context the individual Education Plan is a central focus and is a tool for the involvement of parents in planning for their child's needs as well as their future provisions.

D. *Parents*

This Plan adopts the legal definition of parent as set down in the Education Act, 1998. The Plan recognises that parents play a pivotal role in developing, promoting and supporting the growth of their child both at home and within the school. Parents play a vital role in shaping their children's attitude to school. A supportive home environment shapes attitudes that

promote the holistic development of the child. It is important that parents are aware of and support this Plan together with other school policies and procedures. Parents are further encouraged to involve themselves in positive participation in school life in order to facilitate the development of mutual and beneficial links between school and home. Parents can also participate in the guidance process through:

- Contributing to the development and review of the IEP and transition plans,
- Providing personal assistance to the school relating to their child's needs.

**E. *Students***

Wellbeing, SPHE, collectively cover many aspects of Personal and Social Development. These are central to transition planning and it is important that the students are giving the necessary assistance to communicate their views, so they can input into their future plans.

**F. *Other Agencies***

The School may enlist the help, support, advice and assistance of the following agencies and organisations as appropriate:

- NEPS Psychological Services
  - Social Workers
  - SENO
  - Túsla
  - CAMHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
- (this list is not exhaustive)

**G. *Informal Guidance***

Informal links with parents, student support service personnel (both external e.g. NEPS, NCSE, SENO, Visiting Teacher Service, OT, Speech and Language, HSE, and CAMHS).

Informal guidance also includes observing and following Child Protection Guidelines and reporting concerns in relation to students to Designated Liaison Person (DLP).

**H. *Monitoring, review and evaluation***

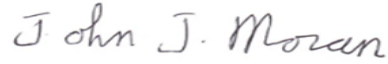
This policy statement will be the basis on which a regular review and evaluation of the Guidance Service will be conducted between the Principal, the in-school management team, staff, parents and the Board of Management. A comprehensive review of the entire Guidance Service within the context of the Whole School Plan will inform a full report to the Board of Management, receive feedback on any shortfalls in the service and agree adjustments for the following year(s).

The school guidance plan will undergo constant appraisal and will be fully reviewed annually.

This Whole School Guidance Plan was adopted by the Board of Management on Tuesday 8th November 2022 and will be reviewed on 7th November 2023



**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Chairperson of Board of Management**



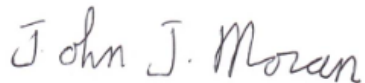
**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Principal**

**Date:** 8<sup>th</sup> November 2022

**Date:** 8<sup>th</sup> November 2022

**Date of next review: 7th November 2023**

Signed:



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**John J. Moran, Secretary, Board of Management**

**Secretary Board of Management**