



Whole School Guidance Plan

Swords Community College

2025-2026

Approved by the BOM on

Signed:

Chairperson

Signed:

Principal:



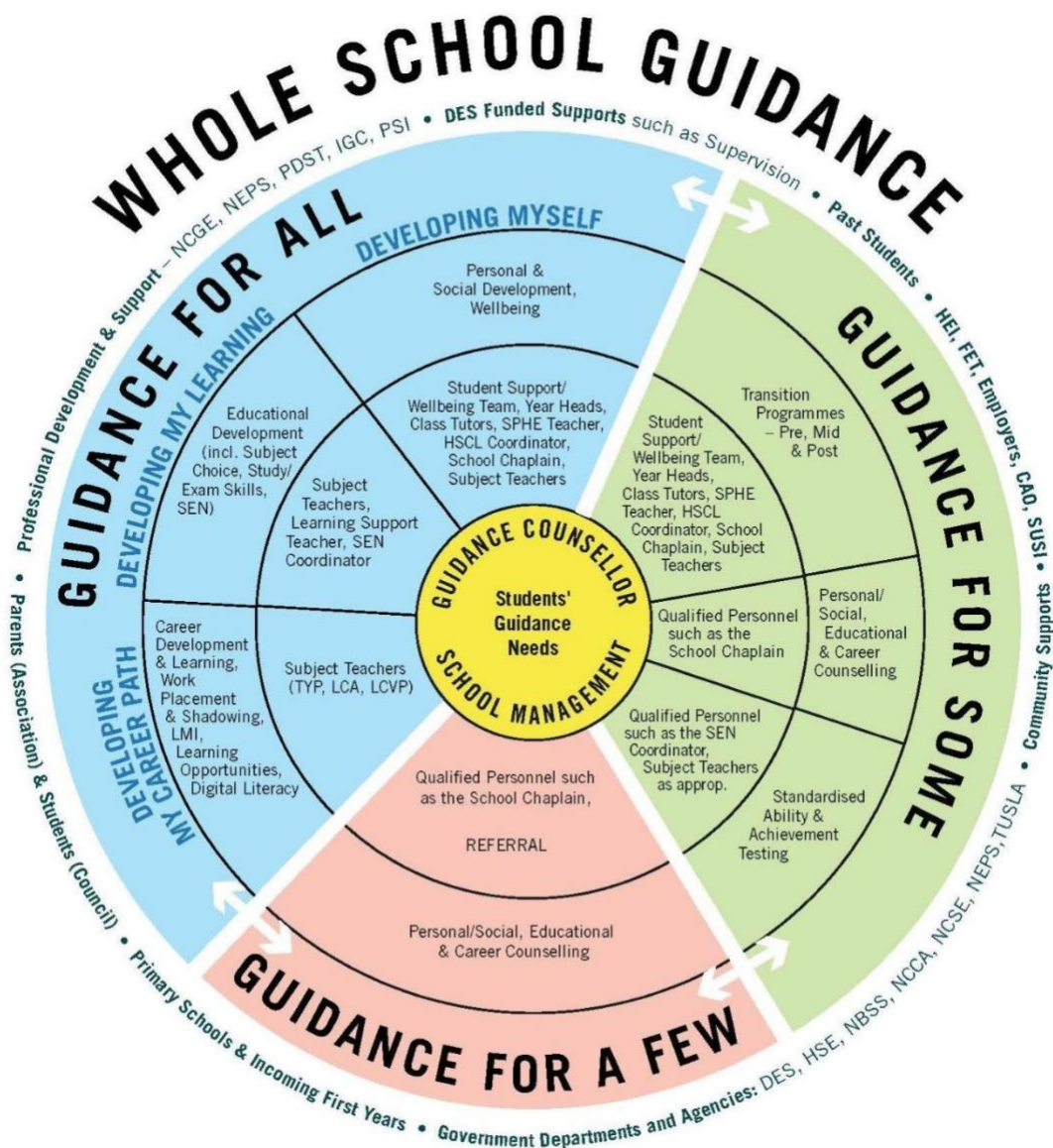
ESTABLISHED FEATURES OF THE SCHOOL'S GUIDANCE PROGRAMME

SWORDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE ETHOS AND GUIDANCE PARTNERS

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1. Swords Community College Whole School Guidance Plan

The Education Act 1998 requires schools to develop a whole school guidance plan based on the needs of the school. A Whole School Guidance programme is a central part of a school’s curricular activities and is referenced in whole school development planning. Schools are required by the act to ‘ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance’ (Section 9(c), education Act 1998). Swords Community College Whole School Guidance Plan is value driven and was drawn up taking into consideration the school’s mission and vision statement.

Swords Community College is a post-primary school serving the community of Swords, County Dublin and the surrounding townlands. The college was established in 2018 and is based in a new campus just off the Rathbeale Road. The college, under the patronage of Dublin & Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB), is multi-denominational and co-educational.

Mission Statement

Swords Community College (SCC) is a warm, welcoming, inclusive, innovative, multi-belief college, which puts the learners at the centre of all activities. We encourage the development of 21st Century learning skills, allowing learners to take ownership of their learning; to explore, enquire and direct their own learning experiences.

Vision

Our vision, based on the four pillars of Teamwork, Respect, Resilience, Excellence is that the college community will work together in atmosphere of mutual respect and that our students will grow in confidence, personality and character. We believe that every student has special gifts and talents and that by co-operating together as a team we can nurture their confidence, create high expectations and support them to achieve their full potential. We are a Tradigital college, which embraces and combines the best of technology, alongside the proven and effective traditional teaching methods. This vision is passed on by everyone who shares this community: Parents/Guardians, Board of Management, Staff and Students.

The Whole School Guidance Plan aims to reflect this respect for the individual in its student-centered approach. The enhancement of self-esteem and life skills and the development of potential – academic, personal and emotional – leading to greater personal autonomy for all students are its central goals. The school guidance plan is a structured document that describes the school guidance programme and specifies how the guidance needs of students are to be addressed. It includes reference to personal counselling, an integral component of the work of Whole School Guidance.

Members of WSP

The WSGP outlines and describes the school guidance programme, that is, the full range of activities through which the school addresses the needs of students by helping them in their personal and social, educational and career development. This broad view of guidance is in keeping with the aims ‘to encourage our students to become responsible, independent and caring adults who will make a positive contribution to society’ as stated in the mission statement above. Given that Guidance Counselling compliments many school activities both inside and outside of the classroom (such as Wellbeing, SPHE, RE, and the Pastoral care system). Swords Community College adopts a whole school approach to the guidance service. Consequently, this plan has been drawn up after consultation with teaching personnel both directly and indirectly involved in aspects of the guidance service. These are known as guidance partners and include:

- Guidance Department: Ms. O’ Moore & Ms. Doyle
- Principal: Ms. Smith
- Deputy Principals: Ms. Punch, Ms. Kinsella & Mr. McBrearty
- Whole School Guidance Committee 2025-2026
- Wellbeing Co-Ordinator: Niamh Donohoe
- Year heads and Class Tutors
- Student Support Team
- AEN Department
- TY Co-ordinator
- SPHE teachers
- Wellbeing Teachers

Together the guidance partners work hard to promote the ethos of “The enhancement of self-esteem and life skills” that “lead to greater personal autonomy.”

The WSGP is constantly evolving, and its goal is to meet the ever-changing needs of the school population. There is the need for on-going monitoring (on an annual basis) and review (a major re-design on a longer timescale, perhaps every three years) of the WSGP.

This is Ms. O Moore's seventh year as the Co-Ordinator of the Whole School Guidance Service in the school. She is joined by guidance counsellor Cara Doyle who joined SCC in 2023. Together and over the course of the year they will be responsible for overseeing how guidance objectives are being achieved, the factors that facilitate or hinder that achievement, unplanned outcomes, unmet needs and possibly new/emerging target groups. This process assists the school with forward planning to ensure that the WSGP remains relevant to the needs of the students.

2. Aim of the Whole School Guidance Service

Outline

'Guidance in schools refers to a range of learning experiences provided in a developmental sequence that assists students to make choices about their lives and to make transitions consequent on those choices' (NCGE, 2004). These choices may be:

- Personal/Social
- Educational
- Career/Vocational

The guidance partners aim to endorse a "student centred approach" by offering and providing personal/social, educational and career guidance which is in keeping with the Swords Community College vision statement. All teachers are informed and supported by the Guidance Department of the need to guide students in their personal/social, educational and vocational development through the subjects they teach and in their day-to-day interaction with them. This goes hand in hand with the importance of cross-curricular teaching and learning.

The responsibility of the Guidance Department is to ensure that the service is planned, implemented and evaluated in a systematic and developmental way so as to take into account the needs of all students at all levels within the school. Ms. O' Moore received her qualification was

in MSc. in Guidance and Counselling from Dublin City University. She also holds a Bachelor of Science in Psychotherapy from Dublin Business School. She is a qualified supervisor and leads a supervision group in North County Dublin with the IGC. Ms. Doyle received her Postgraduate in Education Guidance Counselling from NUI Maynooth. Both work in conjunction to coordinate the guidance and counselling service in Swords Community College.

Continuous Professional Development

- Membership of Institute of Guidance Counsellors.
- Guidance Counsellors attends IGC meetings and CPD courses as timetabling facilitates (Tuesday afternoons)
- Attendance at Supervision timetabling facilitates (Tuesday afternoons)
- Attendance at IGC National conference, if feasible.
- Attend at Autumn CAO Conference
- Attend Higher Options and various college open days
- Attendance at NCGE, Jigsaw & other webinars

Guidance Supervision

The main function of supervision is to enable the guidance personnel to enhance their work with the students in their care. It helps practitioners reflect on their work and perhaps explore other ways of facilitating the client/student. It has normative, formative and educative functions. The Guidance Counsellors normally have Tuesday afternoon free to avail of supervision and avail of this through the IGC North branch of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors.

Time Allocation, Option structures and Timetabling

- The Junior Cycle Classes receive guidance through their Wellbeing Classes in 1st Year and 3rd Year. They also cover CV construction and development in Digital Media Literacy. This can be seen in the Appendix I's in the Guidance Folder. The wellbeing classes use Classroom Guidance resources and books to cover the junior part of guidance for junior cycle. All students engage in SPHE junior classes as well, which cover personal guidance related topics including bullying, drugs, alcohol, managing myself and RSE.
- Guidance needs are met through a variety of formal and informal time allocation. All 1st Year SPHE classes and a majority of 2nd and 3rd Year SPHE classes are taught by a Guidance Counsellor allowing the department to input their educational guidance expertise as needed. 4th year students have one 60 minute class of Portfolio/Careers class per week. This is taught by both guidance counsellors and business teachers.
- In 5th year due to timetabling limits the students who do not choose LCVP get a career guidance class, one 60 minute class per week taught by the guidance counsellors.
- Ms. O' Moore looks after the senior cycle students regarding pastoral support/counselling. Ms. Doyle looks after the junior cycle students regarding pastoral support/counselling. Both Ms. O' Moore & Ms. Doyle split the career service duties between them.
- Ms. O' Moore attends the weekly Senior SST meeting and Ms. Doyle attends the weekly junior SST meeting.

3. Objectives (General Guidance Outcomes / Role and Responsibilities of the Whole School Guidance approach)

Overview of the Guidance Counsellor role

Definition of Guidance in Second Level Schools

The Department of Education and Skills define guidance in schools as: “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. It encompasses the three separate, but interlinked areas of personal and social development, educational guidance and career guidance.”

(Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Science, 2005:4)

Definition of Counselling in Second Level Schools

“Guidelines for Second Level Schools on the Implications of Section 9 (c) of the Education Act 1998, relating to students’ access to appropriate guidance”, state that

“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 has as its objective the empowerment of students so that they can make decision, solve problems, address behavioral issues, develop coping strategies, and resolve difficulties they may be experiencing. Counselling in school may include personal counselling, educational counselling, career counselling or combinations of these.”

(ibid, 2005:4)

The Guidance Counsellor

Due to their specialist training, the guidance counsellor has a professional role in each of the main areas of guidance: personal and social, educational, and career. In addition, the guidance counsellor has a key role in collaborating with school management in the development and review of the school guidance plan and the integration of guidance in the curriculum.

NOTE: Explanation of how such objectives are by Swords Community College Guidance Service are in the section below entitled Guidance Activities in Swords Community College. At the end of the school year students will have experienced:

- **Personal and Social Guidance.** This involves providing students with services, such as counselling (individual, and peer). Students can develop personally and socially through Pastoral Care Programmes such as SPHE, Religion Wellbeing & Life Skills. One to one counselling is offered to all students by appointment when needed.
- **Educational Guidance.** Using educational standardised measures for the use of distinguishing students various learning abilities. This involves the use of aptitude tests to assist students with choices regarding subjects and levels, aid motivation and management learning, showing students how to use available resources, study skills and exam techniques. Students and parents may consult the guidance counsellor on appointment basis. CAT 4s are the standardised tests used in Swords Community College.
- **Career Guidance.** Students will have access to information which is appropriate for their vocational preparation. Sixth years will receive one-to-one vocational interviews throughout the year to support their progression choice to Higher Education. They will also receive careers classes weekly throughout the academic year. Please refer to activities below for further information.

Additional Objectives Include:

- Keeping parents/guardians informed about all aspects of their child's guidance within school.
- Evaluating students' needs about the school guidance service in partnership with staff and school management.
- On-going planning and review of service.

4. The Guidance Counsellor & Guidance Activities in Swords Community College

The nature and range of whole school guidance activities specific to Swords Community College are outlined below and are based on the premises that guidance is both a whole school concern and a specialist area within education and support. The guidance activities that assist Swords Community College students to make choices include (These are just some examples below. Other guidance activities in school are mentioned later in the curriculum plans which details the current guidance programme for each year within the school):

- ***Counselling.*** This involves helping students to explore their thoughts and feelings, and the choices open to them. Care and support is given to students learning to cope with the many aspects of growing up and their development. There is an open-door policy in relation to counselling and students are informed in first year that they are free to come and make an appointment to talk to the Guidance Counsellor if they wish. This counselling service is supported by the Student Support Team meetings, which include the Principal, Deputy Principals, Guidance Counsellor, Wellbeing Coordinator, Additional Needs Co-Ordinator and Year-Heads. At weekly SST meetings, the team discuss students who may be at risk or who could potentially benefit from individual /group counselling. The meetings centre around trying to support the student and if necessary, make provisions to improve the young person's situation by involving a member of the Student Support Team or referring further to outside support agencies.
- ***Assessment and Advice-Testing.*** The Additional Needs Coordinator along with the Guidance Department facilitate CAT4 standardised tests as part of the admissions policy for incoming first year students.

Students will sit reading and mathematics competency tests in first year and second year to enable the school to measure success in these key literacy and numeracy areas. These will be the CAT 4 level E tests, normally administered in January.

Based on initial CAT4 scores and combined with later attainment tests, students are referred for assessment as appropriate. In addition, the Guidance Department may conduct further psychometric aptitude tests on senior cycle students and are available to meet with them afterwards to discuss their results to help them decide on their subjects for the Senior Cycle. Both Ms. O Moore & Ms Doyle are qualified to administer and score psychometric tests.

The Guidance Counsellors conduct vocational interviews with 6th Year students to discuss their career options regarding career progression, college choice, apprenticeships, PLCS & the world of work. Sixth year parents and students are invited to attend information evenings including CAO Information Evening in October and Senior Cycle Subject Choice Information Evening in March. Classroomguidance.ie is the main classroom support resource used to access such information, including other guidance resources and websites like CAO, Careers Portal & Qualifax. Other websites used would be: accesscollege.ie; plc.ie and apprenticeshipireland.ie. The administration of interest/value/aptitude tests to students will help students interpret results, in an effort to assist decision making related to college courses.

- *Vocational Information.*

The Guidance Department provides students with objective, current and factual data on education and training opportunities, workforce market information and entitlements. Trends, opportunities and challenges in the labour market are discussed and evaluated. Noticeboards containing relevant and important information for students are situated on the Careers noticeboard on the first floor. Students are exposed to websites such as www.careersportal.ie, www.qualifax.ie, www.cao.ie, www.accesscollege.ie etc.

College Prospectuses, Apprenticeship and PLC leaflets are ordered, stored and placed on the guidance shelves outside Ms O Moore's office. Students have the opportunity to attend career days and talks from guest speakers during the course of the year. Sixth Year students may attend World Skills/Higher Options in the RDS in mid-September. The Guidance Department hope to organise a Careers Morning every other year, for 4th-6th Years, where they will get an opportunity to speak with different colleges and business representatives to explore their career ideas.

- *Educational Development Programmes.*

These involve facilitating the transfer of knowledge and skills relating to study, examination performance, choice of subjects and levels. The Guidance Department will speak to TY students about subject choice as well as through the TY careers/portfolio module.

A study skills seminar for sixth year is organised each year to reaffirm and to focus students on utilising their learning skills. This is normally delivered in the first semester. In general, all teaching staff continuously remind and provide advice to students about the importance of study every year. The in house exams are organised in a similar manner to the state exams which helps prepare students for the real state examinations when they arise. The Wellbeing Programme e contains information which deal excellently with the topic of Exam Preparation. Third years receive wellbeing classes weekly. All staff collaborate to ensure that all students are receiving the best possible educational support.

Other Guidance Activities

Other Guidance related activities support the achievement of the objectives of the school by liaising with other departments.

These include:

Consultation with parents, school staff and students. Ms. O' Moore & Ms. Doyle are members of the Student Support Team, and on occasion will consult with some of the outside support agencies and are available for consultation with parents. This may involve giving feedback to 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 transition through their education.

Networking involves establishing links with employers, relevant agencies and institutions to enhance guidance work with students. As members of the IGC, O' Moore & Ms. Doyle will liaise with local Guidance Counsellors in other schools during supervision sessions and branch meetings. Ms. O' Moore and Ms. Doyle may attend the IGC conference each year to ensure they have access to the most recent progressions and developments in guidance counselling. Ms. O' Moore and Ms. Doyle will liaise with school representatives from universities, third level Colleges (including

Colleges of Further Education) in order to provide students with information in any new courses or any changes to existing courses and entry requirements.

The below charts highlight how personal, social, educational and vocational guidance can be seen within guidance in Swords Community College.

PERSONAL & SOCIAL	FOR ALL	FOR SOME	FOR FEW
Pastoral Care Structure	✓		
SST Meetings	✓		
Guidance Counsellor	✓		
Guest Speakers	✓		
Post Holders – SEN, Wellbeing, Year Heads	✓		
Psychological Support Services		✓	✓
Other agencies: Camhs, Tusla, Foróige, Sasi, Crosscare, SVP		✓	✓
SPHE	✓		
Home/School Communication	✓		
Awards Day	✓		
CPD- Personal & Professional Wellbeing for Staff	✓		
1 st Year Induction – Primary School links & visits		✓	
Reach Access Scheme- HEAR & DARE			✓
Wellbeing Programme	✓		
LGBTI	✓		
Stand Up Week	✓		
Schools of Sanctuary Club	✓		
AEN	✓		
RSE	✓		
Open Days for 3 rd Level & Appropriate Destination Options		✓	
Outreach Programmes		✓	
Extra-Curricular	✓		
Head Strong Committee		✓	
Community Mentoring Program			✓

EDUCATIONAL	FOR ALL	FOR SOME	FOR FEW
Pastoral Care Structure	✓		
SST Meetings	✓		
Guidance Counsellor	✓		
Guest Speakers		✓	
Post Holders – SEN, Wellbeing, Year Heads	✓		
Psychological Support Services		✓	
SPHE	✓		
Home/School Communication	✓		
Awards Day	✓		
CPD- Personal & Professional Wellbeing for Staff	✓		
1 st Year Induction – Primary School links & visits		✓	
Reach Access Scheme- HEAR & DARE			✓
Wellbeing Programme	✓		
	✓		
AEN		✓	
Guidance Timetabled		✓	
Open Days for 3 rd Level & Appropriate Destination Options		✓	
TY Assessment, Work Experience, Mock Interviews		✓	
Use of ICT in Guidance		✓	
Cross Curricular	✓		
STEM	✓		
Peer Mentoring		✓	
Study Skills – Students	✓		
CAO Evening		✓	
Open Nights, PT Meetings	✓		
Information Nights – 1 st , & 6 th		✓	

VOCATIONAL	FOR ALL	FOR SOME	FOR FEW
Pastoral Care Structure	✓		
SST Meetings	✓		
Guidance Counsellor	✓		
Guest Speakers		✓	
Post Holders – SEN, Wellbeing, Year Heads	✓		
Psychological Support Services			✓
SPHE	✓		
Home/School Communication	✓		
CPD- Personal & Professional Wellbeing for Staff	✓		
1 st Year Induction – Primary School links & visits			✓
Reach Access Scheme- HEAR & DARE			✓
Extra-Curricular	✓		
Wellbeing Programme	✓		
Schools of Sanctuary Club	✓		
AEN		✓	
Guidance Timetabled		✓	
Open Days for 3 rd Level & Appropriate Destination Options		✓	
TY Assessment, Work Experience, Mock Interviews		✓	
Use of ICT in Guidance		✓	
Cross Curricular	✓		
STEM	✓		
Study Skills – Students	✓		
CAO Evening		✓	
Open Nights, PT Meetings	✓		
Information Nights – 1 st , 5 th & 6 th		✓	

5. Referrals

Referral includes two types of activity:

- (i) Referral of an individual student to the guidance counsellors by Year Heads, school management, and parents. The voluntary participation of counselling of the referred student must be respected by all concerned. Where the young person's concern is such that the Guidance Counsellor judges her own expertise to be such that she is no longer unlikely to be able to provide the student with the structure, and protection usually associated with the amelioration of, or recovery from, a particular condition, then the Guidance Counsellor will refer the student to a more specialised service, where such is available, and will monitor progress of such a referral. When the student and /or their parents accept referral the Guidance Counsellor continues to exercise their **duty of care** to the student until contact is established between the client and the other practitioner.

- (ii) Referral of an individual student by the guidance counsellor to other professionals outside the school, e.g. Psychological Support Service in DDLETB.

Professional Standards and Ethical Practice

Ms. O'Moore & Ms. Doyle are members of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC) and adhere to its Code of Ethics, which underpins all aspects of their professional practice. This code is founded on four core ethical principles: **Respect for the rights and dignity of the client, Competence, Responsibility, and Integrity**. These principles guide guidance counsellors to uphold confidentiality, promote student autonomy, maintain professional competence through continuous professional development and supervision, and act with honesty, fairness, and accountability. The IGC Code ensures that all guidance interventions are delivered in a manner that respects the individual needs, rights, and cultural values of each student, while also aligning with legal and professional standards.

Confidentiality

Counselling relationships and information that is disclosed in counselling relationships are kept confidential. However, if a situation arises where the school feel a student is at risk, the Principal or Guidance Counsellor consults the student, school management, parents/guardians and relevant agencies, if necessary. Students are encouraged to discuss their problem with their parent/guardian where appropriate. At the beginning of the counselling, students are always informed that what is said in the counselling session is confidential between the counsellor and the student UNLESS the counsellor feels that the pupil is a danger to themselves (including eating disorders) or anyone else, or at risk. Confidentiality will not apply in the case of abuse (Child Protection Guidelines definition applies here), or if a student discloses an intention to commit a crime or when a court orders a counsellor to make records available.

Local Community Organisation Services Provided

- TUSLA Support for parents and students
- NEWB Support for parents and students
- JIGSAW Support for parents and students
- CRC Support for parents and students
- DDLETB Psychological Support Services
- CAMHS Support for parents and students Support for parents and students
- Pieta House Support for parents and students
- Swords Baldoyle Youth Service
- Crosscare Teen Counselling
- Daughters of Charity Child & Family Service Balbriggan Family Centre

6. GDPR and the Guidance Counselling Notes

The Board of Management within in each school are the data controllers.

Once a student has an appointment(s) with the guidance counsellor, the notes are taken and filed securely in a locked filing cabinet within a locked office. With regard to said notes the Board of Management as Data Controllers apply the GDPR guidelines. The GDPR guidelines stipulates that children merit specific protection when it comes to the processing of their personal data as they may be unaware of risks, rules and safeguards in relation to the processing, as well as their rights.

7. Transferring of the Guidance Notes

It is recommended by the DES, that in the event of a change of personnel within the guidance department the incoming guidance counsellor will have access to the records of students that have been kept on file by the outgoing guidance counsellor, provided both parties are employees of the school. (Circular 0003/2024)

8. Resources

There are various resources including personnel (guidance partners), time allocation, equipment, materials, physical locations and finance needed for the performance of the Guidance Activities and the management of the school guidance programme. The guidance hours' allocation comes from the general staff allocation. Ms. Doyle and Ms O' Moore's timetables include Careers classes with each 6th years within the academic year and some 5th year class groups. The remaining time is spent in meetings, providing personal/social/educational/vocational guidance and counselling to students from all year groups on an individual basis or completing resting, assessments or collaborating with colleagues on other issues relevant to promoting the wellbeing and support throughout the school as a community.

All class groups are of a mixed ability and all the students are receiving the same guidance information.

Ms. O' Moore and Ms. Doyle have their own offices with ICT which has access to the internet, a telephone, a careers library and a filing system. Confidential guidance files on each student are

kept under lock and key in the guidance room. The AEN (Additional Education Needs) department within the school is another vital resource and consultation between the Guidance Counsellor and teachers involved in AEN is continuous throughout the year. This relationship becomes very important around the time of DARE/RACE applications. University and College representatives are available to give talks to students on request. National resources include Department of Education and Skills agencies such as NCGE (National Centre for Guidance in Education) and PSS (Psychological Support Service in the DDLETB).

9. Critical Incidents

The Principal, Deputy Principals, Guidance Counsellors, Student Support Team and other staff support students who experience bereavement, separation or loss. They may carry out some of the following functions, as appropriate:

- Where we know a bereavement is imminent, if appropriate, support is offered beforehand
- In conjunction with the Principal, ensure that all teachers are made aware of a bereavement or loss, especially the Year Head and class tutor Attend funeral
- Meet student on his or her return to school Inform staff if student is having particular difficulties.
- Liaise with support services including NEPS Psychologists and Psychological support services.
- Seek outside help or assistance for a student and his/her family should the need arise The Critical Incident Management Plan guides school procedures in the event of a sudden loss.

10. Whole School Guidance Programme & The Continuum of Support

THIS GUIDANCE PROGRAMME IS BASED ON THE 'CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK FOR GUIDANCE IN POST-PRIMARY EDUCATION' (2007)

Whole School Guidance is perceived to be a continuous process of support and care from 1st Year to 6th Year and therefore it must consist of continuity and progression from year to year. The curriculum focuses on the three guidance domains: the personal, the educational and the career domain. Each curriculum focus is subdivided into a number of broad topics, each of which is treated under the headings:

- Areas of learning
- Dispositions, Values, Attitudes, Skills Developed
- Learning Outcomes
- Skills Development in Related Subjects and Programmes

The curriculum framework reflects the importance of students striving to reach their potential. This is achieved through the provision of information and guidance of a broad range of topics and skills and, in terms of student access to guidance across all the years of post-primary education (See Appendix 2).

Whole school guidance should be addressed across all subjects. Each department will be issued a template as part of the whole school guidance approach to highlight where in their department planning parts of guidance are present.

The Guidance department have uploaded a folder on the staff shared drive where staff can share the lessons, activities and resources they are using and doing in their subject that address the areas of guidance that can be seen through personal, social, educational & vocational.

The Continuum of support is categorised in Guidance, into for Some, Few and All.

The Continuum of Support offers a flexible framework within which schools can address all educational needs, including wellbeing needs (DES & NEPS, 2007, 2010a, 2010b) Guidance curricular planning (schemes of work for guidance lessons, learner outcomes, assessment) Areas of Learning and Competences Guidance-related learning starts in early childhood education and continues through students' primary and post primary education. As part of this holistic development, students in Swords Community College are exposed to 3 areas of guidance-related learning so as to allow them develop in 8 areas of competence (Figure 2 below courtesy of NCGE:

A Whole School Guidance Framework, Page 16). These areas of learning aim to build on the learning that students will have experienced during their years in primary education.



Junior Cycle

The three areas of learning and associated competences are linked with the principles underpinning the Framework for Junior Cycle, a number of the Framework Statements of Learning and Key Skills. The whole school guidance programme is linked to Key Skills, such as Managing Myself, Managing Information & Thinking, Staying Well, Communicating and Working with Others. The guidance counsellor has a role in planning, coordinating and delivering guidance-related- learning associated (Guidance for All) with the relevant Key Skills and in providing more intensive interventions to those students who need it through Guidance for Some and A Few approaches.

Wellbeing

SPHE and guidance related learning are two of the main pillars of Wellbeing. Wellbeing is linked to the Staying Well key skill of the Framework for Junior Cycle. The eight competences can be linked with five of the six indicators of Wellbeing - Responsible, Connected, Resilient, Respected and Aware. The guidance counsellor has an important role in supporting planning for and delivery of the learning outcomes associated with Wellbeing indicators.

Senior Cycle

At senior cycle (including LC & TY) the RSE curriculum and Guidance Programmes can be used to plan learning outcomes in Developing Myself for students. All school staff involved in these programmes work together to ensure a consistent approach is taken in supporting student achievement of the learning outcomes. This collaboration also helps to minimise any repetition/overlap in the provision of teaching and learning experiences in this area.

The Continuum of Support



Guidance For All – provided to all students to support personal & social, educational, and career development, and students making transitions (incoming first years, junior cycle to senior cycle and from senior cycle into college). The guidance counsellor as the specialist has a key role to play in coordinating the planning and delivery of the whole school guidance programme and in the provision of guidance to students. A whole school approach is employed in delivering the teaching and learning activities of the school guidance programme which include, career education programmes, SPHE and Wellbeing in Junior Cycle and Careers classes. The NEPS publication ‘A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools: Guidelines for Teachers’ (2010) outlines whole school approaches that can be employed in relation to ‘Support for All’.

Guidance For Some – provided to specific targeted groups of students to support personal & social, educational and career development and transition making. Such groups of students will typically include, for example, students in senior cycle, especially 6th year, who will benefit from group and one-to-one guidance counselling to support educational and career decision making, and students who are making transitions. Transition points include, primary school into first year of post-primary education, junior cycle to senior cycle, and school to higher/further education and training, apprenticeships and employment. Some students may require additional and more intensive support in making transitions. Group/one-to-one guidance counselling will require the expertise of specialist school staff, such as the guidance counsellor working in collaboration with the student support team, SPHE teacher, year heads, class tutors whilst having been trained in the specific programme. The NEPS publication ‘A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools: Guidelines for Teachers’ (2010) outlines a Solution Oriented Framework that can be employed in relation to ‘School Support (for some)’.

Guidance For A Few – Students may require support in meeting their developmental needs and when they experience personal crises. Some students may also require more intensive support as they make and important decisions during their time in post-primary schools. This support will require the expertise of specialised school staff with the necessary knowledge, skills and competences to respond to the needs of these students and will involve the guidance counsellor, and other school staff who have been trained in meeting the needs of vulnerable students and those who may have additional needs. In the event that the student requires more intensive support, referral to external agencies and supports should be employed. In the event of a protracted referral the guidance counsellor/staff member may need to provide continued support to the student. The NEPS publication ‘A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools: Guidelines for Teachers’ (2010) outlines the supports which can be provided to students with more complex or enduring needs under ‘School Support Plus (for a Few)’.

11.Planning for students with Additional Educational Needs

Each individual student's needs are assessed by the Additional Needs Team and these needs are communicated to the Guidance Counsellor when appropriate. When speaking to the AEN students individually during their guidance meetings, the guidance counsellors make them aware of the DARE programmes as well as other supports that are there to help them at 3rd level as well as Higher Education supports and routes. The Guidance department work in conjunction with the AEN department and sixth year year head to work through the DARE applications with students in 6th Year, normally from January onwards.

The Guidance counsellor as well as the AEN coordinator collaborate to link AEN students in with further education providers like the National Learning Network and support the HSE referral to these educational programmes also.

12. Universal Design in Learning (UDL) in Guidance

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is an approach to teaching, learning and assessment based around a set of principles for curriculum development that supports educators to proactively design teaching, learning and assessment that include the diversity of learners in higher education. As UDL is also one of Swords CCs SSE target focus for the next cycle it is important to embed it within guidance planning also. The UDL approach to teaching, learning and assessment seeks to remove barriers to learning for ALL learners rather than addressing individual barriers to learning. UDL aims to change the design of the environment rather than to change the learner. When environments are designed to reduce barriers, all learners can engage in meaningful learning.

UDL in Guidance classes

- Before class: share a lesson brief (objectives, success criteria, options for tasks, how work will be used).
- During: present class info in layers (headline → detail).

- Use visuals (icons for NFQ levels; coloured “routes”), read-aloud and captions toggled on.
- Choice of task for students that cater for different learners.
- Reduce cognitive load: chunk activities; offer templates (CV bullets scaffold, STAR sheet for work-experience stories).
- Language & EAL: glossary with icons; allow bilingual notes; provide translated briefs where feasible.
- Sensory supports: quiet corner option; timers/visual schedules; printables for note-taking; permission to stand/move.

UDL in Individual Vocational Appointments:

- Access & communication-Offer multiple booking channels (online form, teacher referral, drop-in list); confirm via student’s preferred mode.
- Send a pre-appointment list (topics + how we’ll work; student chooses format: talk, write, draw, translate).
- Provide visual schedule of the meeting and an “opt-out of eye contact” or note-taking card.
- Environment & regulation- calm, UDL signs in all classrooms and offices.
- Quiet space; adjustable lighting; seating choice; sensory tools available.
- Share key info on screen and on paper; use plain English; allow extra processing time.
- Tools & alternatives
- Allow typed chat during session; drawing/mind-map; interpreter/translation where needed.
- Offer choice of output: plan template, audio summary, bullet list, or email recap.

13. Planning for a Culturally Diverse Society.

The guidance department provides guidance and support for those students who are from culturally diverse backgrounds and may aspire to progress to Higher Education elsewhere or to sit another language as part of their Leaving Certificate. Both Ms. O' Moore & Ms. Doyle are there to support students deciding on their subjects for senior cycle and are sensitive and mindful of the diverse backgrounds of these students when doing so.

14. Bí Cineálta Anti Bullying Framework (2024) and Whole School Guidance

Swords Community College recognises the importance of fostering a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment for all students. In line with the Bí Cineálta Procedures (2024), the Whole School Guidance Programme will:

- Embed kindness and respect as core values across all guidance activities.
- Collaborate with the Student Support Team, SPHE, Wellbeing, IMBVE Year Heads and Anti-bullying co-ordinator to help identify and address bullying behaviours.
- Ensure student voice is central to the development and review of anti-bullying strategies.
- Provide targeted guidance interventions for students affected by bullying (Guidance for Few).
E.g Guidance Check Ins.
- Use restorative practices and solution-focused approaches in counselling.
- Maintain accurate records of bullying incidents if discussed in guidance appointments and ensure timely reporting to the Board of Management.
- Liaise with external agencies (e.g. Jigsaw, Pieta House, CAMHS) for additional support where needed.

This integration ensures that the guidance programme not only supports students' personal,

educational, and career development but also actively contributes to a safe and kind school culture.

15.Policies related to Whole School Guidance

Swords Community College School Policies	Guidance Link to Other School Policies
Wellbeing Policy	This policy promotes holistic student development and support. The guidance plan is a core pillar of wellbeing, integrating SPHE, mental health support, and resilience-building activities across all year groups.
Additional Educational Needs Policy	The Special Educational Needs policy supports inclusive education. The guidance plan complements this by offering tailored support to some, few and all as well as, DARE/RACE application assistance, and collaboration with the AEN department to ensure equitable access to career and educational guidance.
IT-internet safety Acceptable Use Policy	This policy defines safe and responsible use of digital tools. The guidance plan supports digital literacy and online career research, ensuring students use technology safely and effectively in their educational journey
Admissions Policy	Regular attendance is important for academic and personal development. The guidance team supports this by identifying barriers to attendance, offering counselling to those who may be school avoiding, and working with the Student Support Team to re-engage students. They also liaise with support agencies like the EWO.
Child Protection and Safe Guarding Policy	This policy ensures the safety and welfare of students. The guidance department contributes by identifying at-risk

	students, maintaining confidentiality, and making appropriate referrals, as outlined in the plan's counselling and referral procedures.
Critical Incident Policy	Guidance counsellors play a key role in responding to critical incidents, offering emotional support and coordinating with external agencies. This policy ensures a structured response that complements the guidance plan's pastoral care framework.
Positive Discipline – Code of Behaviour Policy	This policy outlines expectations for student conduct and discipline. The guidance programme supports this by fostering self-awareness, emotional regulation, and decision-making skills through SPHE, counselling, and wellbeing initiatives.
Swords RSE Policy	TBC
SPHE Policy	TBC
Bì Cinneálta Policy	This policy promotes kindness, inclusion, and anti-bullying strategies. It aligns with the guidance plan's emphasis on personal and social development, restorative practices, and targeted support for students experiencing difficulties.
Data records/confidentiality	Adhering to data protection act/ GDPR

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How well does the School Guidance Service meet its objectives?

Please tick one:

Very well _____

Well _____

Fairly well _____

Poorly _____

Comments and suggestions welcome

2. What did you find most helpful in the School Guidance Service during your years in this school?

3. Was there assistance or guidance which you would have expected and did not receive?

4. Think about the incoming First Years to this school. How can the School Guidance Service meet their needs?

Any other comments and/or suggestions?

Appendix Two

1	1 ST Year: Curriculum Focus	Area of Learning	Dispositions, Values, Aptitudes, Skills Developed	Learning Outcomes	Related Subjects
P R E - E N T R Y	<p>Educational Guidance Administer CAT 4s, send to be corrected and interpret results. Guidance Department works in conjunction with Additional Needs Coordinator to provide information handout to summarize subject content and relevance to future career areas. Meet with students and their parents on Open Day and Registration Day</p>	Verbal. Numerical, Non-Verbal	Awareness of test conditions.	Make informed decisions	All subjects and programmes
	<p>Personal & Social Guidance and Counselling</p> <p>Students can come to Ms. Doyle at any time to explore their thoughts and feeling and the choices open to them. They strive to give care and support to students learning to cope with the many aspects of growing up especially on learning to manage the transition from primary to post-primary. There is an open-door policy in relation to counselling at Swords Community College and students are informed in 1st year that they are free to come and make an appointment to talk to Ms. Doyle when the need arises.</p> <p>Parents are welcome to make an appointment with the Guidance Counsellor at any time of the year in relation to the guidance of their child. Liaise with class teachers, tutors and year heads Consult with practical teachers to ensure students make correct choice of practical for JC</p> <p>Students complete personal profile. Various questions are answered to allow the student to express if they are having any difficulties since starting SCC</p>	<p>Social and Community Issues:</p> <p>Bullying, suicide, depression, illegal substance etc. Awareness of kinds of things that hinder learning</p>	Develop coping skills Personal and interpersonal skills, social skills to form friendships and support with self regulation.	Access to school support and counselling	Guidance, Wellbeing, SPHE, IMBVE Class teacher time, learning support, organisational skills, SST support.

2	2 nd Year: Curriculum Focus	Areas of Learning	Dispositions, Values, Aptitudes, Skills Developed	Learning Outcomes	Related subjects
S E P T E M B E R T O M A Y	<p>Personal & Social Guidance and Counselling</p> <p>Students can come to Oide Etain & Oide Cara at any time to explore their thoughts and feeling and the choices open to them. They strive to give care and support to students learning to cope with the many aspects of growing up. There is an open-door policy in relation to counselling at SCC.</p> <p>Parents are welcome to make an appointment with the Guidance Counsellors at any time of the year in relation to the guidance of their child</p> <p>Oide Etain & Oide Cara are on hand to speak with 2nd Year Parents at the parent teacher meeting about any aspect of guidance relating to their child.</p>	<p>Social and Community Issues:</p> <p>Bullying, suicide, depression, illegal substance etc.</p> <p>Awareness of kinds of things that hinder learning</p>	<p>Develop coping skills</p> <p>Personal and interpersonal skills, social skills</p> <p>Personal effectiveness</p> <p>‘Working’ with others</p> <p>Develop resilience and problem-solving skills</p> <p>Recognise the symptoms of stress and distress</p> <p>Parents aware of the role of GC within the school</p>	<p>Access to school support and counselling</p> <p>Understanding and coping with the challenges to living and learning</p> <p>Students aware of the support networks that are available to them when they become a school leaver</p>	<p>Guidance, SPHE, RE, Class teacher time, Pastoral Care</p> <p>All subjects</p>

3	3 rd Year: Curriculum Focus	Areas of Learning	Dispositions, Values, Aptitudes, Skills Developed	Learning Outcomes	Related subjects
S E P T E M B E R T O M A Y	<p>Personal & Social Guidance and Counselling</p> <p>Students can come to Oide Etain & Oide Cara at any time to explore their thoughts and feeling and the choices open to them. They strive to give care and support to students learning to cope with the many aspects of growing up. There is an open-door policy in relation to counselling at SCC Parents are welcome to make an appointment with the Guidance Counsellors at any time of the year in relation to the guidance of their child.</p> <p>Oide Etain & Oide Cara are on hand to speak with 2nd Year Parents at the parent teacher meeting about any aspect of guidance relating to their child.</p> <p>Look at options for Senior Cycle: Transition Year/ Leaving Cert.</p>	<p>Social and Community Issues: Bullying, suicide, depression, illegal substance, stress, exams etc.</p> <p>Information on the two programmes The connection of subjects to future work/study /life skills</p>	<p>Develop coping skills Personal and interpersonal skills, social skills Personal effectiveness 'Working' with others Develop resilience and problem-solving skills Recognise the symptoms of stress and distress</p> <p>Parents aware of the role of GC within the school</p> <p>Awareness of course content and progression Understanding course content and different active method of learning</p>	<p>Access to school support and counselling Understanding and coping with the challenges to living and learning</p> <p>Making informed decisions Demonstrating awareness of educational progression for students who will find school attainment difficult in LC.</p>	<p>Guidance, SPHE, RE, Class teacher time, Pastoral Care Guidance</p>

4	Transition Year: Curriculum Focus	Areas of Learning	Dispositions, Values, Aptitudes, Skills Developed	Learning Outcomes	Related subjects
S E P T E M B E R T O M A Y	<p>Educational Guidance: School Subjects</p> <p>Ms. O Moore & Ms. Doyle meet with TY students as a group and individually, if they wish, to discuss their subject choice for Leaving Cert.</p>	<p>Subject options and choice</p> <p>The connection of subjects to future work/study /life skills</p>	<p>Awareness of course content of subjects on offer/levels of difficulty.</p> <p>Understanding career implications of choosing/not choosing a subject</p> <p>Advantage of choosing certain subjects over others.</p> <p>Critical thinking</p> <p>Research skills</p>	<p>Making informed decisions</p> <p>Appreciating the value of a chosen subject</p> <p>Demonstrating awareness of the implications of choosing certain subjects</p>	All subjects
	<p>Personal and Social Mental Health Day-Priority</p>	<p>Coping skills, resilience, gratitude</p>	<p>Develop problem solving skills</p>	<p>Learning when to utilise newfound skills</p>	Guidance
	<p>Career Guidance: Career routes/paths</p> <p>M. O Moore and Ms. Doyle meets TY students to discuss subject choice and potential careers. JC results, work experience, skills, interests, aptitudes, strengths and weaknesses are all considered. Approaches to various career paths are discussed.</p>	<p>Type of work associated with various occupation</p> <p>How to prioritise occupation which are most relevant to the student</p>	<p>Research skills (Using Qualifax, careers library and student journal)</p> <p>Critical thinking (analysing the pros and cons of different occupations.)</p> <p>Information processing</p> <p>Identification of the application route for required courses</p> <p>Discussion of course content with college programmes</p>	<p>Categorising and characterising a variety of occupations</p> <p>Openness to 'non-traditional' professions</p> <p>Identifying personal career interests</p> <p>Evaluation options and making critical use of information</p>	
				<p>Developing parental awareness of subjects</p>	

5	5 th Year LCE: Curriculum Focus	Areas of Learning	Dispositions, Values, Aptitudes, Skills Developed	Learning Outcomes	Related Subjects
S E P T E M B E R T O M A Y	<p>Personal & Social Guidance and Counselling</p> <p>Students can come to Ms. O Moore & Ms. Doyle at any time to explore their thoughts and feeling and the choices open to them. They strive to give care and support to students learning to cope with the many aspects of growing up. There is an open-door policy in relation to counselling at SCC</p> <p>Parents are welcome to make an appointment with the Guidance Counsellor at any time of the year in relation to the guidance of their child</p>	<p>Social and Community Issues:</p> <p>Bullying, suicide, depression, illegal substance etc</p> <p>Awareness of kinds of things that hinder learning</p>	<p>Develop coping skills</p> <p>Personal and interpersonal skills, social skills</p> <p>Personal effectiveness</p> <p>‘Working’ with others</p> <p>Develop resilience and problem-solving skills</p> <p>Recognise the symptoms of stress and distress</p>	<p>Access to school support and counselling</p> <p>Understanding and coping with the challenges to living and learning</p>	<p>SPHE, , Class teacher time, Pastoral Care</p>

6	6 th Year LCE: Curriculum Focus	Area of Learning	Dispositions, Values, Aptitudes, Skills Developed	Learning Outcomes	Related Subjects
S E P T E M B E R T O M A Y	<p>Personal & Social Guidance and Counselling</p> <p>Students can come to Oide Etain & Oide Cara at any time to explore their thoughts and feeling and the choices open to them. She strives to give care and support to students learning to cope with the many aspects of growing up. There is an open-door policy in relation to counselling at SCC.</p> <p>Parents are welcome to make an appointment with the Guidance Counsellor at any time of the year in relation to the guidance of their child</p> <p>Careers Morning TBD</p> <p>Ms. O Moore and Ms. Doyle outline the guidance schedule for the year ahead and inform student that they both will be scheduling individual appointments to discuss career options and that students must check the notice board for dates of importance regarding Open Days and CAO alerts as they arise.</p> <p>A Virtual notice board has been set up on schoolwork also which students must check and this informs students that prospectuses are available from outside the office for students to use as a research tool.</p> <p>They both remind students of the UCAS application procedure and informs those who wish to apply to make an appointment to start the application process. And follows through on those who want to apply.</p> <p>World Skills RDS</p> <p>Ms. O Moore and Ms. Doyle instruct students on where and how to access the CAO handbook and delivers a presentation on the CAO application system to students and parents in September.</p> <p>Discusses handbook and the HEAR and DARE application procedures are explained. Helps students CAO – Oide Etain assists students in filling in their CAO application.</p> <p>Oide Etain & Oide Cara are on hand to speak with 6th year parents at the parent teacher meeting about any aspect of guidance relating to their son/daughter</p> <p>A study skills seminar is delivered on motivation, organisation and examination preparation for all sixth. Year groups and is delivered by a professional body</p>	<p>Bullying, suicide, depression, illegal substance etc</p> <p>Awareness of kinds of things that hinder learning</p> <p>Students are informed about the deadlines that affect them this year, for example, UCAS, CAO and PLC application deadlines</p> <p>Planning effectively for the Higher Options Day to maximise learning.</p> <p>Learning about the application process and how it works, NQF awareness. Stress Management and how to recognise stress.</p> <p>Learning how to select courses in order of preference as well as entry and matriculation requirements.</p> <p>Learning and evaluating current study techniques</p>	<p>Develop coping skills</p> <p>Personal and interpersonal skills, social skills</p> <p>Personal effectiveness</p> <p>‘Working’ with others</p> <p>Develop resilience and problem-solving skills</p> <p>Recognise the symptoms of stress and distress</p> <p>It is hoped that students will have formulated an idea of what course they may be interested in. They can use this information to guide them to the correct stands and ask the appropriate questions during Higher Options. For example: entry requirements, course content, duration, work experience, travel abroad, opportunities, whether or not the course is recognised in Ireland.</p> <p>Developing organisational skills and information building skills. Personal effectiveness skills</p> <p>Parents aware of the role of GC within the school</p> <p>Study techniques, note-taking, research skills</p> <p>Planning for examinations. Time management during examination</p>	<p>Access to school support and counselling</p> <p>Understanding and coping with the challenges to living and learning</p> <p>Discussion of course interest from representatives from the colleges at HO. Evaluating options and making critical use of information. Students after researching courses at the HO conference can start applying for some of the UCAS courses they are interested in.</p> <p>Making the CAO application and how to apply for various courses of interest</p> <p>Understanding the importance of selecting their course choice in order of preference</p> <p>Develop study techniques and techniques for dealing with stress</p>	<p>Guidance, SPHE, RE, Class teacher time, Pastoral Care</p>