



**ST JOSEPH'S PATRICIAN COLLEGE
NUNS' ISLAND
GALWAY
'THE BISH'**

MISSION STATEMENT

To create a safe learning environment where Catholic values are promoted and where each student is helped to reach his full potential and to qualify for the career of his choice.

INTRODUCTION

Guidance at St. Joseph's College, Galway, refers to a range of learning experiences, provided in a developmental sequence, that assist students to develop self-management skills which will lead to effective choices and decisions about their lives. It encompasses the three separate, but interlinked areas of

- Personal and Social Development
- Educational Guidance
- Career Guidance

Counselling is a key part of the school guidance programme, offered on an individual or group basis as part of a developmental learning process and at moments of personal crisis. Counselling has as its objective, the empowerment of students so that they can make decisions, solve problems, address behavioural issues, develop coping strategies and resolve difficulties they may be experiencing. Counselling may include personal counselling, educational counselling, career counselling or combinations of these.

INVOLVEMENT IN GUIDANCE AT ST. JOSEPH'S COLLEGE

- 1) **The Board of Management and school management team** have a responsibility to ensure that the provision and practice of guidance in the school is of the highest possible standard. This includes managing the process of guidance planning in co-operation with the guidance counsellor, school staff, and other school partners such as parents. Each school is required to comply with the Education Act (1998) and provide students with 'access to appropriate guidance.'
- 2) **Guidance Counsellors** because of their specialist training have a professional role in each of the main areas of guidance: personal and social, educational and career. In addition the guidance counsellor has a key role in collaborating with school management in the development and review of the school guidance plan and the integration of guidance into the curriculum.
- 3) **Subject Teachers** have a key role in providing support to students and information and advice relating to their subject disciplines and related careers. Some teachers have additional formal responsibilities through pastoral care roles, co-ordination roles, year-head roles and through participation in programmes such as S.P.H.E. and L.C.V.P. Individual teachers may be sought out by students on an informal basis for advice and information. All teachers may consult with the guidance counsellor on the needs of an individual student and/or refer the student to the guidance counsellor when specialist competence is required with due regard to confidentiality.
- 4) **Parents** have by far the most influence, directly or indirectly, on the choices made by young people. Parents have a major influence on the environment in which the young person lives including values, attitude and lifestyle. Parents can participate in the guidance process through
 - (i) Consultation with the guidance counsellor and other school staff
 - (ii) Attendance at relevant information and other meetings at

school.

(iii) Contributing to the development and review of the school guidance plan

(iv) When possible, providing personal assistance to the school guidance programme

- 5) **Students** are the focus of the school guidance programme and are entitled to have an input into the development of the school guidance plan. In particular, students (through the Student Council) can help to identify and establish the needs and priorities of the guidance programme, particularly during a review
- 6) **The Local Community** through its agencies, organisations and institutions provides young people with resources for career exploration, information and other forms of assistance and support. Such agencies, organisations and institutions include providers of training, further and higher education, employment and youth services.
- 7) In some instances, the guidance needs of young people may require **referral to professionals** outside the school, e.g. The National Educational Psychological Service (N.E.P.S.)
- 8) **The Learning Support Teacher** plays an important role in guidance as he is involved in the assessment of students with a suspected learning difficulty. He also facilitates the allocation of resource hours granted by the S.E.N.O. for students with specific learning difficulties. The Learning Support Teacher is responsible for arranging Learning Support Group meetings where students who are struggling academically can be identified and strategies can be put in place to help them succeed.

The Aim of the Guidance Plan is to detail a Guidance Programme which addresses the guidance needs of all students at all levels within the school. As guidance is a whole school concern, the plan applies to school management and staff generally and, in accordance with the schools' mission statement, to 'help each student to reach his full potential and to qualify for the career of his choice.' The plan also aims 'to ensure that pupils have access to appropriate guidance,' in accordance with section 9C of the Education Act (1998).

The objectives of the plan are to

- Create a detailed guidance programme which includes learning experiences and activities designed to meet the needs of specific groups of students during a given academic year.
- Ensure an appropriate balance between the personal, social and educational and career guidance offered to students.
- To reflect the needs of both junior and Senior Cycle students.

Guidance Counsellors

- 1) Barry McDermott B.A., G.D.ED., G.D.G.C.

Both Guidance Counsellors are active members of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC), regularly engage with CPD and attend counselling supervision.as per IGC recommendations.

Guidance Curriculum Content

Parents and pupils information night

All the pupils and parents who accept a place at The Bish are invited to attend an information session for incoming first years in May. During the session, talks are given by the Principal, Deputy-Principal, Chairperson of The Board of Management, Chairperson of the Parents' Council and First Year Year-Head who all explain their roles within the Bish. One of the Guidance Counsellors also speaks, explaining their role and function at The Bish. A copy of the 'Guidance and Counselling at the Bish' brochure is also given to all parents.

First Year Guidance

DAY 1

All new first years have an induction day, organised by the Year Head. They are the only year attending school that day. All students gather in the hall and are appointed to their class groups. They are introduced to a teacher who brings them to their room. They then get a tour of the school which includes being shown where the staff room, school reception, management and guidance offices, science labs and computer room. The school rules are also explained to them. They also meet their new subject teachers.

WEEK 1

The Guidance Counsellors introduce themselves to each new first year class, explaining their role in the areas of guidance and counselling. The main point they need to get across to them is about personal counselling and how talking about your problems can help you come to terms and manage them. If they have any problems, regardless of how big or small, whether school related or issues arising outside school, they can talk to either guidance counsellor in confidence, in the privacy of an office. Each student is given a copy of the **Guidance Brochure**, which explains the services offered by the Guidance Counsellors at The Bish, focusing particularly on personal counselling

WEEK 1

Pupils are given a guidance questionnaire to fill in. Class files are created by the Guidance Counsellor in the Guidance Office from this questionnaire. All information, results and questionnaires filled out by the pupils

during their time in the school are stored here. Psychological reports are also kept there. A list of all students with special educational needs in the school is updated at this stage every year with the new first years added.

September – May

- 1) Guidance is offered by S.P.H.E. teachers throughout the year. There are 10 modules in SPHE, which appear in each year of the 3 year cycle; Belonging and Integrating, Self-management, Communication Skills, Physical Health, Friendship, Relationships and Sexuality, Emotional Health, Influences and Decisions, Substance Use and Personal Safety.
- 2) Weekly Care Group meetings are held and any first years that are having personal problems are discussed. If necessary, a Guidance Counsellor will meet with any first year students who are mentioned at the meetings
- 3) Guidance Counsellors or Learning Support Teacher liaise with N.E.P.S. and set up any psychological assessments needed
- 4) The Guidance Counsellors are available for personal counselling
- 5) If necessary, referrals are made to outside professionals, with the permission of a parent or guardian when possible and appropriate. If a referral is necessary, the Guidance Counsellors will often ask parents to bring their son to see their G.P., who can refer the student on for further help if necessary.
- 6) The Guidance Counsellors are available to meet with parents, by appointment, throughout the school year. Parents can either phone the school or the Guidance Counsellor directly to make an appointment. They can also contact the Guidance Counsellors through the email 'guidance@bish.ie' or through

private message on our Facebook page; St. Joseph's Patrician College, 'The Bish'.

- 7) A guidance counsellor will give a talk on depression to each 1st year class.
- 8) Groups of 1st year students are met by the Guidance Counsellor or SPHE teacher on an informal basis and brought to An Tobar Nua. This is an opportunity to check in with students in a relaxed environment and encourage them to talk should they have something on their minds.

Second Year Guidance

September – May

- 1) Guidance is offered by S.P.H.E. teachers throughout the year. There are 10 modules in SPHE, which appear in each year of the 3 year cycle; Belonging and Integrating, Self-management, Communication Skills, Physical Health, Friendship, Relationships and Sexuality, Emotional Health, Influences and Decisions, Substance Use and Personal Safety.
- 2) Weekly Care Group meetings are held and any first years that are having personal problems are discussed. If necessary, a Guidance Counsellor will meet with any second year students who are mentioned at the meetings
- 3) Guidance Counsellors or Learning Support Teacher liaise with N.E.P.S. and set up any psychological assessments needed
- 4) The Guidance Counsellors are available for personal counselling
- 5) If necessary, referrals are made to outside professionals, with the permission of a parent or guardian when possible and appropriate. If a referral is

necessary, the Guidance Counsellors will often ask parents to bring their son to see their G.P., who can refer the student on for further help if necessary.

- 6) The Guidance Counsellors are available to meet with parents, by appointment, throughout the school year. Parents can either phone the school or the Guidance Counsellor directly to make an appointment. They can also contact the Guidance Counsellors through the email guidance@bish.ie or through private message on our Facebook page; St. Joseph's Patrician College 'The Bish'.

Third Year Guidance

Guidance Classes for third years are given for the purpose of helping them make their Senior Cycle subject choice. Dates may vary from year to year but usually begin in February. Subject choice guidance classes are delivered by the guidance counsellors, who will usually take three of the six 3rd year classes each.

Cambridge Profile Aptitude Tests

Aptitude Tests are increasingly used by both employers and provide valuable insight into a student's potential and likely performance in a career.

The Cambridge Profile Aptitude Tests comprise

- Verbal Reasoning
- Numerical Ability
- Abstract Reasoning
- Spatial Reasoning (2D and 3D)
- Arithmetic Calculation
- Spelling

- Working Quickly and Accurately

In February of 3rd Year, Cambridge Profile Aptitude Tests are administered to all Junior Cert. pupils by the Guidance Counsellors. They are administered over 6 days, taking about 3 hours to complete with each class. Class teachers are informed of the tests in advance, and are expected to turn up to class as usual to help supervise. If pupils are absent on the day their class is doing the tests, they will be facilitated, where possible, in another class on another day. The tests will only be administered on the 6 days specified. When completed, they are sent for correction. The results will be returned during guidance class or posted home. All results are returned to the individual student and are confidential to the individual student. The tests, particularly those for Verbal, Numerical and Abstract Reasoning provide an independent assessment of academic potential, which can supplement the school's estimate of future academic performance. For students, they can become aware of their stronger aptitudes and of those occupations where these could prove valuable. They often discover outstanding personal strengths which can give them greater confidence in their academic work and career planning.

Guidance Classes

There will be 5 guidance classes per year with 3rd years. As a result, guidance takes place during another subject's timetabled slot, with the teachers' permission. 3rd Year guidance classes usually take place between February and April. The execution of these classes may differ between guidance counsellors, but there are core elements which both need to deliver.

- 1) Explaining the points system
- 2) Explaining matriculation requirements
- 3) Explaining the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)
- 4) Giving advice on how pupils can come to a decision regarding subject choice
- 5) Giving back Cambridge Profile Aptitude Test results
- 6) Showing how to navigate www.qualifax.ie (particularly the course search and subject choice sections) and www.careersportal.ie
- 7) Explaining to students that certain subjects are necessary to study certain courses at higher education institutes

Handouts

Each 3rd Year Student will receive 2 booklets from the Guidance Counsellors. The first is a summary of the information delivered by PowerPoint Presentation during

class. The other is a compilation of information about each optional subject, written by teachers of that subject for 3rd year students with the aim of helping them with their decision.

Individual subject choice interviews

Any 3rd Year who wishes will be interviewed by a guidance counsellor on an individual basis. The aim of the interview is to find out what optional subjects the pupil is considering choosing. An important aspect of the interview is to stress to pupils what courses they are eliminating if they do not choose a science subject or French. The interview is also an opportunity for the students to ask questions of the guidance counsellor.

Guidance by subject teachers

Subject teachers are asked to speak to third years about studying their subject at senior cycle. Subject teachers are best placed to provide students with information and expertise on both the content and demands of their particular subject(s) syllabus. It is also hoped that some teachers of senior cycle subjects who do not teach junior cert students will visit each class to talk about the subject they teach.

Guidance by Leaving Certificate Students

Leaving Certificate students studying the optional subjects, nominated by their teachers, will spend 5 minutes talking to each 3rd Year class discussing the subjects they are studying. It is hoped this will give the 3rd year students a greater insight into the subject and help them with their decisions on subject choice.

Information Session for parents

In April, an information session will be held for the parents of 3rd Year students. The topic will be Subject Choice for Senior Cycle. It will be given as a PowerPoint Presentation.

Reasonable Accommodation in the Certificate Exams (R.A.C.E.)

In November before 3rd Year students sit their exams, applications are made by the Learning Support Teacher to the State Examinations Commission for Reasonable Accommodations in the Junior Certificate Examinations. The State Examinations Commission operates a simplified devolved application model in relation to the Reasonable Accommodations scheme at the Junior Certificate Examinations. Essentially, the Commission accepts the school's confirmation on the application form as sufficient evidence to enable the Commission to confirm an accommodation. An accommodation for the Junior Certificate Examination does not automatically guarantee that approval will be given for the Leaving Certificate.

September – May

- 1) Monthly Learning Support Group meetings are held, attended by the Learning Support Teacher, Guidance Counsellors and a member of management
- 2) Guidance Counsellors liaise with N.E.P.S. and set up any psychological assessments needed
- 3) Weekly Care Group meetings are held and any third years that are having personal problems are discussed. If necessary, a Guidance Counsellor will meet with any third year students who are mentioned at the meetings
- 4) The Guidance Counsellors are available for personal counselling
- 5) If necessary, referrals are made to outside professionals, with the permission of a parent or guardian when possible and appropriate. If a referral is necessary, the Guidance Counsellors will often ask parents to bring their son to see their G.P., who can refer the student on for further help if necessary.
- 6) Guidance is offered by S.P.H.E. teachers throughout the year. There are 10 modules in SPHE, which appear in each year of the 3 year cycle; Belonging and Integrating, Self-management, Communication Skills, Physical Health, Friendship, Relationships and Sexuality, Emotional Health, Influences and Decisions, Substance Use and Personal Safety. A Guidance Counsellor will speak about depression to each third year class
- 7) The Guidance Counsellors are available to meet with parents, by appointment, throughout the school year. Parents can either phone the school or the Guidance Counsellor directly to make an appointment. They can also contact the Guidance Counsellors through the email guidance@bish.ie or through private message on our Facebook page; St Joseph's Patrician College 'The Bish'.

Fifth Year Guidance

- **JIGSAW VISITS**

Each fifth year class will visit Jigsaw, Galway, located on Fairgreen Road. They will be given a talk about how Jigsaw hopes to promote positive mental health and how it can be used by them as a resource if needed. Jigsaw is explained further below.

September – May

- 1) Monthly Learning Support Group meetings are held, attended by the learning support teacher, guidance counsellors and member of management. 5th Year students having academic difficulties are discussed as well as possible ways the students can be helped
- 2) The guidance counsellors liaise with N.E.P.S. and set up any psychological assessments needed
- 3) Weekly Care Group meetings are held and any fifth years that are having personal problems are discussed. If necessary, a guidance counsellor meets with any fifth year students who are mentioned at the meetings
- 4) The guidance counsellor is available for personal counselling
- 5) The Guidance Counsellors are available to meet with parents, by appointment, throughout the school year. Parents can either phone the school or the Guidance Counsellor directly to make an appointment.

Reasonable Accommodation in the Certificate Exams (R.A.C.E.)

By May of the year preceding the Leaving Certificate Examination, applications are made by the Learning Support Teacher to the State Examinations Commission for Reasonable Accommodations in the Leaving Certificate Examinations.

Sixth Year Guidance

Guidance Classes for sixth year students are to help them find the information needed to research what they are going to do after the Leaving Certificate Examinations that June. The main emphasis is on helping students choose a course at a higher education institute in Ireland as most of the students attending St. Joseph's College will continue onto third level education. Similar to third year guidance classes, certain leaving certificate subjects are given an allocation of one extra class per week. This allows that extra class be used as a guidance class when appropriate. Each class has a

minimum 6 guidance classes per year, beginning in October and being completed by Christmas. These guidance classes are delivered by the guidance counsellors and will usually be divided up with Barry McDermott taking 5 of the eight leaving certificate groups timetabled at that time and Sarah Gleeson taking the remaining 3.

Class 1

General Introduction. (Handouts)

The outline of the guidance programme is explained to the class and what will be done each week is explained. Students are given a handout listing the dates of H.E.I. open days and other C.A.O. events. They spend a few minutes marking any open days they are interested in attending.

A handout showing the C.A.O. points for entry to H.E.I. courses for the previous years leaving certificate class is also given to the students. They are encouraged to take a few minutes to look over this sheet, noting the courses they are interested in. They are reminded that points change from year to year.

The school's policy on attending open days is explained to the students.

The students are told that all sixth years will have a free day coinciding with the NUI Galway open day to allow them to attend if they so wish. Either a half day or full day off will also be allowed for the Galway-Mayo I.T. open day. A decision will be taken on whether to grant a full or half free day will be made by School Management. For all other open days, students are required to bring a note from a parent or guardian to the school office prior to the open day stating that they have permission to attend. If they have this parental permission and have informed the school they are free to attend.

Students are also asked to realistically predict their Leaving Certificate grades and to calculate the relevant points total. This will give them an idea of what they should be aiming for.

Class 2

Explaining matriculation and how the points system works. (PowerPoint Presentation).

Class 3

How to make your choice (PowerPoint Presentation)

Class 4

Making the application - Filling in the C.A.O. Form (PowerPoint Presentation)

Class 5

College Entry – Alternatives to the CAO. Grants

H.E.A.R, D.A.R.E. NUIG's Access course as well as how you can gain entry to 3rd level through PLC's are explained in this class, along with information on applying for a grant.

Class 6

Internet Research (Computer Room)

Students are shown how to navigate the relevant guidance websites. If the computer room is free at this time they will get the opportunity to do some research themselves using these websites.

INDIVIDUAL GUIDANCE INTERVIEWS

Each Leaving Certificate Student has an individual meeting scheduled with a guidance counsellor between 1st October and January 20th of their Leaving Certificate year. The student gets the opportunity to discuss his future plans with the guidance counsellor as well as his aims for the leaving certificate examinations and how much study he is doing. It also gives the student an opportunity to ask the guidance counsellor questions and allows the guidance counsellor discuss with the student where he can access information that will help with any decision that needs to be made.

UCAS MEETINGS

Guidance meetings take place in September and October for students interested in applying to university in the United Kingdom through the UCAS system. The meetings are with a guidance counsellor who explains the process to the interested students as well as facilitating their applications. Each applicant to the UCAS system needs to complete an application form, write a personal statement, get a reference from a member of staff and ask their subject teachers to predict their Leaving Certificate grades. It is hoped that all applications will be made by October 15th.

GUEST SPEAKERS

Speakers are invited to discuss H.E.I. courses and careers with interested students. Due to the large number of students who continue their studies at NUI Galway, a speaker from every faculty at the university is invited to speak to the students. Speakers are also invited from G.M.I.T. and if there is enough interest, from U.L.

PARENTS' C.A.O. INFORMATION NIGHT

An information night is held for parents of leaving certificate students about the points system, matriculation, course choices and filling in the C.A.O. form. It will be held in December or January.

APPRENTICESHIP INFORMATION.

Every year a group of interested students travel to the GRETB offices in Mervue for a talk on the Apprenticeship system and a tour of the facilities. On occasion, 5th year students who have indicated they may leave school early are also invited to attend.

September – May

- 1) Monthly Learning Support Group meetings are held, attended by the learning support teacher, guidance counsellors and members of management. Leaving Certificate students having academic difficulties are discussed as well as possible ways the students can be helped
- 2) The guidance counsellors liaise with N.E.P.S. and set up any psychological assessments needed
- 3) Weekly Care Group meetings are held and any sixth years that are having personal problems are discussed. If necessary, a guidance counsellor will meet with any sixth year students who are mentioned at the meetings
- 4) Guidance counsellors are available for personal counselling
- 5) The Guidance Counsellors are available to meet with parents, by appointment, throughout the school year. Parents can either phone the school or the Guidance Counsellor directly to make an appointment. They can also contact the Guidance Counsellors through the email guidance@bish.ie or through private message on our Facebook page; St. Joseph's Patrician College, 'The Bish'.
- 6) Reasonable Accommodation in the Certificate Exams (R.A.C.E.)
Although applications for reasonable accommodations must be made by May of the previous year, applications can still be made for students whose difficulty has only been assessed after that date or who have only become disabled since, for example if a student breaks a wrist and cannot write during the exams.

Mental Health

The school engages in Positive Mental Health week each year to coincide with World Mental Health Day (October 10th) and a range of speakers and workshops linked to Positive Mental Health are made available to students.

5th Year and 6th Year students usually have a guest speaker in the gym while other year groups will be met in their classrooms. Agencies that have been used in the past include TeenLine, ReachOut, Pieta House, Jigsaw, Bodywhys, Samaritans, Youth Work Ireland, Aware, Amber Flag and Cycle Against Suicide.

An information point is set up in the foyer of the school with information on a range of agencies/organisations in the locality.

A group of students are brought to the Congress Against Suicide in January which is organised by Cycle Against Suicide.

From time to time, guest speakers linked to Positive Mental Health will address students throughout the year through Religion classes.

Wellbeing

The Framework for Junior Cycle (2015) provides an area of learning called Wellbeing. It includes learning opportunities to enhance the physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing of students. 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.

A dedicated Wellbeing curriculum in junior cycle aims to ensure that all students engage in important learning about wellbeing through key curriculum areas. Six indicators have been identified as central to wellbeing; Active, Responsible, Connected, Resilient, Respected and Aware. The curriculum will include CSPE, SPHE and Physical Education.

PROCEDURES /EXPLANATION OF GROUPS / TERMS/

Jigsaw

Jigsaw Galway is a community based network of supports that assists young people aged 15 – 25 to achieve better mental health and wellbeing. It is designed to ensure that mental health support is more accessible, youth-friendly, integrated and engaging for young people. It is located on Fairgreen Road and a central purpose of it is to ensure that when young people with significant mental health needs seek help, they obtain an immediate response from an individual who listens to them, determines what level of assistance may be required, and insures that they receive that treatment. Many young people have mental health needs and Jigsaw aims to ensure these needs are met. It is aimed at young people from 15 – 25 so will be a significant resource for third, fifth and sixth year students.

Galway City Youth Advocacy Service

Galway City Youth Advocacy Service is a service for 16 – 20 year olds who left school early with few qualifications. It provides information and assistance about progression options including education, training and employment. John O'Donnell is available to speak to any students at the Bish who are considering leaving school before their Leaving Certificate Examinations. He discusses their options if they do decide to leave early and he tries to convince them to complete their Leaving Certificate.

Higher Education Access Route (HEAR)

HEAR is a third level admissions scheme for students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The scheme has been established by 8 higher education institutions (DCU, DIT, NUIG, NUIM, TCD, UCC, UCD and UL) based on clear evidence that socio-economic disadvantage negatively impacts on educational attainment at school and progression to higher education. School leavers who present satisfactory evidence relating to their socio-economic circumstances and satisfy matriculation and subject requirements are eligible to compete for reduced Leaving Certificate points places available in each of the participating institutions through HEAR.

Disability Access Route to Education (DARE)

The Disability Access Route to Education is a college and university admissions scheme which offers places on a reduced points basis to school leavers under 23 years old with disabilities who have completed an Irish Leaving Certificate. DARE has been set up by a number of colleges and universities as evidence shows that disability can have a negative effect on how well a student does at school and whether they go on to college. DARE is for school leavers who have the ability to benefit from and succeed in higher education but who may not be able to meet the points for their preferred course due to the impact of their disability

NUIG's Access Course for School Leavers

The access course is specifically designed for students who have a desire to study at third level, but are unable due to financial or social issues. The scheme facilitates school-leavers from all schools in the BMW region and Clare. The course targets those students who have the ability to benefit from and succeed in higher education but who, for a variety of social and economic reasons, are under represented at third level. The socio-economic reasons considered are long term unemployment, low family income, little or no tradition of progression onto higher education, limited study facilities at home as well as family stresses, particularly those related to family finance. The programme is also suitable for students with disabilities, whose background education has been affected by long-term absenteeism due to their illness.

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)

SPHE provides students with a unique opportunity to develop the skills and competence to learn about themselves and to care for themselves and others and to make informed decisions about their health, personal lives and social development. It enables students to participate as active and responsible adults in the personal and social dimensions of society and to make responsible decisions that respect their own dignity and the dignity of others. SPHE aims to enable students to develop skills for self-fulfilment and living in communities, to promote self-confidence and self-esteem, to enable the students to develop a framework for responsible decision making, to provide opportunities for reflection and discussion and to promote physical, mental and emotional health and well being. There are 10 modules in SPHE, which appear in each year of the 3 year cycle; Belonging and Integrating, Self-management, Communication Skills, Physical Health, Friendship, Relationships and Sexuality, Emotional Health, Influences and Decisions, Substance Use and Personal Safety. The Guidance Counsellor is available to offer support, advice and information to teachers of SPHE when requested.

National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)

NEPS is a service of the Department of Education and Science. NEPS psychologists work with both primary and post-primary schools and they are concerned with learning and behaviour, social and emotional development. Each psychologist is assigned a group of schools. NEPS psychologists specialise in working with the school community. They work in partnership with teachers, parents, and children in identifying educational needs. They offer a range of services aimed at meeting these needs, for example, supporting individual students (through consultation and assessment), special projects and research. NEPS mission is to support the personal, social and educational development of all children through the application of psychological theory and practice in education, having particular regard for children with special educational needs.

Reasonable Accommodation in the Certificate Exams (R.A.C.E.) Reasonable Accommodations are special arrangements in the Certificate Examinations for candidates who would have difficulty in communicating what they know to an examiner because of a physical disability, including hearing and visual impairments, or a specific learning difficulty. The special arrangements are intended to remove, as far as possible, the impact of the disability on the candidate's performance and thus enable the candidate to demonstrate his or her level of attainment and to ensure that, whilst giving candidates every opportunity to demonstrate their level of attainment, the special arrangements will not give the candidate an unfair advantage over other candidates in the same examination.

The applications are completed in compliance with Department of Education and Skills circulars S40/94, S11/2000 and S70/00.

Care Group

This group meets at the same time every week to discuss students who are a cause for concern, usually due to some form of difficulties in their personal lives. The group consists of the Guidance Counsellors, Principal and Deputy Principals. It gives them the opportunity to discuss any concerns or problems that a student may be having and also gives the members an opportunity to discuss the best way to deal with specific problems students may be experiencing. It also ensures that the guidance counsellors are aware of the problems students are dealing with in case they need to become involved. There are 3 signs up in the staffroom asking teachers to inform either a guidance counsellor or member of management if they have any concerns about a student. The care group gives its members the opportunity to share those concerns. It is also useful to get the members to disseminate information to staff about a student if necessary. Everything discussed at the care group meetings is confidential unless it is agreed that others need to be informed about an issue. The group is, on occasion, joined by a NEPS Psychologist.

Appointments

Appointments with the guidance counsellors can be made in the following ways by parents, teachers or students

- 1) **By calling to the guidance office and requesting an appointment**
- 2) **By speaking to one of the Guidance Counsellors in the corridor and requesting a meeting. If the Guidance Counsellor doesn't have their diary or appointment book with them, they will ask the student to come with them to their office so they make a note of the appointment time, or to call to their office when they know they will there.**

- 3) **By phone. They can call the school office and be transferred or call the guidance office directly.**
- 4) **By being requested to meet with the Guidance Counsellor at a certain time by the Guidance Counsellor or by the Principal or Deputy Principal**
- 5) **By email: guidance@bish.ie**
- 6) **Via the St. Joseph's Patrician College, 'The Bish' Facebook page**

Bullying

The school has a policy on bullying and it is usually the role of the class master, year head or deputy principal to deal with issues surrounding bullying. Occasionally however a guidance counsellor will get involved, either due to a student disclosing that they are being bullied or through being told about bullying from a parent, student or member of staff. It is usually the policy of the guidance counsellors to warn the bully that any further bullying will lead to the involvement of management and their parents and could result in suspension and ultimately expulsion. The person being bullied is asked to report back to the guidance counsellor if the bullying doesn't stop. All issues surrounding bullying are treated as sensitive and the identity of anyone who reports bullying is not disclosed.

Confidentiality

Discussions of a personal nature between the guidance counsellors and students are confidential unless there is a danger of the student harming himself, harming others or being harmed by someone. In these cases, confidentiality may have to be broken, preferably with the student's consent.

All students who the guidance counsellors or management have concerns about are discussed at Care Group meeting. Discussions at these meetings are confidential.

Year Head

Each year has a Year Head who has a number of responsibilities in relation to that year. Year Heads are responsible for the pastoral needs of the pupils, in conjunction with management and the care group team. They are also responsible for the implementation of school policies in relation to attendance and discipline, and they also monitor attendance and punctuality. They meet the entire year group or the various individual classes, or groups of students or individuals when deemed necessary. Year Heads also liaise with parents and management and monitor the academic progress and behaviour of pupils.