Holy Family Secondary School

School Guidance and Counselling Policy

March 2014

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Appendix 1: DES Circular 0009/2012 (Staffing Arrangements for Guidance and Counselling)

Holy Family Secondary School staff, the Parents' Association, the Student Council and the Board of Management were consulted during the formation of the policy.

Ratified by Board of Management on: 11th March 2014

Proposed Policy Review date: Academic 2017/18

Chairperson, Board of Management
Mr Feargal White

Secretary, Board of Management
Mrs Angela Ryan

HOLY FAMILY SECONDARY SCHOOL

NEWBRIDGE, CO. KILDARE

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Under the patronage of the Catholic Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin

Principal: Mrs. Angela Ryan Deputy Principal: Ms. Catherine Rochford

Date: 27/3/2014

This Policy has been ratified by a representative acting on behalf of Bishop Nulty of the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin.

Signed: _____ Date: 27/03/14

Representative of the Diocese

1. Mission Statement

School Guidance and Counselling is provided by a professionally trained School Guidance Counsellor and Student Support staff. This Policy has been developed in line with our Mission Statement which states;

'We promote the Christian virtues of faith, hope, love, gentleness, respect and tolerance, and we emphasise togetherness and family. Guided by these Christian virtues, and dedicated to the pursuit of excellence, it is our mission to provide a safe, caring, inclusive learning environment in which to foster the spiritual, intellectual, academic, aesthetic, physical, emotional and social development of each pupil so that she may fulfil her own unique potential and may leave our school with the capacity and the willingness to contribute to the building of a society characterised by these Christian virtues'

The policy content herein must be interpreted and understood in conjunction within the policies framework of Holy Family Secondary School.

2. Rationale

The School Guidance and Counselling plan is a structured document that describes the school guidance programme and specifies how the guidance needs of students are to be addressed. It is an integral part of the school's overall school development plan.

Section 9 (c) of the Education Act, 1998 requires Holy Family Secondary School to "*ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices*" based on the need to provide access as determined by the general resources available and the additional resource allocation for guidance and counselling and other related activities provided by the DES and the need to provide appropriate guidance that is, the whole school's response to meeting the guidance needs of all of its students.

The School Guidance and Counselling plan endeavours at all times to make the guidance;

- Accessible to all students in Holy Family Secondary School
- As responsive as possible to concerns expressed by staff colleagues
- Impartial
- Inclusive
- Informed
- Confidential in nature.
- Expressive of the ethos of Holy Family Secondary School

3. Scope

Guidance in Holy Family Secondary School refers to a range of learning experiences, provided in a developmental sequence, that assist pupils to develop self-management skills which will lead to effective choices and decisions about their lives.

The pupils' needs, on which the school guidance and counselling service is based, can be grouped under three headings: educational needs, vocational needs and personal needs.

- Educational guidance and counselling refers to assisting pupils to access the information and develop the skills and attitudes necessary to get maximum benefit from their time in school. Pupils are given the support necessary to cope with issues that relate to education, e.g. problems with study, examination stress, programme choice, subject choice, etc.
- Vocational guidance and counselling refers to assisting pupils to access the information and develop the skills and attitudes necessary to explore and clarify career possibilities, to set attainable career goals, to make informed decisions and to take the necessary practical steps to implement these decisions.
- Personal guidance and counselling refers to assisting pupils to access the information and develop the skills and attitudes necessary to cope successfully with their personal and social relationships both inside and outside school.

While the above can be described as three distinct areas the reality is that they are inextricably linked. It is the holistic approach to each student's development that is the key to the success of School Guidance and Counselling at Holy Family Secondary School. This is achieved through timetabled lessons, small group work and one-to-one interventions.

As guidance is a whole school concern, the plan applies to school management and staff generally.

The policy operates within a legislative framework and takes account of the following;

- Section 9(C) of the Education Act, 1998 (relating to students' access to appropriate guidance)
- Department of Education and Skills Circular Letter No. PPT 12/05
- The Education Welfare Act , 2000
- Equal Status Act, 2000
- The Equality Act, 2004

Definitions:

- **'School '** means Holy Family Secondary School, Newbridge, Co. Kildare
- **'Guidance and Counselling'** is used in this document to describe the activities provided by "guidance and counselling services" identified under "support services" in Section 2 of the Education Act, 1998.
- **'Parent/Guardian'** means those having parental responsibility for a child.

4. Aims

School Guidance and Counselling in Holy Family Secondary School aim to professionally answer the guidance and counselling needs of our students in the context of the our mission statement.

Counselling is an interactive learning process between counsellor and student, whether individual or group, which approaches, in a holistic way, personal, educational and/or vocational issues. Moreover, the availability of a counselling service can support individual pupils inside/outside the classroom context, the pastoral and the disciplinary structures in the school. Competitiveness, bullying, social exclusion, family crisis, scholastic under-achievement, abuse, homophobia, peer pressure and substance mis-use are some of the problems which can be assisted with the support of counselling and student support.

Individual Counselling - is an interactive process, which facilitates meaningful understanding of the self and environment and/or clarification of goals and values for future behaviour.
Group Counselling - is a broad term covering types of counselling for more than two people. In group counselling members listen to, support and challenge each other and thus, learn to be open, constructive, and assertive and to experience how others see them.
Peer Counselling - occurs on limited and well prepared occasions where pupils help and support each other on topics educational and vocational but not necessarily on personal issues.

It is essential that a counselling service within the school operates in collaboration with processes within the school, which promotes the wellbeing of the school, particularly pastoral and disciplinary teams. Working within the requirements of The Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy and the Institute of Guidance Counsellors Code of Ethics for legitimate practice, ensures that the service is properly supervised and monitored so that the student needs are prioritised and their rights protected.

5. Team

The School Guidance and Counselling team along with the Principal and Deputy Principal, work with other specialised teachers i.e. Religion, SPHE, Year Heads, School Chaplain(s), Class Tutors, TY and LCVP Co-ordinators to facilitate and partake in developmental programmes designed to help pupils with their personal/social, educational and vocational development.

For personal/social development, the programmes would include personal and social skills, self-awareness, decision-making skills, planning and health promotion.
For educational development, the programmes would include subject/course/level choices, motivation and learning and study skills/exam techniques.
For vocational development the programmes would include employment opportunity awareness. Educational and training courses, higher and technical education choices and job search skills.

School Guidance and Counselling consultation is provided by significant adults in the pupil's life. These adults include Parents, the school Principal, the Deputy Principal, Year Heads, Care Team, School Chaplain(s) and external agencies.. These consultations (advice, information or counselling) must always recognise the primacy of the student's integrity and the need to maintain appropriate confidentiality.

6. Confidentiality

All students have a right to confidentiality in their dealings with School Guidance and Counselling at Holy Family Secondary School. The right is not universal, however, and there are some cases in which, for the pupil's best interest, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed e.g. in the case of abuse, bullying, and risk to another pupil's life. In counselling the pupil and the counsellor should make the pupil aware that confidentiality could not be guaranteed in any of the above cases and that information of this nature would have to be referred on. In short, pupils who meet with the School Guidance and Counselling will be informed of the following;

- All things discussed are confidential except when the pupil herself or another person is at risk.
- Any information which highlights that the pupil or another person is in danger.
- If the pupil is in danger of doing grievous harm to herself.

Ethical awareness is a prerequisite for School Guidance and Counselling. She/he is obliged to operate, in policy, process and practice in an ethical manner. The primary focus is the welfare of the pupil and she/he is ethically bound to act in the best interest of the pupil. The counsellor must act within the law and within the ethical guidelines as outlined by her/his profession. The School Guidance and Counselling team are expected to be competent in and mindful of the legal and ethical responsibilities of their work. Furthermore, they are ethically obliged to seek out new developments in the personal, educational and vocational fields with a view to improving the overall counselling service to the pupil.

7. Referral and Standard Operating Procedures

The School Guidance and Counselling team may refer, or they may be the recipient of referrals. Referrals may come from parents, staff, principal or deputy-principal. Pupils who are referred to cannot be forced to attend and their choice must be respected. If, however, a pupil is referred and comes to the School Guidance and Counselling, their presence will be acknowledged and welcomed.

Standard Operating Procedures for pupils to access the Guidance Service for Personal Counselling

Pupils can access or be referred to the Guidance Counsellor as follows:

- Referral by Senior Management (Principal, Deputy Principal, BOM)
- Referral by Year Head(s) (standard referral form)
- Referral by School Chaplain(s)
- A pupil may approach any of the Guidance Counsellors directly and seek an initial appointment.

In the case of pupils who are attending counselling on an ongoing basis a green form will be completed by a Guidance Counsellor and given to the relevant Year Heads for placement in the appropriate pupil files in the Year Head Office

Day to Day Procedures

1. Initial meeting with pupil having being referred as outlined above.
2. Outline verbally to the pupil the conditions of confidentiality which pertains to the counselling session.
3. Assess the pupil's needs and consider the following options
    - Refer to other pastoral care services, e.g. Chaplin, Tutor, Year Head,
    - Refer for ongoing counselling within the school
    - In the event of pupils needing specialised care, the pupil will be referred to outside agencies.
    - Refer to Designated Liaison Person (DLP) if there is an issue of concern under Child Protection Guidelines.
4. Discuss with pupil, her willingness and consent to participate in ongoing counselling within the school.

5. Check on availability of the service within the **total weekly non class contact allocation of 20 periods for personal/career guidance** available for 2013/2014 and prioritise as appropriate.
6. Obtain written consent from parent /guardian if a pupil is to attend for a second and/or subsequent counselling visit.
7. Notify Year Head via green form for pupil file.
8. Use designated appointments page in pupil's school journal to excuse pupil from class.

The School Guidance and Counselling Team, in consultation with the relevant parties, parents, principal, relevant staff, may, also refer a pupil to an external, appropriately qualified professional. A legitimate referral (one made with the received permission of the necessary people e.g. parents) may occur after the School Guidance and Counsellor has made an informed decision that the pupil's situation requires assistance beyond the School Guidance and Counsellor's professional training. Assistance for pupils may be sought for problems such as learning difficulties, substance abuse, addiction, bereavement and personal crisis from agencies such as the student's GP, the NEHB, NEPS, Educational Welfare Officer and the Junior Liaison Officer of the Gardaí.

Parents must be informed of and permission sought for a referral to an external agency e.g. Health Board, Educational Psychologist etc.

8. Assessment

Psychological and educational assessments/tests are useful insofar as they provide information for School Guidance and Counselling and others for whom it is relevant. Judicious use of test information is helpful in predicting academic and occupational performance, classifying ability, assessing remediation requirements and levels of achievement. Assessment results are important. Yet, their dissemination is of equal or greater importance. In returning the results of a pupil's assessment, the SGC must be aware of the confidentiality and sensitivities of the pupil and the manner in which the SGC shares the information with the pupil.

Tests may include: personality tests, aptitude tests i.e. interest inventories, problem checklist, general ability tests, performance tests, school exam results and public exam results.

9. Accountability and Evaluation

Records of counselling sessions should be kept to a minimum. It is also advisable for the School Guidance and Counselling team to use own personal notation if records are to be kept.

School Guidance and Counselling is mindful the obligations to management, staff and pupils alike and recognises that they are responsible for the school guidance service throughout the school. The counsellor(s) discusses with, and informs both staff and pupils of information that is relevant and pertinent to their situations.

10. School Guidance and Counselling Plan

Using the present guidance allocation as judiciously as possible for the student body, some elements of the plan include;

Junior Cycle

- Transition supports from primary to post-primary.
- Entrance Exams
- Support to those students who are not settling in or who are identified through the school pastoral care programme as experiencing e.g. bullying or displaying disruptive behaviour.
- Student referrals by Class Tutors, Year Heads, Deputy Principal, Principal or Care Team.
- Some students self refer for a wide variety of reasons and these are promptly dealt with through individual appointments.
- Use standardised tests as a diagnostic tool and provide feedback to students so that decisions taken will be better informed, e.g. ability tests, interest inventories, aptitude tests, problem checklists
- In Third Year; information evenings for parents and students on subject choice for senior cycle is provided. Comprehensive information on the potential benefits of the Transition Year programme is also made available at this time.
- Address parents of incoming 1st year students (evening).
- Address parents of 3rd year students in Spring re: Programme Choice (evening).
- Address parents of 3rd year students in Spring re: Subject Choice (evening).

Senior Cycle

- The whole spectrum of the third level system in Ireland is explained in considerable detail, the application process for CAO, Universities, Institutes of Technology, Post-Leaving Certificate Courses, Apprenticeships, and Defence Forces and so on.
- The School Guidance and Counselling team meets all sixth year pupils individually and some pupils are seen several times depending on personal needs and circumstances.
- Classes for Guidance purposes with senior cycle pupils are timetabled.
- Preparation for third-level education and post-school preparation activities include, amongst others;
    - ✓ Distribution and completion of CAO application packs.
    - ✓ Arranging Open Day Visits
    - ✓ Dealing with the procedure for grant applications or arranging accommodation.
    - ✓ Preparing classes for visiting speakers.
- Address parents of final year students re: Cost of Going to College (evening).
- Address parents of final year students re: CAO/UCAS (evening).
- Issue Guidance bulletins to staff on a regular basis.
- Maintain and manage a Guidance Resource Library for pupil and staff use

There is an "open door" policy in relation to meeting with pupils, teachers, parents and management. Specific time periods will be set aside for appointments in the timetable for this purpose. Priority will be given to pupils who appear to be in crisis.

Appendix 1: DES Circular 0009/2012 -Staffing Arrangements for Guidance and Counselling (Excerpt only)

To: The Managerial Authorities of Secondary, Community and Comprehensive Schools and the Chief Executive Officers of Vocational Education Committees

Staffing arrangements in post-primary schools for the 2012/13 school year

1. Introduction

The purpose of this circular is to inform all post primary school management and staff of the staffing arrangements for post primary schools for the 2012/13 school year including, in particular, the requirement to manage guidance from within the standard allocation. It includes an overview of the timeframe for the commencement and operation of the teacher allocation process and also the redeployment process. ...

.....4. Guidance Provision

As part of the budget measures guidance posts at post-primary level will no longer be allocated to any post-primary school on an ex-quota basis (i.e. the additional allocations for guidance provision will cease from September 2012). With effect from September 2012, guidance provision is to be managed by schools from within their standard staffing schedule allocation. This circular supersedes all previous circulars in relation to the provision of guidance counselling hours in second level schools.

4.1 Functions of a School - Guidance

The provision of guidance continues to remain a statutory requirement for schools under the Education Act 1998.

Section 9 of the Act sets out a wide range of functions for schools and requires schools to use its available resources to discharge those functions. Subsection (c) of Section 9 relates specifically to guidance:

"ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices"

4.2 Autonomy at school level

The Programme for Government contains a commitment to provide greater freedom and autonomy to school Principals and boards by devolving more responsibility locally, including greater freedom to allocate and manage staff.

Schools currently have autonomy in relation to how they use their standard staffing allocation for the provision of subjects to their students. This autonomy is extended as a result of the budget measure whereby the standard staffing allocation must, from September 2012, also be used for the provision of guidance to students.

4.3 Whole school approach to the provision of guidance

It is established policy that guidance is a whole school activity and under existing arrangements each school develops collaboratively a school guidance plan as a means of supporting the needs of its students. 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. A clear record of roles, responsibilities and practices is a core feature of good guidance planning. Parents and students must be seen as an essential part of the process. Through this process schools can, for example, consider the following options for maximising the use of their available resources for the provision of guidance:

Optimise the delivery of personal, educational, career and vocational guidance in class group settings,

- Enable students to use directly the extensive range of guidance tools available through the internet from relevant websites (e.g. Qualifax, Careers Portal)
- Enable some of the curriculum elements of the planned guidance programme to be delivered through other teachers such as SPHE staff.
- Maximise the role of the student support or pastoral care team in schools, and,
- Ensure that the guidance counsellor has 1:1 time towards meeting the counselling needs of students experiencing difficulties or crisis.

The support of the whole school community, parents and the relevant external agencies such as NEWB and NEPS are key to the provision of guidance in schools.

4.4 Existing Department published documentation on provision of guidance

The Department has previously published documentation on the provision of guidance in schools and these documents are available on the Department's website. It should be noted that these documents were published at a time when a separate additional allocation was given for guidance. Therefore they should be read in the context of the further autonomy being provided to schools relating to the allocation of resources and some elements may need to be adjusted depending on the approach adopted at individual school level. School authorities should nonetheless continue to find the documentation a useful reference guide and resource to be used, as appropriate, and in particular in the preparation of school guidance plans:

Guidelines for Second-Level Schools on the Implications of Section 9(c) of the Education Act 1998, Relating to Students' Access to Appropriate Guidance (DES, 2005)

Inspectorate publication in 2009 "Looking at Guidance"

4.5 Guidance Counsellors

Department Circular 0031/2011 sets out the requirements in relation to teacher recruitment, registration and qualifications. Notwithstanding the budget measure, it remains the case that a person being assigned as guidance counsellor must be a qualified second-level teacher and, in addition, hold the relevant recognised qualification for school guidance work.....

HFSS SCHOOL POLICY: **School Guidance and Counselling Policy**

YEAR OF IMPLEMENTATION/REVIEW: **Academic 2013-14**

PROCESS STAGE	DATE	NOTES
Identification Primary Planning Meeting	March 2013	
Scoping document (DRAFT 1)	April 2013	
Discussion document finalised (DRAFT 2)	August 2013	
Circulation of discussion document to staff (DRAFT 2)	August 2013	Meeting with Guidance and Counselling Team in school planning session (August 2013) C. Mackell, K. Aherne and M.McMahon.
Consultation with SCR, Parents' Association (DRAFT 3)	November 2013	
Review by Planning Team (DRAFT 4)	November 2013	Additional feedback from the Guidance and and Counselling Team
Consultation with Board of Management (FINAL DRAFT)	February 2014	
Ratification date (BOM)	March 2014	
Implementation date		