

# **Ashbourne Community School**

## **Whole School Guidance Plan 2007**

### **Introductory Statement**

Ashbourne Community Schools guidance plan is a structured document that describes the school guidance programme and specifies how the guidance needs of students are being addressed. It is an integral part of the school's overall school development plan. The task group, after some deliberation, adopted as a working definition of Guidance as 'the student support systems and programmes in our school'. Adopting this definition removes guidance away from being understood as the sole responsibility of the Guidance Counsellors to the responsibility of the whole school. Guidance Planning is therefore a whole school activity and an integral part of School Development Planning. The aim therefore of the Guidance Plan for Ashbourne Community School is to:

To help all students in the school to:

- develop an awareness and acceptance of their talents and abilities
- identify and explore opportunities
- grow in independence and take responsibility for themselves
- Make informed choices about their lives and follow through on these choices.

The development of the plan commenced in the academic year 2005/2006.

The commencement of its development was in response to:

- Section 9 (c) of the Education Act, 1998,
- Curricular PPT 12/05

The members of the 2005 / 2006 team were:

- Ms K.Rahilly :Guidance Counsellor
- Mr P.O'Dowd :Guidance Counsellor (Chairperson)
- Ms.C.Farrell :Year Head (Secretary)
- Ms.F.Gildea :Chaplin
- Mr P.O'Shea :Student Council
- Ms. L.Geraghty :Teacher
- Ms. M. Meade / Ms. M. Boylan / Ms C .Mc Garry: Special Needs

The members of the 2006 / 2007 team are:

- Ms K.Rahilly :Guidance Counsellor
- Mr P.O'Dowd :Guidance Counsellor (Chairperson)
- Ms M. Meade / Ms c Mc Garry :Special Needs (Secretary)
- Ms.F.Gildea / Clare Murtagh :Chaplin
- Mr P.O'Shea :Year Head
- Ms. I. Aiken: Student Council

Both these teams over the two years were involved in,

- Becoming familiar with the requirements of current legislation
- Defining, widening and developing a shared understanding of Guidance
- Identifying current provision
- Evaluating the strengths, challenges and gaps in our current provision
- Presentations were made to staff and feedback was used to inform direction of the groups work.

## Rationale

### Why is it necessary to develop a guidance plan at this time?

- Section 9 (c) of the Education Act, 1998 requires schools to “*ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices*”. In fulfilling Ashbourne Community Schools obligation to provide access to appropriate guidance for its students, the school needs to consider two requirements:
  - The need to provide **access** as determined by the general resources available in the school and the additional resource allocation for guidance and counselling and other related activities provided by the Department of Education and Science
  - The need to provide **appropriate guidance** that is, the ACS response to meeting the guidance needs of all of its students.
- ‘We live in a much different world. While basic needs have not changed, the expression of them, the experience of them and the criteria and strategies for meeting them, have changed.’ Sr. Una Collins
- ‘*Principals perceptions of the Guidance Service in Post Primary Schools*’ NCGE 1997
- ‘*Planning the School Guidance Programme*, NCGE 2004

## **Section 1**

### **Statement of Guidance Policy**

Guidance in Ashbourne Community School refers to a range of learning experiences, provided in a developmental sequence, that assist students to develop self-management skills which will lead to effective choices and decisions about their lives. The guidance that is currently provided for both Junior and Senior Cycle students in the ACS focuses on:

- Personal and Social Development
- Career Development
- Educational Guidance

The development and guidance of students includes the schools participation in student's moral and spiritual development.

The school guidance programme supports the values of the school outlined in its Mission Statement and its' provision is inclusive of all students from First Year through to Sixth Year. The programme is extensive in its breadth, in that it commences in the September of the academic year prior to entry and extending, for some students, beyond Sixth Year, and in its depth that it extends throughout the curriculum.

The Whole School Guidance plan seeks to addresses the guidance needs of all students at all levels within the school. The development and implementation of the plan is understood as a whole school responsibility. It involves the guidance counsellors in the first instance, as well as all other relevant members of management and staff of the school. The knowledge, experience and contacts of all staff members will be drawn on to provide the best possible guidance program for students. Parents and students are understood as an essential part of this process. NEPS and other relevant agencies will be consulted and actively involved as appropriate.

As the student cohort and their educational needs change we are aware that the Guidance Plan may need to be revised / updated from time to time to take account of new target groups of students, additional needs of students and new priorities.

While the guidance counsellor/s has/have primary responsibility for the delivery of the school's guidance and counselling programme, other members of staff have important and worthwhile contributions to make. These include:

- Principal and Deputy Principal
- Year Head and Class tutor
- Chaplain
- SEN Team
- SPHE Teachers
- Learning support teacher/s
- Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) co-coordinator/teacher/s

- Vocational Preparation teachers
- Staff members involved in delivery of guidance/student support
- Subject teachers
- Representatives of students council
- Representatives of parents

It is also provided implicitly through all the various teaching and learning aspects of the subject curricula, extra curriculum and co-curriculum provided at Junior and Senior Cycle. The staff, in School Development Planning 2005, 2006, 2007, has discussed the provision of appropriate guidance and has agreed on its implication for teaching and learning in the school. The provision of Guidance thereby beginning to be perceived as the responsibility of the whole school through broadening the concept of Guidance, by subject departments in their subject planning to explicitly state how and where they contribute to the Guidance provision. This planning was included as a part of the School Development Planning day on May 3<sup>rd</sup> 2007.

The type of guidance provided, personal and social development, educational and career, is dependent on the nature and context of the issue, stage of development of the student and the students present and/or future needs. Meeting student's needs can be fulfilled in one to one, small group and full class. Student access to the three aspects of guidance is provided for through timetabled and non timetabled guidance. The pastoral care structure is facilitated through providing daily 10 minute tutorial and timetabled weekly classes of 40 minutes providing space for student and tutor contact.

The Provision of Guidance is supported through the involvement of government agencies such as NEPS, HSE, the development of links and involvement in various activities with industry, local employers and voluntary support groups.

**Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school (school's mission/vision/aims)**

Ashbourne Community School's whole school guidance plan clearly states that its aim to assist the holistic development of all students so that they learn to know and value their talents and abilities and effectively manage their personal transitions while at the same time learn to value and respect others and make a positive contribution to society.

**Mission Statement**

- Our school is a place where we foster such values as respect, inclusion and care as evident in our school policy and practice.
- Ashbourne Community School is a partnership of students, staff, parents, Board of Management and our local community. We value the on-going input of all these parents in the life of the school.
- We pursue academic excellence while recognising the diversity of our student body. Through a relevant curriculum, designed to meet the needs of all, we endeavour to help all students realise their potential.
- Through positive staff and student relationships and a broad extra curricular programme, we aim to develop in each student a confident, healthy self-image and a sense of responsibility.
- We recognise that each student's personal and spiritual growth is important.
- We endeavour to co-operate with parents and religious leaders of all faiths to encourage the development of religious and spiritual values in each student.

**Links to other Policies**

- Acceptable User Policy Internet
- Anti Bullying
- Code of Behaviour and School Rules
- Child Protection Guidelines
- Discipline Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Guidance and Counselling Planning
- Health and Safety Policy
- Homework and Study Policy
- Response to Critical Incident Policy
- RSE
- Subject Choice
- SPHE
- Special Needs Policy
- Student Council
- Subject Choice
- Substance Abuse Policy

## B. Guidance Programme: Junior Cycle

|                      | Counselling Needs | Personal & Social Needs  | Career Guidance Needs  | Educational Guidance Needs   |
|----------------------|-------------------|--|--|--|
| Incoming First Years |                   | Liaison with Primary Schools<br><br>Open afternoon<br><br>Parent Night |  | Liaison with Primary School<br><br>Assessment<br><br>Induction<br><br>Subject Choice<br><br>Learning Support |
| First Year           | Referral System   | SPHE<br><br>Pastoral Care<br><br>'Cool School'<br><br>Mentor s         |  | Study Skills<br><br>Curriculum delivery*<br><br>Learning Support<br><br>Subject trips                        |
| Second Year          | Referral System   | SPHE<br><br>Pastoral Care  |  | Study Skills<br><br>Curriculum delivery*<br><br>Learning Support<br><br>Subject Trips                        |
| Third Year           | Referral System   | SPHE<br><br>Pastoral Care  | Choice of subjects/levels and awareness of any implications for later third-level or career choice<br><br>Career exploration and development | Study Skills<br><br>Curriculum delivery*<br><br>Learning Support<br><br>Subject Trips                        |

Curriculum delivery\* includes:

- providing students with information and expertise on both the content and demands of their particular subject(s) syllabus
- supporting students / parents in choosing subjects and levels for the Junior and Leaving Certificate examinations
- Indicating to senior cycle students the content and study commitments of particular subjects in further and higher education courses
- Links with Industry
- Advising on appropriate Leaving Certificate
- Team Teaching

## Guidance Programme: Senior Cycle

|                 | Counselling     | Personal & Social         | Career Guidance   | Educational Guidance  |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------|---|---|
| Transition Year | Referral System | SPHE<br><br>Pastoral Care | Choice of subjects/levels and awareness of any implications for later third-level or career choice<br><br>Career exploration and development<br><br>World of work   | Study Skills<br><br>Curriculum delivery<br><br>Learning Support                       |
| Fifth Year      | Referral System | SPHE<br><br>Pastoral Care | Choice of subjects/levels and awareness of any implications for later third-level or career choice<br><br>Career exploration and development<br><br>Career events<br><br>Higher and further education events<br><br>World of work | Study Skills<br><br>Curriculum delivery*<br><br>Learning Support<br><br>Subject Trips |
| Sixth Year      | Referral System | SPHE<br><br>Pastoral Care | Subject Choice<br><br>Career exploration and development<br><br>Higher and further education events   | Study Skills<br><br>Curriculum delivery*<br><br>Learning Support<br><br>Subject Trips |

Curriculum delivery\* includes:

- providing students with information and expertise on both the content and demands of their particular subject(s) syllabus
- supporting students in choosing subjects and levels for the Junior and Leaving Certificate examinations
- Indicating to senior cycle students the content and study commitments of particular subjects in further and higher education courses
- Links with Industry

- Advising on appropriate Leaving Certificate
- Team Teaching

### **C. Guidance Resources**

The resources available to deliver the guidance programme are:

- Personnel: see list in Section 1
- Materials:
  1. Handbooks
    1. Subject Choice / Leaving Certificate Choices / School Journal / Staff Handbook / Study Skills / SPHE
  2. Department of Education and Science / HSE
  3. Text books
  - 4.
- Computer Facilities and Internet access
- In-service and CPD
- Time: allocation at points of student transition between schools and within school

### **D. Guidance Areas for Development**

In evaluating the current provision in 2006 the following areas were identified as priorities for further development:

- guidance provision for students from minority groups
- planning and co-ordination of student support/care services with particular emphasis for students that are gifted and talented and students that fall within the autistic spectrum
- Relevant school policies already in place, being developed or reviewed, must be examined by reference to the guidance plan and any implications which it has for them needs to be addressed.

|  |
|--|
| <b>Implementation Arrangements, Roles and Responsibilities</b> |
|--|

As ACS is developing its Guidance provision and the concurrent roles and responsibilities within it is not a case of implementing a Whole School Guidance Plan but of articulating what is entailed in its current Guidance Provision and its ratification by the Board. The roles and the responsibility for the delivery of the Guidance provision are outlined in the Staff Handbook and in various policy documents contained therein.

## Appendix 1

Circular Letter No. PPT 12/05

To: The Managerial Authorities of Secondary, Community and Comprehensive Schools.

### GUIDANCE PROVISION IN SECOND LEVEL SCHOOLS

1. I am directed by the Minister for Education and Science to bring to your notice the provisions which will apply, from the beginning of the 2005/06 school year, in relation to:
  - allocation of hours for the provision of guidance in schools
  - Conditions of appointment of guidance counsellors.

For the purposes of this circular, guidance in second-level schools refers to a range of learning experiences that assist students to develop self-management skills that will lead to effective choices and decisions about their lives. Guidance encompasses the three separate, but interlinked, areas of personal and social development, educational guidance and career guidance. According to Section 9 of the Education Act (1998) a recognised school shall use its available resources to—

- (c) *ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices.*

Guidance should be a whole school activity that is integrated into all school programmes. Each school is expected to develop a school guidance plan as part of its School Plan and this plan should include provision for supporting the needs of pupils at junior cycle. The Department asks that schools should, as far as possible, utilise the additional guidance allocation granted under this circular to focus on guidance provision at junior cycle. While the school's guidance planning should involve the guidance counsellor/s in the first instance, other members of school staff and management also have key roles to play. Parents and students must be seen as an essential part of this process. Representatives of the local community, especially local business, the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), the National Educational Welfare Board and other relevant agencies should be consulted and involved as appropriate.

**2. Allocation of hours for the provision of guidance in schools**

2.1 All second-level schools in the Free Education Scheme/Block Grant Scheme qualify for an allocation of hours in respect of guidance, in accordance with Schedule A below. Schools not in these schemes qualify for an allocation in accordance with Schedule B.

| <b>Schedule A</b> |                                    |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Enrolment</b>  | <b>Allocation (hours per week)</b> |
| 1000+             | 47                                 |
| 900-999           | 38                                 |
| 800-899           | 36                                 |
| 700-799           | 30                                 |
| 600-699           | 28                                 |
| 500-599           | 24                                 |
| 400-499           | 17                                 |
| 300-399           | 13                                 |
| 200-299           | 11                                 |
| <200              | 8                                  |

| <b>Schedule B</b>                         |               |
|---|---------------|
| Schools with 500 or more pupils           | 22 hours/week |
| Schools in the 350-499 enrolment category | 11 hours/week |

- 2.2 The allocation of these hours to an individual school in any particular school year will be determined by the recognised pupil enrolment (including recognised PLC pupils) at the end of September of the preceding year.
- 2.3 Some schools may have previously been allocated posts/hours in response to particular needs and/or as part of the Guidance Enhancement Initiative (GEI). Such posts/hours will continue to be allocated to schools for the 2005/06 school year and will be taken into account in determining a school's allocation on foot of the revised schedule. Thus a school will get the difference between its present allocation and its entitlement under the revised allocation schedule.
- 2.4 An individual school management may allocate, at its own discretion, additional hours from within normal teacher allocation to guidance.
- 2.5 Continued allocation of hours for guidance under this circular will be conditional on:
- a guidance plan being part of the School Plan which is reviewed annually by school management and staff
  - the guidance plan taking account of the context of the school and, to the extent possible, providing for the guidance needs of all students to be met through the integration of guidance into all school programmes and student support measures in the school.

### 3. Conditions of appointment of Guidance Counsellors

- 3.1 Given the broad range of activities it encompasses, guidance in addition to being a specialist area, is also a whole school activity and so will engage a range of staff members, parents and community agencies as well as the young people themselves.
- 3.2 The guidance counsellor's time will be allocated to a range of guidance activities, including work with individual students, group or class contact and other support activities. The school guidance plan should ensure that all students can avail of a developmental guidance programme. The documents *Planning the School Guidance Programme*<sup>1</sup> and *Guidelines for Second - Level Schools on the implications of Section 9(c) of the Education Act (1998), relating to students' access to appropriate guidance*<sup>2</sup> should be referred to in the preparation of the school guidance plan.
- 3.3 A guidance counsellor should be a qualified second-level teacher and in addition, should hold a qualification in guidance in accordance with section 4 below.

### 4. Recognised Courses

- 4.1 The following post-graduate courses are currently recognised by the Department of Education and Science as providing a qualification acceptable for school guidance work:
- Higher Diploma in Guidance and Counselling - University College Cork (UCC)
  - Higher Diploma in School Guidance and Counselling – National University of Ireland, Maynooth (NUI M)
  - Masters in Education with specialisation in Guidance and Counselling- The University of Dublin, Trinity College (TCD)
  - M. Sc. In Educational Guidance and Counselling – Mode B (TCD)
  - Post graduate Diploma in Guidance Counselling - University of Limerick (UL)
- 4.2 The courses leading to the following qualifications have been discontinued. However, the qualifications continue to be recognised for guidance counsellors:
- Masters Degree in Family Counselling -Guidance and Counselling Specialisation (Marino Institute of Education)
  - Diploma in Career Guidance/ Higher Diploma in Careers Guidance - University College Dublin (UCD)
  - Diploma in Guidance and Counselling (Mater Dei Institute)
- 4.3 Other qualifications which are deemed equivalent to those listed at paragraph 4.1 above may also be recognised by the Department. Requests for recognition of qualifications should be made to Post-Primary Qualifications Section, Department of Education and Science, Cornamaddy, Athlone, at least three months in advance of the beginning of the school year in which it is intended to commence employment.

---

<sup>1</sup> Planning the School Guidance Programme –*National Centre for Guidance in Education, 2004*

<sup>2</sup> Guidelines for Second-Level Schools on the implications of Section 9 (c) of the Education Act (1998), relating to students' access to appropriate guidance –*Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Science, 2005.*

5. You are requested to ensure that copies of this circular are provided to the appropriate representatives of parents and teachers for transmission to individual parents and teachers.
6. Queries concerning this circular letter should be e-mailed to [allocations@education.gov.ie](mailto:allocations@education.gov.ie)

---

A. Barrett  
Principal Officer (Acting)

Date 26 May 2005.

## Appendix 2

- The National Development Plan (NDP) 2000-2006<sup>3</sup> states that *the provision of guidance and counselling in second level schools is vital to enable each pupil to gain the maximum benefit from the education system*. The NDP also identifies the school guidance service as a social inclusion measure within the education sector.
- The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development considers guidance within education systems as having an important role to play in laying the foundations for lifelong career development, including *knowledge and competencies regarding self-awareness, the world of work, and making decisions and transitions*<sup>4</sup>. It defines guidance services as *services that assist individuals, of any age and at any point throughout their lives, to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers*<sup>5</sup>. It stresses that effective advice and guidance on educational and training options and on links between these options and later occupational destinations *can help better match individuals' learning choices to their interests, talents and intended destinations*<sup>6</sup>. In the OECD's view, this can help to reduce early school leaving, improve flows between different levels of education and improve transitions from education to the labour market—*these outcomes help to make better use of educational resources, and to increase both individual and social returns to investments in education*<sup>7</sup>.
- The OECD also issued a Country Note on Ireland in 2002<sup>8</sup>. This provides an overview of guidance services in Ireland, the findings of the reviewers and their recommendations for the development of services in the future. The County Note makes the following observations in relation to guidance provision in second level schools:
  - the imbalance in the guidance service provided in schools in favour of senior cycle students is very hard to justify

---

<sup>3</sup> Ireland – National Development Plan 2000-2006 – *Stationery Office: Dublin, 2000, p.99*

<sup>4</sup> Why Careers information, Guidance and Counselling Matter for Public Policy, A Working Paper  
*OECD: Paris, 2002*

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> OECD Review of Career Guidance Policies, Ireland Country Note, 2002

- there is a need to put in place a stronger developmental approach to career assistance, to give students skills in career decision-making, to improve their knowledge of the world of work, and to better prepare them for upper secondary subject choice; this would reduce pressures upon guidance counsellors to provide career assistance in a one-to-one mode in senior cycle and give them increased time to focus on students who have the greatest needs
- there is an absence of a formal guidance planning requirement for schools
- there are constraints on guidance counsellors' time arising from:
  - a role that combines subject teaching with guidance
  - a role that combines personal and social guidance with careers guidance
  - existing student to guidance counsellor ratios
  - there is weak integration of careers guidance into the curriculum and into the day-to-day work of subject teachers
- there is limited use of experience-based approaches, of ICT and of community-based resources to complement the available guidance counsellor resources.
- The European Union Presidency Conclusions<sup>9</sup> on the importance of guidance throughout life in supporting and furthering the Lisbon Agenda<sup>10</sup> emphasise the importance of all European citizens having access to appropriate guidance services at school and at all later life stages. The need for particular attention to be paid to early intervention with individuals and groups at risk of not completing their schooling and of alienation from society is also stressed as well as the need for provision for persons with special educational needs.
- In May 2004, a Resolution was adopted by the Council of Ministers of the European Union on *Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Guidance throughout life in Europe*. The Resolution highlights the need for guidance provision within the education system, especially in schools. It states

---

<sup>9</sup> EU Presidency Conclusions following an informal meeting of the European Ministers for Education and the Commission of the European Union, April 2004, Dublin.

<sup>10</sup> Lisbon Agenda – Strategy agreed by the EU Heads of States and Governments to make the European Union *the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-driven economy by 2010* – Presidency Conclusions, Lisbon European Council: March 2000

that guidance has *an essential role to play in ensuring that individuals' educational and career decisions are firmly based, and in assisting them to develop effective self-management of their learning and career paths.* The Resolution stresses the role of guidance services in:

- the prevention of early school leaving
- the empowerment of individuals to manage their own learning and careers
- the re-integration of early school leavers into appropriate education and training programmes.

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management of Ashbourne Community School at its meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2007 Ref. Meeting Nr. 140.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Chairperson  
Board of Management  
Ashbourne Community School*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_