



# **Whole School Guidance Plan**

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## Section 1 – Aims of School Guidance Programme

### 1.1 What is guidance in schools?

Guidance counselling and Guidance and counselling refers to a range of learning experiences provided in a developmental sequence, designed to assist students to make choices about their lives and to make transitions to these choices. These choices may be categorised into three distinct but interlinked areas:

- Personal and social
- Educational
- Career

Guidance activities that assist students make informed choices include:

- Personal counselling
- Assessment using psychometric instruments and inventories
- Career information e.g. (career classes, personal vocational guidance interviews, attendance at career events)
- Use of information technology eg. Qualifax/Studentfinance
- Personal and social developmental programmes

Counselling is a key part of the school guidance programme, offered on an individual or group basis as part of a developmental learning process and at moments of personal crisis. Counselling may include personal counselling, educational counselling career counselling or combinations of these.

### 1.2 School Philosophy and Mission Statement

Dominican College, Sion Hill aims to help each student achieve her full potential, academically, spiritually, physically, emotionally and socially in a happy secure environment.

In achieving this, the Guidance Counsellor plays an important part in the areas of counselling and guidance as well as involvement in the Pastoral Care programme.

### 1.3 The Aims of the Guidance Counselling Service

The Guidance Counselling Service is seen as having a central role in the continuous developmental guidance process of each individual student, which begins prior to the entry of the student to the school and concludes when the student has left the school.

#### 1.3.1 Guidance

To deal with all students in an eclectic and multicultural manner in order to aid them in developing their full potential.

Provide a framework for the delivery of the school's guidance programme

To ensure a structured response to student's personal, social, educational and career guidance needs

The plan is inclusive, providing for the junior, senior, minority, special education needs of all students.

The plan will include all guidance activities: career classes, Vocational Guidance Interviews, attendance at career exhibitions, open days, meeting with management, and support agencies.

To provide a caring and supportive service, which would be three fold

1. Personal and Social
2. Educational
3. Vocational

Personal and Social: This would encompass developmental skills crucial to the students' education and careers eg. self awareness, decision making skills, planning, coping strategies.

Educational: This is developmental and would include such areas as subject / course choices, subject level, motivation and learning, study skills, learning related problems, psychometric testing.

Vocational: includes areas such as employment rights and duties, job opportunities, vocational education and training, further education, job and interview preparation, career research and career / course information.

### **1.3.2 Counselling:**

To provide a counselling environment which would be both caring and non-judgemental on a one to one or group basis. This service would be aimed at helping students in areas such as:

- Decision making
- Problem solving
- Changing behaviours
- Effect meaningful changes in their lives

This counselling service is aimed at facilitating individual students in a holistic manner to realistically appraise their abilities, interests and aptitudes in order to make appropriate life choices and to achieve personal happiness.

### **Objectives**

- Develop 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

### **1.4 Rationale**

Guidance is a universal entitlement for all students in post primary schools as per the Education Act (1998). This Act also requires schools to provide students with "appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices" (section 9c). The Education Act also requires schools to prepare a school plan (section 21).

### **1.5 Scope**

The Guidance Plan involves all aspects of school life and as such it is a whole school activity.

While the Guidance Counsellor has the overall responsibility for coordinating and compiling the plan all members of staff have a contribution to make.

The Guidance Counsellor is a member of the school educational team and as such works with various members of that team to provide students with the best possible service.

**Members of this team include among others:**

- School Management
- Year Heads
- Tutors
- Subject Teachers and Departments
- Special Needs Co-ordinator
- Transition Year Co-ordinator
- Parents
- School Maintenance Staff
- Support Personnel

**The Guidance Plan is a reflection of this teamwork.**

The Guidance Counsellor, as part of his job, may liaise with outside agencies such as

- Department of Education and Science
- Local Community
- Business
- Garda Liaison Officers
- Employment Agencies
- Feeder Schools (Year Head & Principal)
- Health Service Executive
- Referral Agencies
- Social Services

## **Section 2 – Current Guidance Provision and Programme**

### **Part 1 Current Guidance Provision**

#### **2.1.1 Junior Cycle**

The Guidance Counsellor takes first year students for an introduction to the Guidance Service.

The First Years students also receive help and support in choosing what subjects to retain in second year and in the implications of their decision. These meetings are timetabled in conjunction with the Tutor class.

Third Year students receive support in their choices for Transition year and in what implications this might have at Leaving Certificate level and for third level.

#### **2.1.2 Senior Cycle**

Transition Year students receive advice regarding subject choices and levels and how these may affect their choice of career. Scheduled talks are also given to students with regard to careers. These talks are arranged with the T4 Co-ordinator.

5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year class groups are each timetabled for one careers class per week.

Each senior student receives a minimum of two careers appointments with the Guidance Counsellor. If a student requires more time than this it can be organised by arrangement with the Guidance Counsellor.

### **Part 2 Current Guidance Programme**

#### **2.2.1 Introduction**

The Guidance curriculum may be divided into two components:

- Formal
- Informal.

## **Formal Guidance**

The Formal Guidance curriculum is delivered using two forms of intervention employing a number of methodologies:

1. Individual contact of a personal counselling nature and careers/vocational guidance.
2. Classroom guidance delivered in regular weekly classes to senior cycle students, rotating modules, class group or year group intervention as required.

## **Informal Guidance**

The Informal Guidance programme consists of liaising with other Teaching Staff/Management to promote cross curricular links and to enhance the development of a whole school policy in relation to the delivery of The Guidance Plan. Meetings with Parents/Guardians form an integral part of Informal guidance.

### **2.2.1 Junior Cycle**

#### **First Years**

Introduction to the Guidance Counselling Service  
Subject Choice and its implications.

#### **Second Years**

Subject Levels.

#### **Third Years**

Subject Choice and preparation for Transition Year

### **2.2.2 Senior Cycle**

#### **Aims:**

The aim of the guidance Counselling Programme is to help students to develop an awareness and acceptance of their talents and abilities; to explore possibilities and Opportunities open to them; to grow in independence and to take responsibility for themselves; to make informed choices about their lives and to follow through on those choices.

The guidance programme at senior cycle aims to assist the full development of each student's potential, to help the student grow in self-knowledge and self-esteem and to prepare him/her for higher or further education, training and/or employment.

#### **Objectives:**

The guidance programme should endeavour to provide students with opportunities to:

- § prepare to manage their successful transition from second level to further or higher
- § education, training or employment
- § identify their own key motivating factors
- § prepare for successful transition into adulthood



- § learn about job search and job retention skills develop research and ICT skills so that
- § they can be self-directed in their career exploration and development
- § learn about the world of work, including employment rights and responsibilities
- § develop awareness of the need for lifelong learning
- § develop skills to become independent and self-motivated learners.

### Contents of the Programme

<b>1. Self Assessment</b>	Career Interest Interest Tests Personality Career Values	<b>Guidance Counsellor</b>
<b>2. DATS</b>	Differential Aptitude Testing and analysis Analysis of Career	
<b>3. Career Profile</b>		<b>Guidance Counsellor</b>
<b>4. Relating profile to career</b>	Abilities Interests Aptitudes Strengths Weaknesses	<b>Guidance Counsellor</b>
<b>4. Personality</b>		<b>Guidance Counsellor/SPHE</b>
<b>5. What options are available</b>		<b>Guidance Counsellor/ Subject Teachers</b>
<b>6. How the Education system and FETAC work</b>		<b>Guidance Counsellor</b>
<b>7. The different forms of Third Level Education</b>		<b>Guidance Counsellor</b>
<b>8. Open Days</b>		<b>Guidance Counsellor / Year Head</b>
<b>9. Labour Market</b>	Labour market trends Career Development trends Employment	<b>Guidance Counsellor</b>

	opportunities Employment legislation (as relevant and appropriate) ICT developments in workplace	
<b>10. Challenges to living and learning</b>		<b>Guidance Counsellor / SPHE</b>
<b>11. Social and Community</b>	e.g Issues Bullying Suicide Depression Illegal substances	<b>SPHE / Guidance Counsellor</b>
<b>12. Grants</b>		<b>Guidance Counsellor</b>
<b>13. Study Skills and Exam Preparation</b>		<b>Guidance Counsellor / Tutors / Subject Teachers</b>
<b>14. Interviews</b>		<b>Guidance Counsellor</b>
<b>15. Higher Options</b>		<b>Guidance Counsellor</b>
<b>16. CUKAS and the UCAS system.</b>		<b>Guidance Counsellor</b>

## Section 3 – Current Guidance Procedures

### 3.1 Subject Choice Procedures

Subject choices have to be taken by students on three different occasions.

#### 3.1.1 Junior Cycle

First year to Second year

This choice is normally made by students in March of First Year

Core Subject	Choice Subjects
Irish	Business
English	Home Economics
Mathematics	Art
History/ Geography	Music
Foreign Language	Science
Religion	
CPSE	
SPHE	

Students are asked to choose two subjects to continue studying up to Junior Certificate Level

Second Year

Information re subject levels.

Third Year Students have decisions to make in two areas

Whether to do Higher or Ordinary level at Junior Certificate

What subjects to concentrate on in Transition Year.

The choice of Transition Year subjects is normally made in March of Third Year.

#### 3.1.2 Senior Cycle

Students study four core subjects and choose another three subjects. (with the exception of students where a specific exemption may apply).

This choice is normally made in March of Transition Year.

Students have to choose the subjects they wish to study in 5<sup>th</sup> year.

Core Subject	Choice Subjects
Irish English Mathematics Foreign Language	Art Business Economics Physics Chemistry Biology Geography History Home Economics (Social and Scientific) Music

These choices can vary from year to year according to available resources.

In keeping with our policy of supporting our students through the process of developing their full potential the Guidance Counsellor provides help and support at each stage of the decision making process and is available to all students for advice and guidance

### **3.2 Counselling and Student Appointment Policy**

#### **3.2.1 General**

Students make appointments with the Guidance Counsellor for a variety of reasons

- for Careers
- for Information
- for Personal reasons

Each student is entitled to “adequate guidance” under the Education Act 1998. This will vary from student to student with some students requiring more time than others.

#### **3.2.2 Career’s Appointment**

Career Interviews will typically include the following:

- Analysis of Differential Aptitude Tests
  - Analysis of Career Inventory
  - Career Values
  - Options Available
- Based on this analysis a career path is mapped out for each student

#### **3.2.3 Career Appointments**

Priority for appointments is given to 6<sup>th</sup> Year students. Appointments for 5<sup>th</sup> year students will be scheduled from February onwards. Appointments for other years are dependent on time availability.

### **3.2.4 Arranging Appointments**

Career appointments are given two weeks in advance and are posted on the staff-room notice board as well as a written appointment given to each student.

Changing timetabled slots is allowed in exceptional circumstances and if adequate notification is given.

### **3.2.5 Information Appointments**

These are arranged with the Guidance Counsellor outside of career class time.

### **3.2.6 Written Permission**

It is essential that when attending a Career or Information appointment each student brings her diary.

When a student is meeting her class teacher again she should show her diary with a Guidance Counsellor stamp.

### **3.2.7 Personal Counselling Appointments**

The Pastoral Care team members, Year Heads and Tutors play a central role in the delivery of the Counselling Programme

Personal Counselling appointments may arise for a variety of reasons

A student may be referred to the Guidance Counsellor by a teacher

A parent may ask for some intervention by the Guidance Counsellor

A student may approach the Guidance Counsellor directly and ask for an appointment

Counselling has as its objective the empowerment of students so that they can make decisions, solve problems, address behavioural issues, develop coping strategies and resolve difficulties they may be experiencing.

### **3.2.8 Reasons**

Possible reasons for an appointment may include:

Personal problems

Family problems

Relationship problems

Coping skills

Motivation

Making choices

Transition to 3rd level education and the adult world.

### **3.2.9 Procedure**

Personal counselling appointments may be arranged as soon as possible. Permission of class teacher will be sought if possible and appropriate.

Where this permission is not possible, notification of a student's appointment will be given to the Principal, Deputy Principal or school secretary as soon as practicable.

### **3.2.10 CAO Appointments**

The choice of career path is the responsibility of each individual student. It is the policy of this school that each student should be adequately prepared to make this choice.

The Education Act 1998 states that a school shall use its resources to .....

“Section 9 (c) ..ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices”

In complying with this each student is encouraged in developing her full potential and in making a Career choice that reflects her goals.

Where a student chooses to apply for third level education to a CAO affiliated college it is the policy of the school that each student is supported through the CAO application process. While it is the ultimate responsibility of each student to make the actual application the school will endeavour to support each student through the process.

### **3.2.11 Procedure for Making an Appointment.**

In furtherance of this aim each student:

is provided with adequate advice and information regarding their choices  
is shown how the application process works and where practical a training demonstration is provided

is given an allotted time whereby she can make her application using the school’s computers.

The CAO appointments are made by the Principal and each student is given a written notice of her appointment.

The Guidance Counsellor may be present when the CAO applications are being made in school to offer advice, support and assistance where required by a student.

CAO appointments for applying to college are made in early January of the Leaving Certificate Year.

Notification of these appointments are given to both the students and staff.

### **3.3 6<sup>th</sup> year Analysis of Results**

It is the policy of the school to inform itself of the career choices made by the students after the Leaving Certificate results have been released. This is a reflection of the concern the school feels for the development of the students.

1. In May students are asked by the Guidance Counsellor for permission to contact them in order to find out what career choices they made in regard to
  - § further education
  - § going directly into employment
  - § taking a “ gap” year

2. Sixth year students are asked to provide the Guidance Counsellor with contact details whereby they can be contacted by the school in September/October regarding their final choice of course or career.
3. In October this information is collated by the Counsellor and a presentation is made showing the final destinations of that year's sixth year students.
4. This will show
  - what colleges were chosen.
  - what courses were chosen.
  - what careers were chosen.
  - if any students chose to take a year out before entering third level.
5. This information is made available to the Board of Management, the Staff, Students and Parents on request

### **3.4 Guidance Counsellor Year Calendar**

The Guidance Counsellor shall as soon as is practicable draw a calendar to show the various Guidance activities that impact on the school and shall post a copy of this in the Staffroom. A copy of this shall also be given to both the Principal and Transition Year Co-ordinator in order that school activities can be coordinated. The Guidance Counsellor shall endeavour to keep this calendar updated with any new information as well as informing the relevant people when this arises.

This will typically show:

- CAO Conference
- Higher Options
- Guidance Counsellor's Conference
- Other Relevant Guidance Counsellor's Inservice
- Open Days
- Application Dates for
  - CAO
  - UCAS
  - CUKAS
- Various Career events which may be of interest to students or staff

See appendix

### **3.5 Confidentiality**

- 3.5.1 A professional relationship involving confidentiality is at the core of guidance counselling. The Guidance Counsellor takes all reasonable steps to ensure that consultation with students takes place in an appropriately private environment.
- 3.5.2 The Guidance Counsellor will take all reasonable steps to preserve the confidentiality of information about students obtained in the course of

professional work. They reveal such information only with the student's consent, but with certain exceptions, which include: where concealment would result in danger to the student or others; when required by the Law or designated guidelines; or for purposes of professional consultation or supervision.

- 3.5.3 It is the duty of the Guidance Counsellor to inform each student about their legal limits on confidentiality.
- 3.5.4 The Guidance Counsellor will discuss information about students only for professional purposes, and only with those who are clearly entitled to be consulted. Written and oral reports contain only such data as are pertinent to the case, and every effort will be made to avoid undue invasion of the students' privacy.
- 3.5.5 The Guidance Counsellor will publish oral or written information about students only with their written consent, or where the identity of individuals or groups is adequately disguised.
- 3.5.6 Subject to the law, Guidance the Counsellor will take all reasonable steps to safeguard the storage, retrieval and disposal of students' records, both written and electronic.
- 3.5.7 With the exception of recording of public behaviour, the Guidance Counsellor will make audio, video or photographic records of clients only where these persons have given prior written agreement to the making of the record and the conditions of subsequent access.
- 3.5.8 The Guidance Counsellor will take all reasonable steps to ensure that colleagues, the Principal and others with whom they work understand and respect the need for confidentiality.

### **3.6 Reasonable Accommodation**

Occasionally a student may require special consideration in the State Examinations. Such special considerations may take the form of

#### **3.6.1 Written Examinations**

Arrangements to have question papers read to the candidate. The questions may be read as often as the candidate requires. No elaboration or explanation may be given.

Modified question papers may be supplied substituting alternative questions for those which refer to visual material such as diagrams, photographs and maps.

Braille translations of question papers may be provided, following any necessary modification.

Question papers may be provided in enlarged print.



Candidates may be permitted to record their answers on tape recorder, typewriter or word-processor.

Answers may be dictated to a person acting as a scribe rather than to a tape recorder. This arrangement may be approved where the candidate's speech would be extremely difficult to interpret on tape or where a tape recording would not meet the particular requirements of the examination, e.g. making calculations in such subjects as Maths and Accounting.

Ten minutes extra time per scheduled hour of each question paper may be allowed where the candidate needs the help of a scribe or would otherwise be unable to make adequate use of the mechanical aids provided for recording the answers or is visually impaired.

### **3.6.2 Oral and Aural Examinations**

In the case of oral examinations, school authorities are requested to liaise with examiners with regard to candidates who have special needs. The arrangements for aural examinations vary according to degree of deafness and are as follows:

The candidate may remain in the main centre but sit close to the tape recorder. The candidate may remain in the main centre and be allowed to use a personal stereo player with personal induction loop. An additional tape of the questions will be provided in such circumstances.

The candidate may be allowed to sit in a separate room and listen to a tape recorder either with or without headphones.

The selection and application procedure for such students begins in first year.

Any psychological assessment reports for incoming First year students are referred to the Special Needs co-ordinator who has responsibility for this area. The Guidance Counsellor co-ordinates with them in identifying students with Special Needs and appropriate measures can be put in place.

A staff meeting is convened once a year where the relevant Year Head and Tutor assess the progress of each student and to highlight any difficulties individual students may be experiencing.

### **3.6.3 Assessment Procedure**

Students will be assessed by May of 5<sup>th</sup> year. A meeting is held consisting of relevant subject teachers (such as English and History), Guidance Counsellor, Learning Support Tutors and Year Heads and students are assessed to see if there is a need to apply for a special accommodation from the Department of Education and Science. Previous assessments either in school or by a psychologist are taken into account. On occasion it may be necessary to refer a student to NEPS for an assessment. The Guidance Counsellor will contact the parents concerned prior to such referral.

Junior Students are assessed in October/November of 3rd year in a similar manner.

On receipt of the granting of reasonable accommodations from the State Examinations Commission, the Guidance Counsellor will advise all students and their parents of the

relevant details.

### **3.7 Assessment Procedure**

A range of assessment tools are used in the Guidance Programme to supplement academic and teacher reports.

#### **3.7.1 Assessment of Incoming First Year Students.**

Currently the assessment test is administered by the Guidance Counsellor as part of the entrance test that incoming First year students are asked to take.

This test gives the school an indication of the strengths of incoming students in the areas of verbal and numerical reasoning and perceptual understanding.

The Cognitive Abilities Test 3 and the Group Reading Test 2 are the tests used

In addition to the above The Principal and Deputy Principal ask each incoming student and their parents to attend for informal interview in January/February of their year of entry. The Year Head will contact feeder Primary schools in order to identify the particular needs of students. The Year Head will liaise with the Special Needs Co-ordinator in relation to students with special needs. The Special Needs co-ordinator will meet with all the relevant parties and process applications for the resources required.

#### **3.7.2 Transition Year**

In September of transition year students are tested using the Differential Aptitude Tests for Guidance in order to see what their aptitude is for certain subjects. This information is used to guide students with regard to how well they can do certain types of work. The thinking is that a student is good in an area she will enjoy it as a career.

This is used as part of the Self Awareness part of the Guidance Programme.

The DATS cover

Verbal Reasoning - understanding of the written word

Numerical Reasoning - basic strength with regard to numbers

Abstract Ability - making connections

Spatial Ability - Visualize in 3D

Mechanical Ability – ability in regard to things mechanical and technical

Accuracy - The ability process information quickly and accurately

#### **3.7.3 Senior Years**

Interest based tests are used to see what level of interest a student would have in a particular career or course.

Personality tests are used to allow the students to gain more self- knowledge

Career Values questionnaires are used in order for students to work what is important to them in relation to their future.

#### **3.7.4 New Students**

Should a student enrol in the school in any other year she will be asked to take an assessment a test on her arrival.

### **3.8 Speakers**

It is normal for speakers from individual colleges to give talks to Senior class groups. These talks are both informative and useful as they give the students an overview of the courses available in different colleges and they give the students an overview of third level education.

Other speakers are arranged subject to demand and in consultation with the students, staff and management.

Students will be given a feedback form in order to assess the benefit of the talk.

### **3.9 Records**

The Guidance Counsellor shall keep such records as relate to his/her role.

Records are kept in two forms

- § Electronically
- § Hard Copy

Electronic records are kept with due regard to the provisions of the Data Protection Act.

These files will normally contain:

- DATS results and graph
- Inventories results and graph
- Analysis of Career Inventory
- Values worksheet

These files will be kept on the Guidance Counsellors computer and a back up copy is made.

The paper file consists of:

- DATS original answer sheet
- A copy of each student's
  - Group Reading Test Results (GRT)
  - Cognitive Reading Test Results (CRT)
  - AH2 Results
- A personal form consisting of e.g.name address.

Also each individual visit is recorded and kept on file.

A further database is maintained for all students containing the following information:

- Name
- Age
- Differential Aptitude Results (DATS)
- CRT results
- GRT results
- Other Test Results
- Special Need Resources

These files are kept for five years after the student has left the school

All files are kept in accordance with The Freedom of Information Act and Data Protection Act.

All files pertaining to an individual student kept by the Guidance Counsellor are available to be viewed by that student.

### **3.10 Mock Interviews**

Mock Interviews are arranged subject to demand.

These are organised by arranging for an outside professional body to come in and coach the senior students in three main areas

- a) CV preparation
- b) Letters of Application
- c) Interview technique

### **3.11 Open Days**

#### **3.11.1 6<sup>th</sup> Year Students**

As part of the Careers programme in the school 6<sup>th</sup> year students are encouraged to attend Open Days that are organised by Third Level institutions. In order to minimise disruption to school life, students will be encouraged to attend Open Days that are organised at weekends.

Attendance at Open Days will be confined to sixth Year students only.

The school views Open Days as a good way to meet and speak with lecturers and current students, discuss study plans, and find out more about what the different institutions can offer them. They may include an opportunity to visit any exhibitions hosted by various Institutes. These allow students to form a better picture of what is entailed in further education and of what life as a third level student is like.

#### **3.11.2 Procedure for Organising Open Days 6<sup>th</sup> year Students**

The Guidance Counsellor in collaboration with Subject Teachers and Year Heads shall advise what Open Days are due in the coming year.

The number of Open Days selected will vary from year to year according to demand.

A list of selected Open days is given to the students. This may include Universities, Institutes of Technology and Colleges of Further Education. Students select from the list which colleges they wish to attend and get written permission from their parents to attend.

This permission slip is given to the Year Head. The list will be posted on the staff notice board.

Where practicable visits to College Open Days will occur in the afternoon in order to minimise the class time missed by students.

#### **3.11.3 Information re open days**

Lists of open days are displayed on the school notice board. They are also available through the CAO website or individual college websites.

### **3.11.4 Value of open days and making the most of them:**

Open days are very important in the process of career exploration and planning.

Visiting a college for an open day should be regarded by the student as a hard working day.

It should be a good learning experience enabling the student to look behind the title of the courses.

The focus should be on understanding what courses are about, rather than on what jobs they may lead to, or how much they will earn in the future.

Students think they know what is involved in subjects that are familiar, such as English or Geography or Business, but these are often very different at third level, therefore they should discover the differences when visiting the college.

### **3.11.5 Planning for the open day**

Visit the college web site and read the prospectus before you go

Get a map/guide of the college

Decide beforehand which departments in the college you intend visiting

Make a list of the courses/subjects in which you are interested

Plan your time well and leave time for lectures, demonstrations, and or/ visits to laboratories etc

Will you take an organised tour of the college? This may be very useful in giving you an overall “feel” for the particular campus.

Plan the questions you will ask. In order to get answers you must ask questions.

### **3.11.6 Feedback from open day**

Students will be asked to fill out a feedback form to assess the benefit of the visit. This form must be returned to the Deputy Principal.

## **3.12 Students dropping a subject / changing subject level**

The student may be referred to the Guidance Counsellor in the event of that student wishing to drop a subject, to ensure they understand the implications, if any, of their actions. Equally in the event of a change from higher to ordinary, Ordinary to Foundation or any other request for a change in level a student may be referred to the Guidance Counsellor for advice and Guidance. The Guidance Counsellor will consult with the relevant subject teacher. A Change of Subject Form must be completed and returned to the Year Head.

### **3.13 Pastoral Care Team-meetings**

Regular meetings of the Pastoral Care team are organised between the Principal, Deputy Principal Guidance Counsellor, Year Heads. Times, regularity and attendance will vary depending on the circumstances.

### **3.14 Academic Achievement**

As part of the school policy on Academic achievement the Principal schedules each Fifth and Sixth year student for a meeting with the Guidance Counsellor. Each student will be requested to complete an Academic Profile form.

### **3.15 Study Skills Programme**

The Guidance Counsellor will deliver a study skills programme to students in 1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> year. See Guidance Calendar.

## **Section 4 – Current Policies related to Guidance**

<b>Policy Name</b>
Equality
Substance Abuse
Special Needs
Homework and Academic Achievement
IT and Information Provision
Critical Incident
Child Protection Policy
Positive Discipline
SPHE / RSE
Pastoral Care
Anti Bullying
Strategy re Attendance and Participation
Interculturalism

The Guidance Plan should be read in conjunction with these policies

## Section 5 – Current Resources

Guidance Counsellor's office and classroom  
Phone  
Computer networked to the main school network  
Broadband available in office (etc)  
Notice boards  
Personal Laptop  
Use of computer room for class and resources  
Careers library

### Materials

The careers library contains current Irish and UK prospectuses as well as a range of careers related publications. All books may be borrowed from the Guidance Counsellor and is located in the Guidance Counsellor's office. Careers video are also located in the office and may be borrowed in the same way.

## Section 6 – The Role of the Guidance Counsellor

**Name of Guidance Counsellor:** Paul O'Brien  
**Qualifications** B.Comm., H.Dip Ed., H. Dip. (Hons) SGC

In Dominican College Sion Hill the Guidance Counsellor is professionally trained to undertake the following tasks within the school guidance programme.

### **6.1. Counselling:**

Empowering students to make decisions, solve problems, change behaviours and resolve issues in their lives. Such activity may be personal counselling, educational counselling, career counselling, or it may involve combinations of each.

Counselling is a key part of the school guidance programme, offered on an individual or group basis as part of a developmental learning process and at moments of personal crisis.

Counselling on an individual basis is part of the support structure that the school provides to students. Within the overall time allocated for guidance, adequate time is given for the counselling function in the guidance programme.

The rationale for the time allocated and its usage is evident in the school guidance plan.

See the Department of Education and Science  
*Guidelines for Second Level Schools on the implications of Section 9 (c) of the Education Act (1998), relating to students' access to appropriate guidance.*

**6.2. Support:**

The Guidance Counsellor provides support to students, parents, teachers, the Principal, Board of Management and referral agencies in assisting the personal, social, career and educational development of students. Such support may include advocacy on behalf of a student. Support also refers to assistance in the planning and development of the SPHE programme, Transition Year Programme, guidance related activities.

**6.3. Assessment:**

The Guidance Counsellor is trained to use a range of psychometric tests and other evaluative instruments to support relevant objectives of the school guidance programme. Such objectives may be related to career and educational planning, personal decision making and development of self-awareness.

**6.4. Information:**

Assisting students to acquire, interpret and use information relevant to their personal and social, educational and career development.

**6.5. Classroom Guidance Activities:**

Providing classroom based learning experiences that are relevant to the objectives of the school guidance programme. Such experiences may include information giving, information and communication technologies (ICT), developmental skills (e.g. planning, decision-making, study skills, communication, values clarification), and vocational preparation.

**6.6. Planning and Organising Workplace Learning:**

This normally done in Transition Year and organized by the Transition Year Co-ordinator

**6.7. Referrals:**

Seeking for students the assistance of non-school based professionals following standard procedures, e.g. NEPS.

The guidance counsellor also provides support for students referred to him/her by teachers, parents, and school management. The voluntary participation by the individual concerned is respected in these situations.

**6.8. Professional Development:**

The guidance counsellor should keep abreast of on-going changes in the fields of training, education, work and child welfare. The Board of Management and school management should facilitate the attendance of the guidance counsellor at relevant events and at in-career professional training during the school year. Participation in these events should be related to the objectives of the school guidance programme. Attendance at non-school based events should be negotiated/agreed in advance between the Board of Management, school management and the guidance counsellor.

**6.9. Guidance Activities that Assist Students to make Transitions include:**

**Dominican College Sion Hill  
School Guidance Plan**



## **Careers education/career transition programmes**

Enabling students to make transitions to further and higher education, training and employment.

### **6.10. Placement**

Work experience, work shadowing, and preparing students for employment. Transition Work placements are organized by the Transition Year Co-ordinator.

### **6.11. Follow-up**

Following up former students regarding progression routes and destinations.

### **6.12. Consultation**

With parents, school staff and students.

### **6.13. Feedback**

Giving feedback to the Board of Management, school management and staff on the needs of individual students, groups and the school as an organisation, and how the school guidance programme has supported students' choices and transitions.

### **6.14. Networking**

Establishing links with employers, relevant agencies and institutions to enhance guidance work with students.

### **6.15. Promoting change**

Assisting curriculum development in the school.

### **6.16. Managing, Organising and Co-ordinating**

It is the Guidance Counsellor's role to organize the guidance activities into a coherent programme in conjunction with the management and staff of the school.

The nature and range of guidance activities as outlined above are based on the premise that guidance is both a whole school concern and a specialist area within education.

### **6.17. Evaluation**

As part of this role the Guidance Counsellor will constantly review the programme to ensure it is meeting the demands of the students and their parents.

Students will be asked to complete evaluation forms at the end of the academic year.

## Section 7 –Developmental Areas for Year 2009 to 2010

<b>OVERVIEW OF ACTION PLAN PROGRAMME FOR SCHOOL PLAN PERIOD</b>		
<b>PRIORITIES</b>	<b>TARGETS</b>	<b>TASKS</b>
<b>Priority Development Area:</b> <b>To develop an international Student Information pack</b>  <b>REASON</b> <b>Introduce International students to the complexities of applying for 3<sup>rd</sup> level courses or developing a career in Ireland</b>	<b>Target 1.</b> <b>Gather Info</b>	<b>Task 1. Categorise</b>
		<b>Task 2. Gather the raw data</b>
		<b>Task 3. Turn it into a presentable form</b>
	<b>Target 2.</b> <b>Make the Info Available</b>	<b>Task 1. Identify most suitable way of distributing the Information to the relevant staff</b>
		<b>Task 2. Put it in place</b>
		<b>Task 3. Make people aware of its existence</b>
<b>Priority Development Area:</b> <b>To develop a Special Needs Information pack</b>  <b>REASON</b>	<b>Target 1.</b> <b>To have the Information gathered by Feb 09</b>	<b>Task 1. Identify categories of Special Needs</b>
		<b>Task 2. Gather info from 3<sup>rd</sup> level institutions and other sources</b>
		<b>Task 3. Liaise with the relevant Staff</b>
	<b>Target 2.</b> <b>Create the Pack and Distribute it to the Relevant people</b>	<b>Task 1. Create Pack</b>
		<b>Task 2. identify relevant people</b>

		<b>Task 3. Make the Info. Available in the most accessible form</b>
<b>Priority Development Area:</b> <b>Reorganising Assessment Procedures</b>  <b>REASON</b> <b>Assessment now performed by guidance counsellor instead of Learning Support</b>	<b>Target 1.</b>	<b>Task 1.</b>
		<b>Task 2.</b>
		<b>Task 3.</b>
	<b>Target 2.</b>	<b>Task 1.</b>
		<b>Task 2.</b>
		<b>Task 3.</b>
<b>Priority Development Area:</b> <b>Evaluation of College Open Day Policy</b>  <b>REASON</b> <b>To examine how effective the change in policy from 6<sup>th</sup> years attending Open Days to 5<sup>th</sup> years.</b>	<b>Target 1.</b>	<b>Task 1. Make out an assessment survey and distribute to students</b>
		<b>Task 2. Get the opinion of staff</b>
		<b>Task 3. put the findings together and present them</b>
	<b>Target 2.</b>	<b>Task 1. Survey the present 6<sup>th</sup>. Year student for their opinion on the matter and their assessment of the present system</b>
		<b>Task 2.</b>
		<b>Task 3.</b>
<b>Priority No: Development Area:</b> <b>To put together a Careers Pack for senior</b>	<b>Target 1.</b>	<b>Task 1. Identify what should be in the pack</b>
		<b>Task 2. research the information</b>
		<b>Task 3. Put into a presentable form</b>

<b>students and the development of a careers Resource area for students on the school network</b>	<b>Target 2.</b>	<b>Task 1. Find the best way to distribute the pack</b> - Cost etc
		<b>Task 2. Arrange for cost to be included in the School Contribution</b>
		<b>Task 3.</b>

## **OVERVIEW OF ACTION PLAN PROGRAMME**

Develop an International Student Information pack	April 10
To develop a Special Needs Information pack	April 10
Reorganising Assessment Procedures	
Evaluation of Open Day Policy	Feb 10
To put together a Careers Pack for senior students	Feb 10
The development of a Careers Resource area for students on the school network	Feb 10

## Section 8 - Appendices

1. Change of Subject/Level Consent Form
2. Guidance Feedback Form
3. Open Day Choice Form
4. Open Day Feedback Form
5. Subject Preference Forms
6. Past Pupil Survey

**Reference has been made to the following documents. These are available from the school.**

1. Codes of Ethics of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors
2. Freedom of Information Act
3. Data Protection Act
4. Education Act 1998 Section 9 and Section 21
5. Department of Education and Science guidelines on the implication of Section 9 of the Education Act on Guidance
6. Review of Guidance Resources
7. Brief account of the forms of counselling as practiced by the Guidance Counsellor
8. Statement from the Guidance Inspectors on SPHE
9. Guidance Provision in Second Level School (Circular Letter No. PPT 12/05)
10. Guidelines on the Practice of Guidance And Counselling in Schools ( NCGE 1996)