



Loreto Abbey Secondary School, Dalkey

WHOLE SCHOOL GUIDANCE PLAN

‘Our school is a caring, Christian Community in which pupils have the opportunity to achieve academic excellence and to grow spiritually, emotionally, socially, creatively, and physically in a healthy environment.’

Introduction

This document outlines the many different strands of our Whole School Guidance Plan. It also includes a range of resources that are used as part of our overall plan and the targets we aim to achieve over the course of the academic year 2025/2026.

Our School

Loreto Abbey Secondary School, with a student population of 761 girls, offers an educational experience rooted in the core values of Mary Ward (1585 - 1645), the founder of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary. She saw the amazing potential of all women for involvement in the Church and society. She particularly recognised the importance of education for girls so that they, in her words, could be educated for a praiseworthy Christian life in the world. She proposed that justice, freedom, sincerity, truth and joy be central to the spirituality of a Loreto School; values as pertinent for our time as they were for hers. Our school strives to make these values tangible. With this as our guiding principle we seek to provide an environment in which the full potential of each student can be developed against the background of the Loreto philosophy of education, as outlined in the document [*“Continuing the Journey ... A Loreto Education”*](#) and the [*“Compass Document”*](#).

We provide a holistic centred education in which relationships are characterised by respect, honesty, justice, sincerity, courage and compassion. We recognise the importance of faith development and we seek to introduce our students to a reflective way of living. We hope to provide a supportive environment where every student is encouraged to realise their full potential. Our States examination results reflect the schools’ high academic standards and the importance we place on teaching and learning. This however is not the sole focus of our school. We encourage students to participate in a wide ranging co-curricular programme and in so doing nurture their holistic development. Most importantly, we encourage our school community to look outwards and become agents for social change through involvement in initiatives supporting justice.

Scope of Whole-School Guidance (WSG)

Whole-School Approach: Guidance in post-primary schools is a whole-school activity integrated into all Junior and Senior Cycle programmes, supporting students from first to sixth year. It is planned and implemented by the WSG team, with guidance counsellors

playing a specialised role. However, WSG is the responsibility of the entire school community, involving all personnel in supporting students' personal, social, educational, and career development ([DE, Circular 001/2025](#), p. 1).

Person-Centred and Holistic Support: Guidance is person-centred and holistic, facilitating individuals to make informed decisions and life choices. It supports personal, social, educational, and career development while fostering student well-being and resilience ([DE, Circular 0001/2025](#), p. 1).

Contemporary Guidance Model: The WSG model emphasises that all school staff, not just guidance counsellors, play a role in assisting students with their personal and academic growth. This collaborative approach ensures that guidance meets the diverse needs of the school community ([DE, Circular 0001/2025](#), p. 1).

WSG at Loreto Abbey Secondary School: The WSG programme at Loreto Abbey outlines a range of activities and learning experiences designed to address the guidance needs of students, parents/guardians, and carers. Using the [Continuum of Support Model](#) (NEPS, 2019), the programme provides:

- Guidance for All: Universal Design - support for every student.
- Guidance for Some: Targeted support for specific groups.
- Guidance for Few: Individualised support for those with particular needs.

This approach ensures a comprehensive, inclusive, and effective system of guidance for the entire school community.

Rationale

[DE, Circular 0001/2025](#), p. 1 states that 'guidance is, by definition, person-centred and holistic. It supports personal and social, educational and career development: guidance facilitates and empowers individuals to make informed decisions and life choices. [...] guidance plays a significant role in supporting students' well-being and contributes to building internal and external resilience.'

WSG supports the implementation of a large and varied range of activities and learning experiences provided to students in a progressive sequence.'

At Loreto Abbey, each member of staff recognises and ensures that guidance permeates every aspect of school life.

This plan will distinguish between the competencies available within the school to help support students through various situations and where referral to outside agencies is deemed necessary.

Additionally, in line with [Action 9.1 in Action Plan for Education 2017](#) the WSG plan will 'include specified time allocation for guidance counsellors to be available for one-to-one guidance counselling and time allocation for the role in supporting the organisation and work of the Student Support Team'.

Philosophy and Mission Statement

The WSG Plan has been drawn up in the context of Loreto Abbey's mission statement and reflects the school's commitment to creating a caring, Christian community in which pupils can achieve academic excellence and to grow spiritually, emotionally, socially, creatively, and physically in a healthy environment.

The whole school community, staff, pupils and parents, endeavour to renew and affirm each other by:

- Sharing a common mission and vision
- Working in collaboration
- Giving inspiration, support, and encouragement
- Showing respect; courtesy; care; consideration; appreciation; tolerance; friendship and loyalty.

Objectives

- To encourage students to have confidence in themselves through appropriate affirmation of their actions and abilities.
- To promote a sense of belonging, providing an environment where the full potential of the student can be developed.
- To include all students, regardless of ability in school activities.
- To understand the personal difficulties encountered by our students and the implication of these difficulties on their lives.
- To encourage students and their parents to have realistic goals and expectations.
- To promote self-respect for others.
- To challenge students to recognise injustice and to respond in a positive way.

Content of the Plan

Our WSG Plan is divided into the following sections:

- 1. Organisation**
- 2. Guidance Programme**
- 3. Student Support**
- 4. Inclusion**
- 5. Policies and Procedures**
- 6. Psychometric Testing**
- 7. World of Work**
- 8. Improvement Planning**

1. Organisation

1.1 Members of the Whole School Guidance Team

- Mr Robert Dunne - Principal
- Ms Dara Shortt - Guidance Counsellor
- Ms Orla Brophy - Guidance Counsellor
- Ms Marie Lonergan - Year Head
- Mr Carl Thompson - AEN/ History
- Ms Eve Murray - Wellbeing / MFL
- Mr Cormac Curtis - Irish / Business
- Ms Sadhbh Sutton - Science / PE

Our WSG Team will meet three times per year to continuously evolve our WSG Plan; working collaboratively to develop, orchestrate and implement this whole programme.

Additionally, support and input has been given by the following members of our school community:

Year Heads
Class Tutors
Wellbeing Subject Departments

The WSG Plan reflects this teamwork.

1.2 Guidance Department

Guidance Counsellors : Ms Dara Shortt and Ms Orla Brophy

Our school guidance counsellors hold a dual qualification; each hold Teaching Council registration and a MSc in Guidance and Counselling, in accordance with [DE, Circular 0001/2025](#), p. 2.

1.3 Guidance Allocation: 44 hours

Work is undertaken with students in the classroom, in groups and through one-to-one sessions, as appropriate. There is a balanced approach to time management ensuring that all guidance needs of students are met as effectively as possible. Each guidance counsellor is scheduled to spend approximately one third of their time teaching classroom-guidance, while two thirds of their time is allocated to small group work and one-to-one sessions; this will also include time to sit on the Student Support Team that are scheduled to meet on a weekly basis for one hour ([DE, Circular 0001/2025](#), pg. 2).

1.4 Current Resources

The guidance area contains two offices, two laptop computers, and two iPads. A budget administered by the guidance counsellors is provided by the Board of Management annually. A small College/Careers information library is located beside the two guidance offices, however the majority of information is now obtained through the internet, using key websites including [Careers Portal](#), [Qualifax](#) and College Websites. There is a specific [guidance section](#) on the school website, which is updated at different stages throughout the year. It also contains information on upcoming College Open Days; this information is fed in from [Careers Portal](#), which ensures that it is relevant and timely.

1.5 Guidance Supervision and CPD

The Guidance Counsellors attend 6 supervision sessions (which is an increase of 1 session per year as of 2025/26) throughout the academic year and engage in ongoing CPD provided by their specific IGC Branches and other outside agencies.

2. Guidance Programme

2.1 What is School Guidance?

The term guidance will be used to refer to all guidance and counselling activities and student support services within the school. Guidance in schools refers to ‘a range of learning experiences provided in a developmental sequence that assists students to develop self-management skills which will lead to effective choices and decisions about their lives’ ([DE, Information Note 01/2024](#), p.3). The WSG Plan addresses the full range of activities through which the school responds to the needs of students. It encompasses the three separate, but interlinked areas of:

1. **Personal and Social Guidance:** This area focuses on supporting students in their personal development, helping them build self-awareness, interpersonal skills, resilience, and emotional well-being.
2. **Educational Guidance:** This involves assisting students in developing effective learning strategies, study skills, subject choice decisions, and understanding their educational options and goals.
3. **Career Guidance:** This focuses on helping students explore career pathways, understand labour market trends, develop employability skills, and make informed decisions about their future careers.

2.2 Guidance activities that assist students to make informed choices include:

Counselling: providing students with a safe, non-judgemental environment within which they can explore their thoughts and feelings in the areas of personal and social, educational and career development and at moments of personal crisis. Through this we endeavour to teach students to be responsible for their own behaviour and actions and show them that there is choice in everything that they do. All guidance counselling takes place in a confidential setting unless...

Limits to Confidentiality:

- When there is a known or suspected risk to, or potential concern about a student or students.
- When there is a known or suspected risk of harm to a student
- When there is a known or suspected risk of harm to another individual(s).

In these situations the guidance counsellor will consult with the DLP or the DDLP. Together they will consider the best course of action. Parents/guardians will be consulted where deemed appropriate.

Assessment: Psychometric assessments provide valuable insights into a student's academic progress, enabling teachers to tailor their teaching strategies and offer personalised support. This information can be a powerful tool that helps with educational and career decisions while supporting a student's personal development and learning choices. Please refer to our Psychometric Assessment Policy 2020.

Information: providing students with factual and up to date information on educational and occupational opportunities, whilst teaching them how to interpret and use this information accordingly.

Developmental Programmes: Guidance learning and developmental programmes relating to personal and social, educational and career development are provided to individuals, groups and within classroom settings. This information will be facilitated through a WSG approach, therefore encompassing the entire Loreto Abbey staff in the planning, leading, delivery, review, and evaluation of the guidance service / programme.

Referrals: Within the school context we have three types of referrals:

- Students may be referred to the guidance counsellor by a teacher, Year Head, school management; the student support team or by a parent/ guardian.
- Students may self-refer.
- Referrals to external agencies and professionals as appropriate.

Record Keeping: Detailed personal records of all personal counselling and career/vocational guidance interviews are kept for a minimum of 7 years in line with GDPR.

2.3 Aims of the Guidance Programme:

The guidance programme in Loreto Abbey aims to:

- Be inclusive, providing for the needs of all students – Junior, Senior, International, Additional Educational Needs – the entire spectrum, from those needing learning support to the exceptionally able.
- Develop an awareness and acceptance of their talents and abilities.
- Assist students in the development of positive self-esteem thereby helping them to live full and fruitful lives.
- Provide support for learners to enable them to make wise and informed personal, educational and career choices.
- Help students explore the career options available to them whilst considering their interests, strengths, and aptitudes.
- Equip students with the skills they need to research and explore the various career options available to them.
- Provide students with appropriate support in times of difficulty, crisis, and trauma.
- Facilitate their integration into the school community through various peer related activities.
- Identify students at risk and put in place appropriate strategies to help them deal with the difficulties they may be experiencing.
- Provide where possible appropriate support for parents and guardians where such support is deemed necessary.
- To ensure that the guidance service acts within ethical and legal requirements. *In all areas of personal support, students are assured of confidentiality except where there is a concern that the student may self-harm or harm someone else.* In such circumstances the appropriate professionals, agencies or authorities are informed. Students are made aware of such conditions. (Refer to Confidentiality Policy)

2.4 The Whole School Guidance Programme

The WSG programme is delivered both formally and informally.

Formal guidance refers to guidance, which is delivered using two forms of intervention, using a variety of methodologies:

1. One to one meetings with the guidance counsellor for personal / social and educational or career guidance (Guidance for All, Some and Few).
2. Classroom guidance, which is delivered through regular weekly classes, through a range of subject areas (Guidance for All).

Informal guidance consists of liaising with other teachers/management to promote cross curricular links and to enhance the development of WSG as a whole. Meetings with parents/guardians and outside agencies help form an integral part of this informal guidance.

2.5 Whole School Guidance at Loreto Abbey is divided into two key areas: Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle.

At **Junior Cycle**, WSG aims to ease the transition from primary to secondary school. We aim to ensure that personal or learning difficulties are detected as early as possible. We recognise the importance of students making friends and bonding with their class group and year group. We value and encourage student engagement both academically and socially within the school, drawing on individuals strengths and gifts; whilst developing and discovering new talents and interests.

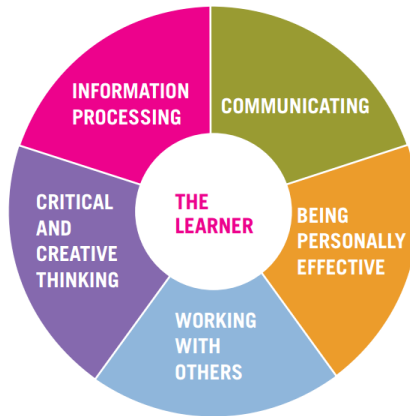
Through a variety of subjects, students will begin to develop key skills and knowledge that will help them to navigate the many challenges that they may encounter in today's world. The curriculum will also support students in learning how to learn, and teach them to take responsibility for their own learning. ([Framework for Junior Cycle | NCCA](#))



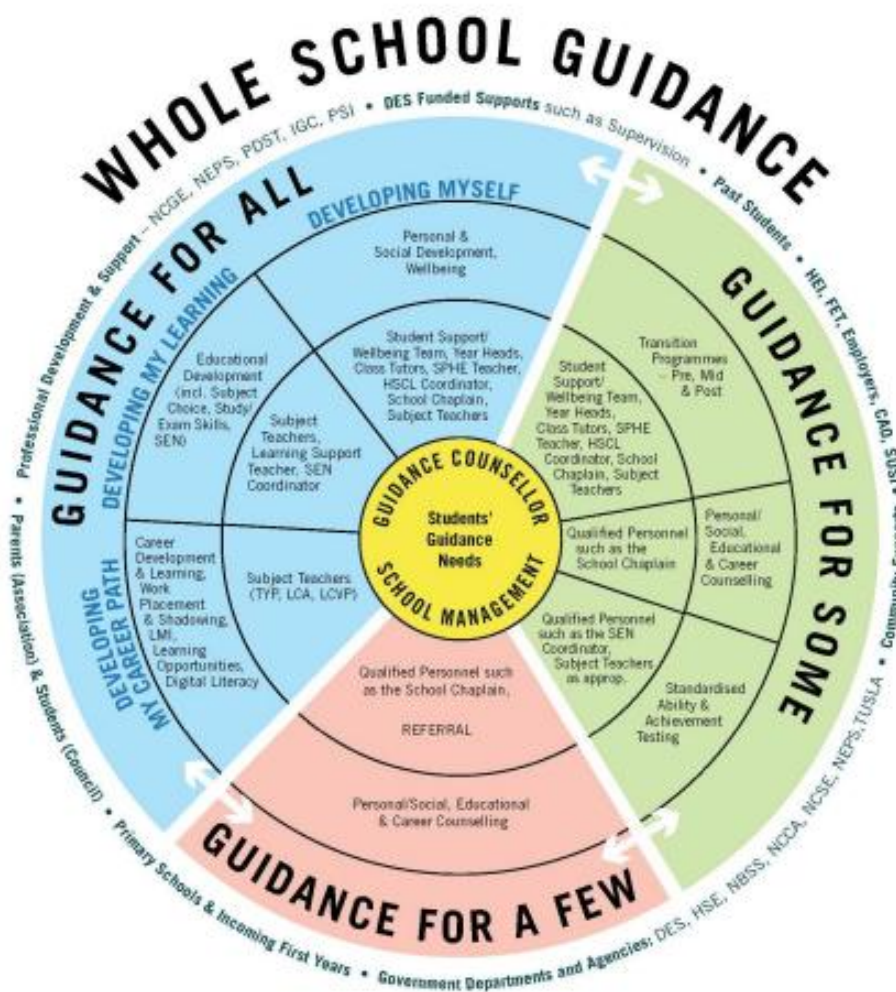
Students will be encouraged to establish good study habits and time management strategies which will in turn lead to good self-management and discipline.

At **Senior Cycle**, WSG centres on the formation of young women who will go out into the world with a true sense of self, knowing their true potential and their values.

Students will continue to build on skills that will give them the “ability to think critically and creatively, innovate and adapt to change; to work independently and in a team; and to be a reflective learner. These skills are prerequisites for life and for the workplace in the 21st century”(NCCA, [Key Skills Framework, Senior Cycle](#), January 2009).



2.6 Whole School Guidance Wheel



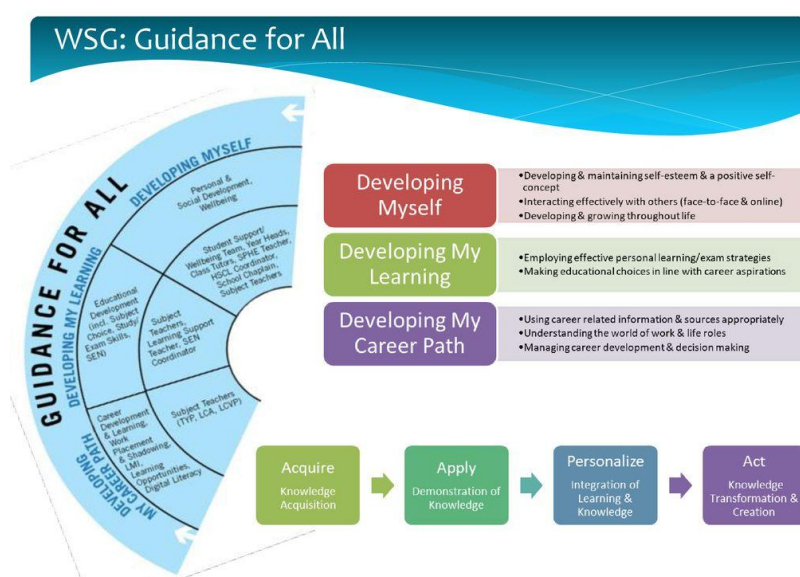
The Whole School Guidance Wheel is taken from the NCGE Whole School Guidance Framework, which was published by the NCGE in June 2017: [Career Development & Learning Framework to support the Whole School Guidance Programme](#) (See page 15)

Note: The listings of school programmes and staff in the above image is not meant to be exhaustive i.e. school programmes/staff involved in whole school guidance will vary across

schools. The image of the Wheel is intended to highlight programmes/staff who may be involved in the delivery of a WSG Programme.

2.7 Whole School Guidance Provision

This section will begin by addressing the WSG activities for all year groups as a whole; it will then proceed to examine each year group individually under the ‘three separate, but interlinked areas of personal and social development, educational guidance and career guidance’; it will do so by also incorporating key ‘learning experiences provided through a WSG approach, that assists students to develop self-management skills which will lead to effective choices and decisions about their lives’ (DE, Circular 0001/2025, p. 4).



Areas of Learning and Competencies, NCGE: A Whole School Guidance Framework, 2017

2.7.1 All Year Groups

The Student Support System deals with all learning or emotional issues that arise within the school. This highly effective system includes class tutors, Year Heads, the Student Support Team, the guidance counsellors, the chaplain, the AEN Department, and school management. The Student Support Team meets for one hour each week. Anything appropriate is then fed into the Assistant Principals Meeting which also takes place on a weekly basis.

All students can avail of one-to-one **guidance counselling meetings** with a guidance counsellor. Students can self-refer; they can also be referred by their Year Head, a member of the student support team, or a parent/guardian. The guidance counsellors are also available to speak with parents/guardians upon request.

Year Heads liaise with parents/guardians, subject teachers, class tutors, guidance counsellors, and management to address any issues of concern regarding an individual or groups of students.

Referrals can be made to outside agencies when a student requires specialised counselling or treatment in a specific area. This will only ever take place in consultation with a student's parents/guardians.

Group assemblies are conducted throughout the year with all Year Groups when deemed necessary. They are an opportunity to meet with Year Groups as a whole and to communicate with them face to face. It provides an occasion to reinforce positive behaviour, to reflect on school ethos, to provide whole school feedback to groups and to highlight all the activities that are taking place for those students.

Anti-bullying surveys are conducted on a regular basis across the years. However, if the need arises these surveys can be done outside of these times. On our school website through the 'Child Safeguarding and Anti-Bullying' tab, students have access to our [Bí Cineálta Hotline for Students](#). This provides students with a safe space to alert school management to bullying that they may be either experiencing or perhaps have been witness to.

Guest speakers are organised by the Parents Association for all parents regarding key issues pertaining to the well-being of students. The guidance department organises information seminars, which are often facilitated by outside speakers on topics pertaining to college and university courses and specific careers. The TY co-ordinator and subject teachers organise speakers over the course of the year related to their areas of expertise.

Students are encouraged to get involved in the numerous activities that take place throughout the school in relation to **positive mental health**. Examples include 'Mind Your Mind Week', 'Safer Internet Day', and 'Stand Up Awareness Week'. In addition, there is a huge emphasis placed on physical activity throughout the school, from yoga, to tennis, to hockey. This range of activities ensures inclusivity, catering to diverse interests and abilities.

The annual 'Spirit Day' serves as a culminating celebration, reflecting the schools' ethos and community spirit. Organised by the Student Council with support from the sports co-ordinator, this day showcases the collaborative effort to build a vibrant, healthy and unified school community.

1st, 2nd, 3rd and 5th Year groups have one period per week of **Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE). Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)** is a module within SPHE which consists of a minimum of 6 classes per year. RSE for 4th, 5th and 6th Year students is covered in RE class. Details of the content can be found in the SPHE Policy, on the school website.

The **SPHE Support Group** is a student committee made up of 24 students from TY, 5th and 6th Year. They work alongside the SPHE teachers throughout the year to organise events and initiatives to address issues they feel are affecting students in our school. The group works together to create a happy and safe environment within the school by acting as a link between the student body and the staff. Some past events include Mind Your Mind Week, Stand Up Awareness Week, information workshops for our anti-bullying ambassadors (Amigas), Movie Nights for Junior Year Groups, Online Safety Workshops, and Alcohol Awareness Workshops. Students volunteer as Digital Champions within the SPHE area. Digital workshops are provided to develop skills and knowledge for this cohort.

All students are offered two one hour periods of **Religious Education** per week. In the first three years, we follow the exam syllabus (Junior Cycle) and the new subject specifications (Junior Cycle) as set out by the NCCA. In Senior Cycle, students engage in a broad programme of study that is designed to allow students to explore questions around faith, worship, morality and their place in the world. Over the two years of Senior Cycle, students work through various modules based around topics such as Personal Spirituality, Religion and Gender, Morality and the study of major World Religions. 5th and 6th Year RE classes are blocked to facilitate guest speakers and group preparation for liturgies.

Each year, a group of 5th Year students volunteer to be part of the **Justice and Peace group**. Students meet on a weekly basis. The vision of the group comes from the Loreto ethos and Mary Ward. It is rooted in the Gospel message: justice, peace and integrity of creation. They plan awareness campaigns on such issues as women's rights to education throughout the world, human trafficking, the needs of our sister school in Rumbek and homelessness. Fundraising is an important part of their work, which in itself is a great learning process. They fundraise for causes such as St Vincent de Paul and provide children in Direct Provision with Christmas gifts.

1st and 2nd Year students receive two one hour periods of **Physical Education (PE)** per week. While students in 3rd Year, TY, 5th and 6th Year students have one class each per week. Students develop skills in the wide range of sporting activities offered; therefore enabling lifelong participation within sport. They are also given the opportunity to perform in the role of a coach as well as a performer which further supports their holistic development.

Students are encouraged to become active members of Loreto Abbey's vibrant school community through an extensive range of **extracurricular activities**. There are a large number of clubs and societies in existence throughout the school. If for whatever reason a student struggles however to find something that appeals to them, they are encouraged to establish a new club to address their interests.

'**Dalkey's Got Talent**' plays a significant role in the personal and social development of our students at Loreto Abbey. It is an opportunity for students to participate and support the talent that is encapsulated within our school, while at the same time looking out-wards to raise much needed funds for our sister school in Rumbek. This event is run and produced by the Student Council. Some of the winners of previous shows have gone on to focus on music careers. This production encourages a deep sense of gratitude within the student body and the staff for the gifts and talents of the school community.

In autumn 2019, Loreto Abbey students were recognised for their volunteerism by being awarded the **Volunteer of All Award** by *Localise*, an organisation supported by The Dept. of Children and Youth Affairs. The students created their own volunteer charter which sets out their rights and responsibilities and volunteers. A school wide survey was also undertaken to determine the level of volunteering taking place among the student body. This survey produced very favourable results showing that many students volunteer at home, in their communities, with the elderly, with sports clubs and youth projects.

Parent teacher meetings take place once a year for all Year Groups. At Junior Cycle level, these meetings are for the parents/guardians alone; however, in 5th and 6th Year students are encouraged to accompany parents/guardians to these meetings so as they can actively engage in these informative and self-reflective meetings.

All senior cycle students are offered the opportunity to engage with a period of reflection each year. These opportunities are facilitated by a combination of the school's Religious Education Department and outside organisations. Transition Year students are offered an Ignatian Spirituality morning facilitated by the Loreto Prayer Ministry Team. Our Junior Cycle students are offered reflection opportunities; and these again are facilitated both within the school and some are outside of school.

The **Student Council** is composed of an elected group of students representative of all years. The Council meets regularly and seeks to give a voice to the student body. Members of the Council need to be able to communicate with their classmates so as to represent their views on issues affecting them. The Student Council is consulted on school policy and therefore members develop an understanding on the wider running of the school community. They are very involved in the

development of school Spirit and organise events such as ‘Dalkey’s Got Talent’ and Spirit Day. Through these events, members develop many personal life skills and become more aware of the world around them.

Y.E.S. (Young Entrepreneur Scheme): Students from 1st and 2nd Year, along with students from TY are encouraged to get involved in the Young Entrepreneur Scheme and run their own business. Not only does it allow students a chance to gain some invaluable business experience but also affords them the opportunity to develop skills such as decision making, teamwork, communication and organisation. This programme is run outside of the classroom setting as an extracurricular activity and is open to all students from the designated years regardless of whether they study Business Studies as part of their overall timetable.

Subject teachers are vigilant and aware of the students that are in their care. While their primary role is concerned with the education and safety of the students that are in front of them, their nurturing and mentoring relationship of students is strongly evident within our WSG system.

Examples of this can be seen with both formal and informal referrals of students to the Student Support Team, the guidance counsellors or even to a student’s Year Head or official mentor (for senior students only).

2.7.2 Incoming First Year Students:

An **Annual Open Evening** takes place once a year for potential incoming students to experience the atmosphere of Loreto Abbey Dalkey. During this Open Evening teachers are available to speak with parents regarding their specific subjects or the needs of individual students. Parents attend a presentation by the Principal on the Characteristic Spirit of the School. Many students play an active part in this evening by showing small groups of parents and children around the school. Interacting and answering questions on life in the Loreto Abbey School Community.

Two information meetings are held for Parent(s)/Guardian(s) of 1st Years in the months prior to September of their year of entry. The first meeting focuses on providing practical information on ethos, curriculum and procedures. The second meeting is a practical presentation on our iPad programme.

The incoming 1st Year students arrive at school in May for a **‘get to know you session’**, prior to their September start. All students come together to make new friends and to work on small team building tasks. This is a great way for students and staff to get to know each other before the academic year begins.

Our AEN Co-ordinator arranges **visits to feeder schools**. This is an opportunity to gain insight into the individual needs of students and to help ease the transition to secondary school.

Students with additional educational needs are invited into the school for a short ‘meet and greet’ and school tour in May prior to commencing at Loreto Abbey. Transitional programmes are set up for students where appropriate, this involves school visits.

2.7.3 First Year

Personal and Social Guidance

1st Year students begin the new academic year, by allowing them the opportunity to focus on:

- Familiarisation with their new school environment
- Distribution and explanation of timetables
- Introduction to pastoral care service

- Introduction to guidance service
- Meeting with all subject teachers

1st Year induction takes place over the first number of weeks of the new academic year.

Each 1st Year student is paired with a 6th Year 'Cara'. This Senior student acts as a mentor to the new 1st Year student. Events are organised throughout the year for the 1st Year girls and their 'Caras'.

Two information evenings are held for parents of 1st Year students in early September. The first meeting provides practical information to parents on easing the transition for their daughters from primary to secondary school. The second meeting looks at educating parents on the use of iPads within the classroom and the need for stringent rules and regulations around its use within the school and at home. In a practical, hands-on workshop setting, Parents/Guardians attend with their daughter's iPad and learn how to set Parental Controls, Restrictions and also view and set screen time limits. Parents/Guardians are also given some elementary training in the use of the iPad so that they can best support their daughter's use of their device in an educational context.

A comprehensive set of resources are forwarded to parents/guardians after the event, including videos and support documents from Apple and a summary and practical instructions of the topics discussed at the evening workshop; these are produced by the Digital Learning Coordinator. As software is updated every year, the newly updated resources are also forwarded to the parents/guardians of other years groups at this time.

Small group and individual meetings, where necessary, are held with students and the guidance counsellor or chaplain throughout the year to discuss their transition to secondary school and moving from 1st Year into 2nd Year.

Educational Guidance

Each student transitions to Loreto Abbey with an Educational Passport from their Primary School. This document facilitates the transfer of relevant data, including assessment results, as students transfer from primary to post-primary school. The **Education Passport** materials follow a three-phase process for sharing pupil information as outlined by the NCCA a 3-phase process to the transfer of pupil information from primary to post-primary schools [Education Passport | NCCA](#).

1st Year students complete Cognitive Ability Testing during the first term. This is used as a tool to monitor student's academic performance over the course of their education at Loreto Abbey. These tests also help to identify students who may require additional learning support.

As part of the **well-being Programme** 1st Year participate in two weekly Physical Education (PE) periods, alongside one hour each of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE). These classes aim to foster the personal, social and educational development of every student.

Additionally, 1st Year students take part in module-based courses such as Learning to Learn, Digital Literacy and Choir. These modules are integral to the Junior Cycle Wellbeing Programme and align with the six Wellbeing Indicators: Aware, Responsible, Connected, Active, Resilient, and Respected. The rationale and learning objectives for these modules are outlined in the Planning Document for Shorter Units of Learning (Appendix I of the NCCA Wellbeing Guidelines,

2021). Students complete various forms of assessment, such as presentations, reflections, performances, or projects, as part of each module.

Vocational /Career Guidance

1st Year students engage in a short 2 week module of guidance in the first term. This is integrated into their curriculum through their wellbeing module and it takes place in the first half of the year.

Given the changing face of employment for the future, the development of skills becomes a priority within vocational guidance for our students.

2.7.4 Second Year

Personal and Social Guidance

Ongoing development of self-awareness, personal growth, individual strengths and potential through SPHE and RE programmes.

Educational Guidance

All 2nd Year students continue to engage with their core Wellbeing subjects which focus on building the ‘Six Indicators of Wellbeing’. This includes one class each of Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE), Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and two periods of Physical Education (PE). These are incorporated into the students main timetable.

Vocational/Career Guidance

Career guidance information is integrated into the curriculum through cross curricular links, such as during *Science Week* and other subject-specific initiatives throughout the academic year. While given the changing face of employment for the future, the development of key skills is a priority across all subject areas.



[NCCA Junior Cycle Indicators of Wellbeing](#) (for further details please refer to the [Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines, NCCA, 2021](#))

2.7.5 Third Year

Personal and Social Guidance

Ongoing development of self-awareness, personal growth, individual strengths and potential through SPHE and RE programmes.

Educational Guidance

Wellbeing continues to be an important component of the 3rd Year syllabus. Every student has one period of Physical Education (PE); one period of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE).

Although optional in Loreto Abbey, the vast majority of 3rd Year students choose to do Transition Year, with a very small minority moving on to 5th Year. The Transition Year coordinator gives a presentation on the TY programme to all 3rd Year students and their parents, during the second term of 3rd Year. Students wishing to participate in Transition Year are required to complete an application form.

Vocational/Career Guidance

As with 1st and 2nd Year students, 3rd Year students have the opportunity to engage with career guidance information through integrated cross curricular links, such as during *Science Week* and other subject-specific initiatives throughout the academic year.

Students will also have a six week **Work Experience Preparation** module which will be delivered by the guidance counsellors between March and May. This programme will involve parent/guardian guest speakers, and a Work Experience workshop with our TY students.

Given the changing face of employment for the future, the development of key skills is a priority across all subject departments for our students

2.7.6 Fourth Year / Transition Year

Personal and Social Guidance

The role of Class Tutor is a vital part of monitoring the progress and development of all TY students within each teachers care. All tutor groups are assigned a specific teacher with whom they have a one hour period per week for the academic year. This is an opportunity for students to reflect on their experiences by completing video diaries, learning reports and being involved in group and individual conversations with their tutor. Weekly challenges are submitted by students to their tutor each week. These challenges are designed to engage students in thought provoking mental and physical activities each week. The pastoral care element of this session allows for improved communication between the students, their tutor, TY coordinator, Year Head and parents.

Topics such as decision making skills, personal development, taking responsibility for one's choices, are just some of the examples of areas that are addressed throughout a range of different classes in 4th Year.

The **TY Musical/Performing Arts Module** provides an opportunity for students to immerse themselves in the creative process in the areas of drama, music, dance, set design, costumes and make-up and all other aspects associated with the production of a fully-staged musical. It develops the kinaesthetic and interpersonal intelligences and encourages communication and teamwork as well as building self-confidence and pride in the students' own abilities.

Philanthropy in TY Religion: One of the main aims of the TY Religion programme looks at how we can positively impact the world we live in and uphold the traditional Christian values of being of service to others. In TY Religion all students take part in a week long community care programme where they work with various community based organisations working within their local area. TY Religion classes also carry out vital work for St. Vincent de Paul in the run up to Christmas and other organisations throughout the year.

Transition Year students are exposed to a number of **sporting activities** that are not typically part of a PE programme such as lacrosse, UCD Schools Dance event, cricket, self-defence, fencing and bowling. Students are scheduled for one period of PE per week.

Exchange Programme: Sixteen students get the opportunity to engage with an exchange programme which sees girls going to Seville and a number of other countries, to live with host families for a short period of time. During this experience, they attend school alongside the host family's child.

Loreto Abbey is also a host to many girls from countries such as Spain, France, Germany and Mexico. These exchanges have a profound effect on students both at home and abroad, by exposing them to new cultures and seeing how life is lived both in and outside of Ireland, while at the same time developing their language skills.

The **Transition Year Graduation Ceremony** takes place at the end of the academic year. This is an opportunity for students and their parents to gather alongside the Transition Year team and school management to celebrate the end of this very special year. This ceremony showcases all that is good about Transition Year and highlights the many successes of its students.

Educational Guidance

Transition Year students **engage with new subjects** which they may not have previously experienced until now. Examples of these include Cultural Studies, Politics, Sign Language, Finance, Art, Home Economics, Enterprise and Music. Whilst core subjects continue to be taught throughout the year, they are approached in a way that allows both the teacher and their students to veer from the main syllabus in order to get a broader, and perhaps a deeper appreciation of these topics.

All students complete the **'My Eirquest' and 'My Aptitude'** assessment in Transition Year; this helps to provide information related to both aptitude and career interest, allowing students to gain a deeper understanding of their strengths. This assessment can assist students in making their subject choices for 5th Year, while at the same time suggesting careers that they may be interested in investigating further, based on the strengths that were highlighted through the assessment process.

A **subject option evening** takes place early in the new year for all Transition Year students and their parents/guardians. A presentation outlining the Eirquest Assessment and the subsequent individual report is given to students and parents/guardians by a specialist speaker in this area. All subject teachers and guidance counsellors attend the evening and are available to speak with students and their parents/guardians regarding their specific areas of expertise.

Vocational / Career Guidance

All 4th Year classes have one timetabled period of **'World of Work'** per week. A sample of content from the World of Work module includes:

- Work Experience Preparation
- CV Builder
- Career & College Pathways
- Career Sector Investigation
- My Talents
- Personal & Career Values
- Career Interest Profile

In September of each year our TY students attend the **World Skills Exhibition in the RDS**. This is a unique opportunity for our students to learn and experience many different skill-based career options available in Ireland. Special attention is paid to apprenticeship programmes and other alternative training routes including Higher Education and Solas programmes.

One of the many important elements of TY is the **two weeks of work placement** that each student is obliged to complete throughout the course of the year. This can be a significant learning experience for many students, giving them true insight into the world of work. In addition students have a one week 'Community Placement', where they are encouraged to volunteer within some area of their local community. Students engage with reflective journals and video diaries throughout these periods.

Several college and career talks are arranged for all students within Transition Year at different times throughout the year. They also engage with the 'Day in My Life Programme' with our 2nd and 3rd Year students.

Students **visit at least one college campus** accompanied by the guidance counsellors. They will also have the opportunity to visit a College of Further Education, which will showcase the wide variety of PLC courses that exist locally, providing pathways to direct employment, apprenticeships or Higher Education Institutes (see D.E., Transition Year Programme Statement, p. 6).

'**Law Day**' takes place in January. Students have an opportunity to learn about Irish law, real court cases and take part in a mock trial.

A **College and Career Fair** takes place in Loreto Abbey between March and April for all Senior students (4th, 5th and 6th Years). This is an opportunity for our senior level students to seek information from local college and university representatives.

Leadership conversations: The "Leadership Conversations" programme for Transition Year students began in 2015 in Loreto Abbey. It encompasses regular sessions with Irish women from different walks of life who have achieved significant success in their field and made a difference. The programme was the idea of two women who had daughters starting in Transition Year. Their original proposal is outlined here:

'In today's world our girls are subjected to much peer pressure and it is not always acceptable to stand out from the crowd – to stand up for what is right – to strive to make a difference in society – instead the pressure is very much to comply with peers, to fit in and absolutely not stand out. Yet these girls have more opportunities than any other generation to make a difference in Ireland and in the world – with modern technology they can spread a powerful message and we can help them. We have a fantastic resource of Irish women who have achieved something great either in Ireland or further afield and have made a difference through the work they do –women who were once 16 year old girls going to school just like our girls' – Geraldine Murphy & Elaine Lyons, Transition Year Parents 2015

Speakers are invited to share their personal journeys, reflecting on the obstacles they encountered, along with the strategies and support that helped them overcome challenges along the way. Our guests are also encouraged to consider what they would do differently in hindsight and offer meaningful advice to their 16-year-old self, inspiring students to navigate their own paths with confidence and resilience.

A **TY Student Committee** is formed at the beginning of each academic year. These volunteers meet guest speakers on their arrival to the school, introduce them to their classmates in the lecture theatre and thank them after the talk. This process is student led

2.7.7 Fifth Year

Personal and Social Guidance

Personal and social guidance issues are addressed during formal class contact time in conjunction with **RE and SPHE classes** specifically. It is also addressed through the Tutor and Year Head system both officially and unofficially.

Subject teachers are also very conscious of the personal and social development of their students and endeavour to provide students with support to make the transition to Senior Cycle.

Each 5th Year student is offered the opportunity to take part in a spiritual and reflective journey that takes place along the ***Camino de Santiago*** at the beginning of June. During this time students will trek for seven days from Sarria to Santiago, carrying with them the bare essentials needed for this journey. In the lead up to this pilgrimage, students will undertake six weeks of training to ensure they are both physically and mentally fit for the journey.

Educational Guidance

All 5th Year students have the opportunity to avail of support from **mentors**. Students will have a good working relationship with the teachers that are assigned to them. Meetings can take place a number of times throughout the year at the request of the student. The primary function of this mentoring relationship is educational; however, this can often flow into personal and social guidance at a low level, and if necessary, referrals are made to management or the guidance counsellors.

Study Skills will be addressed by teachers within each specific subject area.

Vocational / Career Guidance

5th Year students will engage in a ten week classroom based module of Career Guidance. Given the changing face of employment for the future, the development of key skills is an ongoing priority within vocational guidance for our students

Individual **career guidance meetings become mandatory in 5th Year** with each student having a minimum of one, one to one meeting with a guidance counsellor.

A number of general **college talks** are arranged to give students a broad overview of specific college courses on offer. These take place as part of our 'Lunchtime Talks' series throughout the year. The majority of these talks will take place between September and December.

Details of **College Open Days** are communicated through the guidance section of the school website. All senior students are encouraged to attend where appropriate and relevant.

The **Higher Options** College and Careers Fair takes place in September of each year in the RDS. 5th Year students attend this, accompanied by their guidance counsellors.

A **College/ Careers Fair** takes place in Loreto Abbey in December for all senior students (4th, 5th and 6th Years). This is an opportunity for our current senior level students to seek information from colleges and universities throughout the country.

2.7.8 Sixth Year

Personal and Social Guidance

Personal and Social guidance issues are addressed during formal class contact time in conjunction with **RE and SPHE classes** specifically. However, this is also addressed through the Tutor and Year Head system both officially and unofficially. Subject teachers are very conscious of the personal and social development of their students and as such are highly vigilant of the students in their care.

The **6th Year Graduation Mass** takes place in May for the students and their parents/guardians and is also attended by staff, including the guidance counsellors. It is an opportunity for students and their families to meet with those who have played a part in their daughter's educational and personal development over the last six years.

Educational Guidance

Mentors are available to all 6th Year students. These meetings take place at the request of the student. The primary function of this mentoring relationship is educational; however, this can often flow into personal and social guidance at a low level, and if necessary, referrals are made to management or the guidance counsellors.

Study Skills will be addressed by teachers within each specific subject area.

6th Year students will have the opportunity to speak with their guidance counsellor and their teachers following their Leaving Certificate results in August for guidance and support if required.

Vocational / Career Guidance

6th Year students receive **eight periods of formal career guidance classes** with a guidance counsellor.

While given the changing face of employment for the future, the development of key skills remains a priority throughout the whole senior cycle. These skills are linked with vocational guidance for our students

Individual career guidance meetings are mandatory in 6th Year, with each student having a minimum of one meeting with a guidance counsellor.

All 6th Year students attend the **Higher Options** Exhibition in September.

Attendance at **College Open Days** and Information Evenings is encouraged for all students in their areas of interest. Information on Open Days can be found on the guidance website which is updated regularly by Careers Portal.

Specific **Information sessions** are organised during our 'Lunchtime Talks' which are optional for senior students. These talks are organised based on students' specific interests and requests,

and will only take place where there is a sufficient level of demand. Examples of topics include 'Applying for UCAS' and 'Applying for an NUI Language Exemption'.

All 6th Year parents/guardians are invited to attend a **CAO information evening** to help inform them of the CAO process, from inputting college course options, to accepting college offers in early August.

A **College/ Careers Fair** (which was first launched in April 2023) takes place in Loreto Abbey for all senior students (4th, 5th and 6th Years). This is an opportunity for students to speak with representatives from various universities and Colleges of Further Education. It provides an excellent forum for an exchange of information and ideas.

2.7.9 Past Pupils

Loreto Abbey has a strong tradition of keeping close links with their alumni. The **Past Pupils Association has over 2000 past pupils linked on Social Media.**

Loreto Abbey hosts **re-unions of Year groups every decade.** Past pupils gather annually for lunch and provide professional expertise to the school on specific projects. Many have also addressed students on their career paths/ life experience.

2.7.10 Student and Parent Guidance Needs

The WSG Plan is evaluated, reviewed and updated annually. In so doing we endeavour to ensure that the needs of our students, parents and guardians are incorporated into everything that we do.

This data informed approach to planning is facilitated by annual surveys with TY students, reflective focus groups with 5th and 6th Year students and focus groups with parents and guardians (every second year).

The Guidance Department seeks to provide information sessions to educate parents on pathways post and pre Leaving Certificate and is readily available to meet with parents.

2.8 Whole School Guidance Links

The following demonstrates the whole school dimension of guidance and collaboration between the whole school community at Loreto Abbey and the guidance counsellor.

2.8.1 Class Teacher

Encourages students to reach their full potential both academically and personally.

Monitors behaviour and is sensitive to any difficulties students may be experiencing. Referrals to Year Head, Student Support Team, guidance counsellor, Deputy Principal(s), and Principal as appropriate. Referral sheets can be found in the main office for the student support team and the guidance counsellor. Alternatively referrals can be made through the individual emails of each of the guidance counsellors.

Liaises with parents through journals or scheduled meetings.

2.8.1 Transition Year Coordinator

- Motivates and develops personal skills.
- Organises events, guest speakers, excursions, etc which promote personal development.
- Liaises with management, guidance counsellor and parents/guardians regarding programme development.

2.8.2 SPHE Teacher

- Promotes self-esteem and positive self-image.
- Enables and encourages student discussion in relation to social, personal and health issues.
- Monitors behaviour and uses referral systems as appropriate.

2.8.3 Additional Educational Needs Team

- Identifies and priorities students in need of support.
- Consults with guidance counsellor, NEPS Psychologist as required.
- Meets regularly with parents/guardians where appropriate.
- Liaises with primary schools.

2.8.4 Chaplain

The Chaplain works to support the faith and pastoral needs of the students. While the Chaplain is available to all students they have a special role with 1st Year students helping them to settle into their new school and being available to them as needs arise.

The Chaplain is part of the Student Support Team and collaborates with the Principal, Deputy Principals, Year Heads, guidance counsellors, tutors and class teachers. They meet with students on a one to one basis and in small groups. They are available to meet with parents if deemed necessary.

The Chaplain supports the faith development of the students by collaborating with the RE team in organising retreats and liturgies throughout the year. They also organise rituals and prayer times to mark significant events in students' lives e.g. at times of illness or bereavement.

2.8.5 Sports Coordinator

- Responsibility for the coordination of extracurricular/sport/wellness activities for the student body.
- Management of fixtures, events and leagues/cup tournaments etc for all teams within Loreto Abbey.
- Approximately 12 individual sports are available to students, depending on the year; with up to 500 events throughout the school year.
- Management of coaching staff, budgets, resources and events.

2.8.6 Student Mentors

- Students have the opportunity to meet designated teachers for one to one mentoring sessions.
- Approximately four sessions take place in 5th and 6th Year.
- Goal setting, time management, and study habits are discussed.
- Referrals are made to the guidance counsellors if deemed necessary.

2.8.7 Student Council

- Identifies areas of student concern.
- Liaises with teacher representatives to promote positive change.

2.8.8 Amigas

The Amigas or the Anti-bullying Ambassadors are a group of approximately 50 students in the school. They are selected by their teachers to represent their classes as well as their year group in an anti-bullying capacity.

Their role is to draw attention to difficulties students may be experiencing outside of class time and report these issues on to the relevant teachers or Year Heads.

2.8.9 Parents Council

- Forum for parents to participate in ongoing development of the school.
- Voice and link for parents/guardians within the school community.
- Organise seminars for parents/guardians on parenting adolescents and provide speakers on careers for classes.

2.8.10 External Agencies

The Student Support Team, guidance counsellors, teachers and management of Loreto Abbey promote and foster links with the following:

- NEPS: Learning support teachers and guidance counsellors have contact and meetings with the educational psychologist if necessary.
- Social Workers: where necessary management will meet with social workers to support the vulnerable.
- Employers: TY coordinator and Work Experience coordinator foster links with employers
- Colleges/ Admissions Officers: Guest speakers are organised from various Colleges and Universities throughout the country.
- CAO/UCAS/ EUNICAS
- College of Further Education
- Community – Gardai / Defence Forces/ Paramedics / RSA
- State Examinations Commission
- Parents of Students: Parents/Guardians are invited to come in to share their educational and work life experiences with specific year groups and small groups of senior students.
- Past Pupils
- Primary Schools

3. Student Support

3.1 Key Student Support Personnel

Student Support Team (Ref. Student Support Policy)

3.2 Student Support Team

The **Student Support Team** meets with the Deputy Principal on a weekly basis to discuss concerns regarding individual students or groups of students which have been brought to their attention. Here the team develops an appropriate response for each concern. This may involve

providing in-school support for the students or deciding in consultation with the parent(s)/guardian(s), that external help is required.

3.3 Year Head

- Year Heads have both a pastoral and disciplinary role.
- Have access to information on all students in their Year Groups. They survey reports and track academic progress.
- The role of the Year Head in relation to behavioural matters is outlined in the Code of Behaviour.
- Encourage good behaviour through regular contact with Year Groups – Assemblies and classroom visits.
- Liaise with student representatives in the Year Group.
- Promote significant participation of the Year Group in key ethos days of the school.
- Available to meet with parents.
- Available to meet with students regarding both pastoral and disciplinary matters.
- *Junior Level Year Heads* – organise a Prize Giving Ceremony for their Year Group to acknowledge and reward the participation of students in school life.

<u>Year Heads:</u>	
Ms. M. Lonergan	6 th Year
Ms. A. Mooney	5 th Year
Ms. J. McBreen	4 th Year
Ms. C. Ni Ghallchoir	3 rd Year
Ms. T. Ryan	2 nd Year
Ms. A. Green	1 st Year

3.4 Class Tutors

Class Tutors are appointed for all classes.

- A tutor is a teacher who, on behalf of the school community, undertakes the role of caring for a particular class group with responsibility in the pastoral and academic areas. This role is undertaken in a voluntary capacity.
- The tutor should be a class teacher for the class for which she/he has responsibility.
- Involved in induction programmes where appropriate.
- Have a pastoral rather than a disciplinary role and are given information on the students within their group by the Year Head as deemed necessary.
- Promote class spirit and cohesion.
- Encourage leadership qualities within a class group.

- Oversee the student journal and monitor notes for absences.
- Encourage class involvement in all activities that promote the ethos of the school.
- Meet as a group with their Year Head at least twice a term during school time.
- Given opportunities to engage in professional development programmes.

3.5 Mentors

All **5th and 6th Year students have the option to be assigned an academic mentor.**

Mentors will, where possible, teach the particular student that they have been assigned; they will meet with them at least once per term or more often on request.

The mentor will review academic results and progress, and will advise on study habits. S/he will liaise with the Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Head and guidance counsellors where appropriate.

5th Year Mentors	6th Year Mentors
Mr R. Dunne	Mr R. Dunne
Ms. R. Conlon	Mr W. Flanagan
Ms. K. Mulcahy	Ms. R. Conlon
Ms. E. Murray	Ms. M. Lonergan
Mr W. Flanagan	Mr D. Cullen
Ms. E. Noctor	Ms. A. Quirke
Ms L. Segrave Daly	Ms. E. Noctor
Ms A. Freyne	Ms. C. Galvin
Ms A. Mooney	Ms. L. Brennan
Mr C. Curtis	Ms. J. Maginn
Ms. M. Gageby	Mr. C. Thompson
Ms. A. Gleeson	Mr. D. O' Connor
Ms. E. Hayes	Ms. A. McBride
Ms. R. Scott	Ms. A. Gleeson
Mr. C. Thompson	Ms. McBreen
Mr. D. Monaghan	Ms. L. Glass
Mr. P. Byrne	
Ms. J. McBreen	
Mr. J. Ryan	

3.6 Additional Personnel

All other staff members within Loreto Abbey recognise their role within the WSG framework. We refer here specifically to our Sports Coaches and extra-curricular staff:

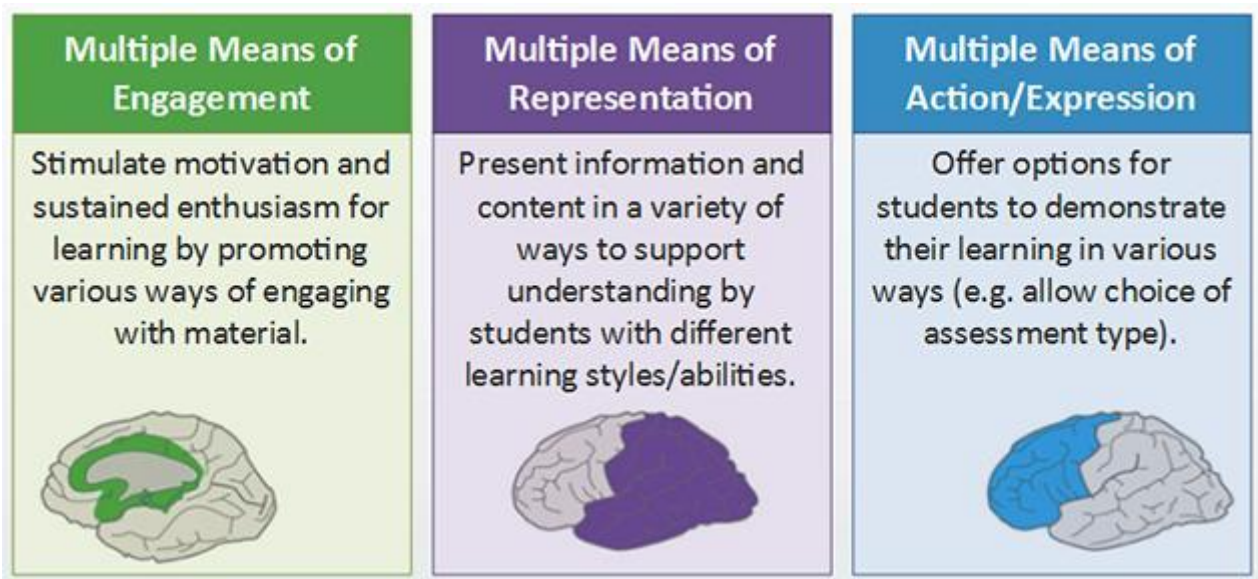
Sports Coordinator:	Ms. J. Coyne
PE Teachers:	Mr. S. Cahill Mr. D. Monaghan Ms. S. Sutton
Sports Hall Manager:	Ms. C. Leech
Hockey, Basketball, GAA and Soccer Coaches	

4. Inclusion

Inclusion is a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of learners ... It involves removing barriers so that each learner is enabled to participate in and benefit, to the greatest extent possible from their education ([The Inclusive Education Framework, NCSE, 2011](#))

4.1 Teaching and Learning

As a school we strive to embed a range of teaching and learning methodologies into each of our lessons regardless of the subjects that we are teaching. By embracing Universal Design for Learning (based on the idea that there is no such thing as a 'typical' or 'average' student, that all students learn differently [The UDL Framework Explained - AHEAD](#)) we are ensuring inclusion in our classrooms in the following ways:



[The UDL Framework Explained - AHEAD](#)

4.2 Procedure for identifying a student with Additional Educational Needs

A Deputy Principal or our AEN Co-ordinator meets with specific parents/guardians in February of the year of entry to review psychological reports and to complete applications for D.E.S. hours where appropriate.

Standardised tests are administered to all 1st Year students in September/October and the results of these tests can often help identify if a child requires additional support or perhaps further diagnostic testing.

A class teacher, tutor and or Year Head can refer any student they are concerned about to the Additional Educational Needs (AEN) Department. Referral forms are available in the main office. This allows the Special Educational Teachers (SET) team to consult with the Student Support Team and class teachers to ascertain the nature of the additional support required.

When a parent notifies the Principal or a Deputy Principal that a student is **not benefiting from the regular education programme** provided by the school, together they initiate a process of formal and informal assessments to be conducted by the AEN team.

4.2.1 Informal assessments may involve some of the following:

- Observations from mainstream teachers
- Consultations with parents
- Student Journal
- Meeting with pupil

4.2.2 Formal assessment may involve some of the following:

- Review of CAT 4 Test results
- Review of in-house exams and reports
- Behavioural record if appropriate
- Woodcock Johnson IV (Irish Edition) Assessments

Following this profiling stage, decisions are made as to the appropriate support warranted. It may be decided that:

- There is no need for further action
- There is need for monitoring and support in a mainstream setting
- Purposeful withdrawal is desirable
- Further investigation is required by specialised individuals. Parents/guardians will be advised accordingly; for example an educational psychologist, NEPS psychologist, GP, Mental Health Services etc.

4.3 Diversity of Career Options - Creating Awareness:

Through our career guidance programme we create awareness of and provide information on a broad range of alternative pathways, such as Post Leaving Certificate courses, Tertiary courses, apprenticeships and vocational training opportunities. This is particularly important for students who may feel for whatever reason that college is not a viable or desirable option.

Individual guidance support is available to all students through our one to one guidance meetings and it is within this space that we can examine in detail ones unique goals, abilities, interests and cultural context.

By creating a safe and non-judgmental environment, we aim to promote open dialogue where students feel comfortable discussing their vision for their future and even their fears about that future. We encourage students to ask questions about potential barriers and how to overcome them.

4.4 Reasonable Accommodations for Certificate Examinations:

The Scheme of Reasonable Accommodations at Certificate Examinations (RACE) in Ireland is a crucial mechanism for ensuring inclusivity in the State examinations (Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate). Its primary purpose is to remove, as far as possible, the impact of a disability on a student's performance, enabling them to demonstrate their knowledge and abilities on an equal footing with their peers.

The core principle of the RACE scheme is to provide equal access to the examinations, not to give an unfair advantage. The accommodations are designed to address the specific barriers created by a student's disability, ensuring that their performance is a true reflection of their knowledge and skills, rather than being limited by their condition. The standard of achievement required for the exam remains the same for all students.

Examples of accommodations include reading and writing accommodations, modified exam papers, waivers and exemptions. For further details please refer to the [Reasonable Accommodations](#) webpage.

4.5 Access of Third Level Education - HEAR & DARE:

‘Higher Education Access Route ([HEAR](#)) is a higher education admissions scheme for Leaving Certificate students (under 23) whose economic or social background are underrepresented in higher education.’

Each year we support students in their applications to DARE (Disability Access Route to Education). ‘[DARE](#) is a third level alternative admissions scheme for school-leavers whose disabilities have had a negative impact on their second level education. DARE offers reduced points places to school leavers who, as a result of having a disability, have experienced additional educational challenges in second level education.’

4.6 Transitioning to Third Level Education:

As part of their holistic education here at Loreto Abbey Secondary School, we endeavour to equip our students with the skills and knowledge to transition comfortably into Third Level Education. We do this by equipping our students with the skills to be autonomous, self directed learners.

We provide students with practical and vocational guidance by encouraging them to actively engage in career investigations, career related activities, discussing subject choice and exploring the range of pathways that exist in order to achieve their goals.

The transition to college is a significant personal change for students. As teachers we help students prepare for this by fostering resilience and self-advocacy. By promoting time management skills. By encouraging a growth mindset, by reassuring students that it is normal to face challenges and that success comes from persistence and learning from our mistakes. Finally by creating a supportive encouraging environment, where students feel that they can share their concerns and seek support in order to move forward confidently with their lives.

5. Policies & Procedures relating to Whole School Guidance

- Acceptable Behaviour - Internet access
- Admissions and Enrolment
- Bi Cinealta, 2025
- Assessment Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment
- Code of Behaviour
- Confidentiality Policy (this needs to be updated)
- Critical Incident
- Data Protection (Data Access Procedures, Code of Practice, Record Retention Schedule)
- Health and Safety
- Homework Policy
- Psychometric Assessment Policy (Review and update if appropriate)
- SPHE / RSE Policy
- Student Support / Pastoral Care Policy
- Substance Use Policy
- Wellbeing Policy
- Whole School Guidance Plan 2025/26

6. Psychometric Testing

6.1 Administration of Psychometric Testing

As outlined by the [NCGE](#) and [Circular Letter 0084/2024](#) the administration of ability tests is restricted to appropriately qualified personnel who have been specifically trained in specialised psychometric testing including the selection and administration of such assessment instruments, interpretation of assessment results, scoring and feedback. These assessments will only be carried out by the guidance counsellors or specifically trained members of the AEN Department. Each of which have the appropriate qualifications to administer these specific tests. These personnel will endeavour to engage in on-going training and continuing professional development. 'The Register of Psychometric Test Use: Guidance Counsellors', which is maintained by the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) www.psychologicalsociety.ie endorses the professional competence of guidance counsellors in the administration of psychometric tests and supports the implementation of good practice in psychometric testing in schools.' Our School Guidance Counsellors are part of this register.

In line with best practice information is provided to parents/guardians and students as to the purpose of the assessment and with whom the results may be shared and why. In accordance with GDPR regulations, students and parents/guardians will have access to the information gathered from these assessments. The consent of parents/guardians and students is obtained in advance of any assessment instrument being administered. This will only take place if written consent has been obtained. In a small number of cases it may be necessary to obtain verbal consent over the telephone from a parent/guardian (please see our Psychometric Policy for further details - this policy will be updated in late 2025) .

6.2 Psychometric Tests include the following

- CAT4 Level E
- Woodcock Johnson IV (Irish Edition)
- My Eirquest & My Aptitude

6.3 Purpose, Sharing & Storage of Psychometric Assessments - Refer to Psychometric Policy

7. World of Work

7.1 Transition Year Careers Module Rationale

Lifelong guidance, as defined by the EU Council, is a continuous process that helps individuals throughout their lives with career and personal development. The key elements of this definition are:

- **Continuous:** It's not a one-time event but an ongoing process that supports people at any age and at any stage of their lives.
- **Empowering:** It enables individuals to identify their skills, knowledge, and interests.
- **Decision-Making:** It helps people make informed choices about their education, training, and careers.
- **Comprehensive:** The process covers a range of activities, including providing information, offering counselling, assessing skills, and teaching career management skills.

In short, it's about providing the tools to help support people to navigate their learning and work lives effectively.

Our year long World of Work module for TY students provides them with an opportunity to develop these skills in an age appropriate way. In time this culminates in students being able “to manage their own educational, training, occupational, personal, social, and life choices so that they reach their full potential and contribute to the development of a better society” ([National Guidance Forum](#), 2007; pg. 6).

During TY, students have opportunities to explore different career options, and develop some of the competencies required to access a range of diverse opportunities in the future. Students begin to develop skills where they can make informed choices about possible career options by, for example, gaining knowledge related to a range of higher education pathways, traineeships, apprenticeships and through direct experience of work and participating in society. The aim is to nurture the development of the student as a whole, by building on their previous experiences, to expand their knowledge of the world of work and to nurture the student’s capacity to sustain their growth and development through a process of lifelong learning.

They will experience personal growth and mature socially and emotionally over the course of the year, developing in areas that include autonomy and identity. Students will become more assured and confident about themselves as a person, they will go about setting and reviewing goals for personal development and achievement through initiatives such as Gaisce, and know how to make informed career-related decisions by organising and reflecting on work experience placements.

Students will engage in career exploration and explore a broad range of future pathways in a guided and coordinated manner. They will become familiar with the links between education and career opportunities, while developing their capacity to research and critically analyse a broad range of careers. They will grow in their awareness of personal interests, aptitudes, values, and dispositions.

Students will be encouraged to identify and review career-related goals more regularly, become more assured and confident about themselves as a person, develop a stronger sense of their identity, set and review goals for personal development and achievement, and know how to make informed decisions.

This module is designed to address the following developmental indicators as outlined by the [NCCA Transition Year Programme Statement, 2025](#):

- Becoming more assured and confident about themselves as a person.
- Setting and reviewing goals for personal development and achievement.
- Reflect on personal values.
- Knowing how to make more informed decisions.
- Coming to see challenges as further opportunities for growth
- Take ownership of their decisions.

It will address the following [student experiences](#):

- Guided creation of a portfolio/homework that captures their personal growth.
- Opportunities for guided reflection and review of personal goals.
- Subject selection for fifth year

In addition, this 4th year module facilitates the following [learning outcome aims in terms of their work experience](#):

- Students will understand the purpose and benefits of work experience and obtain the necessary information about their placement.
- Prepare for work experience by researching careers that match their interests, abilities, and personality and investigating pathways into possible careers.
- Approaching employers to ask for and secure a work placement.
- Establish interest or otherwise, benefits, not just career related, applying, preparation, engagement with first-hand experience of the world of work, reflective practice afterwards.
- Seeking to interact more with new people, taking on responsibilities given, and carrying out tasks that they have not done before.
- Record and critically reflect on their experience by facilitating reflections, before, during, and after the experience to set personal goals across relevant student dimensions and measure their personal development and achievement during the placement in their homework.

7.2 Work Experience

Each TY student will engage with two weeks of unpaid work experience. These two placements will take place during the weeks of

7.2.1 Overseeing of Work Experience

The TY Co-ordinator is responsible for overseeing the work placements of TY students with the assistance of all TY Teachers.

During the periods of work placements, class teachers are asked to phone the employer of a number of students to check on their progress. Notes on these calls will be recorded and maintained for reference purposes for the year in question.

7.2.2 Reporting on Work Experience

Employers or work experience mentors will be asked to submit a short report following each of the students' work placements. These reports will form the basis of their work experience report at different times throughout the year.

7.2.3 Students Reporting and Reflections on Work Experience

Each TY student is requested to complete a report following their work placements within the World of Work class, this will also form a part of their overall portfolio for the year.

7.3 LCVP Work Experience

All students studying LCVP complete a one week work placement during 5th Year as part of their programme.

8. Improvement Planning

8.1 Areas for Development 2025/26

The following has been identified as areas for development over the coming year 2025/26:

- Further develop the profile of WSG within the school with staff, parents/guardians and students by sharing experiences on our school website and our social media platforms.
- Arrange three WSG Team meetings for the academic year 2025/26. These meetings focus on:
- Each subject department to highlight possible careers within their particular subject fields and consider how each of their subjects feed into WSG.

- Subject Departments to focus on developing study skills for their specific subjects with students.
- Wellbeing - WSG Team to meet with the Wellbeing Team to discuss ongoing collaboration.
- Schemes of work and unit plans should explicitly outline the contribution that they make to WSG.
- These developments should endeavour to be closely linked with the School Self Evaluation (SSE) Plan.

Signed: Elis Humphreys

Date: 15/10/2025

Our WSG Plan will be reviewed by the Board of Management in October 2026.

Appendix A

Looking at Whole School Guidance: What does success look like?

Resource 1 - Looking at Whole School Guidance: What does success look like?

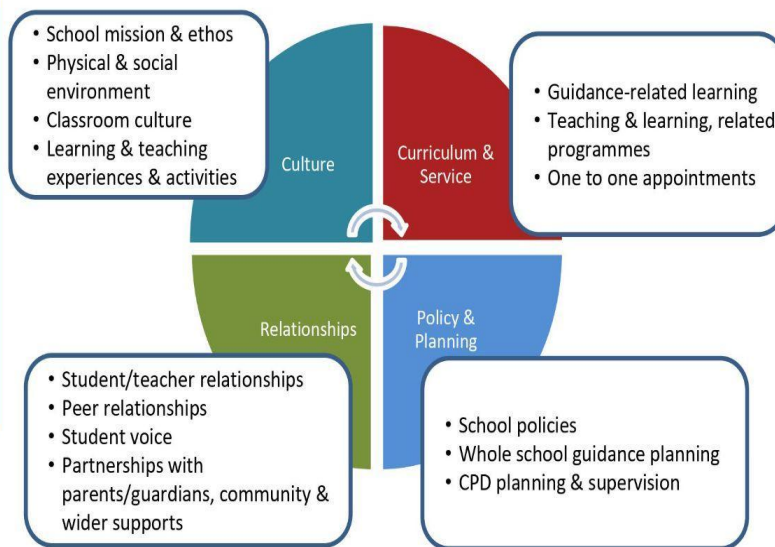
- The school provides an environment where students are supported to grow and develop, reach their potential & achieve their goals
- The school has a dynamic whole school guidance programme in place
- The school provides high quality guidance learning experiences that facilitate personal & social, educational and career related growth and development
- The school promotes students' personal and social, educational and career development
- The school provides a continuum of support model in line with the *NCGE: Whole School Guidance Framework* (NCGE, 2017), *Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines* (NCCA, 2017) and the *Wellbeing in Post-Primary Schools Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention* (2013)
- All adults in the school listen, support and refer students on to appropriately qualified members of staff to support them when needed

Whole School Approach to Guidance

A whole-school approach to guidance requires actions to be identified in four key aspects across three key levels

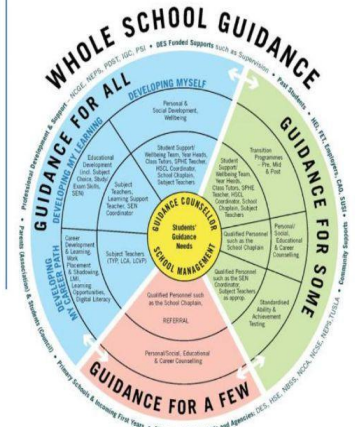
The four key aspects of guidance are:

1. Culture
2. Relationships
3. Policy & Planning
4. Curriculum & Service



The three key levels are:

1. Guidance for All
2. Guidance for Some
3. Guidance for a Few



Appendix B

Education Passport Pas Oideachais

Supporting your child's transition
from primary to post-primary school
Ag tacú le haistriú do linbh ón
mbunscoil go dtí an iarbhunscoil

Outline of transfer process from primary to post-primary

Primary principal ■

Post-primary principal ■


Parent(s)/guardian(s) ■

Phases of Transfer

	Role/Responsibility Who?	Action What?	Timeframe When?
1	Post-primary principal or designated person	Forward Information Request Form to the primary school(s)	Any time after Parent(s)/guardian(s) confirms enrolment
	<i>For children in need of additional support</i> Primary principal or designated person	Forward NEPS Student Transfer Form to parent(s)/guardian(s) and then to the post-primary school	It is recommended that this form transfers in a timely manner For children in need of additional supports such as special needs assistants, assistive technology or school transport, NCSE application deadlines should be considered
	Primary principal or designated person	Forward Information letter 6th Class Report Card My Profile Form: copy My Child's Profile Form to Parent(s)/guardian(s)	By the end of the second week of June
2	Parent(s)/guardian(s)	Complete and return My Child's Profile form to the primary school within five working days	By the end of the third week of June
	Primary principal or designated person	Forward Copy of Education Passports: 6th Class Report Card My Profile Form My Child's Profile Form to the post-primary school(s)	By early September
3	Post-primary principal or designated person	Forward Information Receipt to the primary school to acknowledge receipt of Education Passports and confirm pupil registration	By end of first week of October

The above timeline should help to ensure that materials are transferred in a timely manner.

Personal One to One Guidance Counselling Record



Educational /career guidance counselling one-to-one record

Session Number:

© National Centre for Guidance in Education 2020

School Name:

Guidance Counsellor Name:

Student's Name / Identifier:

Time

Date

This record template has been designed and provided by the National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) for direct use by individual school Guidance Counsellors with students. Information provided on this form is NOT recorded, transferred to or held by NCGE.

Subjects Studied:	Level:	JC:	SC:	Notes / additional subjects:
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
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		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Educational / Careers Interests:

Career Plan:

(JC – subjects for SC; SC – post-school – HPAT, UCAS, scholarships, apprenticeships, FET etc)



Educational /career guidance counselling one-to-one record

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Interests, Talents, Pastimes:

Family Careers (background):

Strengths:

Achievements:

Goals:

Notes (brief record of discussion, decisions, agreed actions):

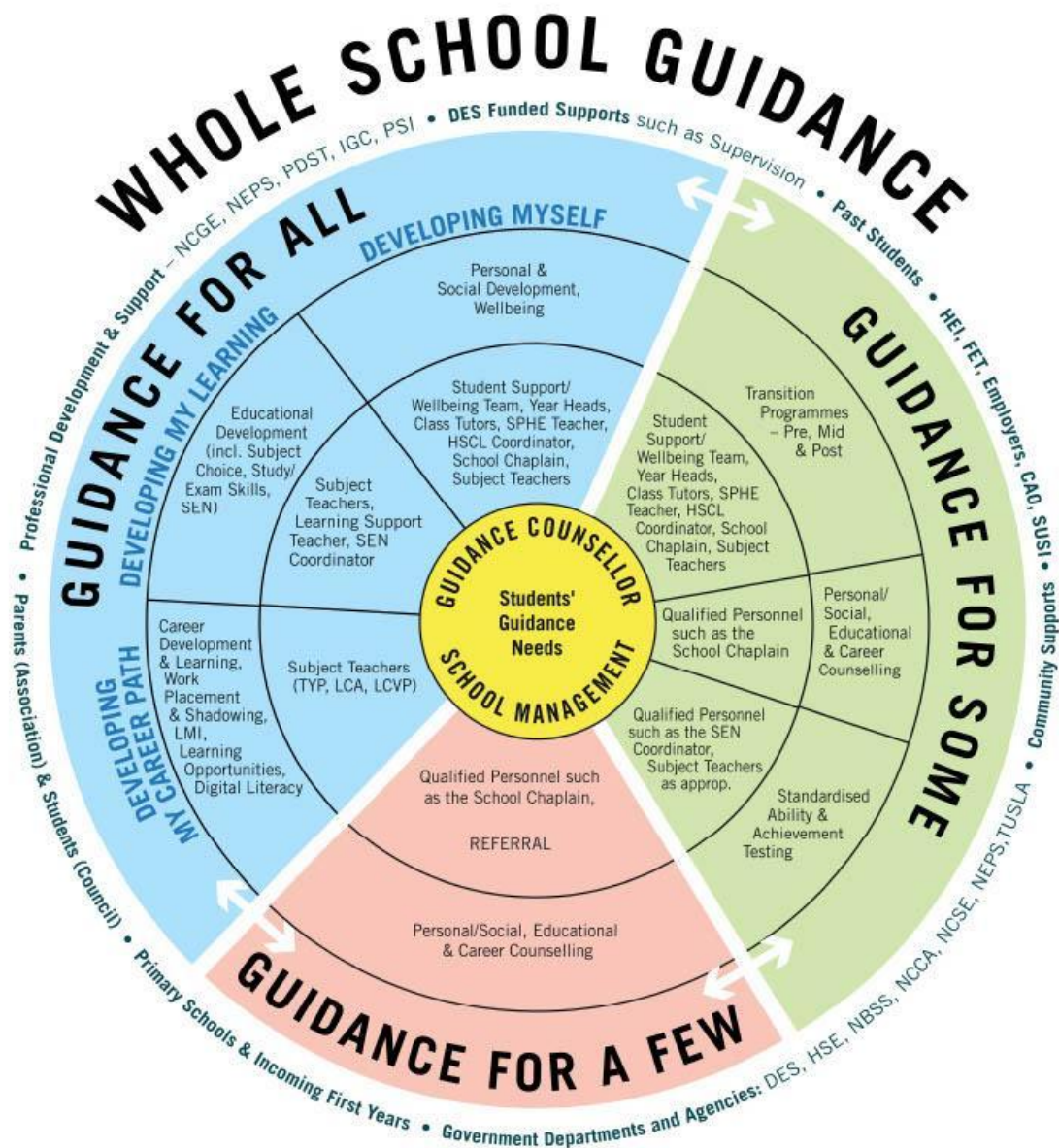
Guidance Counsellor Signature

Student Signature

Session length

Next Appointment

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



Note: school programmes and staffing indicated are not meant to be exhaustive i.e. programmes/staff involved in whole school guidance will vary across schools. This intends to highlight programmes/staff which may be involved in the delivery of a whole school guidance programme.

Full document can be accessed via www.ncge.ie/school-guidance-handbook