COLÁISTE MHUIRE CO-ED, THURLES



WHOLE SCHOOL GUIDANCE PLAN



January 2025



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RATIONALE OF POLICY

Education Act, 1998 and Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed's Mission Statement.

This School Guidance Policy reflects the ethos and spirit of Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed Thurles and it has been devised and developed in accordance with Section 9 of the Education Act 1998. Section 9(c) states that a school "shall use its available resources to ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices". Section 9(d) elaborates further by stating that a school "shall promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students in consultation with their parents having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school".

The ethos and spirit of Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed is embodied in the school's Mission Statement, which states that our Mission at Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed aspires to develop a caring and inclusive learning community which optimises the potential of each student and reflects our school motto: Rath as Saothar – Success through effort. This policy is underpinned by our core values of care, respect, community, equality and excellence in education.

DEFINITION OF GUIDANCE - WHAT IS GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING IN SCHOOLS?

Guidance and Counselling refers to a range of learning experiences provided in a developmental sequence, designed to assist students in making choices about their lives and to help students in making transitions based on these choices. The Guidelines for Second Level Schools on the implications of Section 9(c) of the Education Act, 1998 identify Guidance and Counselling as a single process that "aims to help students to develop an awareness and acceptance of their talents and abilities, to explore possibilities and opportunities; to grow in independence and to take responsibility for themselves, to make informed choices about their lives and to follow through on those choices." (DES 1998, pp 4-5). These choices may be categorised into three distinct areas: (i) Personal and Social, (ii) Educational and (iii) Career. The Department of Education's guidelines state that "counselling in schools may include personal, educational, career counselling, or combinations of these".

BACKGROUND TO POLICY

A Consultative Process

This policy has been implemented and constructed by the WSG (Whole School Guidance) team in Coláiste Mhuire. Members of the WSG team are named later in the policy.

This policy has evolved and developed from a consultative process involving staff, students, parents, and the

Board of Management of Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed. This policy reflects the uniqueness of Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed in its own particular context and circumstances.

MODELS OF GOOD PRACTICE

The development and review of the "Whole School Guidance plan" has been guided by models of good practice in school guidance planning as outlined by the Institute of Guidance Counsellors, the National Centre for Guidance in Education, and the School Development Planning Initiative. It also draws upon the NCGE: A Whole School Guidance Framework and Looking at our Schools 2022. This policy has been developed within the parameters of the guidelines of the Department of Education (Guidelines for Second Level Schools on the Implications of Section 9(c) of the Education Act 1998, relating to student's access to appropriate guidance), and Circular Letter No. PPT 12/05: Guidance Provision in Second-Level Schools). Moreover, this policy also reflects the Junior cycle wellbeing guidelines.

RELATED SCHOOL POLICIES

This Whole School Guidance Policy and Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed's Guidance Programme is consistent with and supported by a range of other School Policies:

- Guidance Counsellor's Department Plan
- Child Protection Policy: Child Safeguarding Statement Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed
- Code of Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Substance Use Policy
- SPHE/RSE Policy
- Internet and Acceptable Use Policy
- Attendance Policy
- TETB Data Protection Policy
- Inclusion (Special Education Needs) Policy
- Leaving Cert Applied and Transition Year Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Suspension/Expulsion Policy
- DEIS Plan
- JCSP Policy
- School Assessment Policy

- Critical Incident Policy
- Home School Liaison Policy
- Student Support Team Policy
- School Admissions and Participatory Policy
- Wellbeing Policy and plan
- One to one Guidance and Teaching Policy

LINKS TO OTHER PROGRAMMES

Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed acknowledges the relevance of and importance of SPHE and Religious Education to the social and personal development focus of Guidance and Counselling. A full description and account of both SPHE and Religious Education in Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed is provided in their respective department plans. Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed recognises the significant contribution that the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme, the Leaving Certificate Applied and the Transition Year Programme make in providing students with appropriate and relevant Guidance-related activities. This Whole School Guidance Plan recognises the significance of the 1st Year Subjects Taster Programme, the Belonging Plus 1st Year Induction Programme and all other cross curricular links (for example Guidance and CSPE, Guidance and Communication/Work Experience Modules and Guidance). The importance of LCVP and the 5th Year Ar Aghaidh Linn Programme is also noted.

OBJECTIVE OF THE POLICY

To ensure that the students of Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed Thurles have access to guidance, that is appropriate to their needs, stage of development, and their school programme.

AIMS OF POLICY

- 1. To promote the development and growth of each student on a personal, social, educational and career basis.
- 2. To ensure that guidance initiatives and programmes in Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed are delivered in a developmental sequence that is relevant and appropriate to all students.
- 3. To provide a framework for the delivery of guidance programmes within our school and in a manner that takes account of the diverse and particular needs of students with special educational needs, students of all ability levels and students from different backgrounds and cultures, up to and including post leaving certificate students.

GUIDANCE TEAM

This Whole School Guidance Policy and the associated School Guidance Programmes reflect the ongoing contribution of the following individuals and groups:

- Guidance Counsellor (A detailed account of the Role of the Guidance Counsellor's is provided in the Guidance Department's Subject Plan)
- The Principal and Deputy Principal
- The Learning Support Team
- The Wellbeing Team
- The Programme Coordinator
- The Home School Community Liaison Officer
- The Religious Education Team
- The PE and Games Team
- The Year Heads
- The Class Tutors
- The SPHE Teachers
- The CSPE Teachers
- The Student Support Team
- Subject Teachers
- Special Needs Assistants
- School Completion Programme Personnel
- School Secretarial Staff
- The Caretaker and all other Ancillary Staff

WHOLE SCHOOL GUIDANCE ACTIVITIES

The Student Guidance Team work together to provide the following formal guidance services during the school year: Assessment/Aptitude Testing of Students Tests; School Induction and Orientation for Incoming 1st Years; Pre-Transition supports for new students; Study Skills Workshops and Study Skills class in 2nd year; Information and Open Nights for Parents and Students; Extra-Curricular Activities; Home-School visits; Educational College Excursions; Work place visits; Visits by Guest Speakers; Visits to Careers Exhibitions and College Open Days; Engagement with student mental health programmes and support agencies. In addition to the above formal school guidance activities, guidance and support is provided informally and on a regular basis in a variety of contexts by all staff. There are a range of other student supports within the school

including the students' council and the Board of Management.

GUIDANCE PROVISION

Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed is committed to employing a team approach in the provision of a range of learning experiences and developmental opportunities to all students. These experiences and opportunities, which will be appropriate and relevant to student needs, shall enable the growth and development of all students and shall assist students in making choices and transitions. (For example; Transitions from Primary to Secondary School, from Junior Cycle to Senior Cycle, from School to Further Education and the world of work).

A number of mechanisms are used in order to assist students in making choices.

These include:

- 1. Assessment: The Guidance Counsellor, the Learning Support Coordinator and other associated staff members carry out assessments such as the C.A.T 4, NGRT, Career Interest Test and other suitable testing instruments.
- 2. Educational Skills: Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle students are given instruction on Study Skills and Examination Techniques throughout their school life. All junior cycle students are provided with formal study skills methodologies.
- 3. Students are provided with information in 1st year and 3rd year that helps them to make decisions on subject choice, subject level and programme choice, which is appropriate to each student's aptitude and interests and which is cognisant of student's career aspirations. After School Study is available to others if they wish to avail of it.
- 4. Vocational Guidance Interviews: The Guidance Counsellors meet with students and discuss subject options. This occurs in 1st year, 3rd year and Transition year. Vocational guidance is also provided to 5th year and 6th year Students to assist them in identifying Third Level courses and career areas that correspond to their interests and aptitudes.
- 5. The Guidance Counsellor also meets with Leaving Cert. Applied students to help them to formulate a Career Action Plan. We also use the School Business Partnership initiative to prepare students for interview and the world of work.
- 6. Counselling: Students are referred for counselling to the Guidance Counsellor by the Student Support Team, School Management, and Board of Management, Parents and or members of staff. A student may also self-refer him/herself for counselling, which can assist students to explore their feelings and to cope with challenges and problems. Students can be referred to the HSCL Officer, the SCP team, year head and NEPS for support as required.
- 7. Information: Students are provided with information on external agencies and supports where necessary by all relevant staff.
- 8. Onward Referral Service: The individual student is referred, where it is deemed necessary by the student support team* to external individuals/agencies. Examples include: General Practitioners, Jigsaw, The HSE Mid-West Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Pieta House, The National Educational Psychological Service, psychologists.

PLEASE NOTE: An appointments system operates for all Personal Counselling, Careers Counselling and Vocational Guidance Interviews. The appointments system helps to minimise disruption to classes and the cooperation of teachers in facilitating time for guidance and counselling appointments is greatly appreciated.

MEMBERS OF THE STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM

Mr. Denis Quinn Principal

Ms. Clare Wallace Deputy Principal

Ms. Julie Delaney Learning Support Coordinator

Ms Lorna Byrne Guidance Counsellor

Ms. Annmarie Purtill Behaviour for Learning

Ms. Michelle Morgan School Completion Programme

Ms. Patricia Hickey Guidance Counsellor

Mr. Paddy Stapleton Wellbeing Coordinator

Ms. Shelly Martin SPHE Coordinator

Ms. Maggie Smith Student Voice

Ms Mary C Ryan Home School Community Liaison

Whole School Guidance Programme

1 st years	Information visits to primary schools by Principal		
	Communication with parents, children and primary school		
	Principals/Teachers of incoming students (by way of meetings)		
	Administration of Tests for Diagnostic Purposes		
	Induction Programme (Belonging +) and Le Chéile		
	Induction Night for Parents/Guardians of 1st years early in the first term		
	Transition Presentation to all 1 st years via Guidance Counsellor.		
	One to One Meetings with all 1 st years in the first term		
	Monitoring of students transition from Primary to Secondary Level by way		
	of meetings with Guidance Counsellor, Year Head and School Management		
	Rapport building between Class Tutors, Year-Head and 1st year students		
	Regular informal guidance and support by all staff		
	HSCL induction for 1st year parents		
	Information from Learning Support team to staff on new 1st year students on a		
	pastoral and academic level		
	Study Skills lessons as part of Whole School Wellbeing		
	Guidance/Counselling sessions as required		
	Anti-Bullying Programme		
	1st year Year-Head invited to SST meeting in November/December for 1st years that		

	have not settled.			
	Student Voice Surveys			
2 nd years	Support by way of the Class Tutor and Year-Head System			
	Regular contact with Principal and Deputy Principal			
	Career Guidance and/or counselling sessions as required			
	Fuse Anti-bullying programme			
	Informal Guidance and support by all staff			
	Weekly Study Skills class			
	Online resources			
	Student Voice Surveys			
3 rd years	Study Skills and Exam Techniques Presentation and Workshop(s)			
	Information and Presentation on Subject and programme choice (to students by fellow students and staff and to parents)			
	One to One consultation on programme choice and subject choice as requested			
	Counselling and Career Guidance Meetings as required			
	Support from Year-Heads and Class Tutors			
	Regular contact with Principal and Deputy Principal			
	Reassessment of students by way of CAT4			
	Student Voice Surveys			
Transition	Personal and Student Profile			
years	Career Interest Assessment and CAT			
years	Study Skills/Time Management			
	Letters of Application and CV Preparation 4 th years			
	Work Experience Preparation			
	Work Experience Preparation Work Experience Programme (Two Weeks blocks)			
	Work Experience Google classroom / e portfolio			
	Guest Speakers			
	3 rd Level/PLC/Apprenticeship Options			
	One to One Guidance Interview			
	Course and Career Research on Qualifax and Careers Portal and Fetch courses			
	Weekly Guidance Class			
	Meeting with Guidance Counsellor and Programme Coordinator re. progression and			
	appropriate pathways			
	Counselling sessions as required			
	REACH – Careers Portal			
	College Open Days			
	Senior Subject Choice			
	Student Voice Surveys			
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5 th years	Study Skills and Exam Techniques			
	Points Awareness			
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Guidance Classes Weekly
Visiting Speakers from colleges
School Business Partnership interviews and feedback
Support by way of the Class Tutor and Year-Head System
Informal guidance and support by all staff
Support from Principal and Deputy Principal
One to one Guidance Meeting, and counselling sessions as required
Evaluation after September tests by SST and Programme Coordinator
re appropriateness of LCE or LCA
Student Voice Surveys
AAL Class
Weekly Guidance Class
5 th Year Symposium

6 th years	Attendance and participation at various Careers Events, such as Higher		
	Options, Agri Career Fair, Open Days		
	Visiting Speakers from colleges and professional bodies		
	Vocational Guidance Interviews (one to One Meetings Between the Guidance Counsellor and Individual students)		
	CAO Form - Information, and Preparation		
	Weekly Guidance Class		
	Course and Career research on Qualifax.		
	Interview preparation		
	Information on Sports/Other Scholarships, Student Accommodation, Budgeting at		
	Third Level		
	Career Interest Test		
	Study Skills and Exam Techniques Workshop		
	Accepting CAO Offers and Change of Mind Form		
	UCAS - Application Process, Eunicas Application Process		
	Access Programmes, HEAR & DARE		
	The Third Level Grants Schemes (Susi)		
	Support from Principal and Deputy Principal		
	Regular contact with and support from Year-Head and Class Tutor		
	Counselling sessions as required		
	RSE Input		
	Life skills programme		
	Student Voice Surveys		

LCA	Weekly Guidance Class		
	One-to-One Guidance Interview		
Information on Progression Routes into Further Education (including PLC			
	course options, Apprenticeships, Garda Siochána)		
	Careers Exhibition (LCA 2)		
	Work on Qualifax, and Careers Portal websites		
	Visiting Speakers		

Presentation and Communication Workshop (LCA 1)
Exam Techniques
Support from Principal, Deputy Principal, Coordinator and Class Tutor
Work Experience (one day per week)
Preparation for Work Experience and Reflection on Work Experience
Social Education and Enterprise Modules
Develop Me Workshop
Counselling sessions as required
Student Voice Surveys

RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS

- Department of Education Resources.
- Staff guidance provision within the general teaching allocation.
- School Funds as Resources allow.
- Career Guidance Office and Guidance/Counselling Meeting Area.
- Careers Library in the main entrance and accessible to all.
- Guidance Library online (Google classroom accessible to 6th year Students).
- REACH programme
- Student Support team.
- School Completion team.
- Regular meetings with school management team with their Guidance Counsellor and with other staff members (HSCL, Year-Heads, Class Teachers, Tutors, SNA's) and with parents/guardians.
- Links with the community and with other agencies and groups that support students and parents.
- Links with 3rd Level Colleges (Admissions, Access Officers, School Liaison Officers), SOLAS, Further Education and Training Boards.
- Links with Business and Industry Work Experience etc.....
- School Business Partnership.
- Transition year and LCA work-experience links.

MONITORING OF THE GUIDANCE POLICY/GUIDANCE PLAN

The School Management, in consultation with the Guidance Counsellor and the School Guidance Team will monitor tile implementation of the Guidance Policy and its associated Guidance Programmes.

Three strands will be identified for focus each year. We will hold three meetings to review this improvement plan annually.

EVALUATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF GUIDANCE POLICY

This School Guidance Policy will be subject to ongoing evaluation. We are committed to this through surveying parents, staff and students and three meetings annually. The school's Guidance Plan will be assisted and directed by the Whole School Guidance team.

This team comprises of:

Denis Quinn - Principal

Clare Wallace - Deputy Principal

Lorna Byrne - Guidance Counsellor

Patricia Hickey - Guidance Counsellor

Anne Marie Purtill - BFL

Paddy Stapleton - Wellbeing coordinator

Marie Delaney - Member of-DEIS team

Katie Carr - AP1

Mary C Ryan - HSCL

Julie Delaney - SEN coordinator

Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed's evaluation of the policy will be guided by the following questions:

- o Is the guidance plan working?
- Are the guidance programmes being provided in the most effective manner?
- o Are all students being provided with appropriate guidance?
- What areas of the Guidance Plan/Guidance Policy require modification and improvement?
- What are the areas that need to be developed in terms of guidance provision and programme delivery?

The guidance team and the school community more generally have an important role to play in the evolution and development of the Guidance Policy. The Whole School Guidance Planning Group welcomes contributions and feedback from the entire school community and from all other stakeholders in relation to Guidance Provision and Guidance Programmes.

REVIEW – ACADEMIC YEAR 2025/26

There will be a full review of the Guidance policy after a minimum of two years. The review group will

comprise representatives of all the stakeholders to the Guidance Policy/Guidance Plan. The review process will involve surveying students, parents, teachers and all other stakeholders to the Guidance Plan.

Appendix 1

Digitalised Whole School Guidance

In the event of school closure

INTRODUCTION TO DIGITALISED GUIDANCE

This resource outlines the decisions made at local school level about the logistics of digitalised / online school guidance provision in our school.

All content was discussed and agreed between School Management and the School Guidance Counsellor(s). The approach to digitalised Guidance in our school is documented here in line with:

A Whole School Guidance Framework document (NCGE, 2017)

https://www.ncge.ie/resource/ncge-whole-school-guidance-framework

(Covid-19) Support information for Guidance Counsellors in Schools (NCGE, 2020)

https://www.ncge.ie/resource/covid-19-ncge-support-information-GC-schools

Continuity of Guidance Counselling - Guidelines for schools providing online support for students (DE, 2020)

https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Post-Primary-School-

 $\frac{Policies/Policies/continuity-of-guidance-counselling-guidelines-for-schools-providing-online-support-for-students.pdf}{}$

Continuity of Schooling (DE, 2020)

www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/continuity-of-schooling/continuity-of-schooling.html

Digitalised Guidance is provided in our school in line with the continuum of support model (NCGE, 2017 p12): Guidance for A Few, Guidance for Some, Guidance for All. This resource outlines the provision of digitalised guidance in line with that continuum. The first section outlines the logistical approach for 'Guidance for A Few,' a second section notes the approach for 'Guidance for Some' and the third section refers to 'Guidance for All.' In addition, a final section outlines how our school will coordinate Whole School Guidance, should the school have to close for part of the year or if some staff must self-isolate.

GUIDANCE FOR A FEW:

In Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed ALL students will have access to one-to-one supports from teachers, support teams and the Guidance Counsellor, where appropriate.

Parents / Guardians will be informed that these services are available by:

• use of the compass portal in the school

Parents are invited to contact the school directly should they wish to discuss the provision of such supports.

In Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed we agree to undertake our 'Guidance for a Few' (one-to-one sessions) as follows:

Platform Used:	G- Suite features i.e., Google Meet.		
How and when students may	A schedule of virtual meetings should be planned with students by email		
be contacted:	during a limited time frame (e.g., following the 'normal' local school		
	timetable, 9am-4pm). Contact with students should not occur outside of		
	these agreed times.		
	Personal phone numbers will not be exchanged between the Guidance		
	Counsellor and students / parents / guardians.		
Contact with parents may	A Child Protection issue arises.		
arise when:			
	Our approach to contacting parents in this event is: if in consultation with		
	the year head/ Principal or Deputy Principal it is felt appropriate that		
	guidance be the contact.		
Students are identified as	Self-Referral – students may self-refer by sending an email to the		
needing one-to-one support	Guidance Counsellor. Students are notified about how to connect with		
through several school	the guidance counsellor at the beginning of the school year and		
processes:	throughout the year.		
	Student support team: Teachers are aware they can contact the student		
	support team by email if they are concerned about a student. The student		

support team will then take appropriate action which may include referral to the Guidance Counsellor.

Parents: If parents are concerned for their children, they may contact the year head. Parents are informed of how to contact each year head on the school website and in the welcome letter sent at the start of the year.

Other Avenues: We will monitor the other means through which students are referred this year and will add those means to this document for future years.

Frequency of Contact:	The agreed procedures to facilitate students to be notified of their initial				
	appointment in advance in Coláiste Mhuire Co- Ed is:				
	e.g., through school email.				
	Further contact will be agreed with students as appropriate during each meeting. This will be clearly communicated to the student in each meeting and/or				
	at the beginning of the series of sessions e.g. 'We will work together for				
	three sessions and review our plan on the third session.'				
Session Length:	Each one-to-one meeting would not exceed the duration of normal				
	appointment or lesson times e.g., 50 minutes, except in the event of an emergency.				
Contract:	A contract will be made with students at the beginning of the one-to one				
	sessions as it would have been in a 'face to face' situation (this can be				
	done verbally).				
	Included in this contract, it will be noted that neither party will record or				
	take photographs of the session.				
	Students and parents are informed that a record of the session will be				
	kept by the Guidance Counsellor, in line with normal professional practice				
	and the school's 'Confidentiality Policy.'				

DLP and DDLP:	If digitalised guidance is taking place, our school procedures for				
	communication with the DLP and the DDLP are:				
	to phone the Principal – Mr. Denis Quinn if a DLP issue presents.				
	In extreme cases if Mr. Denis Quinn cannot be contacted the Deputy				
	Principal – Ms. Clare Wallace may be contacted.				
	If an emergency/child protection issue arises during a time when				
	digitalised guidance is taking place, the agreed protocol is to:				
	Phone Mr. Denis Quinn (DLP).				
Communication with	School management are fully aware of and have agreed on all aspects of				
management:	this document.				
	This document was discussed and agreed on [insert date].				
	It is agreed that this document will be reviewed on [insert date].				
	The guidance counsellor will meet on a [e.g., weekly / bi-monthly /				
	monthly] basis to update management on how digitalised one-to-one				
	guidance appointments are progressing.				

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Record Keeping & GDPR:	A record of every one-to-one guidance counselling meeting will be kept
	by the Guidance Counsellor and stored appropriately in line with normal
	professional practice.
	Our school uses the NCGE one-to-one meeting record, which can be
	downloaded and used as an editable PDF document or printed off for use
	as paper records.
	https://www.ncge.ie/resource/record-templates-guidance-counselling-
	one-one-meetings-students
	In our school we securely save our records by e.g., using a password
	protected work laptop. The files are saved into a dedicated folder and are
	in no way accessible by a third party.

GUIDANCE FOR SOME:

A definition of 'Guidance for Some' can be found on the 'Whole School Guidance Framework' document (NCGE, 2017 p13)

www.ncge.ie/resource/ncge-whole-school-guidance-framework

In Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed's digitalised 'Guidance for Some' will operate in line with our school's 'Remote Learning Policy' as follows:

Timetabled classes with 5th and 6th year students will run in accordance with the school timetable using google meet.

Information regarding CAO, UCAS, College open days etc... will be disseminated through the students google classroom. This portal also offers the medium to communicate with both Guidance Counsellors and the rest of their class.

If a vocational issue arises students may use this classroom as a means of communication and this has worked very well in the past.

Appendix 2

GUIDANCE FOR ALL:

A definition of 'Guidance for All' can be found on the 'Whole School Guidance Framework' document (NCGE, 2017 p12)

www.ncge.ie/resource/ncge-whole-school-guidance-framework

In Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed digitalised 'Guidance for All' will operate in line with our school's 'Remote Learning Policy' as follows:

Use of a well-being classroom for the whole school allows the Guidance department share mindfulness messages to the school community.

This classroom is another platform for students/ staff to make contact with the Guidance Department.

The Guidance Department will endeavour to make contact with all, once a term. This will be through the google classroom platform.

COORDINATION OF WHOLE SCHOOL GUIDANCE:

This section describes how the school approaches the management and coordination of whole school guidance if a blended/digitalised approach must be undertaken in our school.

The Guidance department will meet with the Deputy Principal once a term.

The Principal is the DLP and will be contacted via phone if necessary.

The student support team will meet once a week through google meet.

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Study skills aspect in 5th year formalised

Career fair - past pupils an advantage here

Exploring the civil service as a career opportunity

More guest speakers

