

Whole School Guidance Plan 2025-2027

Castleknock Community College



Review Dates

BOM	June 2016	Ratified
BOM	June 2018	Reviewed
BOM	April 2021	Reviewed with Amendments
BOM	October 2023	Reviewed with Amendments
Staff	Reviewed 2024	Reviewed
BOM	September 2024	Reviewed with Amendments
BOM	February 2026	Reviewed with Amendments

Due for next review: September 2027

Foreword

The College’s Whole School Guidance Plan has recently been reviewed and updated in line with key Department of Education circulars and information notes, including Circular 0001/2025 (Guidance in Post-Primary Schools), as well as supporting guidance such as Information Note 0001/2024 on whole-school guidance and Information Note 0008/2023 on personal and social guidance counselling.

These updates reaffirm the principle that guidance in post-primary schools is a whole-school, holistic activity — embedding personal, social, educational and career guidance across all aspects of school life, from curricular provision to pastoral support.

At the heart of our revised plan remains a deep commitment to each student’s overall well-being. To reflect the broadened remit of guidance, our plan is now structured to align with contemporary DE frameworks and is organised into seven distinct strands — capturing the full range of support available to our students at Castleknock Community College.

Strand 1 – The Guidance & Counselling Department

Strand 2 – The Learning Support Department

Strand 3 – Wellbeing & SPHE (Junior Cycle SPHE & Senior Cycle SPHE)

Strand 4 – Physical Health

Strand 5 – Inclusion & Diversity

Strand 6 – Student Leadership

Strand 7 – Chaplaincy

A Whole School Guidance Plan that prepares students for life.

While each strand will be evaluated at regular intervals through the School Self Evaluation Process the success of our Whole School Guidance Plan may be best measured by the characteristic of a graduate of Castleknock Community College. A series of workshops with staff, students and parents in November-December 2015 invited each group to conclude the following statement: *“A graduate from CCC is recognised as...”*

The responses led to the following statement:

“A graduate from CCC is recognised as a young man or woman who possesses a strong moral purpose and holds the courage of their convictions. Graduates will be equipped with the life skills to understand their own well-being so that they can manage their emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical needs.”

The Whole School Guidance Plan requires regular evaluation in order to meet the needs of our students. The Plan will receive a bi-annual review by the Board of Management and the strands will undergo constant appraisals:

Strands 1 & 3	The Guidance & Counselling Department & The Well Being & Life Skills Programmes September 2027
Strands 2 & 5	The Learning Support Department & Inclusion & Diversity September 2025 - May 2026
Strands 4, 6 & 7	Physical Health & Student Leadership & Chaplaincy May 2027

Table of Contents

Introduction to the Whole School Guidance Plan & Process	
■ Context	Page 3
■ Promoting Wellbeing	Page 4
■ Risk & Protective Factors for Student Wellbeing	Page 5
■ Bí Cineálta	Page 6
■ Care Structures at Castleknock Community College	Page 8
■ The Role of the Year Head	Page 9
■ The Role of the Assistant Year Head	Page 10
■ The Role of the Class Tutor	
■ The Seven Strands of the Whole School Guidance Plan	Page 11
Strand 1 The Guidance & Counselling Department	Page 13
Strand 2 The Learning Support Department	Page 28
Strand 3 Wellbeing & SPHE Programmes	Page 37
Strand 3.1 Wellbeing	Page 38
Strand 3.2 Social, Personal & Health Education	Page 43
Strand 3.3 Relationships & Sexuality Education	Page 49
Strand 4 Physical Health	Page 55
Strand 5 Inclusion & Diversity	Page 59
Strand 6 Student Leadership	Page 62
Strand 7 Chaplaincy	Page 65
<hr/>	
Evaluation	Page 70
Checklist for Annual Review of Whole School Guidance Plan	Page 71
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-Introduction to the College Whole School Guidance Plan & Process -

The Mission Statement of Castleknock Community College

We, the pupils, parents, and staff of Castleknock Community College, strive for excellence in a caring and supportive environment. Growing and developing through co-operation will enable all to realise their full potential.

Context

The Education Act, 1998 requires the management of a school to develop a plan based on the needs of the school. The school Whole School Guidance Plan is an integral part of the School Development Plan. Appropriate guidance is a legal entitlement as schools are required by the Act to “ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance” (Education Act, 1998, 9c), this includes those from minority groups and those with special needs. The Whole School Guidance Plan outlines for all the partners in education the central role that guidance plays in the lives of all students. The Guidelines for Schools on the implications of Section 9(c) of the Education Act 1998 document sets to one side the stereotypical image of Guidance being the remit of one Department in a school and places it at the centre of the students’ whole education. The challenge is to ensure that the broader definition of guidance becomes embedded in the whole school programme. The engagement of the school in Guidance Planning will assist in broadening the concept of guidance beyond the Guidance Counsellors. It will also encourage the exploration of the guidance programme, identify areas for improvement, and promote greater Guidance access for all students.



Promoting Wellbeing

There is substantial evidence that *Wellbeing Programmes* in schools, when implemented effectively, can produce long-term benefits for young people. The College recognises the importance of developing the whole person; emotionally, mentally, spiritually, and physically. A supportive school environment where high expectations and aspirations are the norm for all young people can of itself contribute significantly to lifelong health and wellbeing. At Castleknock Community College we provide a range of supports and interventions that address the emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical needs of our students. These include:

- the effective and consistent implementation of SPHE as part of a whole-school approach to the promotion of wellbeing in our students
- the coordinated implementation of our whole-school Whole School Guidance Plan
- building positive interpersonal relationships and addressing bullying behaviour and how it impacts on the wellbeing of others.
- ensuring that our students are aware of the range of supports within the school as well as those offered by external agencies.
- providing opportunities to develop their physical well-being through physical education and extracurricular activities.
- Addressing the spiritual needs of students through meditation and services.



Risk & Protective Factors for Student Wellbeing

Students can be exposed to many risks and protective factors which influence their well-being. Protective factors in the College environment that help to build resilience in young people include:

- providing a positive school climate
 - ensuring a sense of belonging and connectedness to the College
 - having protocols and support systems in place that proactively support students and their families, should mental health difficulties arise
 - working collaboratively to prevent students from early school leaving
 - developing positive teacher-student and teacher-parent relationships
 - supporting the development of positive relationships with peers
 - fostering expectations of high achievement and providing opportunities for each student to realise their potential
 - using positive classroom management strategies
 - focusing on social and emotional learning and the development of problem-solving skills through our SPHE programme
 - providing support for teachers, including professional development
 - encouraging students to participate in extra-curricular activities
 - providing students with information about the range of community supports and crisis agencies that exist
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Bí Cineálta



Overview

Bí Cineálta (Be Kind) is our whole-school approach to preventing and responding to bullying and promoting positive relationships. It sits within the Whole School Guidance Plan and works across curriculum, pastoral care, and whole-school culture to ensure every student feels safe, respected, and included.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying behaviour is targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm. The harm can be physical, social, and/or emotional. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and usually involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society.

Forms of Bullying Behaviour

Bullying behaviour can take many forms, which can occur separately or together. These can include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

Direct Bullying Behaviour:

- Physical bullying behaviour
- Verbal bullying behaviour
- Written bullying behaviour
- Extortion

Indirect Bullying Behaviour:

- Exclusion
- Relational

Online Bullying Behaviour:

- Sending or sharing nasty, insulting, offensive, and/or intimidating messages or images via text messages, emails, direct messages or other websites or apps
- Posting information considered to be personal, private, and sensitive without consent
- Making and/or participating in fake profiles on a social network to impersonate and/or humiliate other students
- Excluding or disrupting access to a student on purpose from online chat groups, access to accounts or from an online game.

Types of Bullying Behaviour

There are many types of bullying behaviour. These can include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- Disablist bullying
- Exceptionally able bullying
- Gender identity bullying
- Homophobic/transphobic (LGBTQ+) bullying
- Physical appearance bullying
- Racist bullying
- Poverty bullying
- Religious identity bullying
- Sexist bullying
- Sexual harassment bullying

Our Commitment

We are committed to a proactive, restorative, and consistent approach to behaviour that: protects the dignity of every student; encourages reporting; supports those harmed; and teaches social and emotional skills to prevent harm.

Aims

- Prevent bullying behaviour and reduce harm to student wellbeing.
- Promote kindness, inclusion, and responsible online behaviour.
- Ensure clear, consistent procedures for reporting, investigating, and resolving incidents.
- Provide timely support for those experiencing and those displaying bullying behaviour.

Key Principles

- Whole-school: all staff, students and parents share responsibility.
- Restorative and educational: focus on repairing harm and building skills.
- Early intervention: concerns are logged and addressed promptly.
- Confidentiality and dignity: handling information sensitively while keeping students safe.

Prevention & Promotion

- Embedded learning through SPHE, Wellbeing classes and assemblies on kindness, respect, consent, and digital safety.
- SPHE and Guidance – led work on emotional regulation, friendship, and resilience.
- Schoolwide campaigns, peer-mentoring and student voice (student council, Bí Cineálta ambassadors).
- Staff training on recognising and responding to bullying behaviour, including online behaviour.

Reporting & Response

- Report: students, staff or parents can report to a teacher, Care Team, Senior Leadership Team, or Guidance Team.
- Initial response: ensure immediate safety, offer support, and make a record.
- Investigation: proportionate, fair, and timely; gather accounts from those involved and witnesses.
- Support & follow-up: restorative conversations, targeted supports, counselling, sanctions if required, and wellbeing monitoring.

Roles & Responsibilities

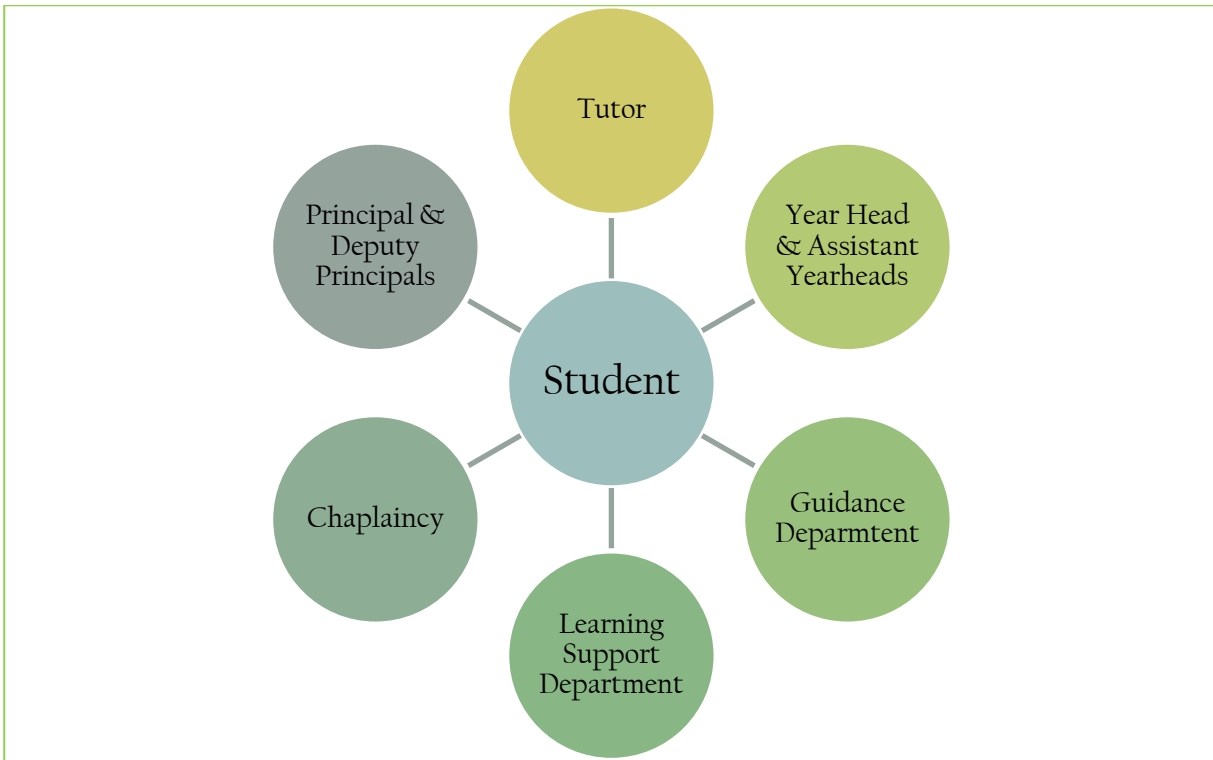
- Students: treat others with respect; report concerns; engage with supports.
- Staff: model respectful behaviour; record and report incidents; support students.
- Parents/Carers: talk with your child about respect and online safety; contact school if concerned.
- Leadership & Guidance/Care Team: oversee investigations, provide supports, coordinate training, and review trends.

Recording, Monitoring & Review

All incidents are logged for monitoring trends. Data informs targeted interventions and annual policy review. The Wellbeing Coordinator reports to school leadership and the Board as required.

Care Structures at Castleknock Community College

At Castleknock Community College care structures have been established to meet the personal, social, and spiritual needs of all students. The Principal and Deputy Principals work closely with the Care Teams that are in place and ensure that communication between the seven strands of the Whole School Guidance Plan exists in an effective manner. Each Year Group is supported by a Care Team that meets fortnightly. The Care Team is comprised of the Year Head & Assistant Year Head(s), The Chaplain a Guidance Counsellor, and a member of the Learning Support Department. The Principal and Deputy Principals facilitate these meetings. The Year Head consults closely with the Tutors in advance of the meeting.

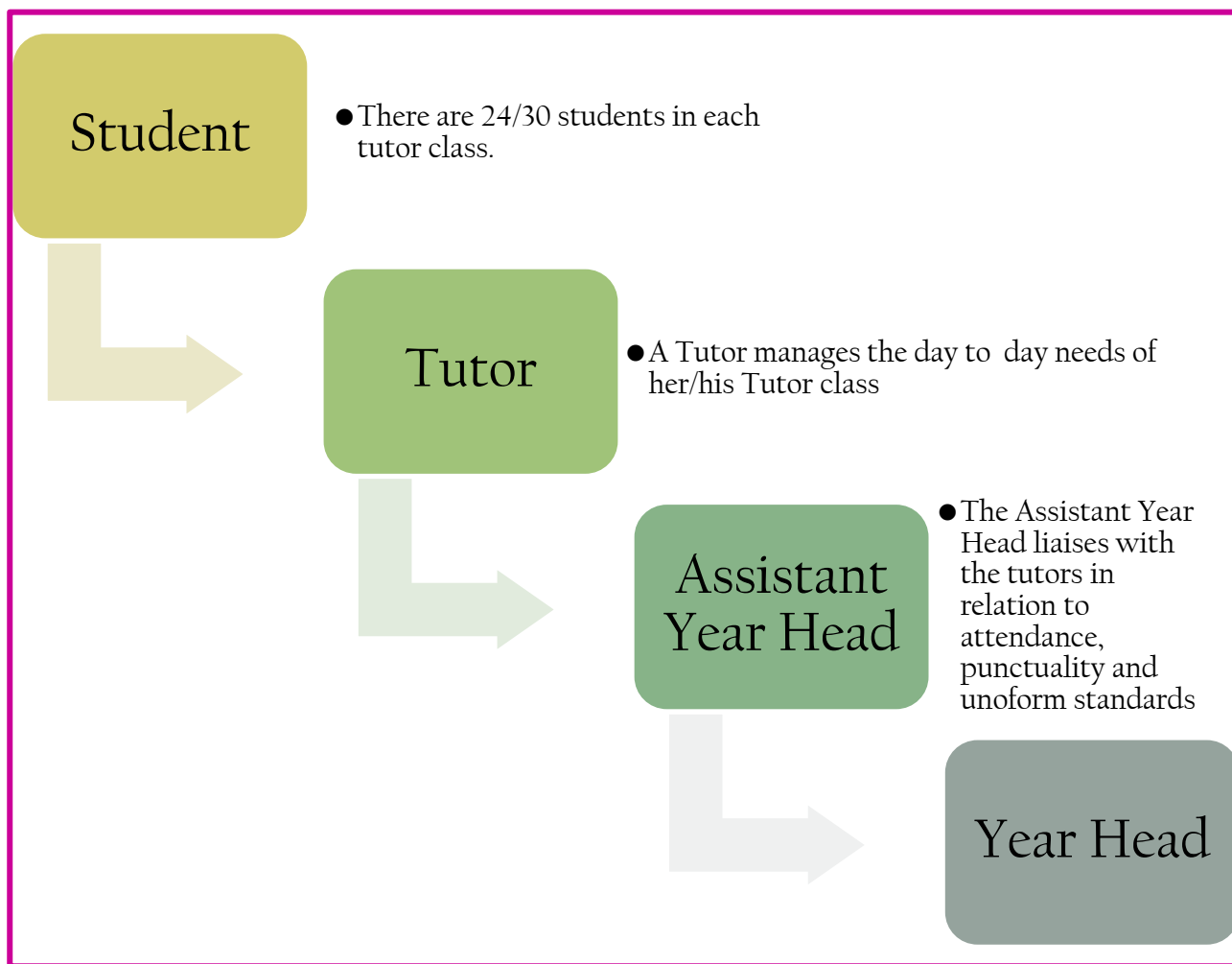


The Role of the Year Head

The Year Head is a member of the management team with specific responsibility for the day-to-day pastoral care, supervision, and well-being of the pupils within her/his year group. The work of the Year Head seeks to create in her/his year group of students a cohesive, harmonious, and disciplined group, positive in their attitude, confident in their self-esteem, motivated and ambitious to pursue excellence in all their endeavours.

The Year Head's primary task is to oversee the welfare of the year group on behalf of the school community. Year Heads serve at an intermediary level between Class Tutors and Principal/Deputy Principal. This role exists as part of a structure of caring for all students in a year group. The Year Head seeks to provide support to class tutors in their care of a class group. The Year Head also provides support to teachers in the development of a positive learning environment.

- The Year Head has an overseeing responsibility for the implementation of the Behaviour Code. Subject teachers are responsible for discipline at class level and ensure that appropriate sanctions are applied, and records kept. When improvement is not forthcoming the student is referred to the Class Tutor who may refer to the Year Head. In extreme cases a referral is made directly to Senior Management.
 - The Year Head refers students experiencing on-going difficulties to Senior Management or when appropriate, Guidance Counsellor, Chaplain, or the Learning Support Department. In matters of Child Protection, The Children First Act 2015 and the Child Protection Procedures 2017 will apply. If a Year Head becomes aware of a Child Protection issue, he/she will report the case to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP), In his/her absence, the Deputy (DLP) will liaise accordingly.
 - The Year Head has a responsibility to work closely with the Care Team and parents/guardians to assist students at-risk in the year group.
 - The Year Head oversees students' academic and other progress. The Year Head, in consultation with the Class Tutor/Teacher, interviews those in most need of encouragement. The Year Head and her/his team will meet students in relation to tracking and target setting.
 - In conjunction with Senior Management the Year Head assists in the process of subject choices for Senior Cycle. He/she will also liaise with the Transition Year Team in relation to the TY process.
 - The Year Head will have an input into the timetable requirements for her/his Year Group.
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The Role of the Assistant Year Head

The Assistant Year Head supports the work of the Year Head in relation to the day-to-day pastoral care, supervision, and well-being of the pupils within her/his year group. The Assistant Year Head will support the Year Head in creating in her/his year group of students a cohesive, harmonious, and disciplined group, positive in their attitude, confident in their self-esteem, motivated and ambitious to pursue excellence. The Assistant Year Heads collaborate closely with Tutors in the following areas:

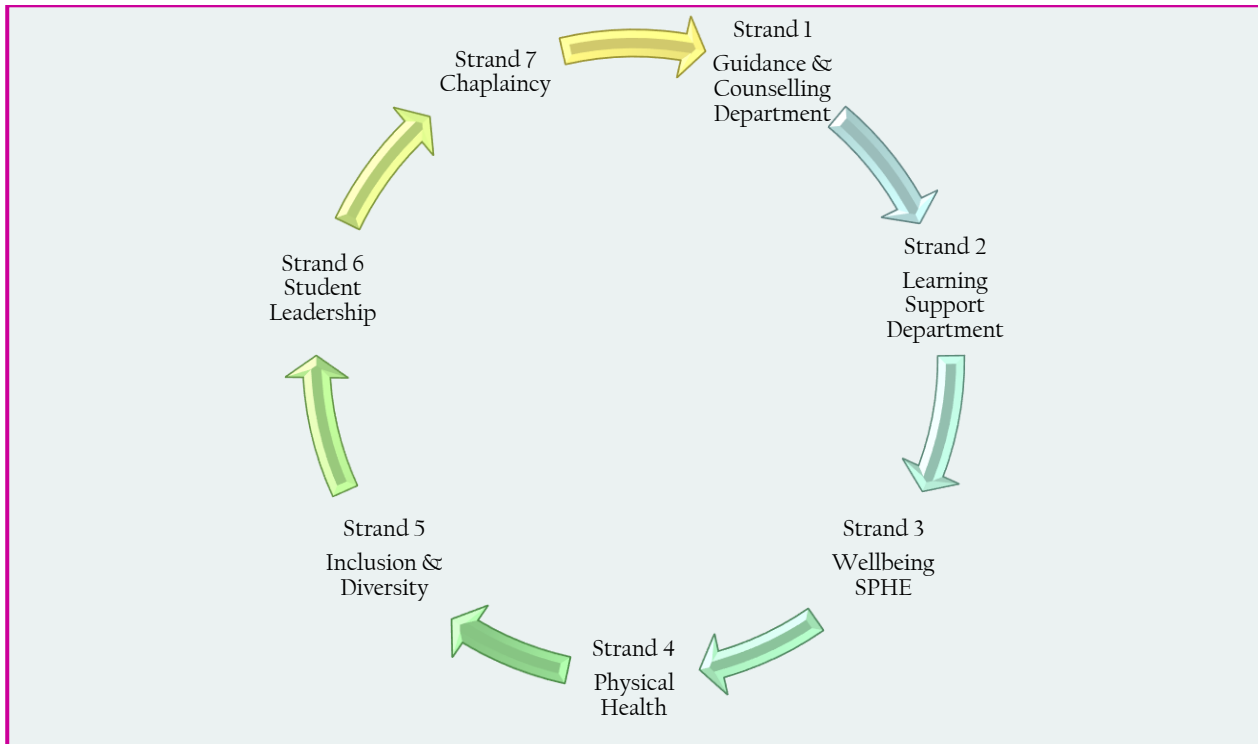
- Track Attendance & Punctuality
- Monitoring Standards
- Assists in the running of in-house examinations, assemblies, and award ceremonies.

The Role of the Class Tutor

Class Tutors and subject teachers are responsible for students' attendance and punctuality. The Year Head monitors the overall attendance and punctuality in accordance with the Attendance & Punctuality Policy. Tutors are required to contact parents/guardians if a student is absent for three consecutive days where no communication relating to the absence has been received.

The Seven Strands of the Whole School Guidance Plan

The Whole School Guidance Plan has been divided into seven strands which capture the range of supports that are offered to students at Castleknock Community College.



Strand 1: The Guidance and Counselling Department

This strand highlights the comprehensive range of services delivered by the Guidance and Counselling Department. It illustrates how these services interconnect with the remaining six strands of the Whole School Guidance Plan, ensuring a holistic and coordinated approach to student support.

Strand 2: The Learning Support Department

The Learning Support Department collaborates closely with the Guidance & Counselling Department to address the diverse educational needs of the students entrusted to their care. Through targeted interventions and specialised supports, this department plays a pivotal role in fostering academic success and personal development.

Strand 3: Wellbeing (SPHE)

The College has developed robust and comprehensive programmes in Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) at Junior & Senior Cycle, including Relationships and Sexuality Education strands in line with curricular expectations. These programmes are reinforced by the collaborative efforts of the Guidance & Counselling Department, the Learning Support Department, and the Chaplaincy. The College is committed to the continual evaluation and enhancement of these programmes to ensure they remain responsive to the evolving needs of its students.

Strand 4: Physical Health

The College promotes the physical well-being of its students through a dynamic Physical Education curriculum and an extensive range of extra-curricular activities. This strand recognises the critical significance of physical health in the lives of young people and underscores the lifelong value of maintaining an active and healthy lifestyle.

Strand 5: Inclusion and Diversity

This strand ensures that appropriate provision is made for students with disabilities, those from disadvantaged backgrounds, and students belonging to minority groups. The College is deeply committed to fostering an inclusive and diverse learning environment, building on its long-standing tradition of embracing the complexities and opportunities of life in the 21st century.

Strand 6: Student Leadership

The College acknowledges and greatly values the significant contributions made by its student body. Through the Prefect and Mentor programmes, students are encouraged to lead by example and uphold the College's core values of Courtesy, Respect, and Responsibility. The Student Council further provides a formal platform through which students can actively influence and participate in the life of the College.

Strand 7: The College Chaplaincy

The College community benefits from the pastoral and spiritual guidance provided by the Chaplaincy. The Chaplain plays a central role in supporting the well-being of students and staff, working collaboratively with the other care teams to implement and strengthen the aims of the Whole School Guidance Plan.

Strand 1 - The Guidance & Counselling Department –

The Guidance & Counselling Department Mission Statement

The Guidance & Counselling Department while working to the school's mission statement developed a simple statement relevant to their own specific needs that is: *“to help students make informed personal and career decisions, set realistic personal and career goals, and develop the skills necessary to accomplish these goals. The service also offers students support in coping with personal problems or academic concerns.”*

The Guidance and Counselling Department at Castleknock Community College operates in full alignment with the latest DEY policy and circulars governing whole-school guidance, child protection, and staffing for post-primary schools. In particular:

- We implement our guidance programme under Circular 0001/2025 – Guidance in Post-Primary Schools 2025, which establishes the “whole-school guidance” (WSG) model as the standard framework for personal, social, educational and career development.
- Our use of assessments, psychometric tests, and guidance-related evaluations is guided by Circular 0084/2024 – Advice on the use of assessment instruments/tests for Guidance or for additional and special educational needs (SEN) in post-primary schools.
- We follow the DEY's policy for record-keeping, data protection, and transfer of guidance-counselling notes as set out in Information Note 0003/2024 for Principals, Guidance Counsellors, and Guidance Teams.
- Our practice reflects the holistic guidance ethos outlined also in Information Note 0001/2024 on Whole-School Guidance, ensuring that all staff — not only formally qualified counsellors — play a role in supporting students' personal, social, educational and career development.
- For Junior Cycle and early-career students, our guidance offering is consistent with Information Note 0009/2023 on Whole-School Guidance provision at Junior Cycle.
- We adhere strictly to the updated child-protection and safeguarding policy outlined in Circular 0041/2025 – Publication of Child Protection Procedures for Schools 2025, which supersedes the earlier Circular 0036/2023 on revised child-protection procedures.
- Finally, our staffing and resource allocation reflect the broader DEY framework for post-primary schools — including guidance counselling staffing — as signalled in relevant 2025 staffing circulars for Voluntary Secondary, ETB, and Community/Comprehensive schools.

1. The Guidance Counsellors Core Activities & Principles.

Personal Counselling and Development

- Promotion of self-development and self-awareness
- Assertiveness
- Teamwork
- Communication
- Informed Decision Making
- Action Plans to achieve Objectives

Educational Guidance

- Interests & Abilities
- Study Skills & Examination Preparation
- Time Management
- Stress Management
- Subject Choices and Combinations
- Educational Links

Career Guidance

- Career Planning – routes and paths
- Careers and Occupations
- Open Days & Careers Evening
- Professional Development
- Third Level Colleges & PLC
- Curriculum Vitae
- Interview Skills
- Work Experience

The principles that guide these activities are:

- Guidance service is a whole school concern
- A confidential service within limitations and confidentiality
- Communication and collaboration with management, subject teachers, tutors, year heads, pastoral care team, learning support, chaplain, higher education institutes, outside agencies, and parents.
- Accessible and open
- On-going reviewing and evaluation
- Transparency and accountability

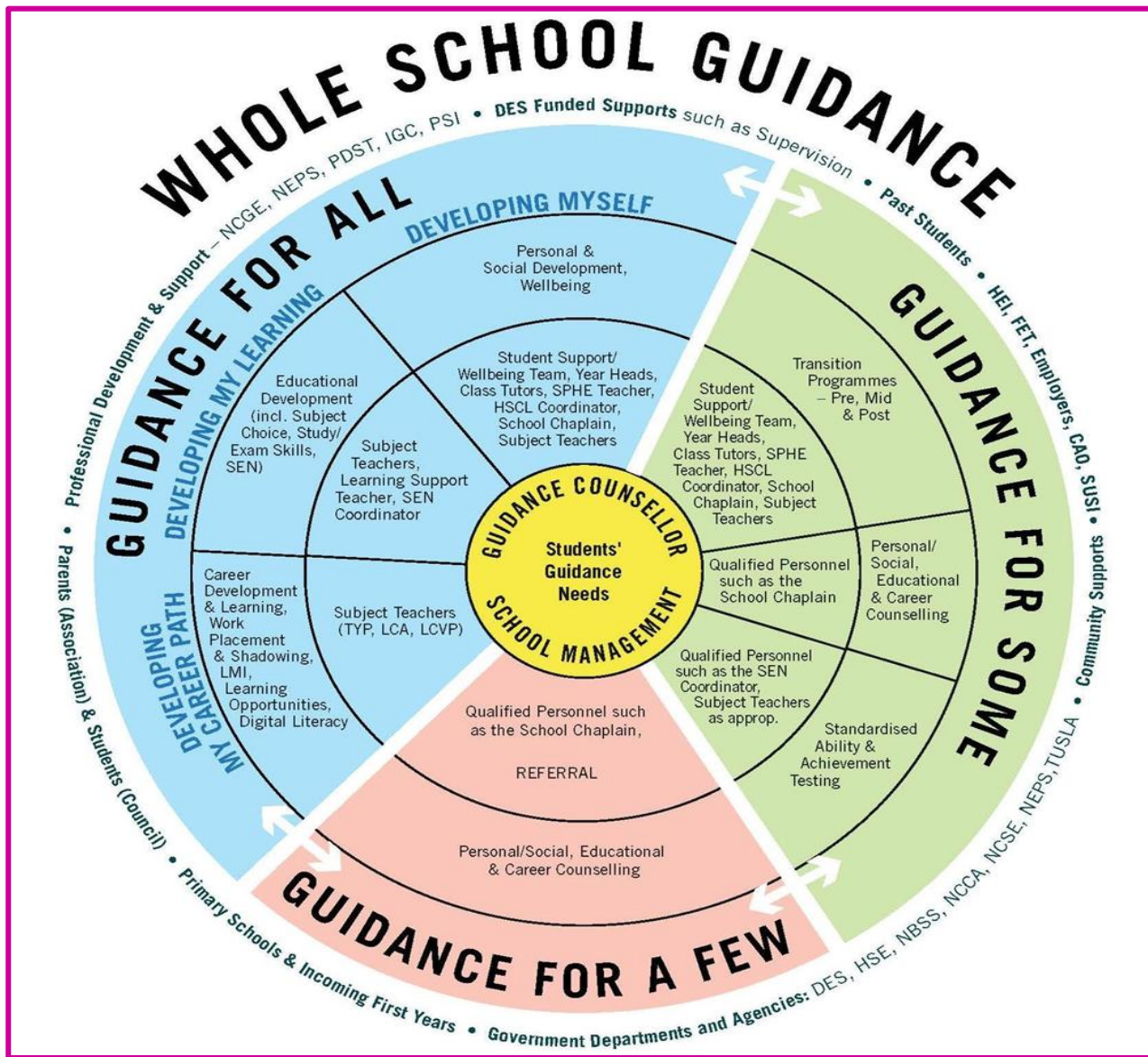
2. Role of Guidance Counsellor

The role of the Guidance Counsellor can be categorised into:

- Educational Guidance and Counselling
- Career Guidance and Counselling
- Personal Guidance and Counselling

NCGE Whole School Guidance Framework 2017 is being employed in Castleknock Community College to support students' learning and development (NEPS, 2010) and mental health promotion (NEPS, 2013).

‘In applying the continuum, the Whole School Guidance Programme aims to meet the needs of students along a continuum, from a whole school approach to group and individualised approaches. The continuum model can be applied to guidance as follows:’



Whole School Guidance Framework NCGE, 2017

The Guidance Team 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 learning and teaching activities of the School Guidance Programme which include, career education programmes, SPHE and Wellbeing in Junior Cycle, guidance modules, SPHE and work experience/placement provided as part of senior cycle programmes (TYP, LCA and LCVP).

The Guidance Team in collaboration with school management, staff, and external organisations/personnel, deliver a wide range of activities and learning to support students' personal & social, educational and career development. The Guidance Team as the specialists play a central role in the design and delivery of the Whole School Guidance Programme. It is acknowledged that the stakeholders involved in a Whole School Approach to guidance may vary across schools according to resources and needs.

3. Educational Guidance and Counselling

This involves the provision of information on educational opportunities, the guidance of students in decision-making and the support of students in their choices of individual education goals.

The Guidance Counsellor discusses the students' educational potential, educational opportunities, course choice, and outcomes. Educational guidance involves the provision of information on further education. The Guidance Counsellor seeks, at all times, to match the individual's ability with education opportunities.

Educational Guidance can involve working with the student in the following areas:

- Decision-making skills
 - Goal-setting skills
 - Motivational skills
 - Study skills
 - Self-esteem and confidence
 - Advice on Subject Choices
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4. Career Guidance and Counselling

This involves facilitating the student's career and vocational decision-making in a non-directive way. Students seeking careers information are engaged in a proactive process.

Careers Education is a process whereby the Guidance Counsellor makes information on career areas available to the student. The Guidance Counsellor encourages the student to discuss preferred options and to make decisions accordingly. In order to facilitate this discussion, information can be accessed by the student through researching careers literature, using information and communications technology, visiting exhibitions, open days, and careers evenings.

5. Personal Guidance and Counselling

Personal Guidance & Counselling is an interactive process between counsellor and student that involves working with the individual in a one-to-one setting. It involves facilitating and assisting the students with the following issues:

- Conflict
- Managing Bullying & Relationships
- Coping with crisis
- Coping with transitions & decision-making
- Developmental & Emotional Challenges
- Promoting and developing personal awareness
- Social Settings

Personal Counselling involves one-to-one sessions between the Guidance Counsellor and student. A counselling session may involve the following process:

- Create a friendly and encouraging atmosphere

- Establish the broad purpose of the session
- Gather information
- Give information
- Identify the needs of the student
- Clarify the next steps to be taken
- Summarise topics and issues covered during the session

This process is facilitated using core-counselling skills and the counsellor, evaluating their role and how they conducted the session, maintains a record and also recording dates and times on VS Ware

Confidential record keeping procedures are adhered to and maintained in a secure area.

6. Approach and Framework in Counselling

We see our purpose as assisting students to develop personal skills and inner strength so that they can create happiness in their own lives and in the lives of others.

At Castleknock Community College an eclectic mix from the different theories of counselling is used. However, it is essential that Guidance Counsellors work from a fundamental base of theoretical knowledge and self-awareness.

The Guidance Counsellors professional expertise lies within themselves, in their personality, their values and in the skills acquired and continue to acquire in practice. Establishing a positive working relationship by communicating the core qualities of empathy, acceptance and genuineness is an essential backdrop for counselling in individual, group, or class settings.

- The main task is to establish a *working relationship*. The Guidance Team assists students tell their stories and, if appropriate, asks them to choose a specific problem situation to work on. They believe it may be helpful to assist students to look for ways in which they may be communicating, acting, and thinking less than effectively.
- The Guidance Team believes *genuineness* allows the development of trust between the student and the Guidance Counsellor. It is important that the Guidance Team understand their own emotions and are aware of their reactions so that they can concentrate on the feelings of their students.
- Trying to *understand* what the student is feeling, from the students' point of view, is essential for the Guidance Team to be effective. Failure to convey this understanding could leave the student feeling isolated and alone with their fears. This incorporates a regard for the student's value as a person and a concern for their welfare.
- The ability to create a *climate* where there is warmth, enthusiasm, acceptance, respect, and interpersonal sensitivity is central for effective counselling. These highly developed interpersonal characteristics are coupled with a high degree of academic competence. There is a change of roles from being a teacher to that of being a Guidance Counsellor. A Guidance Counsellor needs to be able to support the student so that they understand that counselling is a process.
- The Guidance Team believe that *client-centred* counselling is effective for individual and Group Counselling. The solution to problems, the choices, and challenges confronting students can be within their capabilities. The Guidance Team uses *effective listening and responding skills*, they create an accepting and empathic environment for all students. These

students progress because they feel understood, have clarified their thoughts and feelings, and may move freely towards better decisions.

- The Guidance Team are very aware that some students will not achieve their goals through their own self-directed efforts. In these situations, they will be more helpful, active, suggesting choices, perhaps challenging, and directing. Their approach will be responsive to the *individual or group needs*, goals, cultures, and environments. They help the students stand back from their difficulties and to look at them in different ways and from different viewpoints. They help them to ask questions from themselves. The answers lead to a greater self-knowledge, and by looking at this information and learning how to process it, they may have empowered the students to deal more efficiently with future problems, making them aware of alternatives and choices.
- The Guidance Team seeks to *empower* the student by putting the student in charge of the process. Change will happen more quickly, when the person who seeks the change is at the heart of and in charge of the process. The counselling process may develop to assist the students to change their *thinking, feelings, or behaviour* so that the problem situation is addressed more effectively than in the past. The Guidance Team assists the students to *set goals* and to develop and implement strategies to attain these goals.

The Guidance & Counselling Department is constantly evolving and adapting in response to the changing needs of the College and the changing profile of its student body. By consulting with the Learning Support Department, we ensure that students with Additional Education Needs are catered for within the Guidance & Counselling Department. We acknowledge the support of the school management, the general teaching staff, parents, college registrars, etc. in facilitating and promoting the continued development of the Guidance & Counselling Department in the College.

7. Ethical Principles

As Guidance Counsellors at Castleknock Community College we understand that it is our duty to comply with the Code of Ethics as outlined by the Institute of Guidance Counsellors in 2002. When faced with an ethical dilemma we engage in the formal decision-making process; we are aware of the ethical issues concerning competence, conduct, confidentiality, consent, testing, evaluation, and research.

“Guidance Counsellors respect the dignity, integrity, and welfare of their clients. They work in ways which promote clients’ control over their own lives, and they respect clients’ ability to make decisions and engage in personal change in the light of their own beliefs and values.”
(Code of Ethics I.G.C. 2002).

In light of these aims, the Guidance & Counselling Department have the following objectives:

- Respect differences and understand the cultural background of students whom we work with. Not to discriminate against students based on age, colour, culture, ethnic group, religion, sexual orientation, gender, or socio-economic status or disability
- Inform students of the purposes, goals, and benefits of counselling. Provide students with an explanation of the limitations at the beginning of counselling sessions
- Respect confidentiality and avoid unwarranted disclosures of confidential information
- Understand that confidentiality does not apply when disclosure is required to prevent clear and imminent danger to the student and others. Legal requirements may also demand that information be revealed. In these cases, we will consult with the Principal

- Obtain permission from students to disclose information to others. Only essential information will be revealed
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality in creating, storing, accessing, and destroying records of students that we have on computer or in files
- Endeavour to be accurate, honest, and unbiased in our reports
- Competent in the use of computers and try to ensure that students understand the purposes and limitations of the computer applications in guidance work
- Practice guidance and counselling within the boundaries of our competence. Commitment to in-service to expand and maintain our professional competence
- Responsible for the appropriate application & interpretation of aptitude tests in guidance and counselling. Promote the welfare and best interests of the student in the utilisation of these assessment techniques
- Not to use our position for unjustified personal gains or relationships with clients.

8. Responsibilities of the Guidance Service

The Guidance Service has responsibilities to:

- Conduct interest inventories and career search inventories online.
- Consult with management, care teams and other staff individuals and teams.
- Deliver personal development, study skills, and information sessions with small groups
- Identify career and educational paths for students
- Identify students' needs through consultation with student council
- Keep records
- Manage guidance and counselling service
- Manage information
- Network with other professionals, colleges, community services etc.
- Offer a confidential and professional service
- Refer students to other services

Methods used by the service:

- Consultation, discussions, and brainstorming
- Group guidance sessions
- Individual guidance and /or counselling sessions
- Linkages with colleges and professional bodies
- Visits to and open day attendance at colleges

Resources used by the service:

- Guidance Counsellor's office
 - Guest speakers
 - Interests, abilities, and aptitude assessments
 - CAT4 Testing
 - Careers Portal – (Inventory)
 - External services & support agencies
 - Management and staff
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9. Information Gathering and Dissemination

Information is an important component in Guidance & Counselling. It informs all aspects of career, vocational and educational opportunity. Current information is gathered, organised, and disseminated to provide the student with as much information as possible on the widest range of options with the goal of enabling the student to make informed career decisions.

The effective management of a comprehensive library resource facilitates:

- Access to information technology
- Careers exhibitions, site visits & visiting speakers
- Teams page for each year group
- College open day visits
- Research

The availability of this resource is communicated to all classes at the beginning of the school year.

10. Referral Service

Referral services involve the guidance counsellor making and accepting referrals on behalf of and with the consent of the student. Referrals can also be made to the Guidance Counsellor by management using appropriate procedure. A student can also self-refer. The Guidance Counsellor accepts referrals and, when necessary and appropriate, refers students to other professionals for specialised services. The guidance counsellor initiates the referral and supports the student at all stages of the process. A list of all referral agencies is available in the Guidance & Counselling Department. The Department liaise closely with Jigsaw (Dublin 15), Pieta House & CAMHS.

Referral by Year Head or Management is made, using the referral form, to the Guidance & Counselling Department. Teachers may also refer. Cases are discussed at the weekly Care Meetings and depending on the student's need, he/she is assigned to the most appropriately skilled counsellor. A student may self-refer by using appointment request slips from the back of their journal/outside Guidance Offices.

There is an opportunity for parents to directly refer their daughter/son to the Guidance Counsellor.

11. Current Guidance Provision

The Guidance and Counselling Department has 48.5 hours allocated to it and is serviced by three qualified Guidance Counsellors. Public display areas are located at the student entrance with brochures and resources from external colleges.

The Guidance Service is well equipped with technological aids such as computers, printers, internet access, all with access to Qualifax, Careers portal, etc. Worksheets on a number of topics are available for individual as well as class work.

12. Current Guidance Programme

The following is an evaluation of the current guidance service where guidance is meeting the needs of the students and where elements of the service need adjustment.

Personal Guidance	Resources to meet these needs	Related Subjects
Self-Concept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance Counsellor • Subject Teachers • Year Head 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPHE • Religion • CSPE • Guidance
Developing Self		
Teamwork		
Counselling		
Referral		
Confidence		
Motivation		
Stress Management		
Relationships		
Educational Guidance	Resources to meet these needs	Related Subjects
Subject Choices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance Counsellor • Guest Speakers • Subject Teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LCVP • LCA • SPHE • Guidance
Study Skills		
Assessments		
Goals & Plans		
Career Guidance	Resources to meet these needs	Related Subjects
Educational Routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance Counsellor • Guest Speakers • TY Co-ordinator • Guidance Library • Internet Access • Relationship with institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance • SPHE
Interview Skills		
Presentations from 3 rd Level Colleges		
Training Courses		
PLC Courses		

It must be noted that in the area of Personal Guidance there is no specific timetabled hours allocated to the Guidance Counsellor to fulfil these needs.

13 Current Guidance Programme by Year Group

First Year Programme

Changing from the relatively secure environment of Primary School to the many challenges of Secondary School is a daunting task to many young students. The Guidance Counsellor helps to ensure that this transition goes as smoothly as possible.

Main aims of the First Year Programme are:

- Appropriate assessment prior to entry and on-going assessment afterwards.
- Help students to adjust to their new school
- Introduce students & parents to the school Guidance & Counselling Service
- Offer and provide counselling services.
- Build up a profile of each student
- Identify any student thought to be “at risk” or who may have particular needs.
- Offer and provide a referral service.
- Foster the growth of self-esteem and confidence.
- Liaise with the SPHE teachers. The implementation of the SPHE Programme includes the foundations for good study habits and homework organisation as well as the overall wellbeing needs of students.
- On-going evaluation and re-planning of the First Year Programme.

Implementation of the above aims:

- Liaise with Primary School teachers and assist in an Information Session for prospective parents before incoming First Year students enter Castleknock Community College.
- Welcome new students to the school on their first day in September.
- Liaise with the First Year Pastoral Care team and Year Head to ensure that each pupil is made feel that he/she belongs in the school community. Ensure that students know the location of the Guidance Counsellor’s Office and that the service is available to *all* pupils, whether self-referred or referred by others.
- Develop greater social and personal understanding and competency by means of both formal and informal group activities during the school year. This may facilitate those with personal and social difficulties to approach the Guidance and Counselling Service.
- Build up a personal record file for each student.
- Administration of the CAT4 and provision of feedback to students and parents. Results recorded on VS.
- Delivery of Guidance Related Learning activities by the Guidance Counsellor
- Be available for individual counselling as required.

14. Second Year Programme

The objective of the Second Year Programme is to help students develop their vocational, personal, and educational self-concept.

Main aims of the Second Year Programme are:

- Continue to develop the relationship established in First Year.
- Help students develop a positive self-image.
- Help students set goals and targets both personally and academically.
- Reinforce the study skills programme with Tutors started in First Year.

- Available to all who come for individual counselling – whether self-referred or referred by others.
- On-going evaluation and re-planning of the Second-Year programme.

Implementation of the above aims:

- Liaise with tutors and SPHE teachers in the implementation of the SPHE Programme to include the foundations for good study habits and homework organisation as well as the overall wellbeing needs of students.
- Continue to add further personal details, achievements, examination results to each student's personal record on VS Ware & Athena.
- On-going liaison with parents, fellow staff members, and Learning Support Department.
- Organise study skills workshops with Second Year groups.
- Delivery of Guidance Related Learning activities by Guidance Counsellor
- Be available for individual counselling as required.

15. Third Year Programme

Ensure that Guidance Counsellors are available to each student on an individual basis. The emphasis is on helping students to prepare effectively for the state examinations. Assist students in identifying their career preferences, and the implications of this for subject choice for the Senior Cycle.

Main aims of the Third Year Programme are:

- Provide information and guidance on subject choice - Master Chart of essential subjects.
- Assisting with the Wellbeing Programme, with particular emphasis on decision-making and realistic self-evaluation.
- Identify potential early school leavers and help them in decision making with regards job opportunities or vocational training.
- Assist students in the development of effective study habits, and examination techniques by delivering workshops
- Administration of standardised testing
- On-going evaluation and re-planning of the Third-Year programme.

Implementation of the above aims:

- Liaise with Pastoral Care tutors in discussing:
 - Study timetables
 - Time management
 - Forward planning and good organisation
 - Options after the Junior Certificate
- Liaising, when necessary, with staff, students, and parents in relation to the social & emotional aspects of the SPHE and Wellbeing Programmes.
- Administration of the CAT4 and provision of feedback to students and parents. Results for teacher use recorded on VSWare.
- Introduction of Careers Portal/Qualifax website and conduct an Interest Assessment.
- Continue to update student's personal records.
- Continue to liaise with, subject teachers, year heads, learning support teachers and parents in the delivery of the Well Being Programme to include the foundations for good study habits and homework organisation as well as the overall wellbeing needs of students.
- Be available for individual counselling as required.

16. Transition Year Programme

Through a variety of learning experiences, the Transition Year programme facilitates the integrated development of the cognitive, emotional, social, physical, and vocational aptitudes and abilities of each individual student.

Main aims of the Transition Year Programme are:

- Assist students to develop a sound knowledge of self.
- Liaising, when necessary, with staff, students, and parents in relation to the social & emotional aspects of the SPHE Programme.
- Help students to discover and develop their own individual talents, aptitudes, and abilities with regard to future educational and vocational participation.
- Help students appreciate the importance of a healthy, balanced lifestyle and to encourage the development of leisure activities.
- Assist them in their pursuit of work experience.
- Involve parents, who can contribute time and expertise to the Transition Year Programme.
- On-going evaluation and re-planning of the Transition Year programme.

Implementation of the above aims:

- Administer Interest Inventories such as Careers Portal. Students may discuss the implications of these results to career choice
 - Deliver a Career Foundations module.
 - Facilitate visiting speakers from third level institutions.
 - Instruct students in the use of Qualifax.ie as an aid for research in course choice
 - Be available for individual counselling as required
 - Familiarise students with the email system used by the Guidance & Counselling Department
 - Liaise with the SPHE Programme to include the foundations for good study habits and homework organisation as well as the overall wellbeing needs of students.
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17. LCI Programme

The major thrust of the Fifth Year (LCI) Programme is to assist students in relation to the transition to Senior Cycle.

Main aims of the Fifth Year (LCI) programme are:

- Help students develop and accurately define their occupational self-concept clarifying their interests, abilities, and goals.
- Liaising, when necessary, with staff, students, and parents in relation to the social & emotional aspects of the SPHE Programme.
- Liaising, when necessary, with staff, students, and parents in relation to the social & emotional aspects of the SPHE Programme.
- Continue developing effective social skills with students in individual or group work.
- Stress the importance of relaxation and leisure activities.
- Provide detailed information on careers and third-level education.
- On-going evaluation and re-planning of the LCI Programme.

Implementation of the above aims:

- Reinforce the importance of good study habits, time management, forward planning in individual \ group work.
 - Encourage students to attend Third Level College Open Days in line with “Guidelines on students attending Open Days.”
 - Individual counselling on request.
 - Provide opportunity for individual interview to discuss career options, subject levels, and the implications thereof, etc.
 - Facilitate visiting speakers from third level institutions.
 - Continue the work of earlier years in the context of the students’ growing awareness of personal freedom and responsibility, values, life-style options etc.
 - Introduce students to computer software which assists matching interests, aptitudes with career and course requirements such as Qualifax.
 - Class work in topics such as the points system, minimum entry requirements, grants and maintenance scheme, possibilities of studying in another country especially UK, and the UCAS system.
 - Continue to liaise with Pastoral Care Tutors, Subject Teachers, Year Heads, Learning Support Teachers, and Parents.
 - Familiarise students with the email system used by the Guidance & Counselling Department
 - Liaise with tutors and SPHE teachers in the implementation of the SPHE Programme to include the foundations for good study habits and homework organisation as well as the overall wellbeing needs of students.
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18. LC2 Programme

The thrust of the Sixth Year (LC2) Programme is to ensure that students have all the necessary information to make informed decisions re: choices on CAO college entry applications: PLC applications, Further Training, Apprenticeships etc. and to ensure that they are prepared for the transition to the world of college or work.

Main aims of Sixth Year (LC2) Programme are:

- Liaising, when necessary, with staff, students, and parents in relation to the social & emotional aspects of the SPHE Programme.
- Consolidate all previous work done on study skills, learning, and exam techniques.
- Outline the implications of part-time work during this exam year.
- Facilitate the transition from school to work or Third Level Education.
- Provide detailed vocational information.
- Help students make correct choices regarding College courses.
- Stress the importance of healthy balance between study, relaxation, and leisure activities.
- Reinforce the importance of study habits and effective time management.
- Introduce information on Costs and grants for 3rd level.
- On-going evaluation and re-planning of the LC2 Programme.

Implementation of the above aims:

- Provide an appointment for an individual interview for each student along with their parents/guardians if requested to discuss aptitudes, interest, abilities, to assess past achievements and future goals. Students are invited to return for follow-up appointment.
- Study skills classes and small workshops throughout the year commencing in September.
- Cover topics such as CAO, UCAS, Finance, Grants, PLC courses, and Apprenticeships in guidance class.

- Invite various Third Level Institutions, PLC colleges. Promote the HEAR & DARE and the CAO process.
 - Encourage each student to use Qualifax online at home. Our students and parents alike have re-iterated the invaluable resource this is when discussing college options at home.
 - Arrange a Parents Evening during which information will be provided on the following:
 - The content of the Guidance Programme for LC2 students.
 - The Points system & applying to Third Level Colleges in Ireland, Northern Ireland, and Britain.
 - Applying to Technological Universities & PLCS and introduce the Framework of qualifications.
 - Apprenticeship & alternative training options
 - Develop information research skills, including the use of the Careers Library and Information Technology. Familiarise students with Qualifax and Careers Portal
 - Available for individual counselling as requested.
 - Administer interest tests as necessary to meet student's requirements.
 - Update the personal record of each student
 - Evaluate the programme with the students and adapt to improve.
 - Continue to liaise with Senior Management, Care Teams, Subject Teachers, Year Heads, Learning Support Teachers, and Parents.
 - Familiarise students with the email system used by the Department
 - Liaise with tutors and SPHE teachers in the implementation of the SPHE Programme to include the foundations for good study habits and homework organisation as well as the overall wellbeing needs of students.
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19. Resources Employed

Digital Notice Board

The Ms Teams page is used by the guidance counsellor to efficiently disseminate guidance-related information to students across all year groups. This ensures that every student has timely access to announcements, resources, updates & work experience opportunities.

Online Resources

The guidance counsellor has access to up-to-date and relevant information through reputable educational and career websites which enable the department to facilitate career guidance & support academic planning:

Use of platforms such as Careers Portal and Qualifax provides students with accurate career information, career assessments, and interest profiling tools.

20. Evaluation

The Guidance & Counselling Department employ a variety of methods for evaluating their role in the College. All LC2 students are invited to complete an evaluation of the services provided by the Department. Evaluation surveys by senior management asks parents for their assessment of the support services in the school.

21. Policies

A number of policies underlie the provision of the Guidance Service including:

- Counter Bullying Policy
 - Child Protection Guidelines
 - Critical Incident Response
 - Student Behaviour Policy
 - Suspension & Expulsion Policy
 - Acceptable Usage Policy
 - Substance Abuse Policy
 - Learning Support Policy
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Strand 2 - The Learning Support Department

Introduction

Castleknock Community College is committed to delivering comprehensive and effective Learning and Language support to its students with Additional Educational Needs (AEN). In line with the most recent Department of Education & Youth policy framework, including Circular 0064/2024 on the deployment of Special Education Teacher (SET) resources, Circular 0084/2024 regarding assessment instruments for SEN and AEN in post-primary schools, and Circular 0069/2025 clarifying roles in the Assessment of Need process under the Disability Act 2005, the College seeks to ensure that a clearly defined and appropriately resourced support framework enables students with additional needs to access the full curriculum and realise their potential.

Our objective is that every student's additional educational or language support needs are properly identified, assessed, and met in a manner consistent with current national guidelines and legal obligations. We regard each student both as a young person and as a learner deserving of dignity, respect, and equitable access to education. The detailed responsibilities, processes, supports, and review mechanisms of the Learning & Language Support Department, as specified in the College's AEN policy document, align precisely with the structure and expectations established by the Department.

I. Principles

I.1 At Castleknock Community College we are determined to meet the educational needs of all our students. This policy describes the principles, aims and objectives, by which the College will identify, assess, and provide for students with Additional Needs.

I.2 Additional needs can take a variety of forms, including specific learning needs, health related needs, and behavioural needs. Challenges experienced by some students make it harder for them to learn as easily as their peers. These students need extra support to access the curriculum and achieve their potential. Challenges include (but are not limited to):

- General Learning Disabilities: A general learning disability can range from borderline mild, mild, moderate to severe/profound.
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Specific Learning Difficulties e.g., dyslexia, dyscalculia
- Visual or Hearing impairment
- Physical Challenges e.g., Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (DCD/Dyspraxia), Cerebral Palsy
- Attention Deficit (Hyperactive) Disorder (ADD/ADHD)
- Speech and Language Challenges
- Down's Syndrome
- Emotional Disturbance/ Anxiety Disorders
- Behavioural Disorders
- Medical or Health Issues
- Students with a dual diagnosis, for example Down Syndrome and Autism, Autism and Cerebral Palsy

This policy considers the Additional Needs provision outlined in the various acts pertaining to the provision of students with Additional Needs, notably the Education Act of 1998, the EPSEN Act 2004 and the Admissions to Schools Act 2018 underpin the key elements of this policy. This policy aligns with the 2024 Department of Education Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools Supporting Young People with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Classes and with Circular 0064/2024. It reflects principles such as inclusive education, wellbeing, collaboration, and evidence-informed practice.

1.3 The College recognises the right of students with Additional Needs to be educated in a mainstream College and the importance of genuine communication and partnership with parents and students in planning, delivering, and evaluating individual support. The College recognises that provision for Additional Needs is an integral part of its overall aim to raise the achievement of all students.

1.4 Some students will permanently, or from time to time, have a greater difficulty in learning than the majority of students of their age. Some may have needs that prevent or hinder them from making use of the facilities provided for our students. We will give these students individual consideration and make special provision for them, working in partnership with others, as necessary. The College's intention is that the needs of all students are identified and met as soon as possible.

1.5 All students whether they have Additional Needs or not, must have equal access to the full curriculum of the College and all activities. Students with Additional Needs will be encouraged and supported to become independent and take responsibility within the College.

2. Roles & Responsibilities in Coordinating Provision for Students with Additional Needs

2.1 Roles have been clarified in line with the 2024 guidelines. The role of supporting learning is a collaborative responsibility shared by all in the College community: Learning & Language Support Department, management, staff, students, and parents who have a positive and active part to play in achieving this aim.

2.2 The Overall responsibility for the provision of education to all young people, including young people with special educational needs, lies with the board of management. The board must ensure that Special Education Teaching (SET) resources are used for their intended purpose only to support young people with special educational needs in their school and that appropriate systems and procedures are in place to ensure school resources are managed appropriately and correctly and in a manner that provides for appropriate accountability to the relevant parties. The board of management must ensure that it receives annual confirmation from the principal on the use of the special education teaching resources. The Schedule of Deployment of Special Education Teachers (Appendix 1) outlines how teaching resources are allocated across the school, supporting planning and accountability.

2.3 The school principal has the responsibility for establishing, promoting and implementing inclusive whole school policies and procedures which are supportive of the learning of all young people including those with special education needs the principal oversees how the resources, which are provided to the school to support young people with special education needs, are used to ensure that the young people with the greatest level of need have access to the greatest level of support. The principal can establish a core special education teaching team and allow time for the core team to identify, review monitor and coordinate provision for young people with special educational needs.

2.4 Learning & Language Support Department contributes to the development of an inclusive school culture including school policies and practices. This department promotes whole school, inclusive, proactive teaching and learning approaches. Areas of responsibility include:

- Using the school provision plan (appendix 2) to record relevant information relating to some young people receiving additional support to track provision and progression across the Continuum of Support (Appendix 3).
- The LS Department will ensure that they are fully involved in developing and monitoring the College's SEN policy, and that SEN provision is an integral part of the College development plan. The coordinator along with College Management will ensure that they are fully informed of the College's SEN provision, including how funding, equipment, and personnel resources are deployed. They will ensure that the quality of SEN provision is regularly monitored and evaluated.
- Students at 'Support for a Few' have individualised educational programmes developed to ensure that every student can experience success and make progress in line with their potential. Based on their assessed needs and learning goals, students may engage with mainstream subjects, specialised

programmes, or a combination of both. Where appropriate, students may follow mainstream subjects to examination level and/or access Junior Cycle Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LPs). Subject department plans incorporate the Junior Cycle Level 2 Priority Learning Units within their Schemes of Work to maximise meaningful inclusion and support. At Senior Cycle, access to mainstream classes is considered individually for each student based on their profile and learning trajectory. For students whose needs are best met through the Leaving Certificate Level 2 Programme, this programme is delivered through the Learning and Language Support Department. Students following a Senior Cycle L2 pathway are supported, where appropriate, to achieve relevant Learning Outcomes within mainstream settings, such as selected Leaving Certificate Applied classes, in accordance with their individual needs and strengths. Decisions regarding programme access and support pathways are informed by assessment, professional judgement, and the individual student's learning profile, strengths, interests, and needs.

2.5 The Learning & Language Support Department Coordinator has overall responsibility for Management of the policy, for assessment and provision for students with Additional Needs and for keeping College Management informed on Additional Needs policy and provision. The Learning & Language Support Coordinator has oversight of all matters regarding the day-to-day management of all aspects of Additional Needs policy and provision, for leading the Learning & Language Support Team and coordinating the involvement of outside agencies.

The Specific Responsibilities of the Role may include:

- Identifying students whose needs require support at Level 2 or 3 of the Continuum of Support
- Intake screening and collecting information from primary schools including student passport.
- Arranging standardised tests and/or diagnostic tests of literacy/numeracy.
- Advocating on behalf of students
- Applying for resources e.g., SET allocations, SNA allocations.
- Timetabling the SET and Language allocation
- Applying for accommodations for students e.g., RACE/DARE/HEAR.
- Individual work with students e.g., planning, implementing, and reviewing interventions.
- Co-ordinating the SEN team.
- Liaising with the Senior Leadership Team, subject teachers, guidance counsellors etc..
- Liaising with parents
- Collaborating with outside agencies e.g., Psychological Support Service.
- Directing the work of SNAs in the school.
- Developing policies and procedures.
- Putting whole-school initiatives and interventions in place.
- Arranging for cognitive assessments and other psychological assessments to be conducted.
- Identifying relevant CPD and providing CPD to staff.
- Provision mapping and allocating resources.

2.5 Role of the SEN Year Group Co-ordinator. A SEN Year Group Co-ordinator is appointed to oversee the provision of support for students with Additional Needs for each year group.

Specific Responsibilities of this Role may include:

- Developing Student Support Plans (SSP- see appendix 4)/ Care Plans.
- Arranging standardised tests and/or diagnostic tests of literacy/numeracy.
- Applying for accommodations for students e.g. RACE/DARE/HEAR
- Individual work with students e.g., planning, implementing, and reviewing interventions.
- Intake screening and collecting information from primary schools including student passport.
- Liaising with parents
- Attending Care Meetings
- Liaising with the Senior Leadership Team, subject teachers, guidance counsellors etc.

2.6 Special Class Co-ordinator

The co-ordinator of Special Class has overall responsibility for management of the daily operations of the Special Class. The co-ordinators' role typically involves overseeing services and support for individuals on the Autism spectrum who are enrolled in the Special Class in Castleknock Community College. Responsibilities include developing individualised student plans, collaborating with support services, creating supportive and inclusive environments, ensuring students have accommodations and supports required to succeed academically and socially in a post primary setting.

The duties of the Special Class coordinator are attached in appendix 5 of this document.

- 2.7 The Class Teacher has primary responsibility for teaching, learning, and assessment for all young people within their class groups, including those with special educational needs. The class teacher provides an inclusive learning environment, communicates, and collaborates with AEN team, accesses all information in the SSP, adapts teaching approaches as required to meet individual needs, contributes to reviews of the support plan, informs parents and guardians of their child's progress. The class teacher is responsible for gathering information on a student's progress through informal observation /assessment. Where concerns arise, the class teacher should complete a Learning & Language Support Referral Form (Appendix 6) which should include test results, homework proficiency detail. The teacher should work with the Learning & Language Support teacher giving advice on areas that need support.
- 2.8 The Learning Support Teacher provides additional teaching support. This provision includes early intervention, team teaching, small group, and/or individual support where appropriate. The learning support teacher collaborates, liaises, and communicates with other relevant teachers, the learning support team, the young person, and parents, if necessary. The learning support teacher uses evidence – informed teaching and learning approaches to support the special educational needs of young people, and monitors response to intervention. The Learning & Language Department provides a folder for all Learning & Language Support teachers. This folder includes a planning document for completion and return, outlining the needs of the learners and the area of support being targeted. Work records must be completed for each class. These are returned to the Learning & Language Support Office at the end of each term and filed in student files.
- 2.9 Students: The views of young people with special educational needs are central to decision making regarding their education, planning to meet their individual needs. Students engage in identifying their own strengths and needs, and in setting learning targets. This is achieved by regularly attending and working in Learning & Language support classes while developing 'ownership' of the skills being taught in Learning & Language Support classes and applying these skills to all their studies. Students are encouraged to contribute to the evaluation of their progress including self-assessment, and this allows students to grow independence.
- 2.10 Parents: Castleknock Community College acknowledges that collaboration with parents/guardians is a critical factor in enhancing outcomes for young people with special education needs. Parents are consulted in the development of the SSP, identifying their child's strengths, needs and interests, the nature of support and strategies developed to support their child, and review progress. Parents are invited to give consent where necessary for their child to be assessed by the Learning & Language Support Department or outside agencies.
- 2.11 Special Needs Assistant (SNA): The SNA's role is to look after the care needs of students with SNA access. Care needs that are consistent with DES Circular 30/14 include assistance with feeding, administration of medicine, assistance with toileting and general hygiene, assistance with mobility and orientation, assisting teachers to provide supervision in the class and school grounds, non-nursing care needs consistent with specific medical conditions, care needs frequent interventions including withdrawal of a student from a classroom when essential, assistance with moving and lifting of student, operation of hoists and equipment, assistance with severe communication difficulties including enabling curriculum access for students with physical or sensory needs. Students are encouraged, where appropriate, to become independent of the assigned SNAs. Other duties undertaken by SNAs included record keeping, consulting with teachers and the Learning Support Coordinators, and attending monthly meetings.

2.12 Year Head and Assistant Year Head Teams have general responsibility for monitoring the academic and social progress of students, notably through the tracking system. Their specific responsibilities in terms of this policy are:

- Liaising with the Learning & Language Support Coordinator
- Working with their Learning & Language Support link teacher
- Monitoring and reviewing the progress of students with SEN

2.13 Subject Departments have responsibility for all aspects of curriculum content and learning opportunities in their subject area. Their specific responsibilities in terms of this policy are:

- Maintaining and monitoring a Subject Department Policy on Additional Needs
- Ensuring that the subject content has been differentiated to meet the needs of all students.
- Mapping the L2 learning outcomes within their schemes of work.

3. Provision

3.1 Castleknock Community College will use the resources provided by the Department of Education and Skills for the sole purpose of providing additional teaching support for young people with special educational needs. Resources and teaching allocation provided to support students with special educational needs will be used to facilitate inclusion and offer a fully inclusive curriculum as far as possible.

3.2 The Department will refer to the Continuum of Support Framework to identify and respond to students' needs. This framework recognises that special education needs occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to more significant, and from transient to more enduring. It recognises that young people require different levels of support depending on their identified educational needs and that needs may change over time.

3.3 A problem solving process is used to identify a young person's special education needs. This process involves looking at young people's strengths and needs in the context of their current participation and engagement in all aspects of school life, within and outside the classroom. The problem-solving processes applies across the continuum to ensure that interventions are commensurate with the level of needs.

3.4 Arrangements for Students with Additional Needs Transferring to Castleknock Community College from Primary to Secondary School

- The College recognises that the transition to post-primary is a significant time in the life of a young person and a potential risk factor to the wellbeing of young people with special educational needs. It is understood that supporting smooth transitions is very important for fostering wellbeing at school and advance planning is key to successful transitions.
- There is a dedicated care team established each year to manage the transfer of students from Primary to Secondary School.
- A member of the Learning & Language Support Department will be assigned to be the link person between primary schools and parents for students with Additional Needs.
- The profiles of each of these students are commenced in advance of their enrolment at the College.
- Meetings with parents and incoming young people, orientation meetings and meetings with outside agencies supporting the student are all considered in the process of students with Additional Needs transferring to the College.
- SNAs from Castleknock Community College may visit students in their primary school for observation purposes.

3.5 Assessment

The Learning & Language Support Department use a variety of assessment approaches to identify needs:

- Sten scores accessed from Primary Schools' Student Passport

- All students complete Entrance Assessments (CAT 4) which screen for the basic skills in literacy, numeracy, special awareness, and problem-solving competencies
- All students are assessed in their Literacy & Mathematics Skills in Second Year. Results are analysed and distributed to appropriate staff.
- The CAT 4 test is administered by the Guidance Department at the end of the first term of third year. The Learning & Language Support Department analyse these results to identify students who have not come to our attention previously who may be struggling in the areas of reading and spelling.
- Teachers and young people engage in ongoing assessment activities as part of normal classroom practices that can be either formative or summative in nature.
- Standardised assessments may be used as part of the assessment process. These include the WRAT, WIAT and NGRT.

3.6 How the LS Department Operates

Using the continuum of support framework ensures that interventions are incremental, moving from class-based interventions to more intensive and individualized support. Students with the greatest level of need will access the greatest level of support.

- Support for All is the first response. At this stage, it may be appropriate and sufficient for strategies to be implemented at a whole class level.
- Where difficulties persist, 'support for some' is considered. This could take the form of small group or 1-1 support.
- Young people whose needs have been identified as significant and enduring are addressed at the level of School Support Plus. They will require access to individualised programme of learning, reflecting their strengths and interests and their needs.
- The allocation of special education teaching supports is recorded and monitored at each level of the continuum of support in the school provision plan.

3.7 Review of Progress

- From information gathered from the initial assessments, be it at the time of transfer to post-primary or a later stage, an individualised Student Support File (SSF) is opened, and a Student Support Plan (SSP) is put in place.
- Alongside the physical file, which contains professional reports, records of relevant communications and information gathered to develop understanding of strengths and needs, VS Ware will be used to record a log of actions and interventions.
- The SSP is shared with teachers and is available on VS Ware, outlining diagnosis, strengths, needs and targets and strategies for teachers.
- Progress is monitored through the young person's response to intervention, which is reviewed collaboratively. Following the review process, targets may be modified or, if necessary, new targets set.

4. Tracking at Castleknock Community College

The College operates a tracking system, Athena Tracker, for all students which is supported by the Learning & Language Support Department. The key features of the system include:

- To develop an academic profile of each year group by tracking the educational progress of each student.
- To allow each Year Head and their care teams to monitor each student's progress.
- To provide relevant data for subject facilitators and their teams to assess students' progress in relation to in-house assessments. Each subject facilitator will be provided with data which includes:
 - An overview of all grades in their subject
 - A breakdown by grade of their subject
 - Comparative data with previous assessments

- Relevant links to literacy and numeracy data (where applicable).
- Relevant data in relation to Learning Support and ESL
- The tracking of each student will provide the opportunity to affirm students who are making progress and for the early diagnosis of student weaknesses.

5. Assistive Technology

5.1 Assistive technology is an integral component of inclusive educational practice. The roll out of 1-1 devices supports all students' learning by promoting accessibility and fostering independence. For students with additional needs, assistive technology provides essential accommodations that reduce barriers to participation, ensure equitable access to the curriculum.

5.2 Students who require the use of a word processor to complete some or all of their schoolwork as part of their access arrangements or learning accommodations will be clearly identified in the School Provision Plan and their Individual Support Plan. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that all work is available in class.

5.3 MS Teams is the platform by which teachers are encouraged to share notes and class materials. Where there has been prior arrangement with the teacher, students have the option to share their work on MS Teams Platform.

5.4 AT Tools include:

- Text-to-speech software (e.g., Read & Write, Immersive Reader, MS Word's 'Read Aloud' function) enables students with reading difficulties (such as dyslexia) to access written content audibly.
- Speech-to-text tools (e.g., Dragon NaturallySpeaking, MS Word's 'dictate' function) assist students with writing difficulties in producing written work using their voice.
- Mind-mapping software (e.g., Coggle) helps students with planning and structuring ideas before writing.
- Word processors with spell check and predictive text (e.g., Microsoft Word) assist students in composing written work more independently.
- Alternative Communication (AAC) devices support students with speech and language impairments in expressing themselves.
- FM systems improve auditory access for students with hearing impairments or auditory processing disorders.
- C-Pens support students with word recognition in class / at home. They can also be applied for use in State Exams under the RACE process.

6. Training of Staff & Management

The Management at Castleknock Community College is committed to the training of staff members in Additional Needs. The core Learning & Language Support Department team members have all completed a Post Graduate Diploma in Learning & Language Support and Additional needs. In drawing up the staff development plan and training programmes, it is envisaged that The Management Team will continue to give consideration and appropriate priority to the needs of all teachers regarding Additional Needs. The Learning Support Department is committed to continuous improvement through regular engagement in professional learning. Department members regularly attend training and development opportunities to upskill in best practices for supporting students with additional needs. In addition, the department shares relevant teacher professional learning opportunities with all staff to promote whole-school awareness and inclusive practices.

7. Involvement of Parent(s)/Guardian(s) & Students

7.1 The College recognises the importance of the involvement of students and their parents/guardians in planning and reviewing support for students with Additional Needs. We encourage informed participation of both in achieving the aims of this policy.

7.2 We are committed to working in genuine partnership with parents/guardians by:

- Having a positive attitude towards parents/guardians, respecting the validity of differing perspectives
- Providing user-friendly information and procedures and being aware of communication barriers.
- Recognising the pressure, a parent/guardian may be under because of their child's need
- Acknowledging the importance of parental knowledge and expertise in relation to their own child
- Gaining parental consent for testing and referrals
- Ensuring parents/guardians are aware of support groups and relevant outside agencies who can assist them
- Encouraging regular communication between College staff and parents/guardians so that any concerns regarding their child's learning or provision can be addressed.

7.3 The College recognises that students have a right to receive information about plans and outcomes for their learning and to have their opinion considered in any matter relating to them. All students are encouraged and helped to participate in the planning and evaluation of their learning and in setting targets for the future. This is achieved through the development of personal learning planning with their Learning & Language Support teacher, target setting and monitoring as well as more informal approaches.

8. Behaviour and Additional Needs

All students of Castleknock Community College are expected to adhere to the school's Code of Behaviour, as outlined in the Code of Behaviour Policy, which promotes a safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environment. However, it is recognised that some students with additional educational needs, may require targeted support measures or interventions before implementing the Behaviour Code. In such cases, a response involving collaboration between the Learning Support Department, Year Heads, and relevant support teams will be implemented. These supports are intended to address the underlying needs influencing behaviour and are designed to give the student the opportunity to respond positively. While this approach may result in reasonable adjustments to how sanctions are applied, it does not negate the expectations set out in the Code of Behaviour. Where interventions and supports have been exhausted and the behaviour persists, the Code of Behaviour will be enacted in full, in line with the procedures outlined in the school's Behaviour Policy.

9. Special Arrangements for sitting State Examinations

9.1 Department of Education & Skills may grant special arrangements to students with Additional Needs. This is called Reasonable Accommodation at Certificate Examinations (RACE). Each application is assessed on an individual basis. The Learning & Language Support Department is responsible for the submission of these applications to the Department. To qualify for RACE the Learning & Language Support Department must assess students within a year of their Junior Cycle examinations. The SEC have strict criteria for qualifications. Applications are made based on the results of testing conducted by the Learning & Language Support Department. The SEC do not consider results and/or recommendations from professional reports. Result of testing must be included in the application and evidence of testing stored in the College. In general, accommodations granted at Junior Cycle can be reactivated for Leaving Certificate. New applications can also be made for Leaving Certificate. Parents can appeal decisions not to grant accommodation.

9.2 The Learning & Language Support Department also offers, when resources allow, these accommodations during the house/mock examinations to students who may qualify for RACE. Our positive commitment to facilitating an effective Learning & Language Support system will provide an environment, which will promote, enhance, and further develop the acquired skills of the pupils with learning difficulties.

10. Disability Access Route to Education (DARE)

Students with Special Educational Needs who wish to apply for the Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) must tick the disability box on their CAO application. There are deadlines set by the CAO for completion of an online statement from the student outlining how their disability affects their learning, submission of a downloaded form, which the College must complete and submission of professional reports outlining a diagnosis.

The Learning & Language Support Department works closely with the Guidance Department to advise parents on professional reports required by the CAO. The Learning & Language Support Department assists the students in completing their statement and they complete the College form for these students. Students with physical and medical needs and students with mental health illness may also qualify for DARE. New Educational Assessments are not required for students with a diagnosis of dyslexia, but up to date scores for word reading and word spelling must be submitted. The Learning & Language Support Department will assess students for this purpose. To qualify the two scores must be at or below a standard score of 81. Scores from professional reports that are no older than 2 years may be used instead of school scores. (Please see DARE guidelines in this regard).

II. Procedure for acquiring an exemption from Irish

The College strictly adheres to the guidelines for exemptions as set down by the Department of Education and Skills (Circular 0055/22)

Under the new guidelines the following protocols need to be observed:

1. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) must complete an “Application for Exemption from the Study of Irish Post Primary Schools.”
2. The application must clearly state the ground for applying for an exemption from the study of Irish in accordance with Circular 0053/2019.
3. It is important that all documentation in support of the application must be submitted at the time of Application.

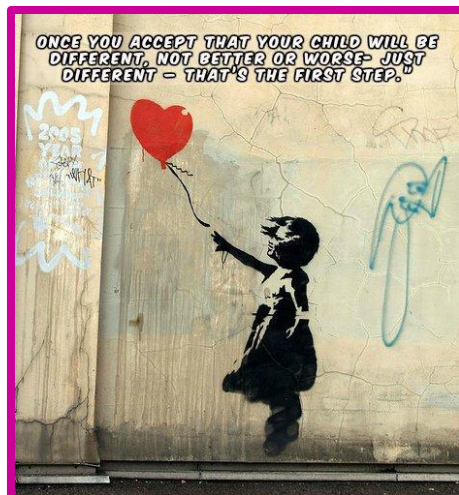
Once an “Application for Exemption from the Study of Irish Post Primary Schools” has been received by the College parents will receive a confirmation letter acknowledging that the College is in receipt of the application.

If it is the College’s decision not to grant an Irish Exemption a parent will be afforded the opportunity to appeal the decision to the Irish Exemptions Appeal Committee.

Parents of Incoming First Year Students should inform the College if an exemption from Irish was granted at Primary School and if they wish to avail of this exemption.

12. Monitoring & Evaluating

The work of the Learning & Language Support Department in implementing this policy and the general effectiveness of Additional Needs provision in the College will be subject to the normal College self-evaluation policy and an annual department review process. The review process will involve evaluating all elements of the day-to-day running of the Learning & Language Support Department which will allow us to identify key strengths and weaknesses in the provision of SEN in the College. Annual developments and plans for the next academic year will be outlined in the College’s annual progress report compiled by The Senior Leadership Team.



Strand 3 – Wellbeing Programmes

A Culture of Care

Educationalists such as Hargreaves and Fullan (1998) and Noddings (1997) argue for the importance of *cultures of care* in schools which are effective in their capacities to meet the needs of all students and staff. In the 1995 White Paper on Education, ‘care’ appears central to the curriculum, to classroom interaction and to broader interactions within the school environment. Bearing in mind that there is now a lot of emphasis on the personal and social development of young people in the curriculum (Smyth 1999), it can be said that teachers have a role to play in preparing students for life outside of the sheltered environment of the school.

Provision of Para-Curricular Subjects: SPHE.

Since 2016 the College has commenced the process of introducing the Well Being Programme as part of the new Junior Cycle Curriculum. SPHE is currently delivered across Junior Cycle, Senior Cycle (including Leaving Certificate Applied and Leaving Certificate Established), and Transition Year in accordance with national guidance, ensuring a coherent whole-school approach to wellbeing education. Student Wellbeing is present when students realise their abilities, take care of their physical wellbeing, can cope with the normal stresses of life, and have a sense of purpose and belonging to a wider community. To help make sure everyone – students, parents, and teachers – has a common understanding of what wellbeing means, six indicators describe what is important for young people’s wellbeing.

These indicators are not seen as goals or targets to be reached. The journey towards wellbeing is never complete and will always involve ups and downs. Often it is through dealing with obstacles and setbacks that people grow. The well-being indicators make it easier for everyone to have conversations about student wellbeing and may help identify where a student needs support.

Whole School Approach

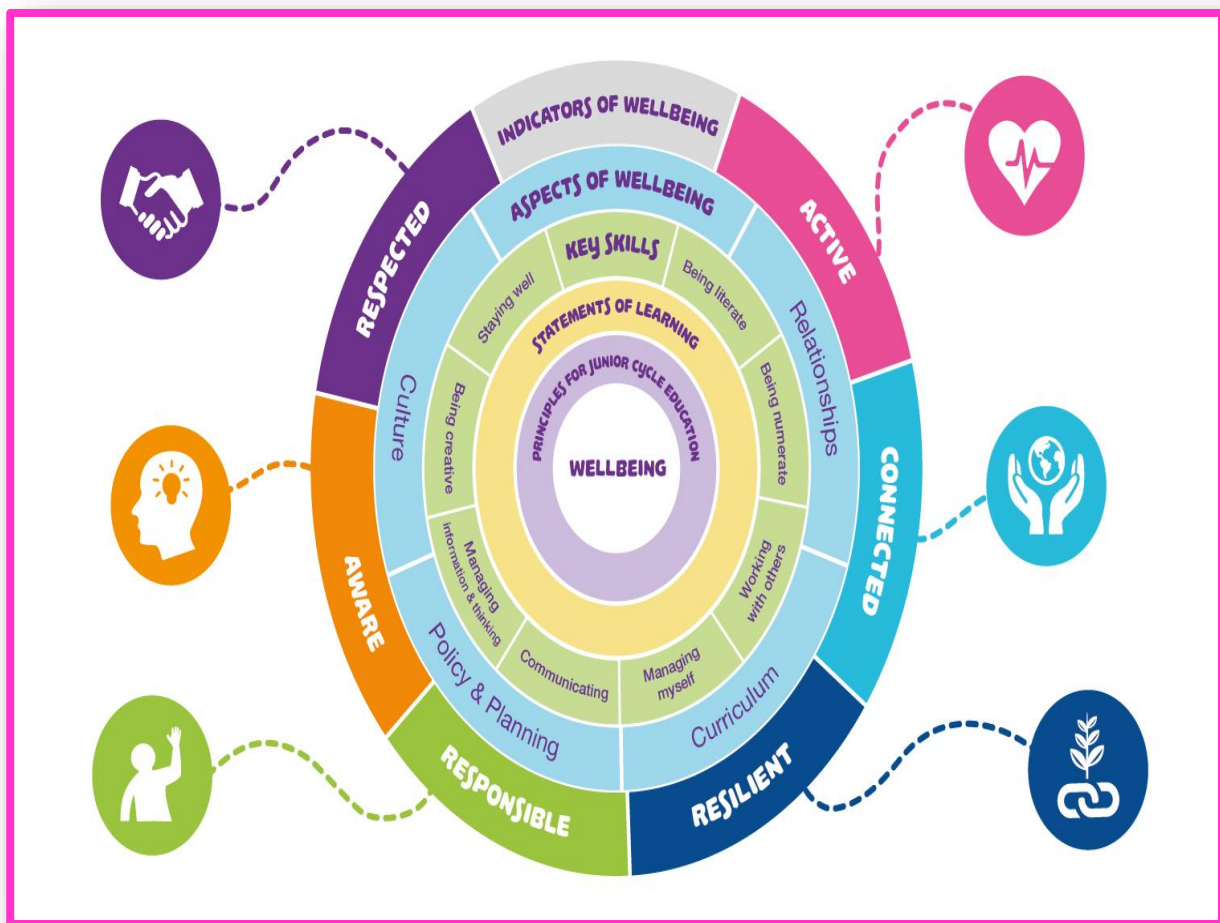
A Whole School approach taken to pastoral care in the College acknowledges the role which all members of staff must play in preparing students for life. Senior management, along with the College Chaplain, Guidance Counsellors, Year Heads and Tutors, all play an integral role in supporting Wellbeing programmes. Members of staff, in their roles as moral agents, are enabled to contribute both formally and informally to the provision of a holistic education for our students. This consequently promotes the development of empathic and nurturing relationships which are at the very core of this learning community.



Strand 3.1. - Wellbeing

Student Wellbeing is present when students realise their abilities, take care of their physical wellbeing, can cope with the normal stresses of life, and have a sense of purpose and belonging to a wider community.

Extract from “Guidelines for Wellbeing in Junior Cycle” National Council for Curriculum & Assessment



1. Wellbeing

As part of the new Junior Cycle, students are experiencing a new area of learning called Wellbeing. This will build on the curriculum and care structures already in place in support of students’ wellbeing and will make it more visible for students.

2. Why Wellbeing Matters?

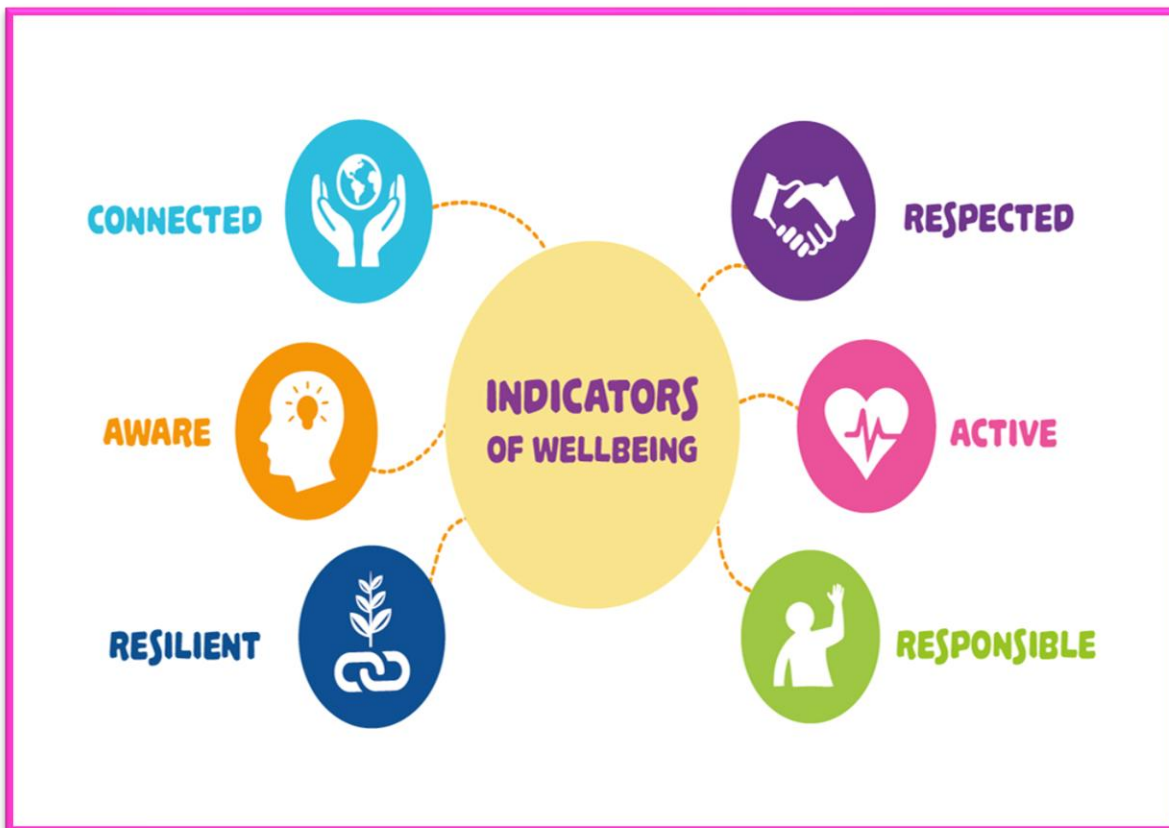
All day-to-day interactions that take place in school can impact on students’ wellbeing. Therefore, everyone plays a part in supporting wellbeing.

Students have a right to feel cared for in school. Developing good relationships in the classroom and through the school are essential for students' wellbeing and for effective teaching and learning. When students feel included, respected, and listened to, they are more ready to learn and more successful in their learning. Wellbeing matters not only because it leads to students doing better at school, but it can also influence young people's outcomes as adults.

What is Wellbeing?

We often associate wellbeing with mental or physical health. Wellbeing is broader than this. Wellbeing includes social, emotional, physical, spiritual, intellectual, and environmental aspects. Learning in Wellbeing focuses on the students' journey across all aspects of wellbeing. While it is recognised that the journey towards wellbeing continues throughout our lives, it is one where school plays an important part.

Six Indicators of Wellbeing



To help make sure everyone – students, parents, and teachers – has a common understanding of what wellbeing means, six indicators describe what is important for young people's wellbeing.

These indicators are not seen as goals or targets to be reached. The journey towards wellbeing is never complete and will always involve ups and downs. Often it is through dealing with obstacles and setbacks that people grow. The wellbeing indicators make it easier for everyone to have conversations about student wellbeing and may help identify where a student needs support.



CONNECTED

- Do I feel connected to my school, my friends, my community and the wider world?
- Do I appreciate that my actions and interactions impact on my own wellbeing and that of others, in local and global contexts?



RESILIENT

- Do I believe that I have the coping skills to deal with life's challenges?
- Do I know where I can go for help?
- Do I believe that with effort I can achieve?



AWARE

- Am I aware of my thoughts, feelings and behaviours and can I make sense of them?
- Am I aware of what my personal values are and do I think through my decisions?
- Do I understand what helps me to learn and how I can improve?



RESPECTED

- Do I feel that I am listened to and valued?
- Do I have positive relationships with my friends, my peers and my teachers?
- Do I show care and respect for others?



RESPONSIBLE

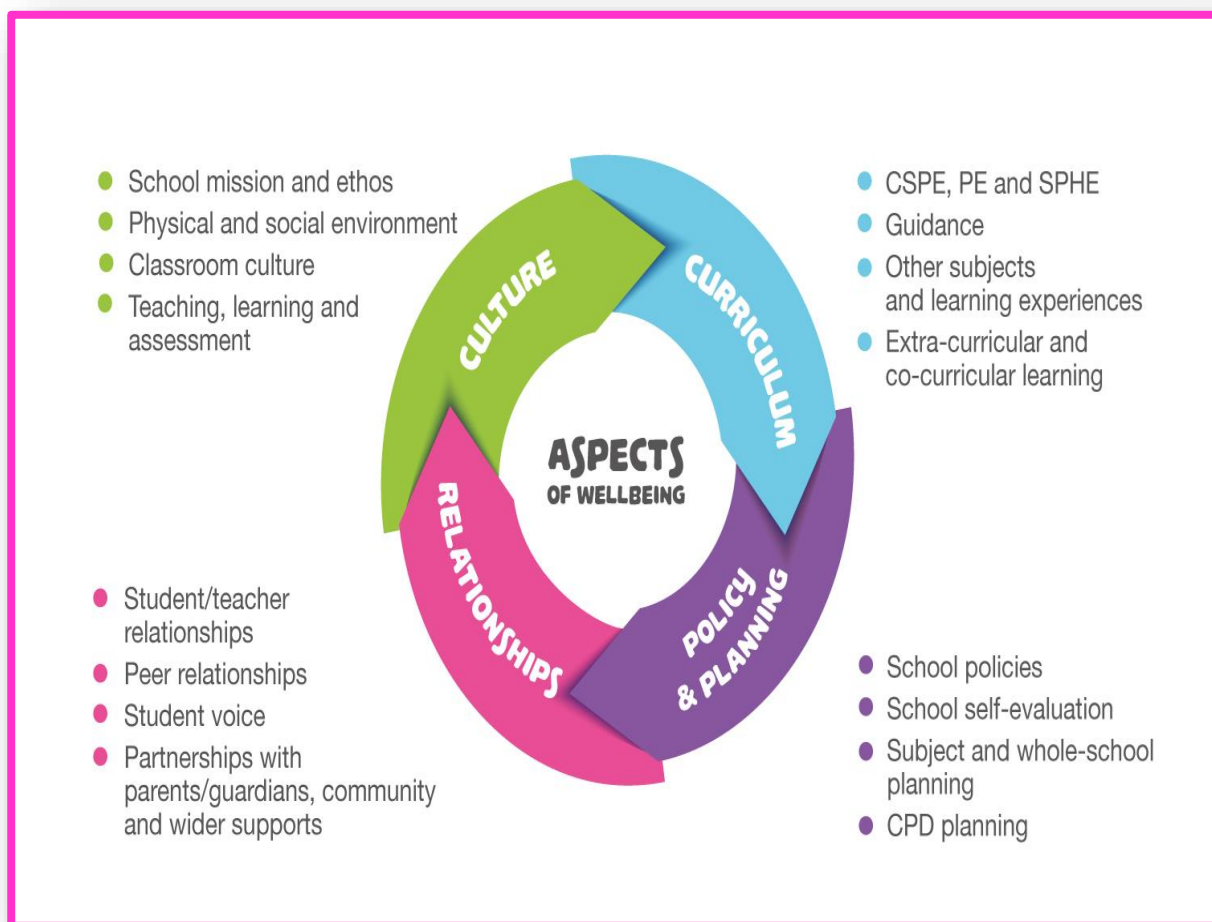
- Do I take action to protect and promote my wellbeing and that of others?
- Do I make healthy eating choices?
- Do I know where my safety is at risk and do I make right choices?



ACTIVE

- Am I a confident and skilled participant in physical activity?
- How physically active am I?

What will Students Learn in their Wellbeing Programme?



Through the Wellbeing Programme, students will be learning the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to enable them to protect their own wellbeing and that of others.

The Junior Cycle Wellbeing Programme currently provides students with 400 hours of timetabled learning in Wellbeing over the three years of Junior Cycle.

The curricular aspect of the Junior Cycle Wellbeing Programme is Civic, Social & Political Education (CSPE), Social, Personal & Health Education (SPHE), Physical Education (PE), and Guidance Education. Other subjects and units of learning also contribute to the school's Wellbeing Programme.

Strand 3.2. - SPHE (Social, Personal & Health Education)

Context of SPHE Policy

In Castleknock Community College, we aim to encourage and support our students so that they can “realise their full potential.” Our College provides a wide range of opportunities for students to be actively involved in school life, express their opinions, and take an active role in their learning.

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) plays an important part in helping our College realise its motto. SPHE encourages students to think about issues that are relevant to their lives at the different stages of their development. It facilitates the development of skills that contributes to the holistic and personal development of the individual. The policy will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis, in consultation with staff, students, parent(s)/guardian(s), school management and the Board of Management. This policy supports and in turn is supported by the Department of Education & Skills publication “Wellbeing in Post Primary Schools” (2017) which states that:

There is substantial evidence that mental health promotion programmes in schools, when implemented effectively, can produce long-term benefits for young people in emotional and social functioning and improved academic performance. A supportive school environment where high expectations and aspirations are the norm for all young people can itself contribute significantly to lifelong health and well-being.

Aims

- To enable students to develop personal and social skills
- To promote self-esteem and self-confidence
- To enable students to develop a framework for responsible decision making
- To provide opportunities for reflection and discussion
- To promote physical, mental, and emotional health

Objectives

- To establish a classroom environment where students feel safe whilst accessing a variety of modules within the SPHE curriculum which will lead to their development of personal and social skills & To promote open discussion
- To instil our College’s core values of courtesy, respect, and responsibility in every student in the classroom environment where open discussions are taking place
- To develop a classroom environment where students feel confident to voice their opinions on various aspects of the programme

Subject Coordinator

SPHE coordination is led by an AP11 post holder who facilitates subject planning, curriculum development, on-going continuous professional development and who leads the SPHE Core Team. The SPHE Core Team consists of a team of SPHE teachers representing each year. This team supports the SPHE teaching staff.

Allocation of Staff to SPHE

SPHE is an integral part of our College curriculum and mindful of the pastoral responsibility of teachers, we strive to ensure that where possible, the class tutor is also the SPHE teacher. This is negotiated with the teacher. We also endeavour to ensure continuity of teacher where possible. Teacher interest in the subject is another factor considered when timetabling.

Student Access

SPHE is allocated as follows:

- First Year: two periods per week
- Second Year: two periods per week
- Third Year: one period per week
- Transition Year: two periods per week
- Fifth Year: one period per week
- Sixth Year: one period per week

Senior Cycle SPHE provision will continue to be reviewed in line with Department of Education guidance and the 2024 Senior Cycle SPHE Specification to ensure the required 60 hours are provided over the two-year programme.

Organisation of Students in SPHE

Students are organised in mixed ability groupings with mixed nationalities. Staff is encouraged to liaise with the Learning & Language Support Department for materials/ideas/strategies/advice about working with students who may have extra challenges. Staff is encouraged to use the Special Educational Needs Register (SEN Register) and the support materials provided by the Learning & Language Department.

The Learning Support staff provides support for students with special educational needs and the Guidance Counsellors/Chaplain support students who are experiencing difficulties or may be at risk. Our College Behaviour Code is followed in SPHE as in every other subject.

Textbook and Course Materials

Age-appropriate course materials are selected by the team and approved by the Principal/Deputy Principal. The course is in thematic form and is spiral in its approach over a five/six-year programme.

Cross-Curricular Planning

Where possible we endeavour to exploit cross-curricular opportunities. Links are made with a variety of subjects during the teaching of various modules:

- PE – Health & Exercise
- Science – Biology (SPHE)
- Home Economics – Nutrition/Substance Use/ Personal Safety
- Geography – Social & Environmental Issues
- English – Communication Skills

Subject Planning for a Culturally Diverse Society

The SPHE Department has a policy of inclusion for all students. We recognise cultural difference, and this is considered in relation to certain topics.

Methodologies

Suggested teaching approaches for the delivery of the SPHE programme:

- Group discussion
- Geographical voting
- Brain showering
- Role play
- Case studies
- Artwork
- Cartoons
- Games
- Debates
- Project work
- Sentence completion
- Situation cards
- Dilemma boards
- Visualisation
- Guided imagery
- Ranking exercises
- Relaxation
- Multi-media
- Guest speakers
- Reflection opportunities

Support Materials / Resources

Teachers are encouraged to use a wide range of resources to bring SPHE alive in the classroom. A wide range of recommended materials and resources are available to SPHE teachers. These are available for all SPHE teachers. As new material comes into the College, staff are informed. Any staff member who finds material that could be useful in teaching SPHE, may order them through the SPHE Coordinator/Deputy Principal.

Currently all classrooms are fitted with PCs, Interactive Whiteboards, and/or Data Projectors. The College also has access to 100meg broadband and Wi-Fi.

In accordance with DES CL 0043/2018

“School management, principals, and teachers have a duty to provide the best quality and the most appropriate education in order to promote the wellbeing of their students. They also have a duty to protect students in their care at all times from any potentially harmful, inappropriate, or misguided resources, interventions, or programmes. The Department therefore wishes to advise management authorities of the necessity to adhere to best practice when implementing the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice.”

Child Protection and Confidentiality

The SPHE teacher provides a safe environment that respects the privacy of students within the class setting. This is achieved through the use of negotiated ground rules which address the limits of confidentiality.

It is school policy that in circumstances where a student is considered at some risk of any type of abuse or in breach of the law, as a mandated person, the teacher must refer this immediately to the Designated Liaison Person – Mr John Cronin (Principal) or in his absence to the Deputy Designated Liaison Person – Ms Christina Clarke (Deputy Principal). The Principal, in consultation with the reporting teacher and TUSLA, will decide whether to inform the parents/guardians and/or appropriate authorities and may arrange for counselling. The SPHE class is not the context for disclosure of personal information. In cases of under-age sexual activity, we will refer to *DES Child Protection Guidelines for Post Primary Schools 2017*, page 15, where it states:

“In relation to child sexual abuse, it should be noted that in criminal law, the age of consent to sexual intercourse is 17 years for both boys and girls. Any sexual relationship where one or both parties are under the age of 17 is illegal. However, it may not necessarily be regarded as child sexual abuse. Details on the exemptions for mandated reporting of certain underage sexual activity can be found in section 4.7.1 of these procedures. Where a school becomes aware of underage sexual intercourse the school should take appropriate steps to inform the child’s parents.”

According to the Criminal Law Sexual Offences Act 2017, seventeen years is the legal age of consent for both male and female. The following is also College policy:

- Teachers must not promise absolute confidentiality.
- Students must be made aware that any incident may be disclosed to the Principal and possibly to parents if the Principal decides that it is in the best interest of the student.
- Teachers must use their professional judgement to decide whether confidentiality can be maintained having heard the information.
- Teachers must indicate clearly to students when the content of a conversation can no longer be kept confidential – the student can then decide whether to proceed or not.

The DES Child Protection Guidelines for Post Primary Schools (2023) states:

4.2.1 In accordance with the best practice (non-statutory) requirement of the Children First National Guidance 2017, these procedures continue the previous requirement that any member of school personnel including a registered teacher who receives an allegation or has a suspicion that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected, is still required to report the matter, without delay, to the DLP in the school.

Every registered teacher, as a mandated person, now also has a statutory obligation to make his or her own mandated report to Tusla where the concern about the child is at or above a threshold of harm as defined in the Act. Therefore, in addition to reporting his or her concern to the DLP, a registered teacher must also consider whether or not the concern is at or above the defined threshold

of harm at which the registered teacher has his or her own statutory obligation under the Children First Act, 2015 to submit a mandated report to Tusla.

Chapter 5 of these procedures requires that the registered teacher shall liaise with the DLP in relation to determining if the concern in question is at or above the defined threshold of harm at which the registered teacher must submit a mandated report. Chapter 5 also requires that the registered teacher shall follow the relevant reporting procedures set out in section 5.2, including, where applicable, those requiring the registered teacher to submit a mandated report jointly with the DLP.

4.2.2 Important note for registered teacher: Every registered teacher should note that as a mandated person the statutory obligation under the Children First Act 2015 to make a mandated report to Tusla rests with the individual teacher and this applies regardless of whether or not the DLP reports the concern in question. However, a registered teacher who makes a mandated report to Tusla jointly with the DLP meets his or her statutory obligation to report to Tusla under the Children First Act 2015.

This chapter contains information (based on chapter 3 of Children First National Guidance 2017) for registered teachers and DLPs on their statutory obligations under the Children First Act, 2015 and on the threshold of harm at which a concern must be reported as a mandated report under that Act.

4.2.3 Registered teachers as mandated persons have two main statutory obligations under the Children First Act, 2015 and they are:

- (a) to report any knowledge, belief, or reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been harmed, is being harmed or is at risk of being harmed to Tusla, and
- (b) to assist Tusla in assessing a concern which has been the subject of a mandated report, if requested by Tusla in accordance with the Act.

4.2.4 Certain provisions of the Children First Act, 2015 that are relevant to the reporting obligations of mandated persons are set out below:

Section 14(1) of the Children First Act, 2015 states that: “where a mandated person knows, believes or has reasonable grounds to suspect, on the basis of information that he or she has received, acquired or becomes aware of in the course of his or her employment or profession as such a mandated person, that a child – (a) has been harmed, (b) is being harmed, or (c) is at risk of being harmed, he or she shall, as soon as practicable, report that knowledge, belief or suspicion, as the case may be, to the Agency.”

Health & Safety Requirements

The SPHE teacher provides a safe environment that respects the privacy of students within the class setting. This is achieved through the use of negotiated ground rules and class. In any incident relating to Health and Safety, all staff are aware of the College policy and procedures. This should be employed in the normal way. There is an Accident Report Form available from the office.

Assessment Procedures

In the College, staff employ “Assessment for Learning” strategies in the classroom. Teachers establish learning objectives at the start of each lesson. Five minutes are afforded at the end of each lesson to reflect on class learning through oral or written means. This assessment is primarily for the students themselves and is very personal to the student. As outlined at the beginning of each school year, to engender a spirit of trust and worthwhile learning for the student, agreed samples of work may be shared.

Parents are informed about the programme at Open Evenings and presentations. Parents/guardians receive a letter at the beginning of each academic year informing them about the programme and inviting them to visit the College to view materials and discuss any queries they may have. Parents also have the opportunity to discuss their child’s participation in SPHE at Parent Teacher Meetings. Through the Parents Association, Information Evenings are organised that address relevant topics aligned to the pastoral programme delivered in the College.

Record Keeping Procedures

Staff are required to take a class register at the beginning of every lesson and keep a record of student attendance. If a student is absent, this should be checked against the tutor register on VS Ware or liaise directly with the student’s tutor. Staff are encouraged to record all work covered in SPHE each week.

Teacher In-Career Development

The College facilitates SPHE teachers in attending any in-service training which may be relevant to this subject. Notification of all staff development courses is posted on the noticeboard in the staffroom or on our shared digital platform. The SPHE team may from time to time organise a facilitator to the College to deliver on site staff training.

Relationships & Sexuality Education

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is an integral and embedded component of our SPHE programme. It follows a spiral approach through each year of the programme in an age-appropriate way. It is delivered in line with the NCCA SPHE specifications, where Relationships and Sexuality forms a mandatory strand both at Junior Cycle (Strand 3: Relationships and Sexuality) and Senior Cycle (Strand 2: Relationships and Sexuality). The RSE policy should be read in conjunction with this SPHE policy. In view of individual students, special educational needs, dialogue with parents is an integral part of the teaching of RSE in SPHE.

Strand 3.3. – RSE (Relationships & Sexuality Education)

Definition of Relationships & Sexuality Education

Relationships and Sexuality Education, as part of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), is a developmental process through experiential learning in which pupils participate to help cultivate a healthy, respectful attitude towards themselves and others, particularly in the area of sexuality and relationships.



Rationale for this Relationships and Sexuality Policy

Sexuality is a key element of healthy social and personal development. Young people are exposed to a bewildering variety of messages about sexuality and sexual activity. Schools, in consultation with parents/guardians, need to reflect on how to provide for the needs of their students.

Schools have a responsibility under Section 9 (e) of the Education Act 1998 to promote the moral, spiritual, social, and personal development of students and promote health education for them, in consultation with their parents, having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school.

In accordance with Department of Education requirements and the NCCA SPHE Specifications (Junior Cycle 2023; Senior Cycle 2024) schools are required to have an agreed policy for Relationships and Sexuality Education and to provide RSE for all students at Junior and Senior Cycle, including Transition Year. Section 4 of the Rules and Programme for Secondary Schools requires schools to have an agreed policy for RSE. At Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle, Relationships and Sexuality is a mandatory strand of within the SPHE curriculum.

- Circular 0037/2010 reminds schools of their obligations to develop a school policy in regard to Relationships and Sexuality Education.

- Subject Specifications for Junior Cycle SPHE (2023) and Senior Cycle SPHE (2024) informs schools that they are obliged to teach RSE within the SPHE curriculum.

Access to sexual and health education is an important right for students under the terms of the Article 11.2 of the European Social Charter. The Council of Europe European Committee of Social Rights, which examines complaints regarding breaches of the Charter, has indicated it regards this Article as requiring that health education “be provided throughout the entire period of schooling” and that sexual and reproductive health education is “objective, based on contemporary scientific evidence and does not involve censoring, withholding or intentionally misrepresenting information, for example as regards contraception or different means on maintaining sexual and reproductive health.”

The effectiveness of teaching RSE is dependent on a collaborative policy process involving teachers, parents/guardians, students, and members of the Board of Management.

Relationships & Sexuality Education within Social, Personal & Health Education (SPHE)

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is delivered within the SPHE curriculum at Junior and Senior Cycle. In line with the SPHE Specifications (JC 2023; SC 2024), SPHE is spiral and developmental in nature and age appropriate in content and methodology.

The teaching of RSE follows this principle and pattern as an integral component of SPHE. In addition to specific learning in the Relationships and Sexuality strand, SPHE addresses the other areas that contribute to the development of a healthy attitude to sexuality in oneself and one’s relationships with others. SPHE includes areas such as self-esteem, assertiveness, communication, and decision-making skills – all of which are essential components that contribute to students’ learning in this area of development.

College Philosophy

Castleknock Community College encourages its students to consider and assess different viewpoints in relation to issues of morality. The experience gained in the development of this policy and through respecting the needs of minority groups and individuals enriches the community life of the College.

In our College, students are afforded the opportunity to explore the humanities, sciences, arts business, and technical subjects. In addition, this College provides religious, moral, and physical education that supports students in achieving their full potential.

Aims of the Relationships & Sexuality Strand within SPHE

The Relationships and Sexuality strand, as an integral component of SPHE, has the following aims:

- To support students in understanding and developing healthy friendships and relationships
- To promote informed, respectful, and age-appropriate understanding of sexuality
- To promote a positive and respectful attitude to one’s own sexuality and in one’s relationships with others
- To promote accurate knowledge and respect in relation to human reproduction and sexual health
- To equip students with the knowledge and skills to seek appropriate advice, information, and support in relation to relationships, sexuality, and sexual health
- To enable students to develop attitudes and values in relation to sexuality within a moral, spiritual, and social framework in keeping with the policy of the College

- To provide opportunities for students to learn about relationships and sexuality in a manner that encourages them to think and act in a mature, respectful, caring, and responsible way.

Organisation & Management of RSE

RSE is delivered as an integral component of the SPHE Programme in accordance with Department of Education Requirements. They follow a spiral approach through each year of the programme in an age-appropriate way. The RSE policy is developed in conjunction with this policy. The Principal and Deputy Principals are responsible for the deployment of staff to teach the programme.

Informing & Involving Parents/Guardians

The College recognises that parents/guardians are the primary educators of their children. In line with the Education Act 1998, their role supporting in Relationships and Sexuality Education within SPHE is considered very important by the College. The RSE policy has been designed in consultation with the Parents' Association and views expressed are reflected in this document. The policy will be made available to all parents/guardians. Information regarding the delivery of Relationships and Sexuality learning within SPHE is communicated in advance, and parents/guardians may request to view relevant teaching materials.

Procedure if a withdrawal from RSE is requested

Parents/Guardians who wish to withdraw their child from specific aspects of Relationships and Sexuality Education are required to put their request in writing. Parents/ Guardians will be asked to attend a meeting in the College to discuss the nature of their concern(s). A Deputy Principal and the SPHE Coordinator/teacher will attend the meeting. The Principal may become involved, if necessary.

In line with Department of Education guidance, parents/guardians may request withdrawal from RSE. As SPHE is a mandatory curricular subject, the curriculum cannot be amended. Care will be taken not to undermine the integrity of the RSE strand and the entitlement of other students.

If it is necessary to withdraw the student, the College will work with parents/guardians to find alternative arrangements for the student at that time, which may include parental supervision at the time of the lesson. Parents/guardians will be guided in how to access appropriate information and resources.

Parents/guardians may also be directed towards appropriate information and resources, where requested.

Advice on Sexual Matters

The College's function is to provide a general education in line with the SPHE curriculum on relationships, sexuality, and sexual health. Teachers do not provide individual medical, clinical or directive advice in relation to personal sexual behaviour and contraception. Where appropriate, students may be signposted to relevant professional services and sources of support. All discussion will be age-appropriate and consistent with the SPHE specifications and school policy.

Explicit Questions

Questions arising in SPHE, including those related to RSE, will be addressed in an age-appropriate manner and in line with the relevant SPHE curriculum learning outcomes, the ethos of the College and the RSE policy.

It may not be appropriate to deal with some explicit questions in class. Teachers will use their professional judgement to determine how to best respond, having regard to the age and readiness of the students and the educational context of the lesson. Where a question is not appropriate to address in a whole-class setting, the teacher may defer the response or suggest an alternative approach.

If the teacher becomes concerned about a matter that has been raised, s/he should seek advice from the SPHE Coordinator or the Principal in accordance with the College's Child Protection procedures.

Where appropriate, students will be signposted to the relevant sources of professional support and information.

Child Protection & Confidentiality

It is College policy that in circumstances where a pupil is considered at some risk of any type of abuse or in breach of the law, the teacher must refer immediately to the Designated Liaison Person who will take the appropriate course of action. In the case of underage sexual activity, the College will be guided by the *DES Child Protection Guidelines for Primary and Post Primary Schools (Revised 2023)*, pages 14 & 15, where it states:

In relation to child sexual abuse, it should be noted that in criminal law, the age of consent to sexual intercourse is 17 years for both boys and girls. Any sexual relationship where one or both parties are under the age of seventeen is illegal. However, it may not necessarily be regarded as child sexual abuse. Details on the exemptions for mandated reporting of certain underage sexual activity can be found in section 4.7.1 of these procedures. Where a school becomes aware of underage sexual intercourse the school should take appropriate steps to inform the child's parents.

Teachers must not promise absolute confidentiality. Teachers must indicate clearly to students when the content of a conversation cannot be kept confidential, giving the student the opportunity to decide whether to proceed or not. Teachers must use their professional judgement to decide whether confidentiality can be maintained having heard the information. Students must be made aware that any incident may be conveyed to the Principal and, where appropriate, parents/guardians if the Principal decides that it is in the best interest of the student, and in line with Child Protection Procedures.

The DES Child Protection Guidelines for Post Primary Schools (Revised 2023) states:

4.2.1 In accordance with the best practice (non-statutory) requirement of the Children First National Guidance 2017, these procedures continue the previous requirement that any member of school personnel including a registered teacher who receives an allegation or has a suspicion that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected, is still required to report the matter, without delay, to the DLP in the school.

Every registered teacher, as a mandated person, now also has a statutory obligation to make his or her own mandated report to Tusla where the concern about the child is at or above a threshold of harm as defined in the Act. Therefore, in addition to reporting his or her concern to the DLP, a registered teacher must also consider whether or not the concern is at or above the defined threshold of harm at which the registered teacher has his or her own statutory obligation under the Children First Act, 2015 to submit a mandated report to Tusla.

Chapter 5 of the Child Protection Procedures 2017 requires that the registered teacher shall liaise with the DLP in relation to determining if the concern in question is at or above the defined threshold of harm at which the registered teacher must submit a mandated report. Chapter 5 also requires that the registered teacher shall follow the relevant reporting procedures set out in section 5.2, including, where applicable, those requiring the registered teacher to submit a mandated report jointly with the DLP.

4.2.2 Important note for registered teacher: Every registered teacher should note that as a mandated person the statutory obligation under the Children First Act 2015 to make a mandated report to Tusla rests with the individual teacher and this applies regardless of whether or not the DLP reports the concern in question. However, a registered teacher who makes a mandated report to Tusla jointly with the DLP meets his or her statutory obligation to report to Tusla under the Children First Act 2015.

This chapter contains information (based on chapter 3 of Children First National Guidance 2017) for registered teachers and DLPs on their statutory obligations under the Children First Act, 2015 and on the threshold of harm at which a concern must be reported as a mandated report under that Act.

4.2.3 Registered teachers as mandated persons have two main statutory obligations under the Children First Act, 2015 and they are:

- (a) to report any knowledge, belief, or reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been harmed, is being harmed or is at risk of being harmed to Tusla, and
- (b) to assist Tusla in assessing a concern which has been the subject of a mandated report, if requested by Tusla in accordance with the Act.

4.2.4 Certain provisions of the Children First Act, 2015 that are relevant to the reporting obligations of mandated persons are set out below:

Section 14(1) of the Children First Act, 2015 states that: “where a mandated person knows, believes or has reasonable grounds to suspect, on the basis of information that he or she has received, acquired or becomes aware of in the course of his or her employment or profession as such a mandated person, that a child – (a) has been harmed, (b) is being harmed, or (c) is at risk of being harmed, he or she shall, as soon as practicable, report that knowledge, belief or suspicion, as the case may be, to the Agency.”

Biological Aspects of Sex Education

This policy recognises that the Science and Home Economics Departments cover the biological aspects of reproduction, but this must also be covered in SPHE. This is planned and delivered in line with the Relationships and Sexuality strands and associated learning outcomes in the Junior and Senior Cycle SPHE Specifications.

LGBTI + (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex)

Teachers do not promote any one orientation as the only acceptable one for society. LGBTI+ matters may be discussed, where relevant, in an age-appropriate manner within SPHE. One of the advantages of exploring issues concerning LGBTI+ is the opportunity it affords to correct false ideas, assumptions, and address prejudice.

The *Equal Status Act 2000* and the *Equality Act 2004* prohibit discrimination across nine groups including sexual orientation, which is a protected characteristic under equality legislation. Discussion of LGBTI+ issues will be appropriate to the age of the students.

This approach is consistent with the College's commitment to student wellbeing and to the principles of *Bí Cineálta*, promoting dignity, respect, and inclusion for all members of our school community.

Contraception

This topic will be addressed in an age-appropriate open manner, open and non-directive manner. In line with the Junior and Senior Cycle SPHE specifications, students will engage with learning in relation to contraception and sexual health within the relevant strands and learning outcomes. The sequencing of this learning will be guided by the SPHE Specifications and the professional judgement of teachers.

Students with Additional Educational Needs

Students with additional educational needs may need extra support in coping with the physical and emotional aspects of growing up. The students may need more support in learning what types of behaviour are or are not acceptable and to prepare against abuse by others. Some students may need further support in understanding personal boundaries, consent, and in developing skills to keep themselves safe in line with age-appropriate SPHE learning. Learning Support Department has a particular role in supporting students' access to SPHE learning, in collaboration with the SPHE teachers.

In line with inclusive practice and Universal Design for Learning (UDL), teaching approaches are differentiated to support meaningful participation for all students.

Resources & Training

Resources are stored securely in the College and shared among the SPHE / RSE teachers. RSE forms part of the SPHE curriculum for Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle students. SPHE is timetabled each week for students in all year groups. The College is committed to keeping resources updated and will purchase appropriate SPHE / RSE teaching materials as identified by the teaching staff and as guided by the Department of Education & Skills Circular CL 0043/2018. A variety of teaching methods will be employed where appropriate. Teachers will be accommodated and given every opportunity to attend in-service training in the area of SPHE / RSE.

Monitoring, Evaluating & Reviewing

The College is committed to monitoring and evaluating the teaching and learning of RSE within SPHE. This will be achieved by –

- Pupil feedback
- Staff review and feedback
- Parental feedback

Reporting to Parents

Any issue that the SPHE/RSE teachers need to be reported to parents/guardians will be arranged through the Principal, the Designated Liaison Person. An incident report on the concern reported will be recorded and filed confidentially in the College.



Strand 4 – Physical Health

Introduction

Physical Education is defined as all activities taught as part of the curriculum within class time where the emphasis is on learning. Physical Activity is an all-encompassing term which includes physical education, sport, play, and activity undertaken for enjoyment, health or performance enhancing purpose. Sport is defined as activities that are organised in a structured way and have a focus on competition.



Context

Physical Education at the College is regarded as an integral part of the whole school approach to physical and mental wellbeing in the College. Since the founding of the college in 1995, physical education, physical activity and sport have received the support of senior management, which has engendered an extremely positive feeling towards physical education in the school. The first special duties post created in 1995 was that of extra-curricular co-ordinator which has set the tone for the years to come.

General Aims

Physical education applies a holistic approach to physical activity in the students at the college. The Physical Education Department recognise that the general aim of physical education is to contribute to the preparation of the students for a life of autonomous wellbeing.

The Physical Education Department pursues its aim by developing the student's skill and creative performance; by developing the students understanding of the importance of physical activity; by motivating the student to choose a healthy lifestyle and by encouraging the student to develop personal and social skills as well as valuing positive interactions with others.

Physical education is compulsory for all junior cycle students. Each student receives a minimum of 44 hours per year. The students follow the Junior Cycle Physical Education programme which

studies such modules as Adventure activities, Athletics, Dance, Game, Gymnastics and Health related activities.

The Department of Education and Skills recommend that each school has the responsibility for the selection and adaptation of the physical education curriculum in Transition Year. In Castleknock Community College the Transition Year students receive a minimum of 32 hours of formal physical education classes, and a further 30 hours of physical activity in the form of coaching studies, fencing, and self-defence.

In senior cycle, physical education is offered to all students. The students have a choice between physical education, L.C.V.P. and study. The students receive a minimum of 44 hours of physical education per year.

Cross Curricular Links

The Physical Education Department regularly encourages cross curricular involvement.

- | | |
|------------------|-------------|
| ✂ Science | Biology |
| ✂ Home Economics | Nutrition |
| ✂ Geography | Map Reading |
| ✂ Art | Posters |

Leaving Certificate Physical Education

The aim of Leaving Certificate Physical Education is to develop students' ability to become informed, skilled, self-directed, and reflective performers in physical education and physical activity, both for their senior cycle and in their future lives. PE students will be scheduled for 5 (40minute) classes per week with a mixture of practical and theoretical lessons based between the sports hall, outdoors facilities, gym, and classroom.

What will students study?

Physically active participation plays a central role in the course. Students will learn about theoretical perspectives through taking part in three different activities; with activities selected from three out of six categories with one activity from each category:

- **Athletics:** Running: sprints, middle distance, long distance, hurdles; Throwing: shot-put, discus, javelin, hammer; Jumping: High, long, triple
- **Artistic and aesthetic activities:** Gymnastics: artistic, rhythmic; Dance: contemporary, folk, modern, ballet, jazz, tap, ethnic; traditional personal exercise and fitness
- **Aerobics:** continuous, interval, fartlek, aerobics/step aerobics, spinning, indoor rowing; Other: weights, core stability, circuits
- **Aquatics:** Lifesaving, survival swimming, swimming strokes, water-polo, synchronised swimming
- **Games:** Gaelic football, hurling/camogie, soccer, rugby, basketball, hockey, netball, Olympic handball, badminton, tennis, volleyball, table-tennis, handball, squash, cricket, softball, rounders
- **Adventure activities:** Orienteering, canoeing/ kayaking, rock-climbing, sailing, rowing/sculling

These three physical activities become the focus of teaching and learning in Leaving Certificate Physical Education. As students learn about the many factors that impact participation and

performance, they are required to apply their learning in a systematic way to improve their own performance in the three selected physical activities.

This planning process is at the centre of assessment tasks in Leaving Certificate Physical Education. Learners then choose one of the three selected physical activities being studied by their class for their performance assessment.

Senior Cycle Physical Education:

The aim of Senior Cycle Physical Education is to develop students' ability to become informed, skilled, self-directed, and reflective performers in physical education and physical activity, both for their senior cycle and in their future lives. The SCPE Framework provides concrete guidance to physical educators and students in Ireland on how to structure and teach their Senior Cycle programme. This is something that has been previously missing from the Irish education system and is welcomed by the PEAI.

What Will Students Study?

The SCPE Framework is structured around six curriculum models. Each model provides a detailed map, including rationale, planning, implementation, and assessment guidance, all of which can be used in the design of a physical education programme in senior cycle.

The learner is the central consideration when planning using the models with due regard to the resources available in the school. While each model provides a unique set of learning experiences, it is up to the physical education teacher to decide which models will be included in their physical education curriculum in senior cycle. As teachers build their familiarity with the models, it is envisaged that a greater range of models will be included. The framework builds on students' prior learning in primary PE, and junior cycle PE short course and Junior Cycle Physical Education Framework (JCPE).

The six curriculum models are as follows:

- Health-related physical activity: developing learners' understanding of health-related physical activity for now and in the future.
- Sport education: providing learners with an enjoyable and authentic experience of organised physical activity as they learn to perform playing and non-playing roles.
- Contemporary issues in physical activity: encouraging learners to critically reflect on their own and others' experiences in physical activity and sport.
- Adventure education: encouraging learners to challenge themselves and co-operate with others as they learn to solve physical activity challenges.
- Personal and social responsibility: encouraging learners to take responsibility for themselves and their learning in physical education class including respecting the rights and feelings of others.
- Teaching games for understanding developing learners' tactical awareness and decision-making skills in a variety of games

The framework is designed to provide a flexible collaborative approach to planning for physical education in senior cycle. The importance of planning within the unique context of each school is recognised here. School settings, facilities, personnel, expertise, the characteristics of the class and learners' interests are all significant considerations in the selection and sequencing of appropriate learning outcomes and approaches to assessment.

Senior cycle physical education is planned in blocks of work. The physical education teacher decides which model or combinations of models will be the focus in each block of work. They then, in consultation with students, select the learning outcomes that will be addressed. While it is not envisaged that all learning outcomes will be included, the selected learning outcomes should prioritise learning in the essential elements outlined in each of the models.

Extra-Curricular Programme:

As stated earlier, physical activity and sport have always had an important place in the life of the College. The present extra curriculum programme co-ordinator is one of the physical education teachers and continues to initiate and support new programmes every year. Students in first year are obliged to attend a sports hour on Wednesday afternoons after school in the first term, with the aim of encouraging and developing relationships within the first-year group as well as promoting the benefits of physical activity.

Each academic year a comprehensive extra-curricular programme is published and issued to every student and parent in the college. This programme details the wide range of activities available to students in C.C.C. and encourages every student to choose a physical activity or sport with the hope of developing their physical and mental wellbeing. This programme links in with the Sports Prefect programme which was established to provide the opportunity for senior students to develop leadership skills. It also enables the college to offer a broad range of physical activities to the students.

With the opening of the college's new Sports Hall and Fitness Suite it is envisaged that the college continues to broaden and enhance the student's physical education, physical activity, and sporting experience into the future.



Strand 5 – Inclusion & Diversity

Context and Ethos

Castleknock Community College is a state, co-educational, multi-denominational school under the patronage of the Education and Training Board. The ethos of the college is underpinned by the core values of respect, care, community, excellence in education and equality, as articulated in the Patron's Framework on Ethos of Education and Training Boards Ireland. This ethos informs and guides all policies, practices, and relationships within the college.

Inclusion, diversity, and equality are understood as whole-school responsibilities. All members of the school community, students, staff, parents and partners, contribute to creating a respectful, inclusive, and supportive learning environment in which every student is enabled to participate fully and achieve their potential.

While all staff share responsibility for ethos enactment, the Ethos Leadership Team has a particular duty to ensure that the Patron's Framework on Ethos is implemented in a coherent, intentional, and sustained manner across the life of the college.

Whole-School Practice in Inclusion and Diversity

Castleknock Community College is committed to providing a learning environment that recognises, values, and celebrates diversity in all its forms, including diversity of culture, ethnicity, religion and belief, social class, language, family background, gender, sexual orientation, ability and learning profile.

The college promotes inclusion and equality through:

- a positive and respectful school culture and environment
- inclusive teaching and learning practices
- student voice and leadership
- pastoral and guidance support
- policy development informed by legislation and best practice

All members of the school community are treated with dignity and fairness, and the college actively challenges discrimination, exclusion, and prejudice in all forms.

Professional learning is recognised as central to effective inclusive practice. To date, the Ethos Lead in the college has completed the eLearning module *Supporting ETB Staff to Affirm Social Class, Racial and Ethnic Diversity*, developed by Dublin City University on behalf of ETBI. This learning supports reflective practice and strengthens staff capacity to respond effectively to the diverse needs of students.

Student Voice and Participation

Student voice is a key component of inclusion and diversity at Castleknock Community College. Students are encouraged and supported to contribute meaningfully to school life through leadership structures, consultation processes, and inclusive events.

In 2025, the Student Council hosted the college's first Multi-Culture Day, celebrating the cultural diversity of the school community. This initiative provided opportunities for learning, dialogue and celebration and will be established as an annual event, reinforcing the College's commitment to inclusion and belonging.

School Self-Evaluation (SSE) Alignment

The College recognises that inclusion and diversity are central to effective teaching and learning and to student wellbeing. Strand 5 is evaluated through the School Self-Evaluation (SSE) process, with particular reference to the following SSE domains:

- Leadership and Management:
Promoting a shared understanding of ethos, inclusion and equality and supporting consistent enactment across the school.
- Teaching and Learning:
Ensuring inclusive, responsive, and equitable learning experiences for all students.
- Student Support and Wellbeing:
Creating a safe, respectful environment where students feel valued, supported, and heard.
- Student Voice and Participation:
Enabling students to contribute actively to school culture and decision-making.

Areas for Further Improvement Strand 5 – Inclusion & Diversity

In order to further strengthen practice in this area, the following actions have been identified through reflection and ongoing School Self-Evaluation:

The Ethos Leadership Team has commenced, and will continue to use, the ETBI *Looking at Our Ethos* tool to evaluate the extent to which the Patron's Framework on Ethos is being enacted across the domains of school life.

All members of the Ethos Leadership Team will complete the eLearning module *Supporting ETB Staff to Affirm Social Class, Racial and Ethnic Diversity* by April 2026, ensuring a shared knowledge base and consistent approach to inclusive practice.

From January to April 2026, the Ethos Leadership Team will undertake a structured review of college practice under the following headings:

- Culture and Environment
- Curriculum

- Policy and Planning
- Relationships and Partnerships

This review will involve consultation with senior leadership, staff, students, and parents, and will inform the development of a whole-school Ethos Action Plan.

The Ethos Action Plan will be implemented from 2026 to 2030, supporting continuous improvement in inclusion, diversity, and equality across all areas of school life. Progress will be monitored and reviewed as part of the SSE cycle.

This process will ensure that the college continues to enhance equal opportunities for all students and to provide a high-quality educational experience within a respectful, positive, supportive, and responsive learning environment.

As part of its commitment to interculturalism and inclusion, the college will commence the renewal process for the Yellow Flag with the Irish Traveller Movement in Autumn 2026.



Strand 6 – Student Leadership

Introduction

We endeavour to include our students in the day-to-day life of our College. Students have a valuable contribution to make to the effectiveness of their school and their involvement in the operation of the school is itself a valuable part of the education process for the students. Practical pupil participation is at the core of our Student Leadership programmes. These programmes aim to promote leadership and responsibility among the student body and afford students opportunities to develop communication, planning and organisational skills which will benefit them in their future lives.

At present we have three formal projects for students to develop and refine their leadership potential. These are:

1. Student Council
2. Mentor Programme
3. Prefect System



Student Council

The Student Council is the representative structure through which students can become involved in the affairs of the College by working in partnership with College management, staff, and parents for the benefit of the College and its students (Education Act 1998). In Castleknock Community College, the Student Council is organised by the Prefects and the Liaison Teacher who is the link person between the students, staff, and management. The Council is made up of the Class Representatives ensuring that the voice and opinions of each year group is represented.

Context

- Recognition of the importance of student involvement
- Recognition of the value of student input in our on-going school development

Structure of the Student Council

- A Class Captain and Vice-Captain represent each class group

The **students** in each class vote representatives into the position

- Class Captains and Vice-Captains meet with the Student Council once every month with more meetings scheduled if required
- Student feedback is brought by the Student Council to Management after each meeting.

Functions of the Student Council

- A forum for students to have their suggestions and opinions heard
- To ensure that all students are represented equally
- To present students' suggestions to the College Management
- To ascertain students' opinions on a range of issues
- To regularly review aspects of school organisation and learning at the Student Council Seminars
- Yearly Report to the Board of Management

The Mentor Programme – Taking Time to Care

This is a structured “Programme of Welcome and Support” for the incoming first year classes offered each year. This is an initiative aimed at making the transition from primary to secondary education more enjoyable and less daunting for our in-coming first year students.

The Mentor programme affords senior students the opportunity to act as a buddy for the new first year students. Students are available to their small group of mentees each morning and help the students with any challenges they may be facing. These can range from reading their timetable, finding their way around the building, using their lockers to supporting them with the transition and to make friends. The mentors also assist with the organisation of a series of activities, trips, and events for the year groups.

Senior students volunteer for this role, complete an application form and personal statement to assess their suitability for the project. They attend a training workshop where they engage in activities that helps to hone their skills and build a team spirit. At this workshop, the role is comprehensively outlined and throughout the programme, the team of Mentors work closely with the Deputy Principal, year head, tutors etc.

The benefits to the Mentors include practical opportunities to experience:

- Leadership skills
- Personal and social skills
- Listening Skills
- Social awareness
- Sense of responsibility
- Teamwork & Communication skills.

This is an opportunity to become involved in a project that has the potential to help others in a real and practical way.

The Prefect System

Each year a select group of our Leaving Certificate 2 students are chosen as the leaders of our student body. At this age they are recognised as young people with leadership qualities and initiative who are dependable and reliable.

They apply and if successful, attend a training workshop on “Leadership Skills and Effective Communication.” This is facilitated by professional trainers from outside the school community. The benefits of such training on this group operating as a team are clearly evident.

Prefects are a layer between staff and students. Their duties include:

- Running the Student Council
- Working alongside staff giving practical help with the running of the College including helping to supervise locker areas, the canteen, and the corridors
- Representing the College at public events
- Being role models for younger students in our College
- Attending school events

Some prefects have responsibility for promoting and organising sporting activities for other students in the College. Sports Prefects have displayed a passion for developing their sporting ability over the years. They like working with people are committed and have good organisational abilities. The Sports Prefects are responsible for organising inter-class leagues, matches and the First Year Sports Hour.

The Prefect Mission Statement says:

We, the prefects, are committed to assisting the staff and management of our College in a loyal and mature manner. At all times we endeavour to be role models for the student body in Castleknock Community College.



Strand 7 - Chaplaincy

Chaplain's Policy at Castleknock Community College

The role of the Chaplain is to support students' spiritual, emotional, and pastoral wellbeing, offering care, guidance, and a listening presence, while also supporting staff and helping to build a positive and inclusive College community.

Aims	Objectives
1. To provide for the diversity of worship needs among the students.	Ensure that the students experience a variety of inter faith worship experiences according to the curriculum.
2. To further develop the faith life of students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities to meditate and worship in the Meditation Room. • Organise retreats. • Facilitate outside ministers in faith worship. • Follow procedures laid down for chaplains as agreed by the Dept. of Education and Diocesan Authority (1976) • Welcome and facilitate ministers from all faiths in their ministry with students.
3. To acknowledge the spiritual needs of students in time of bereavement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide bereavement support tailored to students' individual needs, offering compassionate care and guidance during times of loss.
4. Further develop chaplaincy team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constantly renew the Student Chaplaincy Team and provide creative ways for them to be a resource for the larger student body. • Set up support structures to assist faith development work.
5. Collaborate in the provision of pastoral care for students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome new students and support them in integrating into the College. • Support students in crisis/loss/illness/bereavement.
6. Social Justice & Community Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop links with local faith communities and organisation involved in making a difference in the lives of people in need, so as to offer students opportunities for active participation during their time in the College.

The Chaplain works in close consultation with the Principal, Deputy Principals, Year Heads and Tutors with regard to the spiritual and pastoral needs of the students.



Chaplaincy Provision

First Year

- Information on Chaplaincy service at informal evening in June.
- Blessing and welcome at Assembly in August. Brief input on care and support provided by Chaplaincy.
- Friendship Days for 1st Year students – settling in activity for students in their base classes.
- Working with the RE Dept., Music Dept., and Art Dept. on the Interfaith Celebration. Linking in with parents of students from different faiths and including them in the celebration.
- 1st Years take part in prayer activities to remember deceased relatives and friends during the month of November.
- Opportunity to be part of the Christmas carol service through music, readings, and drama.
- Mass for the season of Lent for class groups.
- Invitation to be part of the Lenten multi-faith event organised by the Student Chaplaincy Team in the Meditation Room on Monday lunchtime.
- Availability to work with students on a one-to-one basis in the area of support around bereavement or family illness.

Second Year

- Welcome to the College with blessing and input on care and support provided by the Chaplaincy at the opening assembly of the school year.
- Invitation and opportunity to be part of the Student Chaplaincy Team.
- Opportunities for students to lead assemblies through their work in the Student Chaplaincy Team.

- Inclusion in creating and shaping a service at the Rainbow Garden in October where, as a College community, we remember those who have died.
- Opportunity for all classes to remember deceased relatives and friends in the Meditation Room during the month of November.
- Students invited to lead prayers and rituals at the Christmas Carol Service.
- Times of meditation organised for class groups in the Meditation Room.
- Invitation to be part of the Lenten multi-faith event organised by the Student Chaplaincy Team in the Meditation Room on Wednesday mornings at 8.30a.m during lent.
- Availability to work with students on a one-to-one basis in the area of support around bereavement or family illness.

Third Year

- Welcome to the College with a blessing and input on care and support provided by the Chaplaincy at the opening assembly of the school year.
- Opportunity to be part of the Student Chaplaincy Team
- Opportunities for students to lead assemblies through their work in the Student Chaplaincy Team
- Inclusion in creating and shaping a service at the Rainbow Garden in October where, as a College community, we remember those who have died.
- Opportunity for all classes to remember deceased relatives and friends in the Meditation Room during the month of November.
- Times of meditation for all class groups in the Meditation Room.
- Students invited to the Meditation Room to pray as a class group during the season of Lent.
- Invitation to be part of the Lenten event organised by the Student Chaplaincy Team in the Meditation Room on Wednesday mornings at 8.30a.m during lent.
- Availability to work with students on a one-to-one basis in the area of support around bereavement or family illness.

Transition Year

- Welcome to the College a blessing and input on care and support provided by the Chaplaincy at the opening assembly of the school year.
- Opportunity to be part of the Student Chaplaincy Team.
- Invitation to take part in class work with the students from St. Vincent's Special School, Navan Road. This is a social outreach programme where students use a class project to support students from St. Vincent's school in building social skills.
- Day of reflection and meditation organised for the Year group in a Retreat Centre.
- Opportunities for students to lead assemblies through their work in the Student Chaplaincy Team.
- Inclusion in creating and shaping a multi-faith service at the Rainbow Garden in October where, as a College community, we remember those who have died.
- Opportunity to remember for deceased relatives and friends in the Meditation Room in November.
- Students invited to lead prayers and rituals, take part in a Nativity Drama and be part of the College choir at the Christmas Carol Service.
- Times of meditation for class groups in the Meditation Room.
- Invitation to be part of the Lenten multi-faith event organised by the Student Chaplaincy Team in the Meditation Room on Wednesday mornings at 8.30a.m during lent..

- Availability to work with students on a one-to-one basis in the area of support around bereavement or family illness.

Leaving Certificate 1 & LCA1

- Welcome to the College with a blessing and input on care and support provided by the Chaplaincy at the opening assembly of the school year.
- Opportunity to be part of the Student Chaplaincy Team.
- Opportunities for students to lead assemblies through their work in the Student Chaplaincy Team.
- Inclusion in creating and shaping a service at the Rainbow Garden in October where, as a College community, we remember those who have died.
- Students invited to lead prayers and rituals, take part in a Nativity Drama and be part of the College choir at the Christmas Carol Service.
- Times of meditation as class groups in the Meditation Room.
- Invitation to be part of the Lenten multi-faith event organised by the Student Chaplaincy Team in the Meditation Room on Wednesday mornings at 8.30a.m during lent..
- Availability to work with students on a one-to-one basis in the area of support around bereavement or family illness.

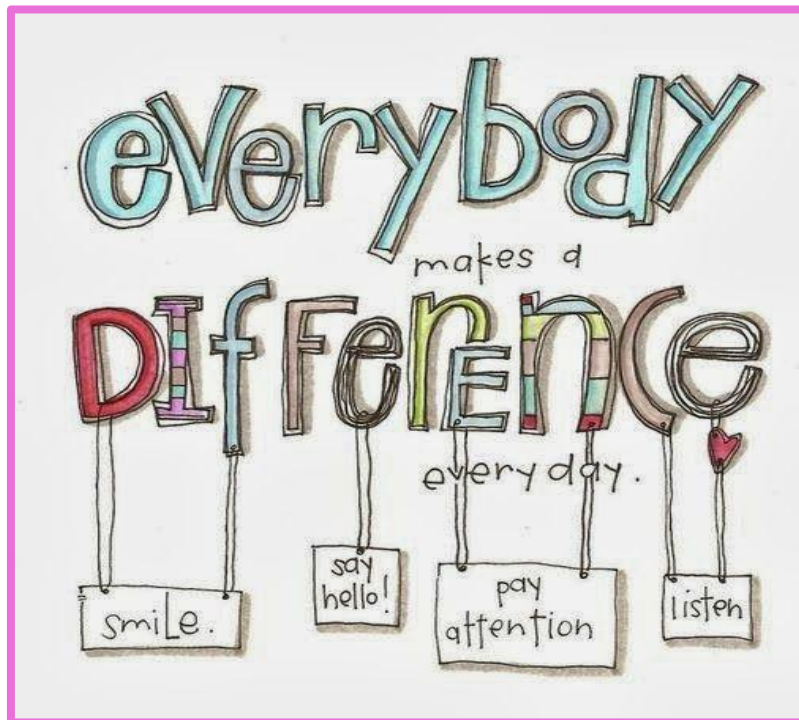
Leaving Certificate 2 & LCA2

- Welcome to the College with a blessing and input on care and support provided by the Chaplaincy at the opening assembly of the school year.
- Opportunity to be part of the Student Chaplaincy Team.
- Opportunities for students to lead assemblies through their work in the Student Chaplaincy Team.
- Inclusion in creating and shaping a service at the Rainbow Garden in October where, as a College community, we remember those who have died.
- Work with the Graduation Committee in preparation for the Graduation Service in May.
- Opportunity to be part of the Christmas carol service through music, readings, and drama.
- Times of meditation organised for class groups in the Meditation Room.
- Invitation to be part of the Lenten multi-faith event organised by the Student Chaplaincy Team in the Meditation Room on Wednesday mornings at 8.30a.m during lent..
- Mass for LC2 students – organised and prepared by the students.
- Availability to work with students on a one-to-one basis in the area of support around bereavement or family illness.



General College Activities

- Contribution to all Information Evenings for parents on the role of the Chaplain in the College..
- Attendance at all Parent Teacher Meetings – availability to parents at these events.
- Attendance at all Care Meeting & Senior Leadership Meetings.
- Weekly meeting with a member of the Learning Support Department and a member of the Guidance & Counselling Department to ensure we sustain a collaborative approach in our work.
- Provide supervision and space for students to pray at lunchtime.



Evaluation

Evaluating our Whole School Guidance Plan

The Whole School Guidance Plan requires regular evaluation in order to meet the needs of our students. The Plan will receive an annual review by the Board of Management and the strands will undergo constant appraisals:

Strands 1 & 3	The Guidance & Counselling Department & The Well Being & SPHE Programmes September 2027
Strands 2 & 5	The Learning Support Department & Inclusion & Diversity <i>September 2025– May 2026</i>
Strands 4, 6 & 7	Physical Health & Student Leadership & Chaplaincy May 2027

Strand	Coordinator/Team
Strand 1 - Guidance & Counselling Department	Guidance & Counselling Department
Strand 2 - The Learning Support Department	The Learning Support Team
Strand 3 - The Well Being & SPHE Programme	SMT and The SPHE Team
Strand 4 - Physical Health	Physical Education Department
Strand 5 - Inclusion & Diversity	SMT and Coordinating Staff
Strand 6 - Student Leadership	Student Leadership Coordinator
Strand 7 – Chaplaincy	The College Chaplain & Chaplaincy Team

This Whole School Guidance Plan is supported by the following Guidelines & Documents

- Data Retention Policy
- Child Protection Guidelines and Safeguarding Statement
- Counter Bullying Policy
- Critical Incident Policy
- Guidelines for Extra Curricular Activities and External Speakers
- Work Experience Guidelines

Checklist for Annual Review of the Whole School Guidance Plan Castleknock Community College

	Yes/No
Has the Board formally adopted The College Whole School Guidance Plan in accordance with all recent legislation?	Yes
Has the College's Whole School Guidance Plan identified other school policies, practices and activities that are regarded as having particular relevance to the College Whole School Guidance Plan?	Yes
Has the College arrangements in place to communicate the College's Whole School Guidance Plan to new school personnel?	Yes
Is the Board satisfied that all school staff are sufficiently familiar with the Whole School Guidance Plan and procedures to enable them to apply the policy and procedures effectively and consistently in their day-to-day work?	Yes
Since the Board's last annual review, was the Board informed of any amendments to the College's Whole School Guidance Plan?	Yes
Has the Board published the Whole School Guidance Plan on the school website and provided a copy to the Parents Association?	Yes
Has the Board ensured that the College's Whole School Guidance Plan is available to parents on request?	Yes
Has the Board ensured that the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum at Junior and Senior Cycle is implemented in full in the College?	Yes
Is the Board satisfied that the Pastoral Care liaison meetings are held on a regular basis between the Guidance & Counselling Department, Learning Support Department & Chaplaincy?	Yes
Is the Board satisfied that the College's Whole School Guidance Plan is being fully and adequately implemented by the College?	Yes
Is the Board satisfied that the adequate supports are in place to integrate new students into the College?	Yes
Has the Board identified any aspects of the College's Whole School Guidance Plan and / or its implementation that require further improvement?	Yes
Has the Board put in place an action plan containing appropriate timelines to address those aspects of the College's Whole School Guidance Plan and / or its implementation that have been identified as requiring further improvement?	Yes
Has the Board ensured that any areas for improvement that were identified in any previous review of the College's Whole School Guidance Plan have been adequately addressed?	Yes

	Yes/No
Is the Board satisfied that achievements and significant events in the life of the College are celebrated appropriately with and for the students?	Yes
Is the Board satisfied that the additional resources allocated to the College for special needs are appropriately allocated?	Yes
Is the Board satisfied that there is real commitment to promote inclusion & diversity in the College?	Yes
Is the Board satisfied that the appropriate provision is given to Physical Education at the College?	Yes

Aspects of the College’s Whole School Guidance Plan and / or its implementation that require further improvement:

Strand 2: Learning Support Department
Interim Review - May 2026

Over the past academic year, the Learning Support Department has undertaken a comprehensive review of its resources and organisational structures. In line with the most recent Department of Education and Youth policy framework, including Circular 0064/2024 on the deployment of Special Education Teacher (SET) resources, Circular 0084/2024 relating to assessment instruments for SEN and AEN in post-primary schools, and Circular 0069/2025 clarifying roles within the Assessment of Need process under the Disability Act 2005, the College is committed to ensuring that a clearly defined and appropriately resourced support framework is in place. This framework aims to enable students with additional needs to access the full curriculum and achieve their potential. An interim review of the changes implemented will be conducted in May 2026.

Strand 4: Physical Health
Active School Flag - Post-Primary

The College’s commitment to “Sport for All” is currently under review by the extracurricular team. As part of this commitment, the College has decided to apply for the Active School Flag (Post-Primary). The Active School Flag process promotes physical activity through a whole-school approach, underpinned by student voice and student leadership. Its aim is to maximise opportunities for students and staff to be physically active throughout the school day. The application process will commence in January 2026, beginning with an assessment of the suitability of the programme and the school’s readiness to engage fully with the process.

Strand 5: Inclusion and Diversity School Self-Evaluation Process

In order to further strengthen practice in this area, the following actions have been identified through reflection and ongoing School Self-Evaluation:

The Ethos Leadership Team has commenced, and will continue to use, the ETBI *Looking at Our Ethos* tool to evaluate the extent to which the Patron's Framework on Ethos is being enacted across the domains of school life.

All members of the Ethos Leadership Team will complete the eLearning module *Supporting ETB Staff to Affirm Social Class, Racial and Ethnic Diversity* by April 2026, ensuring a shared knowledge base and consistent approach to inclusive practice.

From January to April 2026, the Ethos Leadership Team will undertake a structured review of college practice under the following headings:

- Culture and Environment
- Curriculum
- Policy and Planning
- Relationships and Partnerships

This review will involve consultation with senior leadership, staff, students, and parents, and will inform the development of a whole-school Ethos Action Plan.

The Ethos Action Plan will be implemented from 2026 to 2030, supporting continuous improvement in inclusion, diversity, and equality across all areas of school life. Progress will be monitored and reviewed as part of the SSE cycle.

This process will ensure that the college continues to enhance equal opportunities for all students and to provide a high-quality educational experience within a respectful, positive, supportive, and responsive learning environment.

As part of its commitment to interculturalism and inclusion, the college will commence the renewal process for the Yellow Flag with the Irish Traveller Movement in Autumn 2026.

Additional Comments:

The Whole School Guidance Plan will also document the changes arising from the Department of Education's *Bí Cineálta* Anti-Bullying Procedures and will be updated to reflect revised Child Protection protocols.

Cllr John Walsh - Chairperson, Board of Management

February 2026

John Cronin – Principal

February 2026