



***ST OLIVER POST PRIMARY  
SCHOOL***

***GUIDANCE PLAN***

***2023-2025***

***March 2023***

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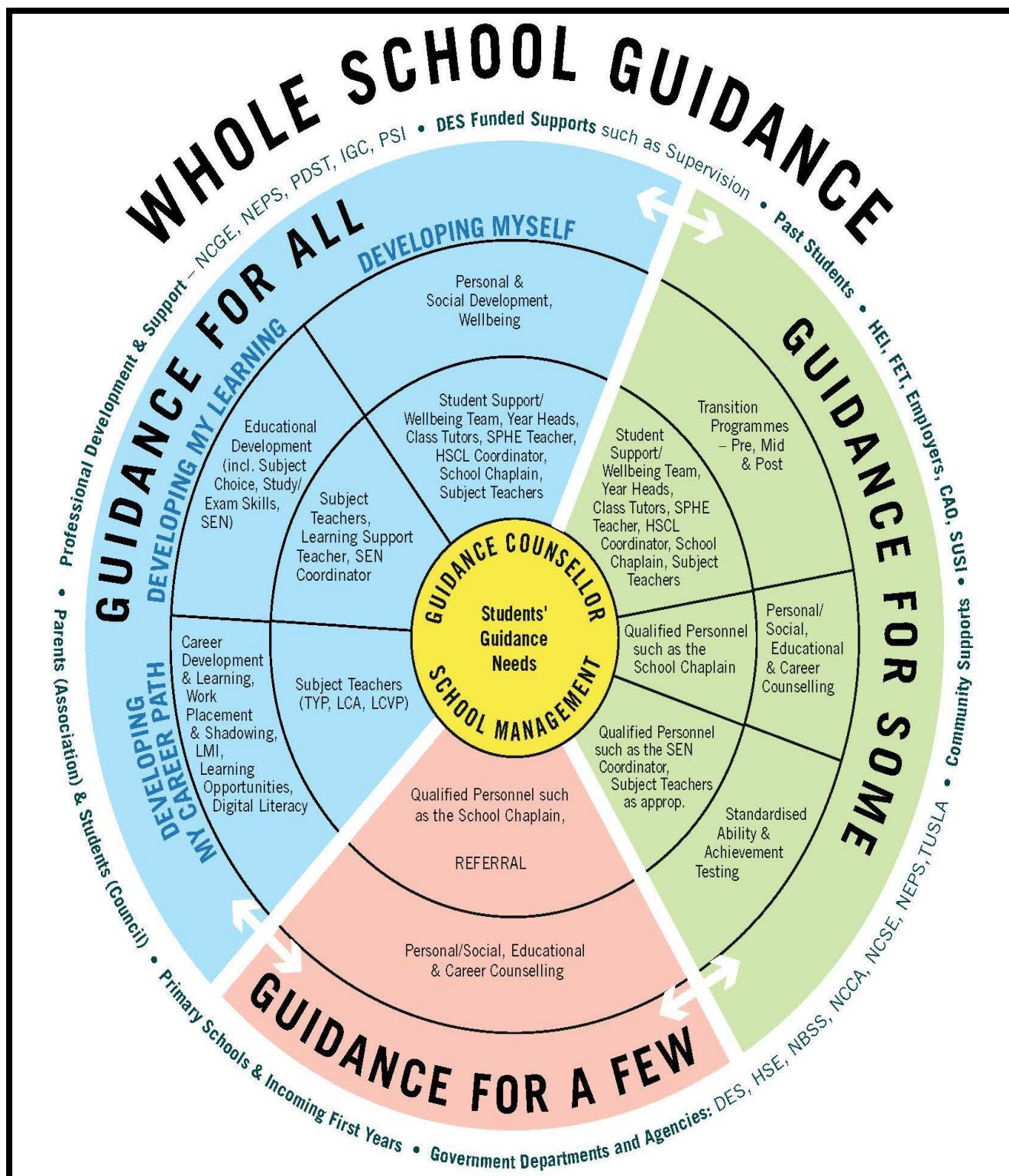
## Section 1: General

### Introduction, school background and rational

#### **Introduction**

This document outlines the guidance plan for St. Oliver Post Primary school. It describes the school guidance programme and specifies how the guidance needs of the students are to be addressed and delivered effectively. The plan aims to reflect on the individuality of St. Oliver Post Primary school, in its own context and circumstances. This plan has been developed as outlined in *A Whole School Guidance Framework* (National Centre for Guidance in Education, 2017) and in *Guidelines for second-level schools on the implications of Section 9 (c) of the Education Act (1998)* relating to students' access to appropriate guidance. This guidance plan refers to the subject 'Guidance' as it is delivered to students at this school and takes into consideration the needs of our students and the resources available to implement this plan. Section 9 (c) of the Education Act states that a school "shall use its available resources to... ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational needs and career choices" and (d) "promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students... in consultation with their parents having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school". This plan forms part of the whole school plan.

Indeed, guidance is regarded as a whole school activity and one in which all members of the school community facilitate and contribute. The delivery of a comprehensive Guidance Programme is the responsibility of the Guidance Counsellor but a whole school approach is essential to realise this objective. A holistic approach to Guidance provision is essential to ensure all students have access to appropriate Guidance. Guidance planning is to be considered a process, to evolve over time, reflecting on the needs of all students, available resources and contextual factors. An integrative, collaborative approach is considered essential to ensure the provision of adequate guidance for all school members.



Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines (NCCA,2017) The Wellbeing Guidelines state that ‘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’ (NCCA, 2017; PG.17) The Guidelines highlight wellbeing as a whole school endeavour. Six indicators of wellbeing are presented in the guidelines- ‘active’, ‘responsible’, ‘connected’, ‘resilient’, ‘respected’, and ‘aware’.



## **School background**

St. Oliver Post Primary school is a co-educational school established under LMETB. The school is in Oldcastle Co. Meath along the border of Co. Cavan and Co. Westmeath. It is a rural community, and this is reflected in the school population. The school community has increased rapidly in recent years and now has a population of approx. 600 students as of September 2022. The schools mission statement aims to instil a spirit of hard work and academic endeavour and to foster the desire for personal growth and happiness. The school also aims to nurture and encourage every child's talent in a caring manner. In St. Oliver Post Primary school our guidance department and entire school staff operates on the philosophy that students perform best in an environment where they feel valued. All students are treated as individuals with unique strengths. The guidance plan reflects this respect for the individual in its student- centred, holistic approach. The promotion and enhancement of self-esteem and life skills and the development of potential – academic, personal, social and emotional – leading to a greater personal autonomy for all students are its central goals.

## **Rational**

A Guidance Plan is essential to ensure the fulfilment of the school's obligations under the Education Act 1998 Section 9 (c) which requires schools to "ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choice." The guidance programme aims to help focus limited resources on areas identified by the stakeholders as being most important, the plan encourages input and ownership from all partners within the community in a collaborative and positive manner.

## **Definitions of Guidance and Counselling**

Guidance, as defined by the NCGE (2017), refers to a wide range of learning experiences provided in a developmental sequence that assist students to develop self-management skills which will lead them to make effective and informed choices about their lives and in making transitions to these choices. These learning experiences may be broken down into three distinct but interlinked areas:

- Personal and social guidance and counselling
- Educational guidance
- Career guidance



## **Personal & Social Guidance and Counselling**

Personal and social guidance and counselling in schools aims to help students to make decisions, solve problems, resolve difficulties and develop coping strategies that will empower them to live more fulfilled lives. Students can be referred for counselling at their own request, the request of parents, and other teachers or if a friend or peer draws it to the attention of any staff member that a student is in crisis. Counselling can only take place if the student is willing to participate and after an initial referral it is always the student's choice whether they wish to continue. At all times it is the policy of the guidance service to respect and value a student who is receiving counselling and to provide the student with a safe, accepting atmosphere where they feel listened to and understood. Confidentiality is guaranteed except in situations where there is a risk to the student, to others, where the law has been broken or where there is ongoing abuse or neglect. The school is committed to following the Department of Health's Child First Guidelines.

The Guidance Counsellors are the people primarily responsible for providing one to one counselling although all members of the school community have a role to play. Students are encouraged to talk to any member of staff with whom they feel comfortable, if they are having trouble, rather than not look for help. Individual counselling is seen as an integral part of the pastoral care system in the school and as part of the school's responsibility to care for the student in a holistic way, considering their individual needs and developmental stage. It should be viewed in a positive light as an attempt on the part of the student and counsellor too. The theoretical orientation of the counselling is eclectic encompassing Rogerian, person-centered counselling, Adlerian counselling and Solution-Focused counselling. The student is viewed holistically as a unique individual within their school and family environment. Counselling aims to develop a rapport with the student and build up a trusting relationship in which they can explore coping strategies and interventions in order to facilitate positive change in their lives.

## **Educational Guidance**

Educational Guidance commences prior to student's entry into the school. There is contact made with the feeder schools to identify students who may require extra support from the resource department or the Guidance Counsellor. CAT4 tests are administered 6<sup>th</sup> class students in the year of entry. These are evaluated in conjunction with the learning support teacher in order to identify students who may require extra help or resources. CAT4 is



administered to 3<sup>rd</sup> year students also. These results can be seen on eportal. A series of evening lectures are provided by the Guidance Counsellors in conjunction with the principal/Co-Ordinator's for parents in the following areas -

Senior cycle for 3<sup>rd</sup> year & Transition Year parents

Options after Leaving Certificate for 6th year parents

### **Career Guidance**

Career Guidance is an ongoing process which commences when students enter the school and continues throughout their secondary school education. Students are provided with the knowledge, skills and resources to research the options open to them in areas such as subject choice, different types of careers, apprenticeships, employment opportunities and further study at college or university. Students will be guided towards making informed, realistic choices about their future plans after the Leaving Certificate. This takes place during classroom guidance classes and individual career interviews

### **Early School Leavers**

The Guidance Service, in conjunction with members of staff and the resource department will endeavor to identify students whom they feel are at risk of early school leaving. The multi-faceted individual needs of these students are recognized by the school and a personal, flexible and holistic approach needs to be taken to meet their educational and personal requirements. The Guidance Service would liaise with the resource department to develop appropriate early interventions. This would include, where possible, adjusting their curriculum and providing extra support in numeracy, literacy, personal, social and career development programs. The parents/guardians are an integral part of this process and the Guidance Service along with the resource department would keep them informed of their child's progress and relevant parental and counselling support services.

Guidance resources and activities that assist students in the decision-making process

Include:

- Personal counselling
- Career information (classroom, personal, vocational guidance interviews, Attendance at careers events, guest speakers, on-line course provider sites, etc.)

- Information technology

Counselling is a key and intrinsic part of the school guidance programme which is offered on an individual basis as part of a developmental learning process and at moments of personal difficulty for students. It is defined in *Planning the School Guidance Programme (NCGE, 2004, p.12)* as "Counselling- helping students to explore their thoughts and feelings, and the choices open to them; giving care and support to students learning to cope with the many aspects of growing up". Counselling may come in the form of personal counselling, educational counselling, career counselling or combinations of the above.

Counselling facilitates students in difficulty by suggesting and exploring a range of coping strategies and interventions in a caring and sensitive way appropriate to the individual's needs. Counselling can only take place in an atmosphere where the young person feels secure, accepted and understood, and where confidentiality is guaranteed. Counselling facilitates the individual students in a holistic way to realistically appraise their abilities, interests and aptitudes in order to make appropriate life choices and achieve personal happiness and fulfilment in life. The Guidance Counsellors can be involved in group, individual or peer counselling as is necessary. All counselling offered is rooted in a person-centred Rogerian approach, where the individual concerns of each student are foremost. Solution-focused brief therapy is also used in situations where appropriate to students' needs. An integrative approach is the most effective approach for the students' needs and is the orientation chosen by the guidance department.

## Aims and Objectives of the Guidance and Counselling in our school

### Aims

- To meet the social, personal, educational and vocational needs of each student within the school.
- To provide a framework for the delivery of the school's guidance programme
- To ensure a structured response to student's personal, social, educational and career guidance needs
- To provide inclusively for the junior, senior, minority, special education needs etc. of all students.

- To ensure students have access to appropriate guidance activities: classroom sessions, vocational guidance interviews, attendance at career exhibitions, open day's etc. meeting with management, support agencies etc. and personal counselling.
- To ensure students have access to information which is appropriate for their personal, educational and vocational development through ICT, careers library, guest speakers etc.
- To act as the administrators of all guidance and counselling services that operate within the school.
- To assist each student in realising, accepting and developing his or her own unique talents, skills, aptitudes and abilities.
- To assist each student in making realistic, appropriate and informed career choices.
- To provide an integrative model of counselling based on sound theoretical theory to any student who wishes to avail of such a service.
- To offer support to parents and all members of the school community in assisting students to make informed, guided, decisions
- To offer an integrative, collaborative approach to guidance including all relevant members of the school community.

### **Objectives**

- To develop awareness and acceptance of their talents and abilities
- To identify and explore future opportunities
- To enable students to grow in independence and take responsibility for themselves through co-operative learning
- To enable them to make informed choices about their lives and follow through on these choices
- To provide an inclusive environment where all members of the school community are given adequate guidance appropriate to their needs

### **Personnel involved in Guidance and Counselling in our school**

All members of the school community are welcome to become involved in planning of the Guidance programme. Key members involved in implementing, monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the Guidance Plan include:

- Principal / Deputy Principal
- Year Heads
- Class tutors
- Subject Teachers
- NEPS Psychologist
- Representatives of the Student Council
- Members of Parents Association
- SEN department
- Learning Support teachers
- Teachers of S.P.H.E.
- Pastoral Care Team
- Peer Mentors

### **Guidance Personnel**

As defined in "*Creative Guidance in Challenging times*" (NCGE newsletter autumn 2009, p.4) Guidance counsellors facilitate people to become aware of their values, personal characteristics, interests and talents and to bring these into alignment with their life goals.

The role of the guidance counsellor involves information management, efficient organisation of the service and the development of a classroom-based guidance programme. The guidance programme is appraised and evaluated on a regular basis. The role also involves vocational guidance, psychometric test administration, liaison with parents and referral agencies and consultation with all members of the school community. The Guidance Counsellor is keen to ensure a good working relationship with all involved in order to provide an efficient and professional service.

## Section 2: Guidance Curriculum

### Guidance Curriculum Content

#### **1<sup>st</sup> Year Guidance Programme**

- Open night for students and parents in September of year prior to entry
- Assessments for identifying levels of achievement and special needs in February of year prior to entry
- Formal communication with primary school teachers from established feeder schools to- gain an accurate profile of the incoming students, identify children requiring resource/learning support, gain personal information of family situation e.g., bereavements
- Induction programme for 1<sup>st</sup> years in August
- Information evening for parents in September
- Introductory talk to first year classes to explain role of the guidance service and talk about the transition from primary to secondary school  
Presentation on: [www.classroomguidance.ie](http://www.classroomguidance.ie) )
- Start file on each student
- Personal counselling by request or referral by teachers/year heads/parents
- Liaise with Year Heads and Tutors to identify students at risk or who are having difficulty settling in
- Individual counselling as required
- Individual queries on option subjects and change if needed
- Homework and Study
- Parent- teacher meetings, advice and support
- Initiate referral to outside agencies as appropriate
- Intervention groups- ‘Think good, feel good’. Referrals via SEN co-ordinator
- Meath Partnership Wellness workshops

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Year Guidance Programme**

- Individual counselling as required
- Advise 2<sup>nd</sup> Years on the role of the Guidance Service
- Subject choice or careers as required
- Parent-teacher meetings, advice and support
- Initiate referral to outside agencies as appropriate
- Homework/Study, Motivation, Emotional wellbeing, personal Effectiveness
- Intervention groups- 'Think good, feel good'. Referrals via SEN co-ordinator
- Meath Partnership Wellness workshop

## **3<sup>rd</sup> Year Guidance Programme**

- Individual personal, educational and career counselling as required
- Advise 3<sup>rd</sup> Years on the role of the Guidance Service
- Changing level in any subject
- Parent information evening to explain the importance of correct subject choice for Leaving Certificate and implications of not selecting certain subjects e.g. Science subject
- Subject choice information given to all 3<sup>rd</sup> year students. Get current 5<sup>th</sup> year students to talk to these students. Several websites to be used to help with this decision
- Career Interest Inventory completed by all students in computer room
- Homework/ Study, Motivation, goals
- Parent teacher meeting, advice and support
- Initiate referral to outside agencies as appropriate
- Module on [www.careersportal.ie](http://www.careersportal.ie) (4-6 week)

## **Transition Year**

### **Aims**

- To help students prepare for vocational maturity
- To help students become aware of their own unique strengths and talents and possible careers
- To build positive awareness among students of the importance of maintaining positive mental health
- To deepen students understanding of the relevance and usefulness of subjects and educational opportunities
- To enable students to make informed decisions about subject choice
- To assist parents/guardians understanding of senior cycle options
- To develop communication and group work skills
- To help the students gain practical skills necessary to help them in their pursuit of a job

### **Topics to be covered**

- Information sessions to each TY class on subject choice and minimum entry and course specific entry requirements. Get current 5<sup>th</sup> year students to talk to 3<sup>rd</sup> year students
- Cover Letters/Letters of Application
- Curriculum Vitae
- Interview Skills
- Mindfulness/meditation exercises
- Interest/skills inventories
- Career Project and presentation to the class



## **5<sup>th</sup> Year Guidance Programme**

### **Aims:**

- To assist students to develop their self-management skills including planning and organisational skills and to foster good study habits
- To enable students to develop their research and ICT skills and their ability to access information on further study and career options
- To develop students understanding of further and higher education
- To understand the job searching process
- To enable students to research and investigate careers
- To further develop students' awareness of skills, abilities and interests
- To enable students to be self-directed in their career exploration
- To enable students to explore alternative routes to courses and careers

### **Topics to be covered**

- Subject choice
- Cover Letter
- Curriculum Vitae
- Application forms
- Interviews
- Mindfulness/ Mediation
- Study
- Interest inventories
- Post Leaving Certificate Options- CAO, UCAS, PLC, Apprenticeships etc.
- Career categories
- Career Project

- Familiarise students with the relevant on-line course and information providers such as [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie), [www.ucas.co.uk](http://www.ucas.co.uk), [www.qualifax.ie](http://www.qualifax.ie), [www.careersportal.ie](http://www.careersportal.ie) [www.classroomguidance.ie](http://www.classroomguidance.ie)
- Parent teacher meeting- advice and support
- Evaluation of Programme –administer questionnaire to fifth years (Appendix 1)

### **Sixth Year Guidance Programme**

#### **Aims:**

- To further enhance students planning and time management skills
- To enable students to further develop their study skills and examination techniques and their ability to cope with exam stress
- To further enhance students understanding of the third level system
- To assist students in making effective transition from school to college/work
- To facilitate students in their continued exploration of career interests
- To further develop their awareness of personal skills and abilities
- To provide access to up-to-date information on open days, careers and courses
- To encourage students to thoroughly research courses
- To inform students of the application procedure for colleges
- To ensure that each student gets the assistance at an individual level that they need to make the best possible decision about the next step in life's journey

#### **Topics to be covered**

- Organisation of Higher Options Conference in RDS
- Appointments with students as necessary throughout the year
- Make contact with last year students
- Review interest inventories etc.
- Help students to recognise the necessity for on-going research

- Organise and update Careers Library, Careers Notice Board
- Parent Teacher meeting- support and advice
- Group meeting to those wishing to apply to UCAS system and an on-line demonstration with a small group, provide relevant information, focus on importance of personal statement, organise references for same
- Show and guide students how to fill out a trial (demo) on-line CAO form
- Personal counselling by referral or request
- Advice on changing a level in any subject
- Information evening for parents re options after the Leaving Certificate
- Invite guest speakers throughout the year from colleges, universities, local colleges, Solas
- Transmit up to date information on HEAR/DARE, grants, scholarships, costs associated with college, living away from home, accommodation etc. and the transition from second level to third level
- Initiate referral to outside agencies as appropriate
- Evaluation of Programme –administer questionnaire to sixth years (Appendix 1)

### **TY-6<sup>th</sup> year Guidance**

#### **Career Awareness Week**

A College and Careers event ran in our school the week of the 21st of November 2022. The main two events were the Careers Fair on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> and the trip for 5th/6<sup>th</sup> year students to Athlone IT on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup>.

On the Tuesday we had talks from Higher and Further education colleges, apprenticeships and local employers. On the Thursday the students got a tour and talk on engineering and apprenticeship options within Athlone IT.

That week both Guidance offices were opened during tutor time for Drop in Guidance queries. There were also displays of teacher graduation profiles and past pupils in the GPA.

## Cara Peer Mentoring Programme

Ms. Ferris (Wellbeing Co-Ordinator) in conjunction with the Career Guidance department run the above programme. This is where students support other students and work with the student support team. It is open to all students (1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> year) Any student interested in applying for the programme completes an application form, sits an interview and receives training if selected. All students meet with their own year head and Ms. Ferris at various times throughout the year.

## Career Guidance Yearly Plans

### **TY Career Guidance Programme**

<b>SUBJECT OR MODULE DESCRIPTOR</b>	
<b>1. Title of subject or modules</b>	
Career Guidance	
<b>2. Aims</b>	
Career Guidance has been taught for the following reasons:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- To understand the process of getting a job</li><li>- To identify areas of interests, skills and understand different types of personalities</li><li>- To identify many different career paths</li><li>- Choose the right senior cycle subjects</li></ul>	
<b>3. Objectives</b>	
Students will:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Identify the process involved in getting a job(CV, cover letter, interviews)</li><li>- Complete many different inventories online</li><li>- Participate in relaxation techniques</li><li>- Research and investigate different career areas and complete a career project</li><li>- Identify senior cycle subjects for senior cycle</li></ul>	
<b>4. Summary of topics</b>	

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students will understand the process involved in getting a job. They will complete a cover letter, CV and an application form. They will also practice interview techniques</li> <li>2. Students will complete a number of inventories online</li> <li>3. Students will partake in some mediation and relaxation exercises</li> <li>4. Students will identify different career areas and complete a career project in an area of their choice</li> <li>5. Students will choose senior cycle subjects</li> </ol> <p>All the above work is ongoing and some of it will be completed in class and the rest for homework</p>
<b>5. Schedule of Topics and Timeframe</b>
<p>CV</p> <p>Career Project</p> <p>Both of the above will be completed at the end of the 8/9-week block</p>
<b>6. Assessment</b>
<p>CV- 3 marks, deadline 2 marks, Total 5 marks</p> <p>Career Project- 3 marks, deadline 2 marks, Total 5 marks</p>
<b>7. Resources</b>
<p>hand-outs</p> <p>Worksheets</p> <p>PowerPoint presentation</p> <p>Computers</p>
<b>8. Links with other Subjects</b>
<p>SPHE- when choosing senior cycle subjects and mediation exercises</p> <p>IT- when completing career project &amp; undertaking research</p> <p>Work experience: liaise with TY coordinator re organising work experience</p>
<b>9. Teaching and learning strategies</b>
<p>Classroom discussion</p> <p>Research</p> <p>Role play</p> <p>Computer based learning</p>

## **5<sup>th</sup> Year Guidance Scheme**

### Aims

- To evaluate aptitudes in the context of making good career decisions
- To begin acquisition of career research skills
- To develop an understanding of the broad range of choices available after Leaving Cert
- To acquire skills involved in making applications to Third Level, CAO, UCAS, PLC's and job applications
- To guide and assist students in making informed decisions about their future path when they move on from our school

### **Term 1 (Sept- Christmas)**

- Liaise in with all fifth years to ensure they are content with subject choice
- Go through subject entry requirements to ensure they have correct subjects necessary
- Set up- careersportal.ie
- Career Interest Inventory
- Personality Inventory
- Career Awareness- National Framework of Qualifications
- The World of Work- CV and letter of application

### **Term 2 (Christmas –Easter)**

- Study
- Goal setting
- learning styles
- Career Investigation

### **Term 3 (Easter-Summer)**

- Students to present career investigation in class
- Introduction to UCAS, CAO, Colleges of Further Education, Private Colleges and other educational opportunities
- Any other areas that students would like to cover

## **6th Year Guidance Scheme**

### **Aims**

- To evaluate aptitudes in the context of making good career decisions
- To update and improve on career research skills acquired in 5th year
- To develop an understanding of the broad range of choices available after Leaving Cert
- To acquire skills involved in making applications to Third Level, CAO, UCAS, PLC's and job applications
- To guide and assist students in making informed decisions about their future path when they move on from our school

### **Term 1 (Sept-Christmas)**

- Appointments with previous sixth year students
- Organisation of Higher Options Conference, RDS Dublin in Sept
- UCAS and application system
- Set up of Careers Portal
- Complete Guidance Interview
- Help students to recognise the necessity for on-going research, a process
- Organise and update Careers Library, Careers Notice Board
- Individual Vocational Guidance Interviews with all sixth-year students
- Be available during parent teacher meetings esp. 6<sup>th</sup> year PTM
- One to one appts with those students wishing to apply to UCAS system and an on-line demonstration with a small group, provide relevant information, focus on importance of personal statement, organise references for same.
- CAO Application
- Show and guide students how to fill out a trial (demo) on-line CAO form
- Personal Counselling by referral or request
- Parents appointments as needed and requested
- Information Evening for Parents of Sixth Year students re options after the Leaving Certificate – CAO
- College Awareness Week:
- Invite guest speakers as appropriate - colleges, apprenticeships, world of work and speakers from various Colleges of Further Education

### **Term 2 (Christmas- Easter)**

- Study/goal setting
- Continued work with students on CAO
- Guide appropriate students through programmes for Access, Dare and Hear
- Invite other guest speakers as appropriate throughout the year DCU, NUIM, TCD etc.
- Further appointments where necessary i.e. those requiring further advice, those requiring assistance in preparing for interviews e.g. UCAS, PLC Interviews etc.



- PLC Applications - Information Briefings for relevant students, completion of application form
- Complete Portal with students
- NUI exemptions

### **Term 3 (Easter-Summer)**

- Repeat and review career investigations and job search skills
- Review Curriculum Vitae preparation
- Interview Skills for Employment /Apprenticeship options
- Stress Management techniques and Healthy Lifestyle behaviour
- Healthy Eating
- Promote Positive Mental Health and appropriate supports
- Transmit up to date information on SUSI Higher Education grants / Costs associated with College / Living away from home / accommodation hunting/ tenancies / budgeting/Scholarships
- Information for students and parents on the SUSI Grant and scholarships for colleges
- Commence gathering material for references for Leaving Certificate students
- Initiate referral to outside agencies as appropriate
- Evaluation of Programme - Administer questionnaire to current sixth years and discuss results with senior management
- Student Self Evaluation RE: Educational Progression and supports required

### **Vocational Preparation & Guidance**

#### **Course Overview: Guidance Module**

##### **Aims & Rationale**

The aim of the Vocational Preparation & Guidance (VPG) course in St. Oliver Post Primary is to prepare the students for the world of work so that they can become productive and competent members of the working world. The school aims to assist the students in reaching their full potential by recognising their personal skills and characteristics in order to identify an individual career path. The programme also aspires to make students aware of other business models and organisations in the community and voluntary sector.

This is achieved by developing the technical skills needed to identify job opportunities and the personal and professional skills expected of a student to be a productive member of the workplace. We also make them aware of the various business models that exist and the benefits of these different models. The aims are further realised by reflection on their work experience placement, sites visit, invited guests and speakers and through participation in college open days.

## Time Allocation

VPG is delivered throughout 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year of the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) Programme. The course is allocated 3 class periods in 5<sup>th</sup> year and 3 class periods in 6<sup>th</sup> year. The Guidance module is delivered by the School Guidance Counsellor, Ms. Ní Áinle or Ms. McArdle.

## Assessment

In VPG, students are assessed in two general areas – VPG class work and work experience. With regards to VPG class work, students receive credits through the successful completion of key assignments and achieving a minimum of 90% attendance. With regards to work experience, students are assessed on the successful completion of their work experience diary as well as a feedback report from the work experience contact at the end of each session.

## Task

Students complete an enterprise task in session 2. Students have two options in relation to the enterprise task. Students may, either in a group or individually, run an enterprise/event. The other option available to them is to complete an investigation into an enterprise. Students submit a task report that is assessed by external examiner. Students also complete an interview on their enterprise task for which they are graded. They also have the option to do a career investigation if they so wish.

## Resources

The resources available to the VPG teaching team include:

- Reach+ Work experience portfolio and CareersPortal
- Vocational Training & Guidance Module Descriptor (LCA/SLSS)
- Get Your Ideal Job – Job-seeking Skills Workbook for Students, S. McEvoy (Publisher: Gill & MacMillan)
- Work Experience Workbook (Publisher: Curriculum Development Centre)
- The World of Work, K. O'Brien (Publisher: Gill & MacMillan)
- Link Modules – LCVP (Publisher: CJ Fallon)
- LCVP Text and Activities, M. Hannon (Publisher: EEC Direct)

- Appropriate web resources including, but not limited to.

<http://lca.slss.ie> and [www.apprenticeships.ie](http://www.apprenticeships.ie)

### Modules\*

\*The module descriptor is a complete overview of each, and every key assignment and task required so it is used as the main scheme of work for LCA VPG. Below is a basic outline:

VPG comprises seven modules:

- Module 1 – Guidance
- Module 2 – Jobsearch
- Module 3 – Work Experience 1
- Module 4 – Work Experience 2, 3 & 4
- Module 5 – Enterprise
- Module 6 – Community work
- Module 7 – Work and Living

The Guidance module is delivered over the two years of the programme, one unit per session.

Enterprise 1 is covered in session 2.

### **5<sup>th</sup> year LCA: Modules**

Session 1:

- Work Experience 1
- Guidance
- Jobsearch module

Session 2:

- Work experience 2
- Guidance
- Enterprise 1
- Task

## **6<sup>th</sup> Year LCA Modules**

### Session 1:

- Work experience 3
- Community Work

### Session 2:

- Work experience 4
- Career Investigation completed in preparation for advancement to further education/employment
- Individual Career appointments as requested
- Meetings with parents regarding transitions as requested

Safepass course ran for any TY/5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year students who are interested.

## Future Planning- Guidance areas that need to be developed

- To have more structured contact time with junior students. For example, coping skills, study skills, organisational skills, motivation, study, subject choice. This is currently under review under the new Wellbeing programme
- Allocate more time to organise and upkeep careers library
- Mentoring programme for exam years

## Guidance Curriculum outside the guidance classroom and Cross Curricular Links

- Higher Options
- Visiting speakers
- University/IT's/Local college presentations
- Amber Flag Initiative- TY group
- The guidance counsellor, as the trained professional, has primary responsibility for career guidance. Other members of staff do play a significant part in delivering educational guidance, personal and social guidance. There is collaborative planning and work between other subjects within the school.

	Subjects	Staff Involved & Areas for involvement
First Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wellbeing (Friends for Youth)</li> <li>• RE</li> <li>• PE</li> <li>• CSPE</li> <li>• ICT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mainly with SPHE teachers and SPHE Co-ordinator- Any SPHE content within 1<sup>st</sup> year</li> <li>• ICT teacher re administration of CAT4</li> </ul>
Second year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CSPE</li> <li>• RE</li> <li>• PE</li> <li>• SPHE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mainly with SPHE teachers and SPHE Co-ordinator- Any SPHE content within 2<sup>nd</sup> year</li> </ul>
Third Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SPHE</li> <li>• RE</li> <li>• PE</li> <li>• CSPE</li> <li>• ICT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mainly SPHE teachers and SPHE Co-ordinator- Any SPHE content with 3<sup>rd</sup> year e.g. subject choice &amp; transition from junior to senior</li> <li>• ICT teacher re administration of interest inventories</li> </ul>
TY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PE</li> <li>• SPHE</li> <li>• ICT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mainly SPHE teachers and SPHE Co-ordinator. Any SPHE content.</li> <li>• Transition year co-ordinator re work experience</li> </ul>
Fifth Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SPHE</li> <li>• PE</li> <li>• Religion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subjects teachers and SPHE Co-ordinator</li> </ul>
Sixth Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SPHE</li> <li>• PE</li> <li>• Religion</li> <li>• SEN</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subjects teachers and SPHE Co-ordinator</li> <li>• SEN department re DARE applications</li> </ul>

Transition from Primary to Secondary, Junior to senior cycle and senior cycle into apprenticeships, FET, HE and employment

### Primary to Secondary

- Primary schools are contacted
- Open night in September for students/parents/guardians
- Enrolment day in February
- Induction programme in August

### Junior to senior

- Guidance Counsellor visits all 3<sup>rd</sup> year classes
- 5<sup>th</sup> year perfects speak to students re senior cycle and subjects

### Senior to apprenticeships, FET, HE and employment

- Guidance Counsellor speaks to 6<sup>th</sup> year students about this
- University/college visitors to school
- Tracking of all 6<sup>th</sup> year students

### Subject Choice Procedures

Subject choice must be taken by students on three occasions such as:

-First Year

-Transition Year

-Third Year

#### First Year

In September, the incoming students and their parents are advised on the subjects on offer and are provided with an information pack. Students/Parents/Guardians can meet individually with the Guidance Counsellors on request.

A Subject Choice Form (Appendix 2) and booklet is included in the Information Pack. This form is signed by parents/guardians are encouraged to contact the school personnel if they have any queries.

Subject teachers, the Guidance Counsellor and Year Heads are available to advise individual students on the content, terminal assessment and the study demands of their subject.

Options are then set, based on students' choices. The school facilities, as far as possible, the students' choices.

#### Third Year

In February, all 3<sup>rd</sup> year students complete a Career Interest Inventory in the computer lab. In February, the Guidance Counsellor introduces subject and programme choice in the context

of decisions about their future. Students are enabled to apply the decision-making process to choices they will make.

Third Years are provided with a booklet outlining the programmes offered at senior cycle. A Subject Choice Form is included in the Information Pack. (Appendix 3) This form is signed by parents/guardians and the student and returned to the school. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to contact the school personnel if they have any queries.

The TY Co-ordinator gives a detailed presentation on the TY programme in a classroom setting.

Students intending to progress directly into 5<sup>th</sup> year and students who are unsure of their choices are invited to meet individually with the Guidance Counsellor to discuss their options and receive feedback on the results of their interest test. They are also advised to speak with their Subject Teachers.

Transition Year Application forms are given to students for completion. The forms, signed by parents/guardians and the students, are returned to the school.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to contact school personnel if they have any query.

### Transition Year

The Guidance Counsellors gives information on subject choice and on the Established Leaving Certificate to all TY students in a classroom setting. Subject choice form. (Appendix 3)

All students are invited to meet individually with the Guidance Counsellors to discuss their subject and programme choices.

Parents/Guardians are invited to an Information Evening where the Guidance Counsellors and TY Co-ordinator give a detailed presentation on subject choice.

Subject Choice Forms are given to the students for completion. The forms signed by parents/guardians and the students are returned to the school by a date.

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to contact school personnel if they have any queries.

Options are then set, based on the students' choices and the school facilities the students in their choices as far as possible. Optional subjects are provided where there are enough to form a class and where the resources are sufficient to provide for this.

Requests for a change of programme or subject choice are granted by the principal where possible.



### Students giving up a subject/changing a subject/level

Sometimes a student may decide to change subjects or change a subject level during the school year. Such a change is a serious decision, not to be taken lightly. Before any change is made, the following procedures apply:

- The student must discuss any change of subject with the relevant subject teacher (s) who will advise them in this regard
- The student must meet the Guidance Counsellor to discuss the reasons why he/she wished to make a change to a subject and be made aware of such implications.
- Parent/Guardian may wish to meet/phone and discuss the implications of a change of a subject/discontinuing a subject with the Guidance Counsellor
- Student must bring in a note from parent/guardian giving permission to either change subject or level and if changing a subject student must fill in a form requesting a change. (Appendix 4)

## Section 3 Meeting with students

### Confidentiality

#### Confidentiality statement made to students:

**St. Oliver Post Primary school**

**Statement regarding confidentiality for students.**

What we talk about here will remain **confidential**, (do you know what confidential means - it means that I won't talk to anyone else about our conversation unless you agree to it), but there are sometimes when I have to tell or talk to someone else about what you tell me.

These times are:

- 1. If you tell me you are going to hurt or harm yourself,**
- 2. If you tell me you are going to hurt or harm someone else,**
- 3. If you tell me that you yourself or someone you know is being hurt or harmed or abused in any way.**

I will do this to make sure you are safe and not in any danger. Do you understand? Have you any questions?

### Referral to Guidance and Counselling procedure

Individual counselling is a necessity in helping students with decision making, problem solving, behavioural change and skills for coping with the ever-changing circumstances in the field of their personal, educational and career development.

## **Rational**

A clear process of referral both within the school and outside agencies is essential to facilitate access to counselling services for every student who wishes to avail of the service.

## **Goals**

- To ensure consistency in referral of students to support services in the school
- To ensure that students are treated with dignity in an effective manner
- To avoid duplication of interventions and to make the most of the services on offer

## **Guidance and Counselling Referral Policy**

- Where a member of staff is concerned about a student. He/she completes the Referral Form (Appendix 5), and this is given to the school Guidance Counsellor. A student may also approach the Guidance Counsellor themselves.
- Students discussed at Pastoral Care meeting.
- The Guidance Counsellor arranges to meet with the student and explore options available to student.
- The voluntary participation by the individual concerned is respected.
- It is envisaged that progress of cases is discussed at agreed time intervals and interventions are reviewed. Although it is necessary to put a formal procedure in place
- In cases where it is felt the student needs additional support referral is made to outside agencies in consultation with management.

## Student Counselling Appointment Procedure

- Open door policy encouraged this procedure should be introduced to the students in first year and promoted to all year groups throughout the school
- Students can be referred through the referral procedure.
- Students are informed of the confidentiality statement of the school before each session begins
- Records are kept in a locked cabinet.
- In some cases, students will be referred to outside agencies in consultation with management.
- The SGCS would encourage a team approach involving management, year heads, tutors, class teachers, parents and outside agencies.
- Group numbers are kept at an appropriate level
- The Guidance Counsellors attends supervision

## Student Guidance Interviews Procedure

- Vocational Guidance Interviews are available on request throughout the year to all students.
- Students will be given a note in their diary and must ask permission from their teacher before attending for interview.
- Folders on each student are kept in a locked filing cabinet.

## Record and report keeping procedures

All meetings are recorded in my diary and log sheet (Appendix 6). The student's diary is also signed. Detailed records of all personal counselling and careers/vocational guidance interviews are kept as follows:

- Guidance records are kept for 7 years after the student leave school
- The detailed records of personal counselling sessions should contain some of the actual words and phrases used by the student and the student should be informed of all matters pertaining confidentiality between the counsellor and the student.
- The Counsellor should ideally write up notes as soon as possible after the session to ensure accuracy and precision.
- Notes should, in general, be brief

The procedure followed when a referral is made to an outside agency:

- The Guidance Counsellor informs the DLP and if appropriate contacts the parent/guardian to inform them of the situation.
- The Guidance Counsellor will inform the parent/guardian that a Standard Reporting Form has or will be sent to Tulsa/Principal Social Worker depending on the seriousness of the matter.
- Depending on the nature of concern the school may advise parents to bring their son/daughter to the doctor immediately.
- Depending on the outside services the student is being referred to, the Guidance Counsellor may need to get written permission from the parent/guardian
- When this recommendation is made to the parent/guardian, the Guidance Counsellor will request the parent/guardian to report back within a few days to confirm whether the student has or will utilise that outside agency or counselling service.
- In some circumstances the parent may ask the Guidance Counsellor to make a referral. If this is the case, a copy of the referral is given to the parent and kept on file.

## Section 4 Meeting with parents

### Meeting parents: protocols/procedures:

It is desirable that links with the home be established at an early stage and not only where there is a “problem”. Appointments can be made with the Guidance Counsellors by phone. This may be the parents’ initiation or by invitation from the school.

### Annual presentations made to parents-on-parents information evening:

First Year	Open night for incoming first years
Third Year /TY	Senior Subject and Programme Choice, Importance of Leaving Cert and consequences of early school leaving.  (SUBJECT CHOICE, LCA and TY)
Sixth Year	Sixth Year Parents Information Evening  (CAO/UCAS/PLCS/FAS/GRANTS/STUDY ETC.)

### All presentations up on school website

## Section 5: Testing

### Assessment tests used for incoming first year students

CAT4 and Irish are administered on the enrolment day in conjunction with the Special Educational Needs Department. Results are used to identify students in greatest need of learning support and used to form mixed ability classes.

### Assessment tests used for third year students

All 3<sup>rd</sup> year students will take a career interest test ([www.careersportal.ie](http://www.careersportal.ie)) which will help them in their decision when making subject choice for the senior cycle. CAT4 is also administered to this group of students.

### Assessment/apptitude tests used during TY, Fifth and Sixth year

Various tests are completed by students in the computer room during career guidance class.

### Reasonable accommodation

The WRAT & CAT4 is used for all reasonable accommodation applications. The WRAT is hand scored in the school and results are used in the RACE applications form.



## Section 6: Links/Distributed Guidance

The following demonstrates the whole school dimension of guidance. Indicate any link that exists between the guidance counsellor(s) and the group/individual mentioned

### Links with Principal/Vice Principal:

- The SGCS work with the Principal/Vice Principal to continuously monitor and identify students experiencing difficulties or those at risk and provide educational, behavioural guidance/counselling as required.

### Links with Year heads:

- The SGCS work with Year Heads to continuously monitor and identify students experiencing difficulties or those at risk and provide appropriate educational, behavioural guidance/ counselling as required.
- Parents Nights organised in conjunction with Year head of Sixth Year to explain College Application System.
- Third year Parents Night regarding Subject Choice and TY.

### Links with class tutor/class teacher:

- The SGCS work with and Tutors and class teachers to continuously monitor and identify students experiencing difficulties or those at risk and provide appropriate educational, behavioural guidance/ counselling as required.

### Links with LCVP/TY Coordinator:

- The SGCS work with LCVP coordinator to assist the students with their career investigation assignment.
- The SGCS work with TY coordinator to assist with the Subject choice programme and helping the students get work experience.

### Links with NEPS:

- Deirdre Conway is the schools NEPS Psychologist. She meets with the SGCS to discuss issues of importance to the school if needed.
- Joe Flanagan is available by phone for consultation.
- Addresses the staff on school issues

### Links with Employers:

- Career talks
- Visits to local industry

### Links with Universities/IT's/Local Colleges/Solas:

- The SGCS have built up links with admissions officers through attendance at Open Days and IGC events.

- Attend Open Days
- Attend Guidance Counsellors Information Day
- Invite guest speakers to address groups

#### Links with Learning Support Teachers/Special Needs:

- The SGCS liaises with the Learning Support Teachers/Special Needs department regarding use of tests.

#### Links with Parents:

Parents are the primary educators of the children. Therefore, their involvement at every stage of the guidance and counselling programme is welcomed and encouraged by the SGCS. It is desirable that links with the home be established at an early stage and not only where there is a “problem”.

- 1<sup>st</sup> Year Information Evening
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Information Evening
- 6<sup>th</sup> Year Information Evening
- One-one meetings with parents/guardians
- Parent Teachers Meetings
- School Reports
- The School Journal

#### Links with Community:

- Open Evenings
- Parents Information Evenings
- Letters to parents
- Guest Speakers

#### Links with Primary Schools:

- Visit primary school

## Section 7 Policies

The Guidance Plan is informed by the following policies:

- Admission Policy
- Critical Incident Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- SPHE Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Code of behaviour
- Substance Use Policy
- RSE Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy

## **Section 8: IGC and Continuing Professional Development**

A Guidance Counsellor is a member of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors. To maintain qualified membership of the IGC a chartered member must complete 10 hours of in-service training annually (IGC Constitution and Code of Ethics 2004)

In-Career development is essential to the work of the Guidance Counsellor. Regular attendance at local IGC branch meetings and counselling supervisions is important. The IGC provides a range of in-service through the provision of workshops and presentations relevant to our work. Additional in-service is organised at local or/and at national level and is open to all registered current members of the IGC. The DES supports the provision of in-service for IGC members through funding, attendance at open days, career seminars etc.


NEPS- School Refusal

Jigsaw- One Good School

Elsta- Newly Arrived Young People

## Section 9: BOM & LMETB Ratification/Resolution Process for This Policy

### **BOM Ratification**

<b><i>Date Ratified by the Board of Management:</i></b>	
<b><i>Proposed By:</i></b>	
<b><i>Seconded By:</i></b>	
<b><i>Signed:</i></b>	<b><i>(Chairperson, BOM)</i></b>
<b><i>Signed:</i></b>	 <b><i>(Secretary to the BOM)</i></b>
<b><i>Scheduled Date for Review of the Policy:</i></b>	<b><i>March 2025</i></b>

### **LMETB Ratification/Resolution of the ETB Board**

<b><i>Date of Resolution of ETB Board</i></b>	
<b><i>Signed</i></b>	<b><i>(Chairperson)</i></b>

## Section 10: Appendices

### Appendix 1

#### **Student Evaluation Questionnaire**

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
The teacher stimulated my interest in the subject					
The teacher managed classroom time and pace well					
The teacher was organised and prepared for every class					
The teacher encouraged discussion and responded to questions					
The teacher demonstrated in depth knowledge of the subject					
The teacher had a good relationship with the students					

#### **Comments on strategies and ways of improvement**

-What changes would you recommend improving the subject?

-----  
-----  
-----

-What did you like best about your teachers teaching?

-----  
-----

-What did you like least about your teachers teaching?

-----  
-----

-Any further, constructive comment

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-----  
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**Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire and for your valuable feedback**

## Appendix 2

Enrolment Form 2023-2024

## Appendix 3

Senior Cycle Options Application Form 2023-2024 -Online.

Appendix 4

**Guidance**

**Student /Options/Level Changes**

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

**Student name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Class:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Current Subject/Level:** \_\_\_\_\_ *Result at Junior Cert* *Result in*  
*recent tests*

*HL*

*OL*

*Grade*

**Current**

**Teacher:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Books returned to teacher:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Teacher signature)

**New Subject/Level:** \_\_\_\_\_

**New**

**Teacher:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

***\*Changes are not guaranteed unless there is space in the class student wishes to move to.***

**Date to take effect:** \_\_\_\_\_

**State Exam secretary (3<sup>rd</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> yr only)** \_\_\_\_\_

**To be signed:**

**Parent/Guardian signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Principal/Deputy Principal:** \_\_\_\_\_

**For Office Use only:**

**Amended on Facility:**

**Note in diary**

OPTION 1

OPTION 2

OPTION 3

OPTION 1

OPTION 2

OPTION 3



Appendix 5

**St Oliver Post Primary**  
**Referral Form for**  
**Guidance, Counselling and Special Needs**

<b>Student Name/Eportal No:</b>
<b>Year:</b>
<b>Class:</b>
<b>Tutor:</b>
<b>Referee:</b>
<b>Date:</b>

**Reason for referral (short detail of incident/learning difficulties)**


*\*If referral relates to learning difficulties, please provide dated samples of students work*

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

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**Action Taken:**


**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Dated:** \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix 6

**Record of Personal Counselling**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>YEAR</b>	<b>REASON FOR REFERRAL</b>