

# Whole School Guidance Plan

Whole School Guidance plan indicates procedures and policies that are used by the school to ensure students have access to appropriate guidance , supports and services available through the school. Guidance is focused on student progress and development in education, careers and personal and social development.

St Aidan's Community College aims to create an environment in which excellence in learning, growth and responsibility flourish.

## **School Motto: 'Bíodh bhur solas ag taitneamh'**

'Let your light shine' encourages all our students to find what they are good at and let it flourish – whether in the science lab, through IT, on the sports field, in the classroom, with their friends and with their teachers. We aim to develop all aspects of the student - their physical, intellectual, moral and emotional well-being.

St. Aidan's Community College is a Designated Community College founded in 1983 under the directorship of Cork ETB (formerly County Cork VEC) and the Diocese of Cork & Ross. Its founding principle was to develop opportunities for students to realise their individual potential and this remains our goal today. We aim to be a school where all of our students are cherished equally and assisted in their efforts to achieve their academic and personal goals.

In St. Aidan's we provide students with an education that has a sound academic and practical content. Staff are committed to develop teaching and learning aimed at good academic achievement. We hold high expectations for all our students. We encourage a positive learning environment for all, so that students can feel safe and valued in their contributions. We hope to nurture a good work ethic in our students that prepares them for further study and/or the workplace.

The following school policies are associated with the School Guidance Plan:

- Code of Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying
- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
- Critical Incident Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Special Education Needs Policy
- Data Protection Policy (ETB)
- Health & Safety Policy & Statement
- Substance Use Policy
- Admissions Policy
- LCA, TY & JCSP Policies
- Acceptable Use Policy
- SPHE Policy
- Working Alone Policy
- Homework Policy
- Medication Procedures

A number of procedures are in place that outline what has to be followed in St Aidan's for a variety of aspects which affect students. These procedures are communicated to staff, students and parents in a variety of ways such as via staff handbook, noticeboards, VS ware notifications, assemblies, announcements, letters, e-mails etc.

## **School Procedures**

### **Morning & Afternoon Assembly**

- Students line up in alphabetical order in class groups with bags on the ground and without jackets over uniforms.
- Year Heads address students and read any notices. Uniform is also noted.
- Subject teachers collect students from assembly area
- Year heads dismiss class groups in an orderly manner
- Class groups walk to class accompanied by subject teacher
- Roll is marked on VS Ware noting any absent students
- Students arriving late must sign in at the office and have their journal stamped

### **General Assembly**

- Assembly for Senior Cycle students will be held by the Principal/Deputy Principal one morning a week (day specified each year) in the main area
- Assembly for Junior Cycle students will be held by the Principal/Deputy Principal one morning a week (day specified each year) in the main area

### **Lockers**

All students are entitled to rent a locker in their year area. Students are encouraged to use this facility to assist them with organisation of their books and materials.

- Lockers should only be used at break and lunch times, before assembly and after school.
- Lockers should not be used in between classes.
- Students will not be allowed out of class to go to lockers. If students are missing books or equipment for class a sanction will be given by the subject teacher.
- If being supervised for a class, students will not be permitted to go to lockers to get other books. They will have to use whatever books they have brought to class.
- No sharing of lockers.
- Students should take responsibility for the care of the books in their lockers while rented for the year and ensure locker is locked when not in use.

### **Detention**

- Students will be given notice of detention. Students may be suspended if they do not attend detention.

### **Mobile phones/IT**

- The procedures regarding mobile phones are clear – phones must be switched off and in a students' bag during class time and at 11am break.
- Students may use their phones before the 8.55am bell and at lunchtime between 1.10 & 1.45pm.
- If students are using their phones for any reason outside the allowed times they will be confiscated. On a first offence a student can collect the phone at the end of the

day, for any further offences a **parent** must collect the phone. (A parent ringing the school to get the phone returned will not be accepted.) If parents are unable to collect the phone it will be kept for two weeks and then returned to the student.

- Photographs/recordings must not be taken at any time in school unless requested to do so by a teacher for classwork or projects.
- Students should not use phones to access the internet during school time unless at the request of teachers for classwork or projects.
- Internet safety measures are in place on school computers to prevent access to inappropriate sites.
- Items should not be uploaded from devices onto school computers.
- USB keys used on school computers are not to be used on computers outside the school to prevent viruses.

### **Student permission to leave class**

Students may only leave class when they have written permission in their school journal.

They must carry the journal while out of class. Toilets will not be available to students during period 1, 4 or 7. Students out of class without their journal will be sent back to class immediately. Students with appointments for the guidance counsellor/chaplain/counsellor etc. must have an appointment slip outlining the time of their appointment.

Some students whose parents have notified the school of medical conditions have permission to leave class immediately without prior permission. A list of these students is displayed in the staff room.

### **Movement in the corridor**

- Students should walk on the left hand side of the corridor to allow ease of movement through the corridor and for the Health & Safety of other students who may have physical disabilities/ailments.
- Students should move directly from one class to another.
- Students should line up outside classrooms.
- Students who are out of class during class time must have a note in their journal from the subject teacher.

### **Appointments**

- Appointments should be made outside school hours where possible.
- Students who have a medical or dental appointment must have a written note in the journal. This must be signed by the class tutor or year head before students come to sign out in the office.
- Students will not be allowed to leave without the note.
- Parents should not call to the school office requesting to collect students if they have not given them a note in advance to leave school.

### **Absence**

- Poor attendance affects students' progression in school.
- All absences must be explained by parents/guardians in writing in the school journal.

- These notes must be brought to the office when students return to school during lunchtime or after school. If not brought to the office students absence is not explained.
- Attendance details are available to parents on VS Ware.
- A text message informing parents of students absence is sent in the mornings and afternoons once rolls are taken.
- Students with poor attendance may not be allowed to attend extra-curricular activities.
- Regular poor attendance is addressed as per the Attendance Policy. The school is obliged to report students with poor attendance to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).
- Referrals are made to the NEWB for students with persistent poor attendance.
- Meetings are held regularly during the year with the EWO. Attendance returns are submitted annually to the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB).
- Students with perfect attendance are rewarded through the school rewards system and through awards from the Lord Mayor's office.

### **Punctuality**

- It is important that students are in school on time both in the mornings and after lunch. Students who are late disrupt assembly and classes.
- Students who are late must sign in at the office. Automatic detention will be given if students are late more than once in a week.

### **Contact/Correspondence with parents**

- Journal: The journal contains a lot of information for parents – meeting times, calendar for the school year, school rules, a guide for parents etc. The journal is regularly used for daily or weekly communication between parents and their child's teachers. It is a vital link between parents and the school, and parents are encouraged to check and sign the journal each night.
- VS Ware: Parents are given log in details for access to VS Ware. This allows them to see student attendance, behavior and exam reports.
- Parent teacher meetings: Parents are required to attend the meeting for each child. Each year group has, at least, one parent teacher meeting per year. Parents and their child attend the meeting together. Any teacher absent for the meeting may be contacted by the parent subsequently, for an update on their child's progress. Any parents who miss their child's parent teacher meeting (without letting the school know in advance) is contacted by letter reminding them about the importance of attending relevant meetings.
- Reports: Reports are issued three times a year – Christmas, Easter and summer. These reports are available to parents on VS Ware.
- Commendations: Students are awarded commendations on a number of occasions throughout the year, to acknowledge the efforts being made by students. Criteria are set for achieving these commendations.
- Appointments/Phone calls/Letters home: Parents are encouraged to make appointments to see relevant teachers/year heads/ deputy principal or principal, when necessary. Equally, staff are encouraged to set up meetings with parents to

discuss issues arising. Teachers often contact parents/guardians by phone where appropriate. Occasionally, letters home are used to inform parents when students are not making their best effort or have poor attendance or punctuality. A comprehensive information pack is sent home in July outlining subject allocation; copies and equipment needed for the school term; details of school uniform/school calendar/code of behaviour etc.

- Contact Information: A contact number for parents/guardians must be provided in case of an emergency. A parent/guardian must be contactable during school hours at the number provided.

### **Students over 18**

- Due to GDPR once students reach the age of 18 they determine who has access to their data. A letter is sent to parents and students informing them of this in advance of students turning 18.
- Once students turn 18, their parents contact details are removed from the system. If students return a form indicating that they want parents to have access to their information, this is changed on the system. If students do not return the form, correspondence is made through the student instead of the parent.

### **Discipline**

- Students are expected to follow classroom and school rules as outlined in the Code of Behaviour.
- Parents can access student behavior details on VS Ware.
- Points are added or deducted from students for positive/negative behavior as appropriate in school.
- Positive behavior is encouraged and rewarded in St Aidan's.
- Sanctions are imposed to students who do not comply with school rules. This can include extra written work, detention, internal suspension, suspension etc.
- Meetings are held with parents and students who repeatedly disregard school rules. These students may be placed on reduced timetables on a short term basis to help behavior management.
- Serious breaches of discipline or repeated discipline issues may result in expulsion

### **Behaviour for Learning**

This support has been put in place through resources and training from the NBSS. A base room has been organised for students to check in each morning. Students engaged in the various aspects of the programme are targeted based on their behavioural needs.

The following programmes are in place:

- Check and Connect
- Transition and transfer
- Alert
- Getting it together organisation programme
- Literacy programme
- Anger Management

Work is carried out in collaboration with staff, School Completion, SEN, HSCL and DEIS planning.

The following initiatives have also arisen as a result of the Behaviour for Learning programme:

- Positive behaviour committee
- Behaviour points system on VS Ware
- Monthly awards to promote positive behaviour
- Behaviour for learning visual clues displayed on our corridors and in our classrooms
- Peer mentoring system between 1st years and 4th years

### **DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity for Schools)**

DEIS is the main policy initiative of the Department of Education and Skills to tackle educational disadvantage.

Interventions are planned by the school to address specific educational and behavioural difficulties; breakfast and after-school activities; and home-school supports.

DEIS schools are required to have action plans for improvement in the following themes:

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Examination attainment
- Attendance
- Retention & Progression
- Partnership with parents and others

For each theme schools have to set targets and actions and then monitor and evaluate these during the 3 year plan relating to learning and classroom practice.

The DEIS action plan is also the school's SSE improvement plan. In particular, the SSE process should help DEIS schools to examine the impact of classroom activity on all DEIS themes.

Benefits to schools include: Improved pupil-teacher ratio (17.85:1 compared with 18.6:1), Home school community liaison co-ordinator (HSCLO), School meals- funding for breakfast & lunch, increased capitation and book grants

### **Break & Lunch times**

These procedures aim to promote a safe lunch break for students and efficient supervision period teachers.

- Students must remain in their designated areas at break time. Only 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> year students are permitted to go to the canteen at 11 o'clock.
- The canteen will close a minute or two before the bell to facilitate students getting into assembly lines after break.
- School meals scheme is available to students in the school canteen for breakfast and lunch.
- Students with permission to go home or to go to a relative at lunchtime must go directly to this address. Students are not permitted to go to the shop at lunchtime (except for 6<sup>th</sup> years). 6<sup>th</sup> years must return to school immediately. Students are not permitted to hang around the neighbourhood. Sanctions will be applied to students hanging around the neighbourhood.
- At lunch time students who are not going home must go to the main area.
- Teachers circulate during the time that students are in the main area and encourage students at all times to use the bins for their rubbish.
- The following duties are undertaken by teachers on supervision (each group decides which duty each teacher is responsible for):

- ✓ Teacher A: At 1.15 checks that the doors to A, B, C, D corridors are locked & that all students are in the main area.
  - ✓ Teacher B: Supervise the area next to the canteen.
  - ✓ Teacher C: If the weather is suitable to go outside, one teacher must be the first out on the yard with the students.
  - ✓ Teacher D: One teacher must remain behind to encourage all others outside, and then go to the yard.
- If it is dry students except 6<sup>th</sup> years go out to the hard court area (weather permitting) at 1.30. 6<sup>th</sup> years are permitted to remain in the main area.
  - The canteen will close a few minutes before 1.30pm.
  - Students must ensure that they get their food in time to eat it and go outside to facilitate cleaning of the canteen. Food or drink is not to be taken out onto the hard court area. If students are not finished eating at 1.30pm they must stand outside the door to finish their food and put rubbish in the bin before going to the hard court area.
  - Bottles are not allowed out in the yard.
  - Students are permitted back inside once the bell is rung, and should proceed to their lockers, assemblies etc.
  - The door near the 1<sup>st</sup> year area will be opened at the end of lunchtime for 1<sup>st</sup> years returning after lunch to alleviate the numbers coming in the front door.
  - If it is wet students will remain in the main area. Towards the end of lunchtime, the supervising teachers will go to year areas with students to get ready for assembly.
  - If students are going to a room/gym at lunchtimes they must be accompanied by the teacher.

### **Uniform**

- Full correct uniform including black shoes must be worn at all times.
- Tracksuits are only to be worn when students have PE. Official school tracksuits only are to be worn in school. Sports hoodies are not acceptable as tracksuits and are not to be worn.
- Students who may not have school tracksuit must wear their uniform and bring gear to change for PE.

### **Child Protection**

All school personnel are made aware of Child Protection Guidelines and should be familiar with signs and behaviours that may be indicative of child abuse as per Child Protection Guidelines for Post Primary Schools. Issues of Child Protection are dealt with as per Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy.

Teaching staff are 'Mandated people' and must report any concerns they have in relation to Child Protection. Staff who have concerns in relation to a student should report these concerns to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) or the Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLDP) and consider making a joint report. Advice should not be sought from others in relation to whether or not the issue should be reported as this affects the confidentiality of the issue. Confidentiality is necessary at all times however students who disclose information cannot be told the matter will remain confidential. The staff member who receives the disclosure must inform the student that it has to be passed on to the DLP.

The DLP must determine if the concern needs to be reported to the HSE. Advice may be sought from the duty social worker if the DLP is unsure as to whether or not to make a referral. Parents/guardians are informed that the referral is being made unless it is felt that this would endanger the student. It is not the duty of the school to investigate the issue however the student will remain supported by the school. Reports are kept in a secure place within the school and BOM is informed of the number of referrals made or advice sought through the Oversight report.

If the DLP decides not to make a referral based on a report from staff, they will inform the person reporting the incident of their reason(s) in writing. As a mandated person, a teacher may still decide to make the referral without the DLP – this will be reported to the BOM through the Oversight report.

If a concern is received in relation to student self-harm or suicidal thoughts, parents are made aware of the situation. Parents are advised to bring the student to the GP to get support from qualified agencies. The school chaplain provides a supportive role to students in this situation also.

### **Staff Employee Assistance Service**

This service is available to staff who may need supports in their working or personal life. It is available through [www.carecall.ie](http://www.carecall.ie)

### **Activities and Outings**

- Students are encouraged to take part in after school activities. Training, supervised by a teacher, may take place at lunchtime or after school. Matches may be arranged during the school day, and a procedure is in place to ensure the activity is properly organised and run. Students are covered by the school insurance, which is paid for out of the pupil development contribution.
- The activity sheet—a list of all students and teachers taking part—must be filled out and delivered to the office 3 clear working days ahead. This applies whether a bus is needed or not, or if the match is on home ground. This activity list is posted up in the staff room for all teachers to check in advance of the outing. Students who are co-operative throughout the year are only permitted to represent the school. Students with poor attendance, poor behaviour or with outstanding STX may not represent the school or take part in certain activities. Such students are encouraged to make improvements in order to make a team, take part etc. If the subject teacher has a valid reason why the student should not miss their class, a compromise should be sought. It is up to the subject teacher to approach the teacher in charge to discuss the situation. The activity sheet provides the details of the trip, so that the Deputy Principal is aware of the location of the group and the duration of the trip.
- The transport used on all trips is booked by the school secretary, and complies with all safety standards outlined in the Road Traffic Act. Safety belts must be worn on all trips.
- On the day of the activity, each teacher checks the students against the original list and returns the list to the office. These students are recorded on VS Ware as attending a school activity. A first aid kit is taken to away activities (some teachers



are trained first aiders). Where necessary, a Special Needs Assistant may travel with the group. The number of teachers going on each activity depends on the size of the group, so that adequate supervision is provided. The supervising teacher must make themselves aware of any medical conditions of the students attending. In the case of an emergency, teachers should contact the school immediately. In the case of an accident or an injury, the school must be contacted by the supervising teacher so that parents can be informed promptly. If necessary, the student should be taken directly to hospital, accompanied by the teacher.

- Students usually return to the school at the end of the activity. A head count is essential before the return journey. On rare occasions, students may meet their parents or walk home at the end of the activity, but only if a note in the journal has been provided by the parent, in advance.

### **Extra-curricular Activities**

Extra-curricular activities are seen as an integral part in the development of students therefore we encourage students to become involved.

Sporting activities in the school include: Basketball (boys & girls), hurling, camogie, soccer and football (boys & girls).

Non-sporting activities in the school include: library, AIB Build a Bank, quizzes, debating, read-a-thon, drama, choir, chess, French pen pals, community work, charity fundraising events, field trips and trips to the Gaeltacht.

### **Curricular Activities**

A number of guest speakers are invited to the school during the year. These include speakers related to SPHE, CSPE, Guidance, Religion etc. Guest speakers are arranged by the subject teacher involved to enhance the curriculum and provide expertise in certain areas. A range of guest speakers are organised during Health week.

Subject teachers arrange activities such as field trips and visits to industry for students in their relevant subject areas. Some of these activities are necessary for completion of projects, Classroom Based Assessments or Key Assignments (LCA) related to the subject.

### **Reporting Accidents**

Basic first aid is available through the school office. Parents will be informed by telephone of injuries and will be requested to collect their child when doctor or A&E is required.

If an injury is deemed to be serious, an ambulance will be called and parents will be notified of same.

All accidents no matter how minor must be recorded on Accident Forms. These forms must be completed promptly with all known details and returned to the Principal when completed.

Insurance claim forms are available on request from parents. Parents must complete their details and return to the school with receipts. The school completes the relevant section of the form and sends forms to the Insurance Company.

The Health & Safety authority are notified via standard on line system if a workplace accident occurs

## Homework

- Regular homework, written or learning will be given in all subject areas.
- Homework must be recorded in journals. Time will be allowed to do this during the class. Revision of work covered in class must also be recorded.
- If homework is not done sanctions will be given by the subject teacher.
- Students who are missing from class for a school activity or event must catch up on work that is missed. Sanctions will be given by the subject teacher if this is not done. Students will be prevented from attending extra-curricular activities if not catching up on work missed.

## Homework Guide

Based on our experience of work rate for various groups, the following is a guideline for study/homework for each of the year groups:

- First years = 1.5-2 hours
- Second years = 2-2.5 hours
- Third years = 3-3.5 hours
- Transition years = 1-2 hours
- Fifth years = 3-3.5 hours
- Sixth years = 3.5 -4 hours.

An additional 3-4 hours should be done at weekends.

Note: Extra time may be needed before exam times, or when projects are being completed.

As noted in the school rules homework should be completed on time. Students who do not have their homework fully completed and on time will have to accept the consequences. This may mean students will be required to complete extra homework for the next subject class. A note will be written in the journal by the subject teacher and/or record made on VS Ware.

Regularly not completing homework will result in parents being contacted by the subject teacher and a meeting may be arranged. Sanctions include detention after school by the subject teacher, withdrawal from out of school activities/extra-curricular activities etc.

Supports are available to any student who is having problems with his/her homework.

## Academic Attainment

Study seminars are held with 6<sup>th</sup> year and 3<sup>rd</sup> year within the first few days of the school year. Follow up sessions are also conducted with classes during Guidance provision. All students are advised on the development of study timetables. Study/revision aids are available to students. Classes are given extra support in relation to study guides and the development of study/revision folders through their class tutors. Study skills seminars and Open Days being run by UCC and CIT are brought to the attention of students. Parents' information sessions on study skills for their son/daughter are also held.

Noticeboards to acknowledge academic achievement of students in different years have been placed in the year group areas. Past pupils are invited to speak to classes to motivate students to achieve to the levels necessary to succeed.

St Aidan's is linked with UCC and CIT through the UCC plus+ programme and CIT Access programme.

Supervised study is available to students who wish to avail of it. Study facilities are also available to 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> years on Friday afternoons and on evenings when the school is open late for meetings etc.

### Junior Student Scholarship

- Awarded to student with best entrance assessment result
- Provided for 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> year (inclusive)
- School Registration Fees exempt
- School Materials fees covered
- School Uniform & Tracksuit provided (1<sup>st</sup> year)
- Stationery pack provided

### Senior Student Scholarship

- Awarded to best Junior Certificate result
- Provided for 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> year (inclusive)
- School Registration Fees exempt
- School Materials fees covered

### School Awards

- Students are awarded commendations following midterm reports
- Students are awarded for perfect attendance each term
- Main school awards held in May to recognise academic and extra-curricular achievements
- Gaelatacht Scholarships awarded

### **Pastoral Care**

The pastoral structures in the school are there to help the student who may need support in an academic, social, spiritual, emotional way. Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle students attend classes on Social, Personal and Health Education, where they receive relevant education on courtesy, manners, personal hygiene, bullying, study skills, relationships and sexuality etc. All students are encouraged to talk to their teachers, Year Heads, Chaplain or Guidance Counselor Teacher if they are experiencing problems. Dialogue between students and teachers is very important in the St Aidan's Community College philosophy of education.

### **Anti-bullying**

Bullying is not an acceptable behavior in St Aidan's. Anti-bullying week is held each year and a set programme is taught during SPHE classes.

Bullying incidents are reported to the Anti-Bullying coordinator and are dealt with as per the Anti-Bullying Policy.

### **Subject teacher**

The subject teacher is the mainstay of the pastoral care system in the school. This is achieved through good classroom management practices which allows for the development of a respectful relationship between teacher and student.

We foster successful interaction in the classroom through the main principles of our code of behaviour: respect for self, respect for others and respect for property.

Subject teachers must make clear and concise demands on our students and use consistently, the agreed codes of practice in all aspects of classroom management. Demands which are reasonable and fair and made within the framework of agreed school policies and procedures will normally be met by our students.

All learning needs and difficulties must be known by the subject teacher – where educational reports/assessments are available. This allows for the differentiation of the class work that best meets the needs of the individual student.

An essential aspect of best classroom practice at St Aidan's Community College must be praise and affirmation. Teachers are supported in all valid strategies which reward students. The importance of developing a good relationship with each student must be recognised. The classroom should be an emotionally safe environment for all students. Sarcasm, unfair or hurtful comparisons or any other form of 'put down' are unacceptable and alienate a student rather than helping the situation. It is particularly important not to discriminate against pupil's best efforts even though they may not be as good as others in the class.

Subject teachers must make use of the school journal and/or VS Ware to communicate both positive and negative observations to parents.

### **Class Tutor**

Each class has a tutor. As part of the team, the class tutor is hugely important in undertaking the role of caring for a class group in order to promote positive behaviour and learning at all times. The class tutor generally teaches the class for which they have responsibility in order to build a relationship with the student. Class tutors have a limited sanction-imposing role and are a support to the school community in reinforcing patterns of positive behaviour.

#### The role of the class tutor in St. Aidan's involves the following:

- Promote positive behaviour by acknowledging students in class and at assemblies.
- Monitoring School Journal and VS Ware points
- Supporting students with study aids and advise on study folders
- Explaining the Code of Behaviour on a regular basis – usually as a result of one-to-one interaction following a referral from a subject teacher - or as a subject teacher themselves.
- As a result of a referral, the tutor may need to consult, as necessary, with subject teachers
- At times, a tutor may need to circulate and complete a student review on an individual student, in advance of a meeting with parents.
- Monitors progress – The results of exams should be discussed, in person, with the appropriate year head. Together, commendations should be decided upon and issued as soon as possible. Other students may need other encouragements to improve their class work e.g. letter home; phone call home; meeting with parent; report card

The role of the tutor can be rewarding, as the relationship with the class develops. As the role of the tutor is voluntary, the tutor's input/ advice should be sought as a support rather than overburdening with referrals or negative feedback.

### **Year Tutor**

Each year group has a year tutor. The Year Tutor aims to create a well-motivated year group in relation to standards of work, conduct and responsibility. Meetings are held twice monthly

to discuss concerns in relation to year groups. School management, guidance counsellor, chaplain and SCP coordinator also attend these meetings.

#### Role of Year Tutor includes:

- Conducting assembly for year groups.
- Creating positive morale among students.
- Ensuring that students are praised, consoled and disciplined as required.
- Dealing with referrals from subject teachers
- Monitoring student report cards
- Making contact with parents to sort out concerns/issues with students.
- Attending twice monthly year tutor meetings
- Liaising with management in relation to advice on dealing with referrals/issues.
- Supporting the Class Tutors in the execution of their Pastoral responsibilities.
- Chairing Class Tutor/Year tutor meetings when scheduled
- Overseeing year-group Assessment, reports and commendations.
- Co-coordinating lateral transfers between classes.

#### **The School Chaplain**

- St Aidan's has an ex quota school Chaplain.
- The School Chaplain is a faith presence in the school community who is available to students, parents and staff members alike. The Chaplain works closely with school management, year heads, class tutors, and classroom teachers to promote a harmonious school environment for the well-being of all its members.
- The motto of St. Aidan's Community College is "Bíodh bhur solas ag taitneamh". This vision is shared by the Chaplain who endeavors to accompany young people on their journey through life, and encourages them to let their light shine brightly.
- The role of the School Chaplain is wide and varied, and can involve teaching religious education, meeting students on an individual basis, organising liturgies and prayers, and participating in activities which relate to the well-being and development of the school community. This role enables the development of relationships of trust with students, staff and parents. The Chaplain responds to the spiritual and religious needs of the students and the whole school community, while respecting the religious and personal convictions of all. The School Chaplain contributes to formal school occasions, such as Open Evenings and school Masses. The organisation of guest speakers and charity fundraising work are integral aspect of the role.
- One of a School Chaplain's key duties is to provide pastoral care. All of us need some kind of non-judgmental, understanding support: someone to listen actively and offer comfort, someone to provide assurance and encouragement that help is available. This role can involve counselling students suffering from emotional trauma, offering advice to pupils facing difficult decisions, leading groups that deal with issues such as bereavement or co-ordinating peer mentoring services. Supporting the school community may also mean referring individuals to outside support agencies, such as mental health, addiction or medical professionals, where necessary.
- The Chaplain provides an open door where students, as well as other members of the school community, can receive support in a safe and confidential manner. The School Chaplain is someone with whom students and their families can talk. If a student wishes to speak with the chaplain, they can contact the chaplain directly. Parents who wish to speak to the Chaplain can make an appointment through the office.

## **Middle Management**

The middle management of the school consists of a number of teachers who have been promoted to Assistant Principal Posts (I or II). Specific duties are assigned to teachers with posts of responsibility. These duties are determined by the needs of the school.

Assistant Principals duties include: Year Tutors, Academic Attainment, State/House Examinations, Anti-Bullying coordinator, Public Relations, Links with outside agencies etc.

Assistant Principals (I) meet twice monthly with Principal and Deputy Principal to develop school policies and promote school progression.

## Deputy Principal/Principal

The role of the Deputy Principal and Principal of the school involves the management of the school to include:

- Day to day running of the school
- Development of school policies and procedures
- Deal with issues that are referred by the Year tutor/chaplain. Discipline issues are dealt with under the schools Code of Behaviour
- Keeping within school budget in relation to the maintenance of the school building, purchase of materials and booking of activities
- Cork ETB are the employers of the staff, however management of staff including timetabling and substitution is carried out by the school management. Complaints are dealt with under ETB guidelines
- The Principal acts as secretary to the Board of Management
- The Principal is the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and the Deputy Principal is the Deputy DLP in cases of Child Protection.

## **Role of Patrons**

St Aidan's CC was established under a Model Agreement that sets out the roles and responsibilities of the Diocese of Cork and Ross and Cork Education and Training Board. The college is coeducational, multi-denominational with a Catholic ethos, and the Co-Patrons are responsible for supporting the realisation of that ethos throughout the college in conjunction with the Board of Management.

## **Board of Management**

A board of management for an ETB school has a clear remit to manage that school on behalf of the ETB and the Trustee Partner, in accordance with legislation; Department of Education and Skills (DES) circulars, guidelines and procedures; and any policies or strategies that the ETB may establish regarding the operation of its schools.

The primary role of the board of management is one of governance. Governance is about providing direction and oversight for a school while ensuring that the rights of all members of the school community are upheld and that the school is accountable for its work.

The functions of a board, may in the main be categorised under three different headings:

- Policy setting and strategic planning
- Monitoring the implementation of policy, strategy and plans
- Supporting the principal and his/her staff.

## **Parent's Association**

All parents of students registered in the school are welcome to join the Parents Association. Meetings are held approximately every 6 weeks. They have an input into student's education and policy development. A report on events and activities in the school and the agreed report from BOM are given to the Parents association at each meeting by the Principal.

## **Students' Council**

- The role of the Student Council is to represent students' views to management, to be consulted prior to the implementation of new policies, to contribute to developing policies in the school, to be a resource working in partnership with the management of the school, to improve the school atmosphere, conditions and facilities, and to generate good relations between students, staff and management.
- Class maors are elected by each class. These elections take place in September and are carried out in the presence of class tutors. Any number of candidates can seek election as Maor but must outline to the class why they would be the most suitable candidate. Each student is given one vote.
- Junior and Senior Representatives are elected annually by the Maors from interested students within the student council.
- Student council members arrange and record their own meetings
- Junior & Senior representatives meet with the Principal/Deputy Principal after meetings to discuss issues raised and get feedback on concerns or suggestions.

## **Career Guidance**

St. Aidan's guidance counselling department provides guidance and counselling service for all of its students. The service is designed to help each student to make the best use of the opportunities presented to him/her in school. The main areas covered include:

- Educational Guidance: this involves guidance and advice on subject selection and the implications of these choices for later life.
- Personal Development: this helps students to find direction in their personal and school lives and to recognise and develop their own personal strengths.
- Career Guidance: this helps students to plan for their future beyond school. Information and advice is offered on employment and third level opportunities. Assistance is also provided on job applications, CV preparation and interview skills.

Students are timetabled for Guidance classes during Transition Year and 6<sup>th</sup> Year. Guidance modules are provided for other classes as per the Guidance plan. Cognitive Ability Tests (CATS) are carried out with incoming 1<sup>st</sup> years and students during Transition Year.

Information sessions are held for parents in relation to study skills, application to 3<sup>rd</sup> level through CAO process, UCC Access, CIT Progression Scheme, Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) and Disability Access Route (DARE).

Disability Access Route to Education (DARE): This is a university admissions scheme which offers places on reduced points to school leavers with disabilities. Students must meet the criteria as set down by the colleges.

The Guidance Counsellor is the main link to UCC plus+, CIT Access Programmes, Schools Business Partnerships and DPS Student Support Programme. This includes coordination of events organised through the schemes, visits to college Open days, site visits and careers exhibitions. A number of guest speakers from colleges and industry are invited to speak with students as part of the Guidance programme.

### **Important Career Events**

#### **September/October:**

- CAO Handbook & Documentation issued
- UCC Open Day
- University of Limerick Open Day
- Higher Options Careers Exhibition, Rochestown Park Hotel, Cork.

#### **November**

- CAO online applications facility opens
- Institute of Technology Tralee Open Day
- Cork Institute of Technology Open Day
- Waterford Institute of Technology Open Day

#### **January**

- Post Leaving Certificate Colleges Open Days
- UCAS applications close
- CAO early Applications deadline

#### **February/ March**

- 3<sup>rd</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> year pre examinations.
- CAO applications deadline.
- HEAR (Higher Education Access Route) applications deadline (see [www.accesscollege.ie](http://www.accesscollege.ie)).
- DARE (Disability Access Route to Education) applications deadline.
- HEAR/DARE – Deadline for supporting documentation returns.

#### **April/May**

- Post Leaving Certificate Colleges direct applications close.
- CAO free online change of mind facility becomes available.

#### **June/July**

- Commencement of leaving and junior Certificate examinations.
- CAO online change of mind facility closes.

#### **August**

- Student maintenance grant scheme applications deadline (see [www.studentfinance.ie](http://www.studentfinance.ie)).
- Leaving Certificate Results issued.
- CAO round 1 offers

**Important Notice:** Parents, guardians and students are advised to check all details prior to the events. It is the student's own responsibility to ensure that all applications are submitted correctly and on time. Students are advised to consult the information literature supplied by institutions.

### **Links with Outside Agencies**

St Aidan's has developed links with various agencies over the years to help enhance the educational experience of students.



Community Youth workers: Staff run a drugs awareness programme in the school and deliver classes to students at intervals throughout the school year. Supports via counseling are available for families affected by alcohol or drugs.

DPS Student Support Programme: This link involves targeting a fifth year class to promote progression to 3<sup>rd</sup> level. Funding is provided by DPS Engineering for extra tuition, activities, scholarships etc. Mentoring is provided by staff at DPS. Extra links with UCC and CIT are involved.

Schools Business Partnership: This is an educational inclusion programme that partners schools with businesses. St Aidan's is linked with a local business. Students in Transition Year participate in the programme which involves site visits, the world of work, interview preparation, mock interviews etc.

Junior Achievement: The focus of this programme is to show students the benefits of further education. It is run in conjunction with the Maths department by volunteers from various industries. The programmes run in St Aidan's are with TY (Finance Your Future) and with 1<sup>st</sup> years (Sum It Up). 'School to work days' are also organised which give the students an insight into the world of work.

CIT Access Programme: This programme aims to promote student awareness and progression to 3<sup>rd</sup> level. This involves participation in a range of events organised by CIT. These events include tours of the CIT campus, Experience CIT, CIT Engineering Week, Blackrock Observatory visit, 'A day in the life of a CIT student' etc. The CIT progression scheme is a supplementary admissions route to CIT leavers. Successful applicants receive post entry academic, guidance and financial supports.

UCC Plus+ Programme: This programme also aims to promote student awareness and progression to 3<sup>rd</sup> level. This involves participation in a range of events organised by UCC. These events include 'Experience UCC', Chemistry day, BIS week, Law academy, Computer Science, Physics etc. The Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) scheme offers places on a reduced points system for eligible students and gives extra supports to students.

HSE: St Aidan's cooperates with requests from Social workers and/or CAHMS re information and updates on students. Forms received are completed by class tutors/Resource teachers. A copy of completed forms is kept in the students file. Meetings are arranged in school as requested. If an invitation to attend a case conference meeting is received, they are attended when possible.

### **Home School Liaison**

The HSCL supports School Guidance in a number of ways:

- Liasies with Primary school HSCL officers to gather information about the needs of incoming students.
- Organises coffee mornings for parents in the first term.
- Liasies with outside agencies to provide further support including Solas Training Centres, Bridgeway, Springboard, CAMHS, HSE, Jigsaw, Foroige etc.

- Attends regular Meetings with the Guidance Team
- Home visitation is a crucial element of the HSCL role

### **School Completion Programme**

The Ballyvolane/Dublin Hill School Completion Programme (SCP) is a Tusla/Child and Family Agency initiative governed by Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA).

The SCP intake Framework is used to identify students who are at risk of educational disadvantage through early school leaving and who require a targeted intervention and/or ongoing support to gain the most benefit from their education.

The referral forms are designed to identify the risk factors associated with potential early school leaving as well as the protective factors present for students. Information is gathered from parents using a referral form. This information enables SCP staff and the EWO to identify the most appropriate support for the student.

A referral meeting is held with SCP, EWO and HSCL to review and assess each referral made against the identified risk factors of educational disadvantage in order to identify the students to be prioritised for inclusion in the programme. The SCP Intake Framework protocols and weighting guidelines are used to make informed decisions regarding referrals to the SCP.

#### Risk Factors include:

- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Retention
- Transitions (house/class/school/family)
- Literacy/Numeracy/SEN
- Class/homework completion
- Socialisation skills
- School Behaviour
- Parental Engagement
- Involvement with Tusla/CAMHS/NEPS etc.
- Ethnicity

#### Summary of SCP Interventions include:

- Mentoring for Achievement
- Life & Social Skills Mentoring
- After-school homework support
- Incredible Years Parents Course
- Summer schemes

### **Book Loan Scheme**

St. Aidan's operates a Book Rental (Loan) scheme whereby students are given all relevant text books. Students pay a fee (determined by the needs of the scheme and reviewed on an annual basis) when registering/re-registering each year. This fee is reduced for siblings. The fee can be paid in instalments for families who are experiencing financial difficulties. Arrangements can be made by contacting the school Principal.

Students who misplace or damage a text book(s) must replace the book(s) to the scheme at their own expense. A refundable deposit is also paid by 6<sup>th</sup> year students. This deposit is

repaid to each student provided all text books are returned in good condition after the state exams in June.

### **The Library**

The Library is a pleasant, comfortable space at the heart of the school. All students are automatically given membership free of charge and get an opportunity weekly to check out or return books during designated English class. First-Year students also receive a Library pack and various incentives are in place to promote reading. Library stock is constantly updated and every effort is made to include student book requests.

### **Canteen**

A canteen is available in the school which serves a range of hot and cold food. The canteen is open to all students before school and at lunchtime. Due to time limits of small break time, the canteen is only available to senior cycle students. School meals scheme is available to students at breakfast and lunchtime. Packed lunches can be brought to school by students and eaten in the canteen. Fizzy drinks, crisps etc. are not permitted as per the school rules. A drinking water fountain and tap to fill bottles is available for students use.

Students (except 6<sup>th</sup> years) are not permitted to go to the local shop at lunchtime.

#### *Helping the environment:*

- Bins are provided in the school. Rubbish should be thrown in the bin and not thrown around the neighborhood.
- Separate waste, recycle and compost
- Students provide a community service litter picking at intervals during the school year which is organised through SPHE/CSPE or Geography.
- Lights should be switched off when not in use, appliances should be switched off (not put on standby)
- Taps should not be run unnecessarily

### **Administration of Medication**

All students in the school with chronic conditions must inform the school through the registration form about their condition. A further medical details form will be sent out to be completed by parents.

Medication for students with chronic health conditions are generally stored in the office – and are available to students throughout the day. A small number of students administer their own medication – usually in the case of diabetes –and following an agreed procedure with the school.

Medication is stored in accordance with instructions, paying particular attention to temperature. Office staff ensures that medication is only accessible to those for whom it is prescribed. In all cases, emergency and non-emergency medication brought to school is clearly labelled with the student's name and the dose and frequency of the medication.

All medication is sent home at the end of the school year. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that new medication comes into school at the start of a new year.

## **Health Week**

'Health Week' provides a range of opportunities to the students to benefit in a number of ways, whether that is through participating in physical activity or accessing information on topics including but not limited to Mental Health, Physical Health, Sexual Health and Addiction Issues. An effective and efficient Health Week requires a Whole School approach.

### The following events are organised:

**Junior Sports Day:** All Junior Cycle students take part in a full day event which includes a range of team games, track and field and novelty events.

**Senior Sports Day:** All Senior Cycle students take part in a full day event which includes a range of team games, track and field and novelty events.

**Athletics Events:** This can be incorporated into the sports days or held as a stand-alone event. The focus of this event is to provide students with an opportunity to participate in the traditional running, jumping and throwing track & field disciplines.

**5Km Fun Run:** This event attempts to introduce students to a sport which will provide them with a long term outlet for remaining physically active. Students must complete the 1-mile run in PE class in the week prior to Health Week to be placed on the list for the 5Km run.

**Guest Speakers:** The guest speakers specialise in a range of important topics. These have included Cork Counselling Service, YMCA, Mental Health Services, ISPC, Sexual Health Services, Drug and Alcohol Addiction Support Services, Pregnancy Support Services, Samaritans, Irish Heart Foundation, Tabor Lodge Addiction Treatment, Gamblers Anonymous Ireland, Donal Walsh Live Life Foundation and Source Health & Fitness.

**Lunchtime Events:** These are generally held for the Junior Cycle years. Examples of events which have been held over the last number of years include Healthy Lunch competitions, Basketball Free Throw and Soccer Skills competition.

## **Enrolment of new students to school**

- In September the Principal visits all feeder Primary schools with brochures advertising the school and gives a presentation to students.
- Advertisements are placed in newspapers and signs are placed outside the school and in the locality advertising the event the Open night which is held in early October.
- During Open Night prospective students and their parents are invited to visit classrooms and facilities in the school.
- A presentation is made by the Principal which gives relevant information about the school, its curriculum, co-curricular activities etc.
- Application forms are accepted from prospective students.
- Letters of offer and enrolment forms are sent out to students and they are required to accept or decline the offer.
- Students who accept the offer are sent further information in relation to optional subjects, assessment exams, parents meetings etc. Enrolment in the school is not dependent on student performance in the entrance assessments. School fees, book loan etc. are paid after enrolment.

- Assessments are analysed and are used to determine needs for students.
- Information is sought from Primary schools through their Education Passports.
- Student records are maintained as per Data Protection Policy and Retention of Records as set out by Cork ETB.
- Parents of incoming first years are met in May to outline the school procedures and policies.

### **Student Induction**

Following the enrolment process all incoming students are invited to attend the school to get information about subject options and a tour of the school. The hope is that it will take some of the anxiety out of the transition to secondary school in late August.

The first day at St Aidan's Community College is dedicated to settling students into the school. First Year Students become familiar with the school surroundings are given assistance in understanding their timetables, use of lockers, school procedures etc. All other students meet with their class tutor for induction to receive details in relation to timetables and refresh information about school procedures. (See Appendix)

At the beginning of each school year, classes meet with their class tutor to obtain their timetable. A refreshment of school and class rules and school procedures is also done by the class tutor with each class group.

All new students coming to the school are given a hand out which outlines these procedures (See Appendix).

### **Student Mentoring**

Transition year students are selected and trained to operate as mentors. They help the First Year students to settle into Secondary School, make new friends and generally to ease the transition from Primary to Secondary School.

### **Transfer from another school**

Students wishing to transfer to St Aidan's must follow procedures as per the enrolment policy. Places are dependent on availability in classes and suitable option subjects. Record from previous school will also be taken into consideration particularly if previous school is in the locality. All stages of the transfer process must be complete before a student attends St Aidan's.

### **Subject choice**

St. Aidan's offers a wide range of subjects. Currently at Junior Cycle we offer the following core subjects: Irish, English, Maths, French, Geography, History, Science, Wellbeing (RE, PE, SPHE, CSPE, Friends for Life, Life skills etc). Parents are made aware of our subject choice at the Open Night, held in October and at meetings held in April/May.

Where possible during TY, speakers from various course and colleges visit the school to help the students in making decisions about courses and therefore subject choice in 5<sup>th</sup> year. Our 4<sup>th</sup> year students also have the opportunity to visit the annual careers exhibition, the NMCI, UCC and CIT during their Transition year.

At senior cycle students choose from a range of 14 subjects (Accounting, Business, Economics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, History, Geography, Art, Music, Home Economics, Construction Studies, Engineering, and Technical Drawing) along with Irish, English and

Maths. We endeavour to please as many students as possible with their senior cycle choices; however, this is determined by available resources and staffing. We use a preference system for 1<sup>st</sup> year and 5<sup>th</sup> year option choices rather than a pre-determined line of subjects where students must pick one choice.

Students are well supported in making subject choices, especially at senior cycle. Subject teachers offer students individual advice and students can make an appointment with the guidance counsellor to seek further clarification. Parents and 5<sup>th</sup> year students are invited to an information session on how to choose the correct options, usually in March/April.

The career guidance teacher also provides a booklet at this meeting outlining summary details of each subject and the subjects needed for various courses.

A further information session is held for those who are considering Leaving Cert Applied as an option. Students are informed of their allocation as early as possible, so that they can reconsider their decision at this point. There is also some room for movement between courses/subjects, where possible, in the first 2 weeks of the new term (subject to availability).

Students who decide they want to change levels in a subject during the school year must complete a change of level form (See Appendix). This must be completed by student, teacher and parent/guardian before a student changes level. If the student is changing level against the advice of the subject teacher, the student must meet with the Guidance counsellor to ensure they are aware of the implications of the change of level.

All students are expected to undertake the set number of subjects for their year group. St Aidan's does not recommend that students would study a reduced number of subjects. Students will only be permitted to drop a subject under exceptional circumstances. The advice of the Guidance counsellor must be sought in advance and the appropriate form must be completed (See Appendix). Students must remain in the timetabled class and study during these classes.

### **Junior Certificate Schools Programme**

This is a programme which is designed to help students work towards the Junior Certificate exam through a system of profiling their course work which enables them to become more confident about their Junior Certificate. It is not an alternative Junior Cert but it complements the Junior Certificate exam. The aim of the programme is to provide a fresh approach to the Junior Certificate for students who may find learning difficult.

### **Leaving Certificate Applied**

#### Procedures to enter the LCA programme

- LCA co-coordinator speaks to class tutors, year tutors and subject teachers of students in both 3<sup>rd</sup> year and 4<sup>th</sup> year to determine which students would be suited to the LCA programme.
- LCA co-coordinator then speaks to 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year students and explains what the LCA programme is all about and answers any questions students may have. Students are given an application form for the programme.
- Parents/guardians of targeted students are contacted and invited into an information evening in the school with the LCA co-coordinator and the Principal

- The LCA co-coordinator will contact the parents/guardians of students they felt should have applied for the programme but didn't apply and relay again why the programme would be best suited to their son/daughter.
- LCA co-coordinator gathers information about the students that have applied, i.e. results, attendance record, behaviour record etc.
- Students have to attend for an interview with the LCA co-coordinator and the Principal to assess their suitability for the course.
- The parents/guardians of students are notified by post whether their son/daughter were successful/unsuccessful in gaining entry to the LCA programme
- Due to numbers preference may be given to students who have already completed Ty

#### Presentation of end of session certs

- Parents are invited in to a presentation of Certs to students.
- The LCA co-coordinator generally runs through how many credits a students can get in each session and whether students are achieving a Pass, a Merit or a Distinction.
- Parents and students are invited to have a cup of tea/coffee and speak to teachers and the Co-coordinator about how the student is progressing, what they really need to work hard on for the next session and generally how the student is doing in LCA.

#### **Transition Year Programme**

Transition Year is a compulsory year in St Aidan's unless students are going directly from 3<sup>rd</sup> year into LCA or by application in very exceptional circumstances. Following Transition Year students can choose to enter traditional Leaving Cert or LCA (as per LCA application process).

Transition year programme is designed to provide the integrated development of the intellectual, spiritual, emotional, physical, social and vocational capacities of each pupil. The principle objective of the Transition Year is to prepare young people for their role as participative and responsible members of society. The Transition Year offers students the opportunity to review and consolidate the work done in the Junior Cycle, explore new areas and methods of study, and make more mature and informed choices regarding their future development and learning.

#### **Aims of the Transition Year Programme are:**

- To provide a better chance for all our pupils: The extra year brings extra maturity and students are encouraged to take more responsibility for their learning and involvement in a variety of activities throughout the Transition Year programme.
- To help pupils start again, catch up, aim higher, and go further: When a pupil goes straight from the Junior Certificate to the Leaving Certificate programme, there's very little time to help those who've developed late, lost their way, fallen behind, or sold themselves short. Students are given a chance in Transition Year to study the subjects available for the Leaving Cert programme so they can make an informed decision for their Leaving Certificate. Students are also encouraged to get involved in areas of interest through the variety of additional modules and courses offered.
- To help pupils become Autonomous Students: We live in a Learning Society. Life-long learning is already a feature of life and work in the modern world. We offer help with our Learning to Learn programme to help students to become better learners, the methods of assessment offered by teachers allow for students to put this new knowledge into practice.
- To encourage pupils to aim for a third-level qualification: Transition year allows students to investigate what they would like to do after school life with work experience and with their career guidance class and visits to the local colleges and university.

St Aidan's Transition Year Programme builds on pupil's knowledge and skills from the Junior Cycle and allows them to gain new experiences and skills. The subjects pupils complete are split into three groups: core subjects which pupils will complete throughout the whole year. Options which are the subjects students can choose for senior cycle and modules which pupils will complete over a set number of weeks.

Core subjects: Irish, English, Maths, Religion, French, PE, SPHE and Career Guidance.

Options include: Geography, History, Chemistry, Physics, Biology, Home Economics, Design Communications Graphics, Accounting, Economics, Business Studies, Construction Studies, Engineering, Music, Art (dependent on student numbers and subject availability)

Pupils will also have the opportunity to participate in a variety of additional programmes, such as: Drive for Life, Peer Support Programme, Work Experience, AIB School Bank, Scala Retreat, The Gaisce Award, First Aid, School Business Partnership, School Tour, Sciath na Scoil, CAT 4 Exam, CIT open day, Reward Trips, Drugs workshop, Counselling Centre, Collins Barracks Work experience, Career Exhibition

### **Modules (sample)**

YSI	Drama	Scratch Programming	Computer Programming
Safety	SPHE	Learning to Learn	Sculpture

### Assessment

Reports are sent home at the end of modules throughout the year. Transition year allows for a variety of assessment to be used and teachers are encouraged to use as many of the following assessment methods:

- A project
- A portfolio
- An essay
- A report
- An interview
- An oral presentation
- Self-assessment
- Keeping a learning journal
- End of unit exam

During the Transition Year Parent teacher meeting student work is on display and teachers are encouraged to present the work done by the Transition Year Students. Transition year awards are presented at the school awards night in May. Students are nominated by teachers for a reward trip based on their performance in modules at the end of each term.

### Work Experience

Work experience is a key element of Transition Year and LCA. It allows students to examine careers and see first-hand how their chosen career functions. It helps develop students work ethic, social and communication skills, learning new skills and talents, learning the jargon of the job and make valuable contact in the area of their choice.



They are also afforded the opportunity to investigate the different pathways to achieving their career path in career guidance. Students become more aware of the importance of the subject choice in relation to the career and college options available to them.

During September & October students prepare their CVs and cover letters in Career Guidance class with the help of the Guidance Counsellor (TY)/Work Experience teacher (LCA). In November they canvass for work placement in desired area of interest.

Work placement occurs in November/December for TY and is for one week. LCA students undertake two blocks of two week Work experience each year. LCA 1 work experience involves one block before Christmas and one block around Easter. LCA 2 work experience involves one block after Christmas and one block after midterm.

### Procedure

- Work experience is run with the help of the career guidance class where students are given help to formulate a C.V. and cover letter. Students are also encouraged to investigate the college courses required for their chosen work placement.
- When students have a completed CV and cover letter they are given a Letter of introduction from the school and the insurance letter.
- On securing work placement students return the Employer Information to the Transition Year coordinator or LCA Work Experience teacher.
- During their placement students complete a work experience diary for each day and an overall review at the end about how they found the whole experience.
- Employers complete a Student review to be returned to the school.
- LCA students are awarded credits for successful completion of Work Experience module.

### **Learning Support & Resource**

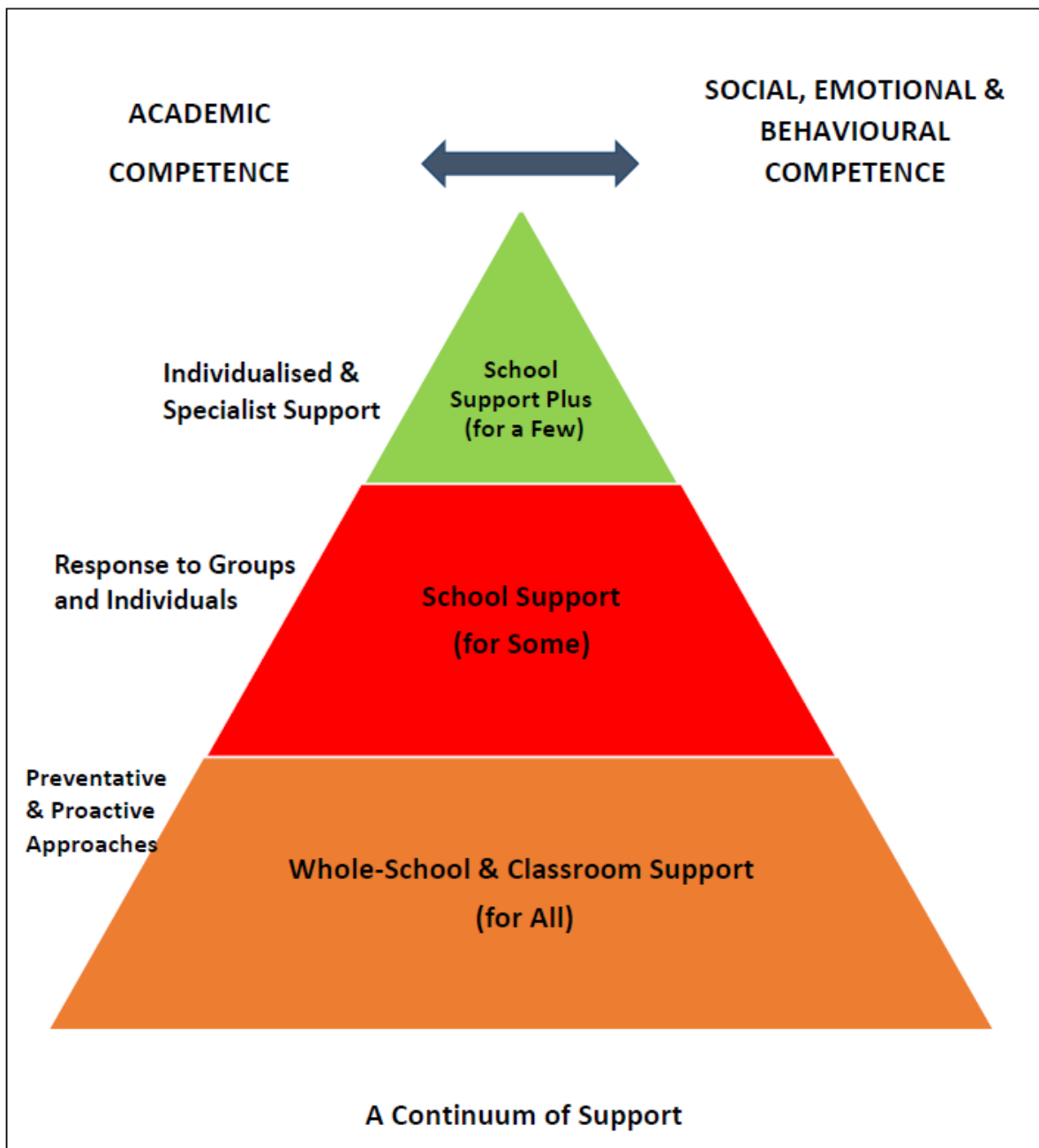
Using the Continuum of Support framework, schools can identify students' educational needs, to include academic, social and emotional needs, as well as needs associated with physical, sensory, language and communication difficulties.

Many students will have their special educational needs identified prior to their transfer to post-primary school. The school gathers information on students' learning from primary schools and parents (Education Passport materials) in order to plan provision and to ensure continuity and progression in the students' education. These include 6th Class Report Card, My Profile sheet for children and My Child's Profile sheet for parent(s).

A Special Educational Needs Summary Form supports the sharing of information for children with identified learning needs. For students with a high level of need, transition meetings may be arranged between primary and post-primary schools in advance of transfer. The Post-Primary Transfer Review Form provides a useful template for collating assessment data relating to students' academic, attainment and personal development needs in order to inform intervention planning following transition.

A post-primary school may use its own assessment practices to provide further screening and diagnostic information to support the planning process for students with special educational needs.

The Continuum of Support provides a framework for schools to enable them to identify and respond to students' needs in a flexible way. This process is also supported through engagement with external professionals, as required. The following levels of support are suggested.



Students with an educational psychological assessment or who are determined to need support are provided with resource either in the form of withdrawal from class for individual or small group tuition or through team teaching. The support provided depends on the educational and social needs of the student. Team teaching involves the presence of two teachers within the classroom to support the learning needs of the student(s) in the class.

Some students may require the presence/support of a Special Needs Assistant (SNA) in the class. This is determined by the Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO) who is assigned to the school.

#### Irish Exemptions

Students who meet the criteria (as outlined in DES Circulars) for a formal exemption from the study of Irish are invited to avail of this exemption by applying in writing to the Principal. The application process is facilitated and directed by the SEN Department.

Such an exemption may be extended to the study of additional languages where the Principal deems it appropriate."

## Sharing SEN information

- All information regarding students is to be treated in the utmost confidence at all times and is disclosed on a need-to-know basis.
- Information stored digitally is limited to professional recommendations or other summary information it has been deemed appropriate to make known to relevant staff.
- The SEN Department does not retain originals of any reports.
- All documentation is stored securely and is not to be copied or removed from storage without the express permission of the Principal.
- All records are merged with the student's main file after a student has left the school.
- These records are kept as per ETB Retention of Records Policy

In practice SEN information available electronically is:

- Profiles and information on students with SEN, collating assessment data, identifying learning needs, suggested strategies, instructional, environmental and assessment accommodations required and other information regarding health or care, etc.
- Measured attainment in reading assessments (reading ages) for all new enrolments
- A complete list of all students exempted from the study of Irish

## Differentiated Teaching

The role of the subject teacher is to:

- Implement teaching programmes which optimise the learning of all pupils.
- For each pupil who is in receipt of supplementary teaching, to collaborate with Resource teachers in the development of an individual profile and learning programme by identifying appropriate learning targets and by organising classroom activities to achieve these targets.
- For each pupil who is in receipt of supplementary teaching, to adjust the classroom programmes in line with the agreed learning targets and activities.
- Modify presentation and questioning techniques to maximise the involvement of pupils with low achievement in class activities
- Set learning targets at an appropriate level
- Provide learning activities and material which are suitably challenging but which also ensure success and progress
- Apply assessments and tests which offer challenge and opportunities for success to children of all levels of achievement."

## **Level Two Learning Programmes**

A Level 2 Learning Programme will target the very specific group of students with general learning disabilities in the higher functioning moderate and low functioning mild categories.

The Level 2 Learning Programme will be based around Priority Learning Units (PLUs). The PLUs focus on developing the basic social, pre-vocational and life skills of the students involved.

There are five Level 2 PLUs:

- Communicating and literacy
  - Numeracy
  - Personal care
  - Living in a community
  - Preparing for work
-

### The SENO

The Special Educational Needs Organiser provides a direct service to the parents of children with special educational needs and to the school. This involves identifying the needs of children and deciding on the level of resources the school requires to provide them with an appropriate education service.

The SENO, on behalf of the NCSE, provides a service to parents and children through the co-ordination of the delivery of services between the health sector and schools. This facilitates the inclusion of the child in the school system and keeping parents informed of what decisions are being made on their child's behalf.

### N.E.P.S.

The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) supports the personal, social and educational development of all children through the application of psychological theory and practice in education. The school's assigned psychologist works with teachers, parents and children in identifying educational needs. Where an individual assessment is required, it will only be carried out with the written consent of the parents or guardians. Psychologists provide oral and written feedback to both parents/guardians and teachers. A psychological service is also provided to the school by NEPS in the event of a critical incident.

### S.N.A.'s

The allocation of a special needs assistant to assist a student is balanced against the student's need to develop independence and to gain access to education in school alongside and in the same way as the other students.

The duties of special needs assistants are set out in Circular SNA 12/05 and Circular 71/2011.

These include tasks of a non-teaching nature, such as:

- Preparation and tidying up of classrooms
- Assisting school children to board and alight from school buses. Where necessary travel as escort during school hours on school buses may be required.
- Special assistance as necessary for children with particular difficulties e.g. helping special needs pupils with typing or writing or computers or other use of equipment
- Assistance with clothing, feeding, toileting and general hygiene and being mindful of health and safety needs of the pupil
- Assisting on out-of-school visits, walks, examinations and similar activities
- Assisting the teachers in the supervision of pupils during assembly, recreation and dispersal from the classroom for one reason or another
- Accompanying individuals or small groups who may have to be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom for one reason or another
- General assistance to the class teachers, under the direction of the principal, with duties of a non-teaching nature (Special needs assistants may not act as either substitute or temporary teachers. In no circumstances may they be left in sole charge of a class or group of children.)
- Participation with school development planning, where appropriate, and co-operation with any such changes with policies and practices arising from the school development process.
- Engagement with parents of special needs pupils in both formal and informal structures as required and directed by school management
- Other duties appropriate to the grade as may be determined by the needs of the pupils and the school from time to time. Special needs assistants may be re-assigned

to other work appropriate to the grade when special needs pupils are absent or when particular urgent work demands arise.

Circular 71/2011 further sets out a non-exhaustive list of SNA duties including:

SEN pupil-centred activity:

- Provide input with regard to care needs for the preparation of Individual Education Plans;
- Assist with care planning;
- Provide assistance and information in relation to care needs for preparation of physiological and school reports and files;
- Assist transition process in relation to care needs for pupils from one school or education centre to another;
- Assist SEN pupils to display their work;
- Assist in analysis of attendance for SEN pupils;
- Assist teachers and/or principal in maintaining a journal and uniform care monitoring system for SEN pupils;
- Assist Principal or other teacher designated by Principal in preparing briefing profiles on SEN pupils;
- Under the direction of the Principal or designated teacher, assist in compiling information for staff for the return to class in the new academic year e.g. special section in staff handbook, particularly in relation to care and assistance required in class for SEN pupils;

Learning resource administration:

- Preparation, organising, tidying of Class Room, Resource Room, Learning Support Room, ASD classrooms and such other rooms used by SEN pupils, and appropriate equipment and resources used, including those related to ICT;
- Prepare materials and equipment in classrooms used by SEN pupils including cleaning any specialist equipment used by SEN pupils, e.g. computer keyboards, special desks;
- Provide assistance for SEN pupils in relation to assembling their class materials, displays, programmes, books and preparing their materials for class.

Class and school planning and development:

- Participation with school development planning and policy development, where appropriate, including reference to particular assistance required by SEN pupils to participate fully in school;
- Planning for the following day's classes; in particular where there may be additional care or assistance requirements for certain classes or projects;
- Liaising with the class teacher;
- Liaising with other teachers such as resource teachers and/or Principal;
- Meetings with parents as appropriate with the agreement and guidance of the Principal and/or class teacher;
- Preparation for and attendance at whole team meetings and staff meetings;
- Participation in and assistance with school operational structures which are in place to facilitate the full integration and participation of SEN pupils in school;

Examinations (Both State and House Examinations):

- Assist in the setting up of Special Examination Centres and appropriate accommodation centres for examinations;
- Assist in ensuring that special centres are properly organised, and that SEN pupils with assigned SNA are present and have the appropriate equipment;

- Where rooms are adapted for use as special centres, assist in restoring those rooms for normal school use after the examinations have finished.

Training and development:

- Training (nationally or school mandated);
- Inform colleague SNAs of best practice based on professional and experiential knowledge in relation to the educational and care needs of SEN pupils, with the agreement and guidance of the Principal, and/or class teacher;
- Up-skill in use of ICT as learning tools for SEN pupils;

Other:

- Other work which is appropriate to the grade as may be determined by the needs of the SEN pupils and the school.”

**School Exams**

Official written school exams are held twice a year within exam centres/classrooms. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> years are held before Christmas and before the summer holidays. 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> years are held before Christmas and in February (pre- exams). 4<sup>th</sup> years have exams/assessments in classes.

Timetables are made available to students and parents. Exam centres are set up prior to the exams. Students are assigned designated seats. Exams are held in morning and afternoon sessions. Students must remain in school for the full session. They are not permitted to leave early. Study is available to students for sessions in which they have no exams if required.

Pre exam papers are ordered by the school. Students are required to pay for the pre-exams. Students who have a medical card are not exempt from this fee. Junior cert papers are sent away for correction unless subject teachers request to correct them in school. Leaving cert papers are corrected in the school.

Classroom Based Assessments are held for Junior Cycle students as per the guidelines specified for each subject. They are held in second and/or third year and may replace some of the written exams. Assessment tasks/Practical tasks are also undertaken as part of Junior Cycle and are generally held in 3<sup>rd</sup> year.

**State Exams**

All circulars/relevant exam material/exam envelopes are given to the relevant Department Heads.

PREPARATION FOR SETUP OF STATE EXAMS

A folder is prepared by the exam co-ordinator for the Examinations Aide. This includes:

- Centre Rolls
- Reasonable Accommodations Information
- Superintendent contacts and room allocations
- Exam Attendants contact details and guidelines for Attendants
- Schedule of Examiners of Practical Projects
- Centre Notices
- Centre Posters
- Payment claim forms to be completed by each superintendent (and set up forms where applicable). Completed forms are transferred to a master sheet at the end of the exams. All forms are signed by the Principal and then forwarded to the ETB.

- Posters are made up with the Student Names, Exam Number, Centre Number and Centre Location. These are placed outside the rooms in the main area.
- Centres are set up in the days before the exams.
- Rooms are also allocated for Practical Projects to be displayed.

### STORAGE OF EXAM MATERIALS

- Leaving Cert Geography, Leaving Cert History, Junior Cert Assessment Tasks are stored securely in the school in numerical order. These are given to the Superintendent to be sent with the exam paper on the day of the exams.

### Centre Accommodation Form

This includes:

- Number of Leaving Cert and Junior Cert centres
- Number of candidates in each centre
- Plan for the additional centres needed in respect of French and Irish Aural Exams.

### Leaving Certificate

- Students are entered for state examinations in the October returns.
- Leaving Certificate students complete form E7A. There is a two week deadline for return of forms.
- Students enter the expected level at this stage and complete the form. The student can change the level on the day of the exam.
- In May an e-mail is sent to the SEC if there are significant changes to avoid unnecessary delays during the exams.

### Junior Certificate

- Junior Certificate students complete form E8 in the middle of March. There is a two week deadline for return of the forms.
- Levels are decided by the teacher with discussion by parents and students.
- Parents sign a draft subject level form. Students then complete the official form with the exam secretary.
- Junior Cert students cannot change level on the day of the exam unless there are exceptional circumstances explained in writing by parents which require the permission of the Principal. A letter from the Principal is given to the superintendent on the day of the exam.

### Exam Fees

- All candidates are issued with a pre-printed form with a PIN number from the State Examinations Commission for fees to be paid online.
- Students with a Medical card complete card details online. Other students pay the fee online. All students must show their receipt to the school once online process is complete.
- Parents are contacted by text message to advise them that the students have been given the form.
- A further text message is issued before the closing date.
- Parents are contacted by text message, phone or letter in the event that a receipt is not supplied.

## REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

Applications for Reasonable Accommodations are prepared and submitted by the Resource Department. The SEC will process late applications as they arise.

- “Where students are eligible for reasonable accommodations in examinations, the school will attempt to provide such accommodations in House Exams, prioritising students in third and sixth year, resources permitting.
- For the Junior Certificate, the school applies to the State Examinations Commission for "Reasonable Accommodations" under Circular S71/01. There is authority for the school to appoint superintendent/scribe/reader as appropriate under the terms of the scheme where appropriate evidence exists justifying the need for such an accommodation.
- For the Leaving Certificate the school applies to the DES for "Reasonable Accommodations" for the student. These requests are determined based on evidence and are open to appeal.
- The appointment of all relevant exam personnel is based on the needs of the child and will be determined by the SEN Co-coordinator.
- A Reasonable Accommodation booklet, student details and exam timetable are issued by SEC. These are given to the superintendents.
- Practice sessions are held between students and superintendents where readers/scribes or use of Assistive Technology is granted.
- The SEN Department may conduct screening tests to determine eligibility for reasonable accommodations and reserves the right to process applications where insufficient evidence of a disability exists.”

## PRACTICALS AND ORALS

- Information from the examiners as well as date and time of exams are passed onto the relevant department head.
- After the practicals and orals, the rolls are filed.
- Any student who is absent due to illness can sit the exam at a later date on provision of medical cert and completion of relevant forms to SEC.
- Details of new exam date and time are passed onto students and department heads.

## PRACTICAL SUBJECTS

- The timetable for practical exams is submitted to the SEC.
- Superintendents are required to supervise these exams. The superintendents need to be set up for payment with the ETB.
- Some projects are stored (subject dependent) and later collected by An Post. Other projects (subject dependent) are stored and are displayed for correction in June as determined by SEC.

## Important Junior Cert & Leaving Cert Exam Dates

### September/October:

- LC Design, Communications Graphics Project start
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Year English Classroom Based Assessments
- JC Art Craft Design Project start
- LC Engineering Project start

### November:

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Year English Assessment Tasks



- 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Business Classroom Based Assessment
- JC Materials Technology Wood Project start
- JC Materials Technology Metal Project start
- LC Construction start
- LC Home economics Food Studies Coursework completion

#### December:

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Business Assessment Tasks
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Science Classroom Based Assessments

#### January/February:

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Science Assessment Task
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Art Classroom Based Assessment
- LC Design, Communications Graphics Practical Coursework Completion
- LC Art Coursework Component begins
- LCA Task Assessment Session 1 & 3

#### March:

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Business Classroom Based Assessment
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Science Classroom Based Assessment
- LC Engineering Practical Coursework Completion
- LC Art Coursework Component finish
- JC Home Economics Project Completion

#### April:

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Year English Classroom Based Assessment
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Year French Classroom Based Assessment
- JC Materials Technology Metal Project Completion
- LC Orals Irish & French
- LC Music Practical
- JC Music Practical
- JC Home Economics Practical
- LCA 1 Task Work Session 2 Completion
- LC History Research Report Completion
- JC Science Coursework Completion
- JC CSPE Action Project Completion

#### May:

- JC Art Craft Design Project Completion
- LC Engineering Practical Exam
- LC Construction Studies Practical Exam
- LC Art Practical Exam
- JC Materials Technology Metal Practical (Higher level)
- LCA Personal Reflection Tasks Completion
- JC Materials Technology Wood Project Completion
- LC Geographical Investigation Report Completion

- LC Construction Studies Practical Completion
- Assessment LCA1 Task Work Session 2
- LCA Practical Performance Tests
- LCA Completion date for Practical Coursework
- LCA2 Oral Exams English & Communications, Irish & German

Note: The above dates are approximate and based on the Department of Education dates from previous years. Exact dates will be available from the subject teachers and should be noted.

### **Evacuation Plan in case of Fire Alarm**

A fire “Evacuation Procedure” notice is posted in each room – teachers should read this and note nearest exit and assembly point. THE USE OF A PARTICULAR EXIT DEPENDS ON THE LOCATION OF THE FIRE.

When alarm sounds, everyone must evacuate the building (including visitors to the school).

Evacuation will commence as follows:

1. Teachers summon students to attention – count the number of students present – check to make sure none have left the class during the lesson.
2. Teacher instructs student to form into single file and to leave through required exit.
3. All students’ belongings should be left in room.
4. After students have gone teacher will close windows and doors (doors not to be locked)
5. All students should walk quietly through the appointed exit to designated assembly area

During evacuation, the following must be observed:

- Comply with all instructions issued by Teacher and any other person in charge.
- No running.
- No talking, laughing or shouting.
- No overtaking.
- No picking up coats, bags, etc.
- **No going back.**

**Any form of pupil indiscipline will receive a sanction.**

Assembly will take place as follows.

- (i) All classes will be grouped in their year groups.
- (ii) Class groups will line up in alphabetic order opposite the appropriate year number at the fire assembly point (basketball courts).
- (iii) Office staff will print off rolls from VS Ware using the fire drill report.
- (iv) Teachers will check their class based on the students who were present in the class when the alarm was activated.
- (v) Teachers need to check with office staff if they have concerns about students who have left their class sick and were due to go home. The office staff will consult the sign out book to confirm if they left the school prior to the alarm.
- (vi) Management must be notified if any students cannot be accounted for.

**No one should re-enter the building until officially told to do so.**

If the source of the alarm is determined during evacuation, management should be informed.

During school hours, the alarm company will contact the school office/Principal's mobile phone to get instructions in relation to sending a Fire Brigade. Directions will be given not to send the Fire Brigade if it has been determined that the alarm is false. If a false alarm cannot be determined or if a fire has been detected, the alarm company will request the assistance of the Fire Brigade. In case of a fire the critical incidence plan will be enacted.

These instructions do not preclude an attack on a fire by Staff with the available appliances, where this can be done without personal risk.

**Fire fighting must always be secondary to life saving.**

Purpose of a fire drill

- Identify difficulties in proposed method of evacuation.
- To comply with regulations of fire dept.
- To calculate the time it takes to evacuate the building.

The following documents were used as reference or guidelines in the development of this policy:

- Well Being in Post Primary Schools
- Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion & Suicide Prevention
- Continuum of Support for Post Primary Schools – Guidelines for Teachers
- Guidelines on Individual Education Plan Process
- Inclusion of Students with SEN – Post Primary Guidelines
- Planning a School Guidance Programme
- Child Protection Guidelines for Post Primary Schools
- The Irish Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HSBC) Study 2010
- Department of Education Circulars

The following relevant CPD courses have been attended by staff:

- Chaplains supervision twice a month
- Chaplains Annual Conference
- Seasons for Growth
- Advancing Counseling Competency
- Learning Health Recovery Seminar – Learning Mental Health Recovery including Wellness Recovery Action Planning
- Wellness Recovery Action Planning Facilitator Training
- Wellbeing
- Mental Health Promoters' Training Programme
- Suicide Alertness
- LGBT Awareness Training
- Mindfulness Training
- How to deal with suicide, self-harm and eating disorders in the school environment
- Suicide Prevention Training

