RCS School Plan



**RAMSGRANGE COMMUNITY SCHOOL**

School Plan 2018 - 2021

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## 

## School Profile of Ramsgrange Community School

Ramsgrange Community School is a standalone DEIS Band 1 rural post primary school. It was established in 1977, following the amalgamation of the Sisters of St. Louis Secondary School and Sheilbaggan Vocational School. Under the Patronage of Waterford and Wexford ETB and the Sisters of St. Louis through the Le Cheile Trust, we continue to reflect the values and ethos of both founding partners.

The current Senior Management Team is in place since July 2013. Distributed leadership and staff empowerment enable teachers to become school leaders in a context outside of their classroom and engage in the process of change within the school.

Ramsgrange Community School is a co-educational school established and managed with the aim of providing quality education for the people of the area, which we serve. We are located in the remote village of Ramsgrange (population circa: 500) on the Hook Peninsula in South West Wexford.

The student population is 433 – excluding PLCs. The socio-economic background of our students is wide and varied. The Community School offers pupils both the practical and academic in a broad general curriculum, so that each pupil is offered an educational structure suitable to his/her needs, abilities and interests.

The philosophy of the school is to develop every student as a whole person and to enable all in the school community achieve their full potential.

Our school ethos, centres on respect for oneself and for others and loves of our religious and cultural heritage, both as Irish citizens and Europeans. This is lived out in the teaching and instruction around our charter. We aim to develop the whole person: intellectually, spiritually, socially, emotionally, physically and aesthetically.

We encourage our student’s participation and interest in sport and other extracurricular activities, to enhance their confidence, team-spirit, self-discipline, initiative and leadership skills.

Through our comprehensive subject range and emphasis on participation, justice and discipline, we aim to instil in our students a sense of personal worth and responsibility which will motivate them beyond school into the world of work and good citizenship and in the area of third level education.

Our school is a unique and welcoming place where all students, staff and parents are quickly embraced and become part of our very proud community.

The enrolment of the school has varied over the years. Since the appointment of the current Senior Management Team the enrolment figures has increased each year:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 07/08 | 426 |
| 08/09 | 387 |
| 09/10 | 401 |
| 10/11 | 372 |
| 11/12 | 366 |
| 12/13 | 351 |
| 13/14 | 354 |
| 14/15 | 367 |
| 15/16 | 369 |
| 16/17 | 404 |
| 17/18 | 424 |
| 18/19 | 449 |
| 19/20\* | 475 |

This increase in enrolment . The school is growing very strongly given its isolated location and past reputation. In 2013 there were 16 class groups and approximately 340 students in the school, we are now in a position of a projected enrolment of 500 students by September 2020 and 23 class groups. We currently have an application for additional accommodation lodged with the Buildings Unit of the DES in Tullamore.

In 2014 the school was in an ex quota position of over 3 WTE and made a curricular concession application for over 70 hours. In comparison, the school now operates within quota and will not be applying for any curricular concessions. The school has been applying for extra allocation based on projected enrolment for the last number of years and has succeeded with this.

This change has been the result of robust planning, curricular change, improved staff recruitment based on subject needs and trends, targeted and increased Staff CPD, increased and improved links with our National feeders schools (18 feeder schools in 2019), created links with other post primary schools via Droichead and TL21, increased and improved student voice, overhauled our Code of Behaviour, introduced consistency and transparency into work practices, excellent relationship with parents – a recent survey carried out with 1st and 2nd year parents shows that over 98% feel ‘included as part of our school community’. Senior Management has set up many teams and working groups to include staff in school development, these are very successful, they are methodical and focussed. The sheer volume of CPD that staff have engaged had led to a re-energised, motivated and dedicated staff.

The educational programmes on offer are the Junior Certificate / Junior Cycle, Transition Year (optional), Leaving Certificate Established, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme, Leaving Certificate Applied and Post Leaving Certificate. In 2017 the SENO granted Ramsgrange Community School a Special Class/ ASD Unit, an application has been submitted to The Buildings Unit in Tullamore for an extension to accommodate this in a more suitable fashion and to meet he needs of the students accessing the room. The ‘Unit’ is known by our students as Room 11.

Ramsgrange Community School has several working groups and teams that look at different aspects of school development. These groups are made up of cross sections from the staff, including Senior Management, Middle Management and non- post holders and Students. Teachers are elected to working groups annually. The groups/teams currently active in the school include; Advisory Board of Studies to the Principal, Positive Behaviour Strategy Team, Procedures Committee, Wellbeing Committee, Health and Safety Committee. Other Core teams include; DEIS Planning Core Team, Guidance Core Team, Care Team, Student Support Team, Attendance Core Team. Regular group meetings allow for effective dialogue amongst staff at varying management levels. Areas for development are identified and change is initiated. These teams demonstrate how staff are empowered through collaborative leadership by allowing them the opportunity to become agents of change in the school. The teams are a conduit for School Self Evaluation (SSE).

Our vibrant school offers every student the opportunity to shine, not just in academic performance. Participation in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities is high. Our website (ww.ramsgrangecommunityschool.com) and our Facebook and Instagram pages (Ramsgrange Community School) offer a flavour of the many activities, sporting and non-sporting available to our students. Many teachers give freely of their time to ensure the development of the whole person.

## Mission, Vision, Aims

Mission

Ramsgrange Community School is a welcoming, open and inclusive school. Our aim is to develop each of our students as a whole person by promoting an atmosphere of respect, honesty and fairness in which all the school community can achieve their full potential.

**Vision**

In 2013/2014, in consultation with all school partners, we re-launched our vision to RCS: Respect, Community and Success.

**Aims**

Our aim is to develop each of our students as a whole person by promoting an atmosphere of respect, honesty and fairness in which all the school community can achieve their full potential.

The School aims to encourage and facilitate effective communication, support and respect among all members of this community.

Through effective teaching and learning we aim to

* Awaken the natural hunger for knowledge which exists in every human being
* Challenge students to achieve full potential
* Offer creative, varied and enriching learning experiences
* Provide opportunities for enhancing self-esteem and achieve
* Promote moral values and social responsibility.

## Charter of Care

* Each person has the right to Education
* Each person has the right to Respect and to Fair and Equal Treatment
* Each person has the right to A Bully Free School and to be Listened to
* Each person has a right to a Clean and Comfortable School
* Each Person has the right to be Helped and to be Comfortable asking for Help

## Equality Statement

Ramsgrange Community School is committed to creating an environment in which each person is equally treated, valued and respected across the nine grounds of equality legislation – gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of ethnic minorities.

## Ramsgrange Community School Planning Process

School Development Planning and School Self – Evaluation are an integral part of Ramsgrange Community School as we strive to meet the educational needs of all our students. This process involves the whole school community.

Looking at our School 2016: A Quality Framework for Post Primary Schools (<https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Inspection-Reports-Publications/Evaluation-Reports-Guidelines/Looking-at-Our-School-2016-A-Quality-Framework-for-Post-Primary-schools.pdf>) provides a unified and coherent set of standards for two dimensions of the work of schools:

* Teaching and Learning
* Leadership and Management

This framework is used by Senior Management to implement the most effective and engaging teaching and learning approaches and enhance the quality of leadership in our school.

In Ramsgrange Community School, school development planning and self-evaluation is a collaborative process whereby the whole school community are involved: Staff, Students, Parents and Board of Management.

Advisory Board of Studies - Current Review Update – March 2019

PLEASE SEE ADVISORY BOARD OF STUDIES FOLDER FOR FULL CURRICULUM REVIEW AND PLANNING FOR ONE HOUR CLASSES SEPTEMBER 2020

1st Taster Modules: These will be removed as they currently exist. Students will taste all Optional Subject for a shorter period of time and then make choices sooner in the year. School is currently looking at subject trends and teacher capacity

Class Structure: The school has decided to move to 1-hour classes in September 2020. Ongoing planning and discussion are currently taking place including visits to other school, feedback to staff, whole staff engagement and discussion.

Wellbeing: An audit of hours and initiatives being delivered under the umbrella of Wellbeing can be seen in the Wellbeing folder.

## Board of Management

Nominees of the Trustees

Sr. Finola Cunnane

Ms. Lisa Shannon

Mr. John Flood

Nominees of Waterford Wexford ETB

Mr. James Moore

Ms. Margaret Rossiter

Ms. Mary Ryan

Secretary of the Board

Ms. Rachel O’ Connor

Elected Teacher Representatives

Ms. Marie McCabe – ASTI – Chairperson for 2018 2019

Ms. Sharon McDermott - TUI

Elected Parent Representatives

Mr. David Fitzgerald

Ms. Patricia O’ Brien

## School Leadership and Management Team

**Principal:** Rachel O’ Connor

**Deputy Principal:** Tracey Edwards

**Assistant Principals:**

**API Duties**

Ms Ann Cadogan: DSP Funding, Grant Applications, HSCL

Ms. Bridget Cadogan: 1st Year Head, Droichead Co-ordinator

Ms. Mary Cullinane: 3rd Year Head, SSE – Learning and Teaching

Ms. Sharon McDermott (Acting): 5th Year Head, JCT Co-ordinator, Exam Secretary

Ms. Linda Rogers: DEIS Facilitator, PRO & Social Media, Awards Ms. Louise Walsh: Programme Co-ordinator duties

**Programme Co-ordinator** Ms. Louise Walsh

**APII Duties**

Ms. Nichola Culleton: 6th Year Head

Ms. Mairin Dunne: 2nd Year Head

Ms. Aisling Foley (Acting): Mock Exams

Ms. Maeve Walsh: LCA Co-ordinator

Ms. Sharon Walsh: Student Council Liaison

## Ramsgrange Community School’s Facilities and Resources

Ramsgrange Community School’s campus encompasses three buildings:

Main Building

Upper School

Sports Hall

The following table lists the facilities and resources available at Ramsgrange Community School:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 2 Science Laboratories | 1 Needlework Room | 1 Large Student Social Area and 4 smaller social areas |
| 1 Home Economics Kitchen | Room 11 – Temporary Special needs Unit | 1 Canteen |
| 1 Large Art Room | Learning Support Room | Sports Hall including changing facilities and PE gear storage |
| 1 Stage | 12 General Classrooms | 1 Temporary Sensory Room |
| 2 Computer Rooms | 1 Demonstration Room | 1 Outdoor Basketball Court |
| 1 Metalwork / Engineering Rooms | 1 Woodwork / Construction Rooms | 1 Outdoor Football/Hurling Pitch |
| 1 Staff Room | 1 Chaplains Office | 1 Prayer Room |
| 1 Technical Graphics Room | 1 Career Guidance Offices | Reception |
| 1 Library | Spacious Corridors with Lockers | Student Toilet Blocks |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

## Curriculum Provision

The curriculum for Ireland's post-primary schools is determined by the Minister for Education and Skills who is advised by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). The curriculum sets out, not only what is to be taught, but how learning in the particular subject area is to be assessed.

The NCCA leads developments in curriculum and assessment and supports the implementation of changes resulting from this work. The Department supports the development of overall policy relating to assessment, curricula and guidance by: Providing syllabuses, specifications, guidelines for teachers, circulars to schools and prescribed material for the examinations.

The school provides the following programmes of education for its students:

1. Junior Cycle Programme (3 years)

Junior cycle (lower secondary education) is a three-year programme which is usually taken by students between the ages of 12/13 and 15/16 years.

Click here for [Syllabuses and Prescribed Material](https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Curriculum-and-Syllabus/Junior-Cycle-/Syllabuses-Guidelines/) (prescribed material comprises works of literature, art, music, etc. on which examination questions can be based)

While a majority of subjects are assessed as part of the **Junior Certificate Examination**, junior cycle also includes a number of subjects that are an important part of the curriculum but are not formally assessed in this way.

**Non-examination subjects** at junior cycle include Physical Education and Social, Personal and Health Education (must be studied but is not examinable). Religious Education is available as an examination subject.

A **revised Junior Cycle** began phased implementation in 2014.

The new Junior Cycle Student Award (JCSA), a process that will not be completed until 2022. The new JCSA will see changes in every syllabus to incorporate certain key skills and statements of learning. Methods of assessment and certification will also change gradually.

Comprehensive information about these changes can be obtained on [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie) and [www.juniorcycle.ie](http://www.juniorcycle.ie)

Our school’s Junior Cycle provision is as follows: **This however is currently under review by the Advisory Board of Studies to the Principal**

All students study the following subjects to examination level:

**Core:**

English, Gaeilge\*, Mathematics, French, Geography, History and Religious Education (NCCA syllabus / specification)

***\* Except those with a DES exemption***

**Elective Subjects** (Options):

Students choose three subjects from the list below and options lines are computed to maximise student’s choice.

Art, Business Studies, Home Economics, Materials Technology (Wood), Metalwork, Music, Science, Technical Graphics, French, Science, Business

The following non-examination subjects are also taken by all students:

Tutor Class, which is led by detailed Tutor Focus Plans

Physical Education

Computer Studies – a module in first year

Civic, Social, Political Education (CSPE) (New JC specification only)

Social, Personal, Health Education (SPHE), incorporating Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

## Curriculum Planning – Current 1st Year Cohort



## The Transition Year Programme – Optional based on a TY admissions Policy

This is a specially devised programme of study for students who have completed their Junior Cycle education. This one-year educational programme offers the potential for the holistic development of young people as flexible learners, active citizens and future workers. It is an interdisciplinary programme with an emphasis on personal development, social awareness and increased social competence. Students taking this option are given the chance to follow a school-developed course of study without the pressure of state examinations.

Our programme includes the following:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Current TY Prog 2019/2020** | **Periods** |
| Business/Enterprise | 2 singles |
| ECDL | 3 singles |
| History | 1 singles |
| Engineering or Woodwork | 1 double |
| French/Euro project | 2 singles |
| Science | 2 singles |
| Maths | 3 singles |
| English | 3 singles |
| Irish | 3 singles |
| Home Ec | 1 triple if possible |
| YSI | 1 single |
| Art | 1 double |
| PE | 1 double |
| Re/Tutor | 2 singles |
| SPHE | 1 single |
| Guidance/Work Prep | 1 single |
| Geography | 1 single |
| T**uesday Release for**  Modular work – First Aid/GAA/Gaisce Adv Journey/Team building  Work Exp /Comm Work | Month Sept in school  1 x 8 week block approx  1 x 8 week block approx  1 x 8 week block approx |

## The Leaving Certificate Programme (2 years)

The **Leaving Certificate (Established)** is a two-year programme that aims to provide learners with a broad, balanced education while also offering some specialisation towards a particular career option.

Students following the **Leaving Certificate (Established)** programme are required to study at least five subjects, one of which must be Irish unless an exemption applies [see [Irish Exemption](https://www.education.ie/en/Parents/Information/Irish-Exemption/) section of website]. In general, students take seven or more subjects for examination.

All subjects are offered at two levels, ordinary and higher. Irish and Mathematics are available at foundation level also.

Click here for [Syllabuses and Prescribed Material](https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Curriculum-and-Syllabus/Senior-Cycle-/Syllabuses-and-Guidelines/) (prescribed material comprises literature, academic works, musical pieces, etc. on which exam questions can be based)

**Core:** English, Gaeilge\*, Mathematics

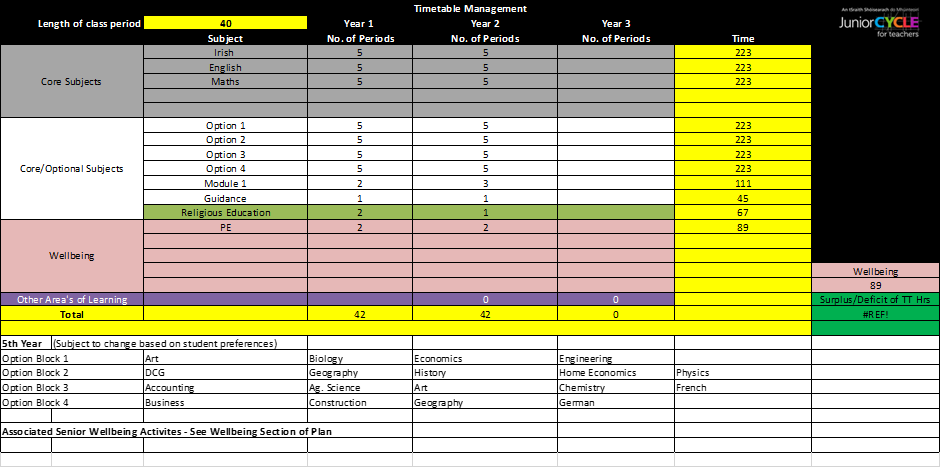
**Elective Subjects:** (Options) Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Ag. Science , Home Ec. Social and Scientific Studies, French, German, Geography, History, Music, Business, Accounting, Economics, LCVP, Art, Construction Studies, Engineering, Design and Communication Graphics.

The following subjects are also taken by all students but are non-examinable:

Physical Education

Religious Education

Guidance Counselling



## The Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme – compulsory as part of the Leaving Certificate Programme – however students may opt out.

Our students undertake the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) as a full school subject. Spread over two years, the LCVP combines the academic strengths of the established Leaving Certificate with a new and dynamic focus on enterprise, the world of work, information technology and languages. It promotes the skills and qualities of self-reliance, innovation and enterprise in an integrated programme that will prove relevant to the lives of students on leaving school for further education, for employment and for self-employment.

**80 % of our students use LCVP to achieve their highest preference CAO course.**

## Leaving Certificate Applied

Entry to the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme is per LCA Admissions Policy. The maximum number of students who can enter each year is 24 although, generally, the number is about half that annually.

**The Rationale for LCA include:**

Prepares learners for the demanding transition to adult and working life.

Recognises talents of all learners - programme responsive to aptitudes, abilities, needs and interests.

Provides opportunity to develop in terms of responsibility, self-esteem and self-knowledge.

Develops communication and decision-making skills.

Helps learners achieve a more independent and enterprising approach to learning and to life.

**The LCA programme is divided into half year blocks called ‘sessions’ of which there are four over the two-year programme.**

Students are assessed on their work in January and May of each year when a session end

LCA1:Sept- Jan= session 1

LCA1: Feb- June= Session 2

LCA2: Sept- Jan= Session 3

LCA2: Feb- June= Session 4



**General points**

It is school policy not to stream classes in 1st year. Base classes are divided with an eye to gender balance and a mix of abilities and information from primary schools

Traditionally, after 1st year, classes in Irish, English and Maths will be divided in accordance with the levels taken by students’ i.e. higher, ordinary or foundation, but this is changing with the rollout of the new junior cycle. Classes in all other subjects will be of mixed ability.

All subject options are student-led and option lines constructed accordingly using the Options package with the VSWare MIS.

School management and the teaching staff also keep under review the desirability and possibility of introducing new subjects to the school’s curriculum, subject to the provision and funding by the DES of all necessary resources.

## Curricular Planning and Co-ordination

Teachers of each subject area form themselves into departments. Each subject department appoints a Subject Liaison Person each year who works in a voluntary capacity to fulfil the following responsibilities:

• To act as a contact person for that subject department

• To act as a spokesperson for that department

• To convene meetings of subject departments

• To keep records of subject department meetings

**Subject Liaison Teachers 2018-2019**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Irish |  |
| English |  |
| Maths |  |
| History |  |
| Geography |  |
| Science |  |
| Biology |  |
| Physics |  |
| Chemistry |  |
| Ag. Science |  |
| Home Economics |  |
| CSPE |  |
| SPHE |  |
| Woodwork / Construction |  |
| Metalwork/Engineering |  |
| Technical Graphics / D.C.G |  |
| Religion |  |
| Art |  |
| Music |  |
| French |  |
| German |  |
| Business Studies (JC) |  |
| Business (LC) |  |
| Accounting |  |
| Economics |  |
| Learning Support |  |
| PE |  |
| Guidance |  |
| LCVP |  |
| Transition Year |  |
| RSE |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

Departments meet formally a minimum of three times per year in accordance with a schedule set out in the school calendar in addition to professional time (40 minutes/week).

The purpose of these meetings is several-fold:

* To eliminate the possibility of professional isolation that may be felt by individual subject teachers to foster professional dialogue, debate and reflection
* To plan for the changing and increasing demands on schools
* To discuss resource requirements
* To discuss timetabling matters
* To decide on booklists
* To evaluate the quality of and approach to teaching and learning
* To advise on student allocations
* To empower subject teachers as educators and decision-makers
* To develop a sense of co-operation and collaboration

To assist in the delivery of school policies at classroom level as well as working on a department basis, the following areas of the curriculum each have a specific Coordinator who works closely with staff and management in the development of the particular area: .

The Principal maintains close contact with all departments and co-ordinators and seeks to support teachers in every possible way in the discharge of their professional duties.

All subject departments have a detailed written plan that is updated annually and kept under ongoing review and development.

## Extracurricular Programme

In Ramsgrange Community School through extra-curricular and co-curricular activities, we foster a holistic education. The aim, as outlined in our Mission, Vision and Aims statement, is to promote the spiritual, moral, intellectual, physical, social, and personal development of each individual student.

At Ramsgrange Community School, we place great value on ensuring that each child in our care becomes a responsible and hard-working adult. We support them as they become active participants in protecting and supporting their community and environment. Through our extra-curricular and co-curricular programmes, we give our students the opportunity to discover and explore cultural and social issues and develop their knowledge and communication skills. We believe strongly in the importance of giving our students a wide range of educational experiences both inside and outside the classroom.

Extra-curricular and co-curricular activities include:

Debating, hockey, basketball, Swimming, badminton, tennis, yoga, athletics, Hurling, football, camogie, European school tour, musical productions, paired reading, field trips, equestrian, theatre, trips school, choir, Young Entrepreneurs competition, Justice Group, Green School Committee – (2 green flags already achieved).

This list is not exhaustive and can vary from year to year.

The school is greatly indebted to teachers who give so generously of their time and expertise in the promotion of these activities on a voluntary basis. The help and encouragement of members of the local community also facilitates the development of these activities and is, once again, deeply appreciated by the school.

## Student Voice

The school is fully committed to giving its students a very real sense of empowerment, involvement and representation in its daily life and decision-making processes. (LAOS: L&M D4-S3)

Students’ Council

The BOM has established a Students’ Council in fulfilment of section 27 of the Education Act, 1998.

The Board acknowledges the valuable contribution that students can make to the effectiveness of their school and considers their meaningful involvement in the operation of the school to be a valuable part of their education process. The Student Council present to the Board annually.

The general objectives of the Students’ Council are:

•To enhance communication between students, management, staff and parents

• To promote an environment conducive to educational and personal development

• To promote friendship and respect among students

• To support the management and staff in the development of the school

• To assist with policy development

• To represent the views of students on matters of concern to them

We always aim to develop and support Student Voice opportunities. The Student Council meets once a week with excellent attendance rates. After each meeting, when necessary the Chairperson meets with the Principal who listens to and discusses issues that have arisen. Following discussion with students a written letter is given to students for their file. In reference to Looking at our School 2016: A Quality Framework for Post-Primary Schools, it is our intention to develop student participation in decision making around Teaching and Learning. To that end, In 2018/2019 our Students are part of the school working group (PBST) doing a full Code of Behaviour Review.

## 

## Awards Day

Ramsgrange Community School recognises and rewards achievement, endeavour and contribution to the school community. At the end of each academic year, our Awards Ceremony highlights our students’ personal growth and successes. We name our outstanding Student of the Year and recognise academic achievement in each class group. We reward those who have excelled in sports, clubs and societies during the year. In Introduction of the St. Louis Network Award this year will be presented to a student whose enthusiasm and generosity with time has encouraged the school community to reach out and be life-giving. Our Awards Ceremony recognises personal growth and shows our appreciation to those who have contributed to the growth of our school.

## School Policies

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Policy** | **Relevant legislation/Circular/Guideline** | **Board Approval** | **Review Date** |
| **Admissions**  **TY Admissions Policy** | Section 15(2)(d) Education Act  Equal Status Acts 2000-2011  Circular M51/93 | September 2018  March 2016 | September 2020 |
| **Behaviour**  **Anti-Bullying**  **Dignity in the Workplace (draft received by ACCS March 2019)** | Circular M33/91  NEWB Guidelines ‘Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools’  Section 23 Education Welfare Act 2000.  Equal Status Acts 2000-2011  Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary & Post Primary Schools 2013  Circular 45/13  Section8(2)(b) Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005. | 2013  2014 | **Review 2018/2019**  January 2019 |
| **Attendance & Participation** | Circular M51/93  Section 22 Education Welfare Act 200  Section 21 Education Welfare Act 2000  (Annual Attendance Report to NEWB & Parents) | 2018/2019 | January 2019 |
| **Health & Safety – In Folder** | Health & Safety Act 2005 Section 20 | 2018 | May 2019 |
| **Data Protection – To Do**  **Personal Data Security Breach Code of Practice Form**  **Protected Disclosures Policy** | Data Protection Act 1988  Data Protection (amendment)Act 2003 | May 2018  September 2016 | May 2020 |
| **Inclusion and Additional Support Policy (SEN)** | Education Act 1998  Equal Status Act 2000-2011  Education Welfare Act 2000  Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (EPSEN) 2004  Disability Act 2005  Circular 0070/2014 | Final Draft Form | January 2019 |
| **Social, Personal & Health Education (SPHE)**  **Relationships & Sexuality Education (RSE)** | Circulars 37/2010, 23/2010, M27/08, M11/03, M22/00, M20/96, M4/95 | December 2015 | May 2019 |
| **Substance Abuse/Misuse** | DES Directive  Schools Guidelines 2002 | 2015 | 2019/2020 |
| **Acceptable Use of Information and Communications Technology Policy** | NCTE Guidelines 2012 | October 2018 | 2020 |
| **Child Protection- In Folder** | Circular 0065/2011  Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017 | March 2018 | March 2019 |
| **Critical Incident Policy** | RESPONDING TO CRITICAL INCIDENTS NEPS Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools – DES 2016 | 2017 | January 2019 |
| **Uniform Policy** |  | 2014 | March 2019 |
| **Subject Choice Policy** |  | May 2017 | October 2019 |
| **Assessment and Change of Level Policy** |  | May 2015 | October 2019 |
| **School Tours/ Trips and Extra-Curricular Sporting Activities** |  | March 2016 | November 2019 |
| **Homework Policy** |  | 2010 |  |
| **Subject Development Plans** |  | 2017 2019 | 2019 2021 |
| **Whole School Guidance Plan** |  | 2018 | December 2019 |
| **Wellbeing Policy/Plan** |  | Currently in Draft |  |
| **Facebook/ Social Media Policy** | ACCS Guidelines March 2019 | 2016 | 2019 |
| **One to One Meeting/Teaching Policy** | Recommendation from Guidance Inspection 2018 | Currently in Draft |  |
| **Inclusion Support Assistant Policy (SNA)** |  | In Guidance Plan |  |
| **Admission Policy for Entry into TY Programme in RCS** |  | March 2016 | 2019 |
| **Policy on Support for Staff Professional Development** |  | To be drafted | 2019/20 |
| **CCTV Policy** |  | To be drafted | 2019 |
| **Religious Education Policy** |  | To be drafted | 2019 |
| **Development Education Policy** |  | To be drafted | 2019/20 |
| **Visitors Policy** |  | To Be Drafted | 19/20 |

## Subject Department Plan

Each Subject Department currently has an un to date Subject Department plan 2017 2019.

## Admissions Policy October 2018

**Introduction**

1. All decisions in relation to pupil enrolment at Ramsgrange Community School are made by the Board of Management of the school in accordance with school policy, the Education Act 1998, the Education Welfare Act 2,000 and the Equal Status Act.

2. The Board of Management retains the right to restrict intake below the number that the physical capacity of the school indicates if it considers that the admission of some pupils would be detrimental to the interests of those pupils or to the pupils already attending the school or to prospective pupils. The current maximum number of admissions into First Year is 120 students.

3. All prospective students must meet current Department of Education and Skills requirements.

4. It is expected that an application to attend Ramsgrange Community School indicates an acceptance of all school regulations by both parents/guardians and pupils.

5. Parents/Guardians applying on behalf of a prospective student will be deemed to have read all the information set out in this document.

**Mission Statement**

Ramsgrange Community School is a welcoming, open and inclusive school. Our aim is to develop each of our students’ person by promoting an atmosphere of respect, honesty, and fairness in which all in the school community can achieve their full potential.

Relationship to the School Mission Statement.

This policy statement is in line with the objectives set out in the school’s mission statement and in the Deed of Trust for Community Schools to:

‘Provide a comprehensive system of post-primary education open to all the children of the community, combining instruction in academic and practical subjects.

The school mission statement prescribes that the school is co-educational, multi-denominational and inclusive. This policy statement, therefore, provides for the admission of all boys and girls in the community regardless of religion, social class or educational need within the limits of available accommodation and facilities provided by the Department of Education and Skills.

**Rationale**

Ramsgrange Community School is subject to all legislative requirements and regulations set down from time to time by the Department of Education and Skills (DES). The school is funded by the DES and provided with staff in accordance with DES staff allocation systems.

The curricular programme of the school is governed by the Department of Education and Skills regulation in accordance with sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act of 1998.

Enrolment is limited by school capacity and by the requirements of the school curriculum and organisation as prescribed from time to time by the Board of Management and as determined by DES regulations and standards.

In assessing applications for admission, the school will take fully into account:

a) The rights of parents to enrol their children in the school of their choice.

b) The capacity of the school to provide adequately for the education of all its’ pupils.

This policy also aims to ensure that appropriate procedures are in place to enable the school:

1. To make decisions on all applications in an open and transparent manner consistent with its Ethos, the Mission Statement of the school and legislative requirements.

2. To make an accurate and appropriate assessment of the capacity of the school to cater for the needs of applicants in the light of resources available to it.

3. To put in place a framework which will ensure effective and productive relations between students, parents and teachers where a student is admitted to the school.

The Education Welfare Act 2000 (Section 19 (1)) requires that a Board of Management shall not refuse a child except where such refusal is in accordance with the school’s Admission Policy. Section 19 (2) requires that parents must provide relevant information to the school while Section 19 (3) requires that the Board of Management shall, as soon as is practicable (but not later than 21 days) after receiving such information ‘make a decision in respect of application concerned and inform the parent in writing thereof’.

The Equal Status Act, 2000 (Section 5 & & (2)) prohibits discrimination on the grounds of ‘gender, marital status, sexual orientation, religion, age, race or membership of the Travelling Community’ regarding the admission, access to programmes, participation in the school or regarding expulsion or any other sanction.

The school will comply fully with this legislation and render and application void, which does not comply with this legislation – Section 19 (2).

1. **Background**

This policy has been drawn up in consultation with the Board of Management, Staff, Parents and Students of Ramsgrange Community School and has been approved and adopted by the Board of Management. The policy applies to all pupils who wish to enrol in the school and to their parents.

This policy is rooted in the school’s fundamental aim of providing a diverse and quality system of Post Primary Education open to all the children of the community. The policy sets out procedures to be followed in all the following circumstances.

1.1 Students applying for a place in First Year

1.1.a Students applying for enrolment to the ASD Class

1.2. Students transferring from another Second Level school or applying for a place in any other year group or programme

1.3. Students applying to repeat any year of any programme within the school including repeating the Leaving Certificate Programme.

1.4. Students from within the school applying for a place on any programme within the school (Leaving Certificate Traditional, LCVP, Transition Year, Junior Certificate Schools Programme etc).

The policy should be read in conjunction with:

• The School’s Mission Statement

• The School’s Code of Behaviour

• The School’s Homework Policy

• The School’s Attendance Policy

• The School’s Policy on SEN

• The schools’ Policy on Substance Use

• Guidelines for Parent/Teacher Communications & Meetings

• The School’s Policy on Anti-Bullying

• The School’s Policy on Internet Acceptable Use – AUP including use of mobile phones

• The School’s Policy on Relationships and Sexuality Education

• The School’s Assessment and Change of Level Policy

• The School’s Subject Choice Policy

• Other relevant policies. All school policies are available on the school website www.ramsgrangecommunityschool.ie

2. **Context:**

Our school is a Community School and as such supports the principle of equality for all students regarding access to and participation in the school.

The school respects the diversity of traditions, values, beliefs, languages and ways of life in society. The school acknowledges the right of parents to send their children to a school of the parents’ choice, subject to the resources available to the school including classroom accommodation, class size, teaching resources and financial resources and subject to the capacity of the school to provide for the needs of those who apply for admission.

Where the school lacks the necessary resources to meet the needs of any applicant or student, it will make every effort to secure those resources – where the resources cannot be secured the school may refuse admission.

The school is managed by a Board of Management, which operates under the Deed of Trust for Community Schools. The school has an active Parents’ Association and Student Council.

3. **Management, Teaching & Financial Resources:**

The school is funded by the Department of Education & Skills as part of the free education scheme. The school is staffed in accordance with the standard pupil-teacher ratios sanctioned by the Department of Education & Skills and any additional teaching hours sanctioned by the Department in respect of curricular concessions, special needs, special programmes, etc. The school operates within the regulations laid down by the Department from time to time.

The capacity of the school to implement its desired curriculum, its broad range of educational programmes, its breadth of extra-curricular activities, its school plan and policies are dependent on the resources it receives. Consequently, in determining its activities and programmes for any school year the school must have due regard to the teaching, management and administrative resources and the accommodation, equipment and funding available to it.

4. **Organisation:**

Appendix 1 contains relevant information about the organisation of the school. In addition, the school issues several Information Bulletins for parents each year setting out relevant information for the current year including dates of holidays, dates of house examination, dates of Parent-Teacher meetings etc.

5. **Curriculum:**

The school offers a broad curriculum designed to meet the needs of a wide range of abilities and aptitudes. The details of the curriculum on offer are set out each year in the School Prospectus which is available from the school on request. The curriculum is subject to change from time to time as deemed appropriate by the school. The school also endeavours to provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The provision of these activities is subject to a range of factors and the list of activities is subject to change from time to time.

6.  **Objectives:**

The objectives of this policy statement are:

6.1. To define clearly the procedures to be followed by parents/guardians in applying for the admission of a child to the school:

6.1.1. On transfer from primary to post-primary school

6.1.2. On transfer from another post-primary school

6.1.3. On seeking admission to a programme or course e.g. Transition Year, Leaving Certificate Applied.

6.2. To define the criteria to be applied in the consideration of applications in the event that the number of applications exceeds the number of available places.

6.3. To define clearly how enrolment decisions may be appealed to the local school management and/or to the Department of Education & Skills.

7. Policy Content:

Procedures – Application, Enrolment Criteria & Decision, Appeal.

7.1. Application Procedures – into First Year

7.1.1. All students entering 1st Year must be a minimum of 12 years of age on the 1st of January in the calendar year following entry. (Original birth certificates will be requested.

7.1.2. The school will have an Open Day/Night each year circa. September/October. This will be published by contacting all Primary Schools in the catchment area and by advertising in the local press.

7.1.3. Application forms will be distributed to all 6th class students in our school’s catchment area/ and to others on Open Night, together with School Prospectus, Admission Policy and Opening & Closing Dates of application procedure.

7.1.4. Application forms will be accepted on Enrolment evening which takes place in October each year. Incomplete forms will be returned to parents.

7.1.5. Application Forms will be accepted up to and including February 1st in the year of enrolment. For late applications see page 12.

7.1.6. Further information will be requested through the school’s enrolment form.

7.1.7. The school may request to meet with students and parents.

7.1.8. All parents and students will be required to sign the School’s Code of Behaviour.

7.1.9. All students will be required to sit an Entrance Assessment Test as set out in local agreements. Students may only sit this Assessment if they have made a formal application to enrol to the school. A candidate who fails to sit the Entrance Assessment without good reason outs their application to enrol at risk. The Board may decide to revoke an earlier decision to admit such a student and to offer the place to student on the waiting list.

7.1.10. It will be the policy of the school to accept all students from its catchment area regardless of ability or special educational needs except where there are limited facilities, shortage of places etc. Criteria for admission from outside catchment area are outlined later in this policy.

Students will be accepted from all backgrounds as well as those from minority groups. If a situation arises where Ramsgrange Community School receives more enrolments than it can cater for the following will apply:

i. Priority will also be given to brothers and sisters of pupils from the catchment are already enrolled in the school.

ii. Priority given to pupils living in the catchment area and attending National Schools in the catchment area.

iii. Students living in the catchment area and attending National School outside the catchment area will also be given priority.

If more students enrol from the catchment area than the school can cater for then the following will apply:

i. Priority to brothers and sisters attending the school, then

ii. Lottery.

7.2. Applications from Outside the Catchment Area – First Year.

As outlined in exceptional circumstances students from outside the Ramsgrange Catchment Area (as outlined by the Department of Education & Skills) will be admitted to Ramsgrange Community School, if they can be accommodated. If students cannot be accommodated in individual classes because of class size difficulties, they will be immediately informed, and the process will be terminated.

The following procedure will apply:

1. Application Form completed

2. Interview with parent/ guardian and student

3. Suitable reference from previous school

4. Good attendance record – as determined by the school authorities

5. Full disclosure of all relevant information

6. Good behaviour record of previous school

7. Receipts of written assurances regarding full compliance with school rules and regulations

8. Overall capacity of school to meet educational needs of the child

9. Class size

10. Capacity of the school / sufficient time to deliver programme (late applications only).

All applications must be submitted with full documentation to the Board of Management for decision.

Failure to complete the necessary documentation listed above or to supply any other relevant documentation / information requested by the school may result in an applicant being refused admission to the school.

**7.3 Enrolment into ASD Class**

Important note: The ASD class has been sanctioned only for students (subject to numbers as determined by the DES and NCSE) with a diagnosis of Autism i.e. DSM-IV, DSM-V or ICD-10.

This Admission Policy stipulates that a student may not apply for a place in both mainstream school and the RCS ASD class.

An application to the RCS ASD class carries with it an acknowledgment that said student requires the support only provided by the ASD programme.

Enrolment of First Years into the ASD Class:

7.3.1. Only applications from 6th class National School/ Special Schools will be considered.

7.3.2. All applications must be received by the school on or before the 31st October of the preceding year in line with current enrolment procedures as set out herein.

7.3.3. The following conditions, along with the general criteria outlined in our admissions policy, must be satisfied for enrolment to be considered:

a) The student seeking a place in the ASD class must have a psychological/psychiatric report which clearly specifies a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder. Diagnosis must be determined by the DSMIV, DSM-IV-TR, DSM-V or ICD-10, from an ASD Multi-Disciplinary team. The pupil must also have a recommendation for placement in a Special Class or Unit attached to a mainstream secondary school.

b) A detailed psychoeducational assessment which contains information on the pupils results on a standardised test of cognitive ability. Pupils assessed cognitive ability should not be lower than the Mild General Learning Disability range. Ideally a Speech and Language report and an Occupational Therapy report within the previous two years will be provided. Indicators are that the needs of a student with intellectual ability assessed as being in the Moderate General Learning Disability range and who is not capable of any significant level of integration are best met in a Special School placement. The ASD class will not cater for students with severe or profound learning difficulties. Evidence available must suggest that the student has the adaptive skills and cognitive functioning to enable them to access and learn in a mainstream environment to some degree.

c) Each application should be supported by a report from the primary school or previous secondary school if transferring. This report should include the student’s academic, social, emotional and behavioural needs and outline the current extent of social inclusion.

7.4. **Enrolment Procedure**

7.4.1. All vacancies in the ASD Class will be filled as per the criteria outlined in our admissions policy and subject to the conditions above.

7.4.2. Students who meet the criteria for enrolment but are not offered a place for September will remain on that year’s waiting list if a mid-academic year vacancy arises.

7.4.3. Where an application for a student to be enrolled specifically in the ASD Class is unsuccessful, this student will not be accommodated in the mainstream intake as Ramsgrange Community School would not have the capacity to meet their needs. (see 7.4.6. below)

7.4.4. The number of students enrolled in the ASD Class each year will depend on the resources and ability of the school to integrate the students into mainstream classes. The total capacity of the ASD Class is six students and this will not be exceeded. The number of students enrolled each year is determined in consultation with the NCSE.

7.4.5. The inclusion operates on the understanding that the intellectual ability of students enrolling in the special class is like the profile of the population of students attending the mainstream classes in the school and the student would have the ability to integrate into mainstream classes according to individual need.

7.4.6. The Board of Management, as is the case with all admissions to the school, makes the final decision on applications for admission to the Unit. In deciding, the Board of Management will have regard to the recommendations of the Admissions Advisory Panel. The Board of Management reserves the right to appoint other or substitute members to the Admissions Advisory Panel as deemed necessary and to seek external expert advice if required. The Board of Management of Ramsgrange Community School reserves the right to refuse enrolment, to rescind an offer of enrolment or current enrolment to any student, in exceptional cases. Such exceptional cases could arise where:

7.4.7. The student has special needs such that, even with additional resources available from the Department of Education and Skills, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the student with an appropriate education.

7.4.8. The Student poses an unacceptable risk to themselves, other students, school staff or school property.

7.4.9. Admission of the student would make it impossible to deliver, or have a serious detrimental effect on, the provision of an educational service to the student and other students.

7.4.10. An annual review of the student’s placement within the ASD Class will be held by the ASD Class team together with relevant personnel/ professionals to ensure that the ASD Class continues to be the most suitable placement option to the student.

7.4.11. All potential applicants may be visited by a member of the admissions committee to observe the student in their existing placement and to provide feedback to the admissions committee.

7.5. **Application Process**

7.5.1. Parent/ Legal Guardians are required to indicate on standard enrolment form that they request consideration for a place in the ASD Class for their child.

7.5.2. Applications for enrolment will be considered for eligibility by the Admissions Committee which will comprise of: Principal and/or Deputy Principal, SEN Co-ordinator(s), Member of the ASD Class Team, Guidance Counsellor.

7.5.3. Completed application form and all the required documentation must be received in the school no later than October 31st of the preceding year to entry.

7.5.4. Where the number of applicants to the ASD Class exceeds the places available in any year the normal enrolment policy of RCS will apply.

7.5.5. Late applications to the ASD Class will not be considered. Such applicants will be placed on a waiting list in order of receipt of application and will only be offered a place in the ASD Class whereby there is a space in the class and the overall enrolment in the year does not exceed X students. Late applications will not supersede those to the ASD Class or mainstream made before the closing date for receipt of applications who are already on the waiting list.

7.5.6. If parents/ guardians decide to avail of a place in another school rather than accept a place in the ASD Class, they are required to inform the Principal in writing immediately. This will enable the school to offer the place to another student.

7.6. **ASD Class notification of vacancies**

7.6.1. The Principal will notify the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) of the number of vacancies in the existing classes for the following year. The SENO will also be informed of the names of students on the application list.

7.6.2. When the places for the following school year have been filled, the Principal will inform the SENO of the names of the students who remain on the waiting list without places.

7.6.3. The SENO will also be informed if vacancies arise during the school year following recommendation from the admissions committee.

**7.7. ASD Class Transition Programme**

7.7.1. The SEN Co-ordinator and/or ASD Class Co-ordinator will endeavour to visit schools and observe incoming students in their existing placements. This will happen during the second or third term of the school year.

7.7.2. Transitional Programmes will be arranged on an individual basis with successful applicants in consultation with parents, educational staff and other relevant personnel.

7.7.3. Parents will be invited to meet Principal and/or Deputy Principal for all incoming students in May.

Applicants are advised that the Board of Management meets six times each academic year.

8.  **Entrance Assessment Test:**

8.1. Students will normally be advised of the outcome of their application prior to sitting for the school’s Assessment Test.

8.2. All applicants shall be obliged to sit for the school’s Assessment Test, which shall be held on a day, time and place determined by the school. A candidate who fails to sit for the test without good reason (as judged by the school) will put their admission at risk. The Board may decide to revoke an earlier decision to admit such a student and to offer the place to a student on the waiting list.

8.3. The Assessment Test will be used to help the school identify whether a student has special educational needs and the results may be used as a basis for seeking additional teaching or other resources from the Department of Education & Skills, in line with the school’s Special Educational Needs Policy.

8.4. The Assessment Test guides the school in its assignment of students to certain classes. Details of Class (Appendix 1)

9. **Application for other Year Groups:**

9.1. Application Forms are available from the Office, Ramsgrange Community School. These will be accompanied by the Admission Policy/ Code of Behaviour/ Opening and Closing dates.

9.2. Any application must be fully completed together with a medical form. Incomplete application forms will be returned to parents.

9.3. Normally applications should be submitted by April 1st. Late application procedures are outlined later in this policy.

9.4. All applications must be accompanied by a reference from previous school.

9.5. Applicants will be required to furnish details about previous 2nd Level education including school reports and other relevant information. The procedures as outlined for students entering first year from outside the catchment area also apply.

9.6. All applicants will require the following:

9.6.1. Approval of Board of Management/Interview with Principal/Deputy Principal/ Written Assurances regarding compliance with the school’s Code of Behaviour.

9.6.2. All new applicants will initially be accepted on a trial period –Contract to be signed by parents/Students.

9.7. Selection Criteria: The following will determine the success of the application:

9.7.1. The capacity of the school to cater for the applicants needs i.e. Subject choice, class size.

9.7.2. The behaviour record of a student in their previous school

9.7.3. The attendance record of a student in their previous school

9.7.4. Late applicants to year Groups: In the event of applications being received after September 1st but before January 1st in any academic year from students wishing to enter a year group in that academic year the following will apply:

9.7.4.a All procedures as outlined previously for ‘Application for other year groups’

9.7.4.b Class Size – certain subjects (i.e. practical classes must comply with Department of Education & Skills capacity limits.

9.7.4.c Subject Choice / availability of subjects.

9.7.4.d There are certain restrictions on class sizes also in line with Department of Education & Skills guidelines and with school policy such as Transition Year and LCA.Details of such restrictions may be had from the school.

9.7.4.e Applicants must have studied subject in previous school.

9.7.4.f A period of at least one week will pass between the acceptance of a student and the student commencing classes to allow time for the Year Head and Tutor to disseminate relevant information regarding the new student’s arrival.

Because of the lateness of application, applications received after January 1st in a school year will not be accepted.

10. **Admission to specific programmes or subjects (or subjects at a specific level) to students from the school.**

If there are limits in LCA, Transition Year, LCVP, or specific subjects the following will apply:

10.1. Behavioural record

10.2 Attendance record

10.3 Performance in subject previously. If the student has not taken the subject previously the Principal will liaise with Guidance Counsellor and subject teachers in order to ascertain the viability of this option.

10.4 Student’s commitment to the programme modules and completion

10.5 Student’s willingness to participate in all aspects of the programme

In relation to the above courses an application process will apply. The school will be the final arbiters of who enters any of the programmes listed above.

11. **Repeat a Year:**

11.1 Applicants must meet with Principal and outline reasons.

11.2 Department of Education & Skills forms to be completed.

11.3 Since places are limited the following will apply:

11.1.1. Application of Department of Education & Skills criteria

11.1.2. Attendance Record

11.1.3. Behaviour Record & Work Ethic

12. **Admission to Repeat the Leaving Certificate:**

12.1 Applicants must meet with Principal or Deputy Principal or Year Head

12.2 Department of Education & Skills forms to be completed and guidelines to be followed.

12.3 Since the school does not provide a specific Repeat Year Course and if space is limited the following will be considered:

12.3.1. Subject availability

12.3.2. Class size

12.3.3. Behaviour Record & Work Ethic

12.3.4. Attendance Record.

12.4. There is a fee of €200 payable to Ramsgrange Community School for all repeat students. (This fee is refundable on students attaining 90% attendance)

13. **Appeals Procedures:**

13.1. All applicants will receive a written answer to their request as set out above. Where possible, this will be done within 21 days of receipt of the application. Where it is not possible to decide on an application at the time it is received, the procedures to be followed will be explained in writing to the applicant within 21 days of receipt of the application. All applicants have the right to appeal the decision to the Board of Management. This will be dealt with as soon as possible.

13.2. A decision to refuse admission may also be appealed to the Department of Education & Skills as outlined on page 15 of this policy.

13.3. The policy will be reviewed regularly in the light of experience. It will be reviewed by a representative staff group for ratification by the Board of Management annually. Any staff member, Board member, parent, guardian or student who is unhappy with the content of the implementation of any school policy may request a review at any time and such a request will be dealt with as quickly as possible.

**The Appeals Procedure:**

How to appeal a refusal to enrol in Ramsgrange Community School:

All applicants will be informed, as soon as practicable, but not later than 21 days, after a parent has provided, in accordance with this policy, such information as may be prescribed by the Minister there under, the board of management of the school concerned shall decide in respect of the application concerned and inform the parent in writing thereof.

All applicants have the right to appeal the decision to the Board of Management. This will be dealt with at the next scheduled Board of Management meeting.

Appeals should be made in writing to;

The Secretary to the Board of Management,

Ramsgrange Community School,

Ramsgrange,

New Ross,

Co. Wexford

Y34 YY17

An Appeal against Permanent Exclusion, Suspension or Refusal to Enrol

An appeal may also be made to the Secretary General of the Department of Education & Skills in respect of a decision by a board of management or a person acting on behalf of a board of management to:

1. permanently exclude a student from the school,

2. or suspend a student from the school for a cumulative period of 20 school days in any one school year,

3. or refuse to enrol a student in the school.

Circular letter M48/01 Appeal Procedures Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998 applies.

**How to Apply**

Section 29 Appeals Administration Unit,

Department of Education and Skills,

Friar's Mill Road,

Mullingar,

County Westmeath.

N91 H30Y.

Review:

This policy will be reviewed regularly in light of experience. It will be reviewed following normal school procedures.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, Principal & Secretary to the Board of Management

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

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, Chairperson to the Board of Management

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

## Code of Behaviour January 2013– A full review is currently being undertaken (2018 2019) by the PBST Team

**Context**

The Code of Behaviour supports our Mission Statement and School Charter and is prepared in line with the NEWB Guidelines and all relevant statutory legislation.

This Code should be read in conjunction with;

 The School’s Mission Statement

 The School’s Homework Policy

 The School’s Attendance Policy

 The Schools’ Policy on Substance Abuse

 Guidelines for Parent/Teacher Communications & Meetings

 Policy on Anti-Bullying

 Policy on Internet Acceptable Use

 Policy on Mobile Phone Acceptable Use

Schools are complex organisations, whose specific purposes are teaching and learning, leading to personal and social development. Like all organisations, schools need accepted rules of procedure and codes of behaviour in order to operate efficiently and to ensure a positive learning atmosphere conducive to the realisation of their specific purposes.

The values on which our Codes of Behaviour is based are those of mutual respect, fairness, equity, self-discipline and social responsibility. They emanate from recognition of the need to protect majority rights and to ensure the creation and maintenance of an atmosphere where effective teaching and learning can take place. These values are expressed in our School Charter.

The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between pupils and the need to seek to accommodate these differences.

Schools’ activities take place in classrooms, practical workshops and laboratories, formal and informal playing areas, in the sports hall and in various out of school areas.

Unacceptable behaviour can arise in any of these areas. It is important that the boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in all of these areas are known and understood so that affirmation can be given, and sanctions can be applied. Sanctions should make clear distinctions between misdemeanours and gross misbehaviour and punishment should be quickly, fairly and consistently applied.

Ramsgrange Community School places greater emphasis on rewards than on sanctions in the belief that this will, in the long run, gives the best results.

**Disciplinary Structures and Procedures**

It is Ramsgrange Community School’s aim to foster a positive attitude to personal responsibility and behaviour. Our primary goal is to encourage pupils to consider what they should do as part of their moral and ethical development. There are a range of means in which positive behaviour and achievement both within and beyond the classroom are recognised. These include assembly, individual classes, awards nights etc.

In the daily routine of school, pupils can achieve high standards for themselves and make a positive contribution to the community in a variety of ways.

Some examples are:

• Assisting new pupils or any visitors to the school.

• Involvement in Meitheal, Student Council and Prefect system.

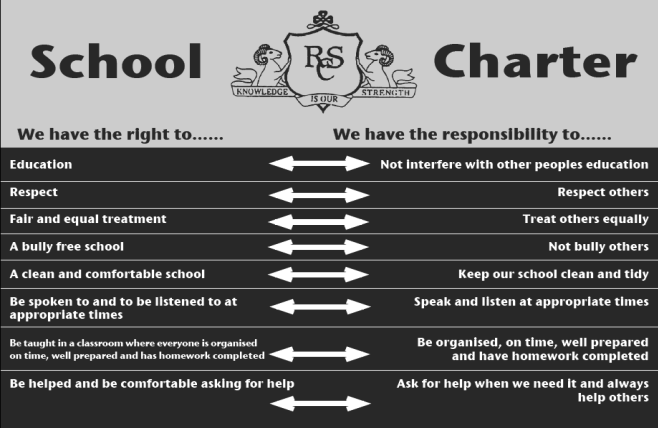
• Being punctual to class and activities.

• Ensuring all equipment is brought to class.

• Completing homework to the best of their ability.

• Valuing and respecting yourself and other people.

Our school charter clearly outlines our expectations within the school community.



**Central Core of School Rules:**

There is a central core of school rules which are detailed in the students’ journal and with which every school pupil is expected to be familiar. These rules are as follows:

1. Pupils are expected to attend punctually at all classes for which they are timetabled,

2. Pupils are to apply themselves to their classwork, to perform the exercises given to them as homework and to give their teachers respect.

3. No students may impede in any way the progress and development of another

student.

4. Students are expected to be neat and clean in their persons and attire. The uniform specified by the Principal must be worn on all school days.

5. Pupils may not smoke.

6. Pupils may not leave the school grounds without permission.

7. Pupils are expected to keep the school clean and to take care of the furniture and equipment which they may have occasion to use.

8. Pupils leaving the school on educational tours or for matches etc. are expected to refrain from behaviour which would bring the school into disrepute.

In addition to these core rules, there has also developed a set of rules and procedures which apply to the general rules in practice. These regulations include the following:

1. **Attendance:** Students who are absent from school must bring with them on their return a note in their Journal from their parents/guardians, which explains their absence. This note will be collected and signed by the Principal in the 9:00am class. Students with excellent attendance are acknowledged throughout the year and at our awards night.

2. **Punctuality**: Students arriving late for school should go first to the office where their Journal will be stamped with an ‘L’. They will complete a Late Card outlining the reason for their lateness. This will be given to their Year Head in order to monitor and assist students who are persistently late.

3. **Staffroom:** All students coming to the Staffroom are expected to knock politely and wait. Students should not come to the Staffroom during breaktime, except in exceptional circumstances.

4. **Uniform:** A detailed description of the uniform is issued to parents and students must wear this uniform to school.

5. **Homework:** Prescribed homework must be completed each evening as per homework guidelines. Positive affirmation such as notes in journals and praise will be given for presenting homework to the best of each student’s ability.

6. **Classroom**: Students must wait outside classroom until the teacher arrives. Students must leave the classroom in order before departing for the next class. Students coming to a class to give a message must knock politely, excuse themselves to the teacher and thank the teacher and class before leaving the room. Copies, workbooks etc will not be accepted for correction if graffiti of any type appears on the cover.

7. **Smoking** in public buildings is prohibited by law as well as by school rule and is regarded as a very serious misdemeanour. Students will receive an automatic Saturday detention if found smoking on the school campus. Failure to attend Saturday detention without 2 days’ notice from parents/guardians will lead to a one-day automatic suspension. The HSE Environmental Health Officer will also be informed in writing of the incident.

8. **Damage:** A student who breaks or damages any item of school property or equipment due to lack of care, will be expected to pay towards its repair or replacement.

In the event of a pupil engaging in a negative behaviour a structured series of disciplinary responses will be invoked. These are set out below. The chain of reporting proceeds from the Class Teacher to the Class Tutor to the Year Head to the Deputy Principal, Discipline Committee to the Principal, to the Board of Management. The role of each of these key personnel in our Code of behaviour is outlined below.

**Role of Key Personnel in our Code of Behaviour**

**The Subject Teacher**

In order to elicit co-operation and effort from the students, praise and commendation both written and verbal are vital given in an effort to raise each student’s self-esteem and confidence.

Subject Teachers aim to build a positive and vibrant work ethic in the classroom. Their approach to classroom management will be firm, fair, inclusive and consistent.

Achievements and positive contributions of students can be recognised in a variety of ways:

• Words of praise and encouragement.

• Note to parents – placed in the student’s journal.

• Certificate of Achievement.

• Extra responsibility given.

• A display of their work.

• Inform Class Tutor/Year Head who will reinforce achievement in a number of ways.

• Nomination for awards.

In the event of the non co-operation of a student, the following procedures apply:

Reason with the student while making sure that they understand the consequences of their actions for everyone involved.

In the event of negative behaviour occurring in class, subject teachers have a range of sanctions available to them. These include:

• Verbal reprimand

• Loss of privileges at the discretion of the event organiser.

• Moving the pupil to a different location within the class

• Assigning extra work

• Detaining the pupil at breaktime / lunchtime

• Issue Incident Report

• Possible referral for counselling session.

• Note sent to parents in Student Journal.

• Referral to Class Tutor on Discipline slip.

• Referral to Deputy Principal in the case of gross misbehaviour.

This list is not exhaustive. In the event of a disciplinary incident occurring, which, in the view of the class teacher is of sufficient severity to require further sanctioning, the matter must be referred to the relevant Class Tutor and, if necessary, the Year Head or Deputy Principal.

Any sign of sustained improvement needs to be met with approval.

**The Class Tutor**

On receipt of a referral (positive or negative) about a pupil and having consulted in detail with the Subject Teacher, the Class Tutor may take a form of the following action:

• Meet pupil, gather facts.

• Identify the source of the problem.

• Consult with others.

• Get agreement to work in partnership to bring about the desired change.

• Help work out strategies for change.

• Small signs of improvement need to be met with approval.

• Request Parent Teacher meeting through the Year Head.

• Issue Incident Report

**Forms of Affirmation may include:**

• Highlighting positive contributions of class to members of the school community through use of Notice Boards, Assembly, School Newsletters,

• Letter of Achievement, Certificates of Attendance/Punctuality,

• Pointing out improvements no matter how small,

• Giving responsibility within their area of ability.

**Forms of Sanction may include:**

• Give Discipline Slips.

• Refer to Year Head for Formal School Detention.

• Refer to Year Head for placement of pupil on Report (Notify parents using Report Notification Form)

• Referral to Deputy Principal

**The Year Head**

On receipt of a referral (positive or negative) on a pupil from a member of staff the Year Head may adopt a form of the following course of action:

**Forms of affirmation may include:**

• Recognition of achievements at Year Group Assembly.

• Rewards.

• Nomination for School Awards.

**Forms of Sanction may include:**

• Consultation/meeting with Class Teacher/Deputy Principal.

• Counsel/Warn/Impose sanction/Note in Journal.

• Closely follow and monitor the Discipline slip system by placing the pupil on Report (Report Notification sent to parents).

• Request Parent-Teacher meeting.

• Refer for counselling.

• Place pupil on detention .

**The Deputy Principal**

**Forms of Sanction may include:**

• Placing pupil on Detention.

• Placing pupil on Report.

• Withdrawal of pupil from class.

• Referral for counselling and/or assessment.

• Referral of serious cases to Principal.

• Request a Parent-Deputy Principal Meeting.

**The Discipline Committee**

The discipline committee consists of the Deputy Principal and 3 teachers nominated and elected by teaching staff at the beginning of each academic year.

**Forms of Sanction may include:**

• Placing pupil on Detention.

• Placing pupil on Report.

• Referral for counselling and/or assessment.

• Referral of serious cases to Principal in order to draft a ‘Behavioural Plan’.

• Request a Parent-Discipline Committee Meeting.

**The Principal**

**Suspension (**Appendix 2 - Suspension Policy)

The Principal has the authority to impose suspensions, subject to the parents’ right of appeal to the Board of Management against the decision.

The decision to suspend a student will be taken only if a serious breach of discipline has occurred and/or all other disciplinary measures have failed and will normally be taken only after consultation with the members of the Disciplinary Committee.

**Expulsion** (Appendix 3 – Expulsion Policy)

A pupil may be recommended for expulsion by the Principal to the Board of Management. In the event of a pupil being recommended for expulsion the parents/guardians, or the pupil themselves, if they are 18 years of age or over will be provided with the right of appeal as specified in Section 29 of The Education Act 1998.

Indefinite suspension or expulsion are procedures which are subject to review by the Board of Management.

**Concluding Points**

This Code of Behaviour will be issued to all prospective parents/guardians in advance of their daughters/sons being accepted into the Ramsgrange Community School.

It is a requirement of entry that parents/guardians sign their acceptance of the Code of Behaviour in advance of their daughters/sons being accepted into the school.

Ramsgrange Community School values the role played by the Parents Association and the Code of Behaviour may be commented on by the committee of the Parents Association and their views passed on to the Principal. Parents/Guardians wishing to comment on the Code of Behaviour should do so through the Parents Association Committee members

**Appendix**

**Appendix 1: Definitions**

1. Misdemeanours:

Misdemeanours include isolated minor breaches of school regulations and repeated minor infringements of rules related to schoolwork and homework. Sanctions here include correcting the student, giving the student additional work, detaining the student during break time, etc.

2. Continuous Misdemeanours:

These include repeated minor breaches of school regulations and repeated minor infringements of rules related to schoolwork and homework. Sanctions here include reporting the student to the Principal or Deputy Principal, placing the student on report, informing parents, loss of privileges, etc.

3. Serious Breaches and Gross Misbehaviour

These could include wilful harm to any person or property and include insulting behaviour, sexual harassment, bullying and theft.

Smoking is also included under this heading.

It also includes

• serious assault (physical fights) by students on another person,

• supply, possession and use of alcohol or illegal/legal drugs or any non-prescription mind-altering substance,

• Leaving the school grounds without permission.

• Directed offensive language,

• possession of pornography,

• possession of weapons,

• serious damage to property,

• misuse of mobile phones or Internet ,

• Smoking,

• any misbehaviour of a similar kind.

As part of such disciplinary action the Board of Management reserves the right to suspend or expel a student or students where it considers the actions to warrant such sanctions.

**Appendix 2: Suspension Policy**

Suspension is described as necessitating the student to absent themselves from Ramsgrange Community School for a specified limited period of school days. During the period of suspension, the student retains their place in school.

Suspension is designed to address student’s behaviour. Consequently, any period of suspension:

a. enables RCS to set behavioural goals with the student and their parents/guardians.

b. gives RCS staff an opportunity to plan and arrange interventions.

c. impresses on parents/guardians the seriousness of behaviour.

**Grounds for suspension:**

Suspension is utilised as a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. Normally, other interventions will have been tried before suspension, and school staff will have reviewed the reasons why these have not worked. The decision to suspend a student requires serious grounds such as that:

a. the student’s behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students

b. the student’s continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety

c. the student is responsible for serious damage to property.

A single incident of serious misconduct or gross misbehaviour may be grounds for suspension.

Factors considered prior to suspension.

a. The nature, seriousness and persistency of the behaviour.

b. The context of the behaviour.

c. The impact of the behaviour on other students and staff.

d. The effect on the quality of teaching and learning in the class group of the student concerned.

e. The interventions tried to date, including internal and external supports and agencies.

f. The possible impact of suspension.

**Forms of suspension**

IMMEDIATE SUSPENSION

In certain exceptional circumstances, the Principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary where the continued presence of the student in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of students or staff of the school, or any other person. Fair procedures must still be applied.

**SUSPENSION DURING STATE EXAMINATIONS**

This sanction will be approved by the Board of Management and will only be used where there is:

a. a threat to good order in the conduct of the examination

b. a threat to the safety of other students and personnel

c. a threat to the right of other students to do their examination in a calm atmosphere.

**ROLLING SUSPENSION**

A student will not be suspended again shortly after they return to school unless:

a. They engage in serious misbehaviour that warrants suspension and

b. Fair procedures are observed in full and

c. The standard applied to judging the behaviour is the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any student.

**‘AUTOMATIC’ SUSPENSION**

The Board of Management of Ramsgrange Community School has decided that as part of the school’s policy on sanctions, and following consultation with the Principal, parents, teachers and students that those named behaviours in ‘Appendix 1 under Gross misbehaviour’ incur suspension as a sanction. The decision to impose suspension for these named behaviours does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedures in each case.

**Procedures in respect of suspension**

Ramsgrange community school is committed to following fair procedures when proposing to suspend a student in line with all relevant legislation. Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious breaches or gross misbehaviour that could warrant a suspension, the school will:

1. Inform the student and their parents about the serious breach or gross misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it may result in suspension. Parents/guardians may be informed by phone and/or in writing, depending on the seriousness of the matter.

2. Parents and students will be given the opportunity to respond by phone, in writing or by attending a meeting whichever is deemed appropriate.

**Procedures in respect of immediate suspension**

In the case of an immediate suspension, parents will be notified, and arrangements made with them for the student to be collected. The school must have regard to its duty of care for the student. In no circumstances will a student be sent home from school without first notifying parents.

**Implementing a suspension**

The Principal will notify the parents and the student in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter will confirm:

• the period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end

• the reasons for the suspension

• any study programme to be followed

• the arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents (for example, parents might be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the code of behaviour)

• the provision for an appeal to the Board of Management

• the right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (Education Act1998, section 29).

The letter will be clear and easy to understand.

**Recording a suspension**

Formal written records will be kept of:

1. the investigation (including notes of all interviews held)

2. the decision-making process

3. the decision and the rationale for the decision

4. the duration of the suspension and any conditions attached to the suspension.

**Reporting a suspension**

1. The Principal will report all suspensions to the Board of Management, with the reasons for and the duration of each suspension.

2. The Principal will report suspensions in accordance with the NEWB reporting guidelines (Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, section 21(4)(a)).

**Authority to suspend and the period of suspension**

1. The Board of Management of Ramsgrange Community School has delegated to the Principal, the authority to suspend a student for a maximum of period of five school days at any one time.

2. A student will not normally be suspended for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances where following investigation the Principal considers that a period of suspension longer than three days is needed in order to achieve a particular objective as outlined under ‘grounds for suspension’. The matter will be referred to the Board of Management for consideration and approval, giving the circumstances and the expected outcomes.

However, a Board of Management may wish to authorise the Principal, with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board, to impose a suspension of up to five days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion, subject to the guidance concerning such suspensions.

3. The Board of Management will normally place a ceiling of ten days on any one period of suspension imposed by it.

4. The Board will formally review any proposal to suspend a student, where the suspension would bring the number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year to twenty days or more. Any such suspension is subject to appeal under section 29 of the Education Act

1998.

5. These provisions enable school authorities to give the student a reasonable time to reflect on their behaviour while avoiding undue loss of teaching time and loss of contact with the positive influences of school. They recognise the serious nature of the sanction of suspension and ensure that this seriousness is reflected in school procedures. The provisions mean that the Board of Management takes ultimate responsibility for sanctions of significant length, especially where such suspensions might reach twenty days in one school year and therefore might lead to an appeal.

**Appeals**

1. Parents/guardians, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal the Principal’s decision to suspend to the Board of Management of Ramsgrange Community School. In the event of an appeal of suspension the following will apply:

a. The Principal must be informed of the appeal of suspension in writing or verbally within 10 days of receipt of the letter of suspension.

b. The appeal will be placed on the agenda and heard at the next Board of Management Meeting.

c. The Principal outlines the reason(s) for suspension to the Board with the parent(s)/guardian(s) present.

d. The parent(s)/guardian(s) outline the reason(s) for the appeal with the Principal present.

e. Both the Principal and/or parent(s)/guardian(s) may be questioned by the Chairperson, or by Board members, through the chair, regarding issues raised.

f. The Principal and parent(s)/guardian(s) leave the Board meeting.

g. The Principal and/or parent(s)/guardian(s) may be recalled by the Board, with the other party present, should any clarification be required by the Board.

h. The Board informs the parent(s)/guardian(s) in writing of the Board’s decision. This to be signed by the Chairperson.

In the event of the appeal being successful the suspension will be erased from the student’s record.

1. **Section 29 Appeal:** Where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches twenty days, the parents, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the Education Act 1998, as amended by the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007.

At the time when parents are being formally notified of such a suspension, they and the student will be told about their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under section 29 of the Education Act 1998 and will be given information about how to appeal.

**Grounds for removing a suspension**

A suspension may be removed if the Board of Management decides to remove the suspension for any reason or if the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science directs that it be removed following an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

**Supports after a suspension ends**

A period of suspension will end on the date given in the letter of notification to parents/guardians informing them of the suspension. The school will endeavour to help the suspended student take responsibility for catching up on work missed.

Once the period of suspension is complete a student will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start. A record of the behaviour and sanction imposed will be maintained on the student’s file. However, once the sanction has been completed the school expects the same behaviour of this student as of all other students.

Students will be readmitted to Ramsgrange Community School on a phased basis should this be considered necessary.

**Review of use of suspension**

The Board of Management will review the use of suspension at regular intervals to ensure its use is consistent with school policies, that patterns of use are examined to identify factors that may be influencing behaviour in the school and to that use of suspension is appropriate and effective.

**Appendix 3: Expulsion Policy**

A student is expelled from Ramsgrange Community School when the Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him or her from the school, having complied with the provisions of section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

The Board of Management of Ramsgrange Community School has the authority to expel a student. As a matter of best practice, that authority is reserved to the Board of Management and will not be delegated.

**The grounds for expulsion**

We consider the expulsion of a student to be a very serious step, and one that will only be taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour.

The school will take significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of a student including, as appropriate:

• meeting with parents and the student to try to find ways of helping the student to change their behaviour

• making sure that the student understands the possible consequences of their behaviour, if it should persist

• ensuring that all other possible options have been tried while seeking the assistance of support agencies

A proposal to expel a student requires serious grounds such as that:

• the student’s behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process

• the student’s continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety

• the student is responsible for serious damage to property.

The grounds for expulsion may be similar to the grounds for suspension. In addition to factors such as the degree of seriousness and the persistence of the behaviour, a key difference is that, where expulsion is considered, Ramsgrange Community School will have utilised a series of other interventions and believe we have exhausted all possibilities for changing the student’s behaviour.

The Board of Management of Ramsgrange Community School has decided, as part of the school’s policy on sanctions, and following the consultation process with the Principal, parents, teachers and students, that particular named behaviours incur expulsion as a sanction. However, a general decision to impose expulsion for named behaviours does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedures.

1. Serious or malicious damage to school property

2. Supply, possession or use illegal/legal drugs

3. Serious physical assault or violence

4. Sexual assault

Expulsion for a first offence

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a student should be expelled for a first offence. The kinds of behaviour that might result in a proposal to expel on the basis of a single breach of the code could include:

1. a serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff

2. actual violence or physical assault

3. supplying illegal drugs to other students in the school

4. sexual assault.

**Determining the appropriateness of expelling a student**

Given the seriousness of expulsion as a sanction the Board of Management will undertake a very detailed review of a range of factors in deciding whether to expel a student.

1. The nature and seriousness of the behaviour.

2. The context of the behaviour.

3. The impact of the behaviour.

4. Any interventions tried to date.

5. Whether expulsion is an appropriate response.

6. The possible impact of expulsion.

**Procedures in respect of expulsion**

Ramsgrange Community School is required by law to follow fair procedures as well as procedures prescribed under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, when proposing to expel a student. Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include:

1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal.

2. A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.

3. Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal’s recommendation; and the holding of a hearing.

4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.

5. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.

6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.

The Board of Management of Ramsgrange Community School has decided that the above procedural steps at 2, 3 and 4 can be accomplished together in a single meeting, consistent with giving parents due notice(a minimum of 7 calendar days) of meetings and a fair and reasonable time to prepare for a Board hearing. STEP 1 A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal

In investigating an allegation, in line with fair procedures, the Principal will:

a. informs the student and their parents, in writing, about the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion

b. gives parents and the student every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made and before a sanction is imposed. This will include a meeting with the Principal, parents, student and any other relevant personnel.

STEP 2 A recommendations to the Board of Management by the Principal.

Where the Principal forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal makes a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion. The Principal will:

a. informs the parents and the student that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion

b. ensure that parents have records of the allegations against the student; the investigation; and written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion

c. provides the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to parents

d. notifies the parents of the date of the hearing by the Board of Management and invite them to that hearing

e. advises the parents that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management

f. ensure that parents have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing.

STEP 3 Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal’s recommendation; and the holding of a hearing.

The Board of Management will review the initial investigation and satisfy itself that the investigation was properly conducted in line with fair procedures. The Board will undertake its own review of all documentation and the circumstances of the case. It will ensure that no party who has had any involvement with the circumstances of the case is part of the Board’s deliberations

Where a Board of Management decides to consider expelling a student, it must hold a hearing. At the hearing, the Principal and the parents, or a student aged eighteen years or over, put their case to the Board in each other’s presence. Parents may wish to be accompanied at hearings and the Board will facilitate this, in line with best practice and Board of Management procedures.

After both sides have been heard, the Board will ensure that the Principal and parents are not present for the Board’s deliberations.

STEP 4 Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.

Having heard from all the parties, it is the responsibility of the Board to decide whether or not the allegation is substantiated and, if so, whether or not expulsion is the appropriate sanction.

Where the Board of Management, having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the student should be expelled, the Board will notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion. (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(1)). The student will not be expelled from Ramsgrange Community School before the passage of twenty school days from the date on which the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) receives this written notification (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(1)).

The Board will inform the parents in writing about its conclusions and the next steps in the process. Where expulsion is proposed, the parents are informed that the Board of Management will now inform the Educational Welfare Officer.

STEP 5 Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.

Within twenty days of receipt of a notification from a Board of Management of its opinion that a student will be expelled, the Educational Welfare Officer must:

a. makes all reasonable efforts to hold individual consultations with the Principal, the parents and the student,

b. and anyone else who may be of assistance convene a meeting of those parties who agree to attend (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, section 24).

Pending these consultations about the student’s continued education, the Board of Management may take steps to ensure that good order is maintained, and that the safety of students is secured (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(5)). The Board may consider it appropriate to suspend a student during this time. Suspension should only be considered where there is likelihood that the continued presence of the student during this time will seriously disrupt the learning of others or represent a threat to the safety of other students or staff.

STEP 6 Confirmation of the decision to expel.

Where the twenty-day period following notification to the Educational Welfare Officer has elapsed, and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Board of Management will formally confirm the decision to expel (this task can’t be delegated to the Chairperson and the Principal). Parents will be notified immediately that the expulsion will now proceed.

Parents and the student shall be told about the right to appeal and supplied with the standard form on which to lodge an appeal. A formal record will be made of the decision to expel the student.

**Appeals**

A parent, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (Education Act 1998 section 29).

An appeal may also be brought by the National Educational Welfare Board on behalf of a student.

**Review of use of expulsion**

The Board of Management will review the use of expulsion at regular intervals to ensure its use is consistent with school policies, that patterns of use are examined to identify factors that may be influencing behaviour in the school and to that use of suspension is appropriate.

## Subject Choice Policy 2017

**Mission Statement**

Ramsgrange Community School is a co-educational and non-denominational school. We are a welcoming, open and inclusive school. Our aim is to develop each of our students as a whole person by promoting an atmosphere of respect, honesty and fairness in which all the school community can achieve their full potential. Our school’s vision centres on the values of Respect, Community and Success.

**Other relevant policies**

Admissions Policy

Transition Year Admissions Policy

Leaving Certificate Applied Admissions Policy

Assessment and change of level policy

**Overview of process**

The process of ‘choosing subjects’ begins in December annually. All students in third year complete DATS (Differential Aptitude Tests) and meet with the Guidance Counsellor to discuss results prior to subject choices. Third year/ Transition Year students also receive a presentation from subject teachers and programme co-ordinators.

The Guidance Counsellor will meet with students in order to help students make choices for Junior Cert subjects and Leaving Cert subjects on an individual basis if requested.

Parents will also be informed on subject choice in the following ways:

Parents will attend an information evening explaining the process in early March. Parents will also have an opportunity to discuss subjects at Parent/Teacher meeting in February. Parents can also speak to the Guidance Counsellor individually if they so wish.

Subject bands are created annually from student preferences. Every effort is made to meet the preferences of students; however, there will always be situations where preferences cannot be met within the subject bands. Subjects and programmes offered each year are very much dependent on DES teacher allocation.

**Second Year Subject Choices:**

All students study the core subjects Mathematics, Irish, English, History and Geography as well as other compulsory subjects CSPE, PE and SPHE.

Students then select three subjects from the following list of subjects (the provision of these subjects is dependent on DES allocation): Art, Materials Technology Wood, Materials Technology Metal, Technical Graphics, Home Economics, Business, French/German, Science and Music.

Students will then receive a preference form similar to the one in appendix 1A. Students are advised to speak with subject teachers before making any decision. There will be a Parent Teacher Meeting in February where parents will have an opportunity to speak with individual teachers. Principal and Deputy Principal create bands based on student preferences using the ‘Options’ programme in VSWare. The school does not guarantee that all subjects will run, this is based on both DES allocation and demand.

Students will be informed of their subject options during April. Timetabling then begins. Classes are created based on student’s subject choice. Timetabling will continue throughout the summer months. The process of subject choice, banding and timetabling is a very rigorous and time-consuming progress and thus there is no scope for change of subjects after the deadline set.

**Oversubscription of subjects:**

If a situation arises that a subject is over-subscribed, then the following criteria will apply:

1. Student Preferences

2. Lottery

**Fifth Year Subject Choice Subject choice:**

All students study the core subjects Irish, English, Maths, Religion/RSE (Relationship and Sexuality Education), Guidance, LCVP (Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme), PE. Students then select four subjects in order of preference from the following optional subjects (the provision of these subjects is dependent on DES allocation): Art, Engineering, Construction studies, Design and Communication Graphics, Home Economics, History, Geography, French, Business, Accounting, Economics, Agricultural Science, Biology, Chemistry, and Physics.

The availability of subjects will be based on Department of Education and Skills allocation and demand.

**Choosing Subjects:**

When choosing Leaving Cert subjects great care must be taken as the choice of subjects made now may determine 3rd level and career options in two years’ time.

• Be aware of Minimum entry requirements and specific course requirements for 3rd level.(Check out www.qualifax.ie and www.careersportal.ie)

• Identify the subjects you like—it is easier to work on something you enjoy. Note subjects you are good at.

• Ask your subject teachers for advice.

• If uncertain about your future career, choose a balance of subjects to keep options open.

• Talk about options to your parents, guidance counsellor, and Leaving Certificate students.

• Look at text books of subjects, exam papers and websites.

A 5th year options talk for parents will be held in RCS annually.

Subject bands will be created based on student preferences and demand. Students will be informed of their chosen subjects in April. The creation of classes and timetabling then begins by the Principal. Classes are created based on students’ subject choice. (Subjects may not be offered if there is insufficient demand or Department of Education and Skills allocation). Timetabling will continue during the summer months.

Students must attend class and participate in all of their chosen subjects throughout the entirety of the Junior or Leaving Certificate cycle. There may be some scope for subject choice change in exceptional circumstances during September. Applications must be made to the Principal in writing. Change of mind applications will not be considered after September 30th.

**Oversubscription of subjects:**

If subjects are oversubscribed the following criteria will apply:

1. Student preferences

2. Subject taken to Junior Certificate level

3. Lottery

**Additional subjects outside of school:**

The school will not be in a position to accommodate students studying additional subjects outside of school.

**Programme choices:**

Transition Year and Leaving Certificate Applied programme choices will also be completed by students in mid-March. Applications for those programmes are set down in the TY/LCA admissions policies. LCVP is compulsory for all students in 5th Year. There is a copy of the Vocational Subject Groupings that are required to sit the LCVP exam attached (Circular 40/2013).

An Interview panel will be created by the school to determine entry to these programmes, however, the final decision rests with the Principal of the school.

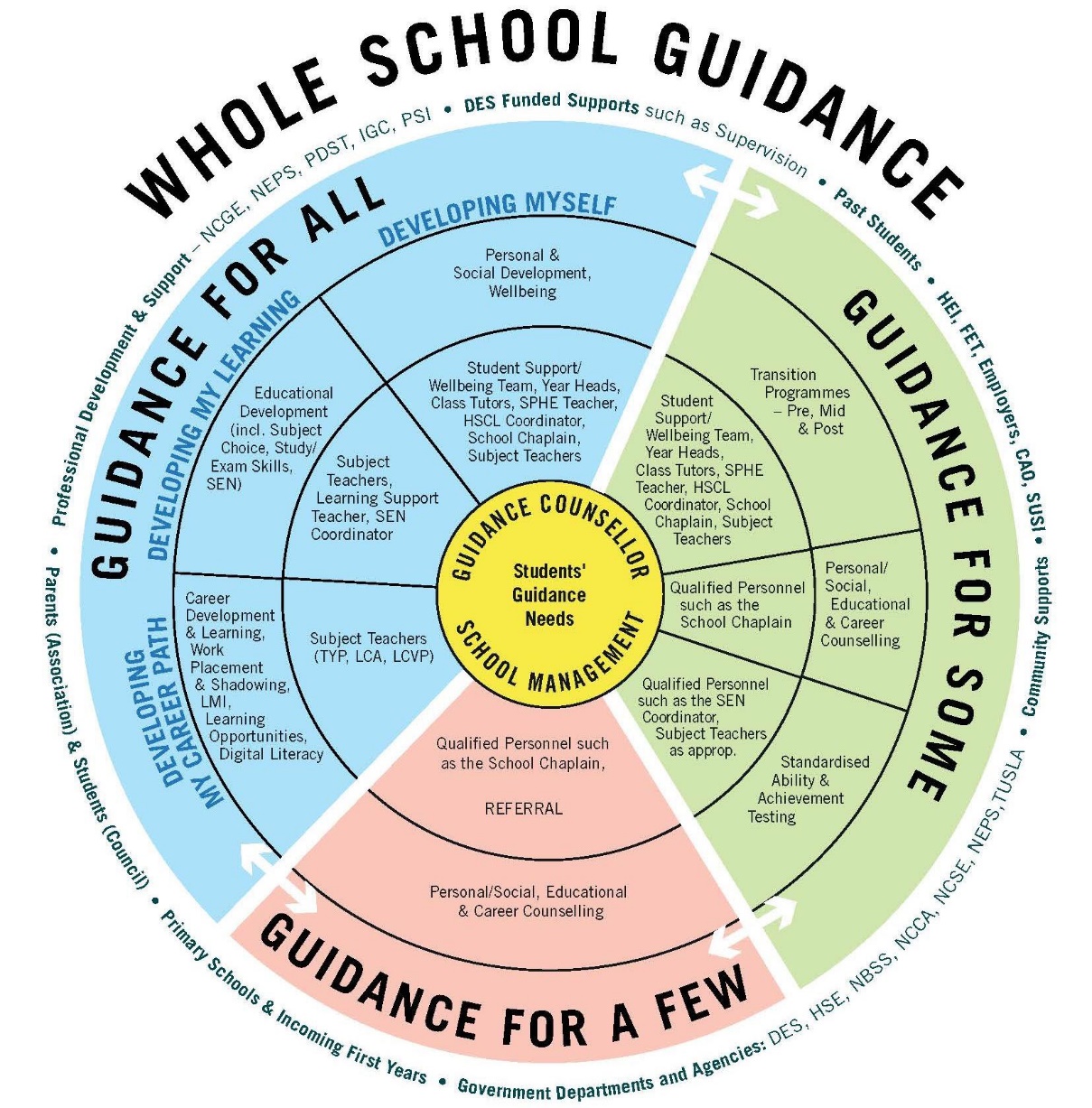
**Review:**

This policy will be reviewed when deemed necessary by School Management.

## 

## Whole School Guidance Plan (2016)

**Excerpt from - ‘NCGE: A Whole School Guidance Framework’ © National Centre for Guidance in Education 2017.**



**List of Abbreviations**

CAMHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service

CAO Central Applications Office

CAT4 Cognitive Abilities Test

CFE College of Further Education

CII Career Interest Inventory

CPD Continuous Professional Development

DARE Disability Access Route to Education

DES Department of Education and Skills

EUNICAS Colleges in Europe providing programmes through English

GC Guidance Counsellor

HEAR Higher Education Access Route

HSLP Home School Community Liaison Person

HSE Health Service Executive

II Interest Inventory

IT Institute of Technology

JC Junior Cycle

LCE Leaving Cert Established

LCVP Leaving Cert Vocational Programme

NEPS National Educational Psychological Service

NGRT New Group Reading Test

PE Physical Education

PLC Post Leaving Certificate Course

RSE Relationships and Sexuality Education

SHIP Self-Harm Intervention Programme

SPHE Social, Personal and Health Education

SOLAS Apprenticeships and Training Authority

SSE School Self Evaluation

STEM Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

SUSI Student Universal Support Ireland

TUSLA Child and Family Agency Services

TY Transition Year

UCAS Universities and Colleges Application Service

VGI Vocational Guidance Interview

WRAT4 Wide Ranging Achievement Test 4

WTO Working Things Out

### 24.i Guidance

Guidance is defined as the process of facilitating individuals or groups at any point throughout their lives to develop their capacity for the self-management of their personal, social, educational, training, occupational and life choices in order to grow towards their potential and thereby to contribute to the development of a better society, (National Guidance Forum 2004). The Education Act of 1998 Section 9 (c) requires that schools ensure students have access to appropriate guidance and develop a comprehensive guidance plan, as part of the overall School Development Plan, which takes into account the needs of students, available resources and contextual factors (www.education.ie, 2007).

Operating Context

Ramsgrange Community School is an amalgamation of the St. Louis Secondary School, Ramsgrange and the Vocational School, Shielbaggan. The schools amalgamated in 1977. Ramsgrange Community School continues the traditions of the two schools. The Community School offers pupils both the practical and academic in a broad general curriculum, so that each pupil is offered an educational structure suitable to his/her needs, abilities and interests. A Board of Management which is representative of all the school partners manages the school. The Board meets once a month and is elected for a three-year term. The BOM is comprised of three nominees of each of the Trustees (the Sisters of St. Louis and the Co. Wexford VEC), two parent nominees and two teacher’s nominees. The day-to-day management of the school is carried out by the School Principal and the School Deputy Principal. A Year Head takes responsibility for each year group and liaises with staff, students and parents.

Ramsgrange Community School is a DEIS school situated near a peninsula (Hook Head) in the South West of Wexford. The nearest secondary school is approximately 28km away situated in the nearest town. There are 16-18 feeder schools within a 40km radius. Hook Head Peninsula, although a thriving tourist destination nowadays, has historically been a very disadvantaged area where the only means of employment were farming and fishing, a tradition which remains true for several families today. As a result, there is a culture of complacency born out of fear regarding future aspirations and willingness and / or ability (financially) to move forward through education. As a result of the many initiatives taking place in the school, this culture is shifting.

**1.2. School Details**

Ramsgrange Community School is co-educational and currently has approximately 435 students and almost 46 teachers, including a full-time guidance counsellor, chaplain, home school liaison coordinator, behaviour for learning coordinator (NCSE) and project worker. There are also 5.75 ISAs. A structured Guidance and Counselling Service is available to all students in the school at all levels. Guidance is given in classes in a mixed ability setting and during individual consultations. The Guidance and Counselling service includes class, individual and small group interventions in one or more of the three areas of personal/social, educational and vocational concerns.

**1.3. Philosophy & Mission Statement**

The philosophy of the school is to develop every student as a whole person and to enable all in the school community achieve their full potential. The school has long been recognised as a centre of academic excellence for second level and continuing education. Our mission statement is:

Ramsgrange Community School is a welcoming, open and inclusive school. Our aim is to develop each of our students as a whole person by promoting an atmosphere of respect, honesty and fairness in which all the school community can achieve their full potential.

Schools are complex organisations, whose specific purposes are teaching and learning, leading to personal and social development. Ramsgrange Community School always aims to protect the wellbeing of its students by providing a safe and nurturing environment. The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between pupils and the need to seek to accommodate these differences.

**1.4. The Role of the Guidance Counsellor**

The role of the guidance counsellor has many facets: manager, leader, gatherer and distributor of information, administrator, researcher, analyst, report writer, teacher, mediator, negotiator, listener, advisor, friend….to name but a few. Traditionally the main role of a guidance counsellor was that of a “careers advisor”. Even though the role has evolved alongside society, it nevertheless is still conceived to be predominantly that of a “careers advisor”.

Today’s World and Today’s Adolescent

The modernisation of Irish society has proceeded apace and resulted in the emergence of an increasingly pluralist society. These changes have been significant in nature, but the pace of change has proved to be of even greater significance with many young people emerging from school to an adult world radically different from the world of their parents.

(NCCA, January 2003, Section 3:8)

The demands put upon adolescents today far exceed the demands put upon any other generation. Society has changed so rapidly, it can be difficult for parents, teachers and guidance counsellors to relate to and indeed appreciate the pressures put upon students in schools today. More variety and choice mean a lot more decisions must be made; more freedom requires more responsibility and faster development from child to adolescent, adolescent to young adult, means a shorter childhood and a longer working life. People make “bad” decisions. It is an inevitable part of life. For adolescents, making wrong vocational decisions can have consequences for the rest of their lives.

Ramsgrange Community School endeavours to provide a range of interventions which will assist our students in reaching their full potential through making informed social, personal, educational and career decisions. The interventions include activities such as information sourcing, distribution and processing, advice and a variety of assessments which provide some structured inputs relating to the context of the decisions but also include activities such as counselling, career education and coaching where the focus is more on the processes involved in decision-making, thus equipping the student with the skills necessary for any transition in life.

**1.5. The Aims of the Guidance Service**

**•** To assist every student in achieving their full potential in every aspect of their life.

• To provide information enabling students to make informed decisions in relation to subject choice and ultimately career choice.

• To develop a sense of independence in the students with regards to completing their own research.

• To encourage a confidence in the student in dealing with situations, both personal and vocational and accordingly developing their self-esteem.

• To provide students with appropriate support in times of crisis and trauma through counselling or support programmes.

• To facilitate student’s integration in the school community through various peer related activities.

• To identify students at risk and put in place appropriate strategies to help them deal with the difficulties they may be experiencing.

• To provide where possible appropriate support for parents and guardians where such support is deemed necessary.

**1.6. The Objectives of the Guidance Service:**

**•** Students will have knowledge of subjects and their relevance to further training, study or careers.

• Students will have acquired skills such as research, study, time-management, communications and information processing, etc.

• Students will be adept in decision-making and encouraged to follow their dreams.

• Students will be able to recognise and acknowledge their feelings and deal with them in an appropriate manner.

• Students will be able to actively listen and respond fittingly.

• Students will be more self-confident, self-aware and have a positive sense of self-esteem.

• Students will learn to develop and enhance the social skills of communication.

**1.7. Ethical Considerations & Accountability**

The Guidance Counsellor operates within the professional code of ethics of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors. The Guidance and Counselling Service is subject to all relevant legal requirements, to the provisions of the 1998 Education Act, to Department of Education and Science Directives, to the school’s mission statement and the school plan. The Guidance Counsellor like all other members of staff in the school is entrusted with the care of their students in ‘loco parentis’ and accepts the responsibilities of this position, keeping the student’s welfare to the forefront always. The Guidance Counsellor and those involved in Guidance provision are constantly aware of their responsibility to the student, to the school, to their profession, to themselves and to the implementation of this policy.

The work of the Guidance Counsellor can be categorized under three headings:

• 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.

**Educational Guidance**

Educational guidance encompasses many aspects of an adolescents learning while in secondary school. Educational Guidance occurs in every class for every subject. It is essential in aiding in identifying a student’s own most effective learning styles and in developing effective study and note-taking skills, examination techniques and time-management skills.

**Career Guidance**

Career Guidance is not an event, but a process which begins on the student’s entry to second level education and continues until they leave and even after leaving the school. Guidance in Ramsgrange Community School refers to a range of learning experiences, provided in a developmental sequence, which assists students to develop self-management skills which will lead to effective choices and decisions about their lives. The same protocols and procedures that are used for personal guidance also adhere to career guidance.

**1.8. Student Appointments: Protocols & Procedures**

**•** Students can be referred for counselling at their own request, the request of parents, teachers or if a friend or peer draws it to the attention of any staff member that a student is in crisis.

• Once an appointment is made, the student is issued an appointment slip which they must get signed by their class teacher.

• The duration of the session may vary according to the need but in general will be 40 minutes (one class).

• The appointment slip is signed at the end of the session by the guidance counsellor and the time at which the session has ended is noted on the slip.

• The student then brings the slip back to the class teacher who signs it and returns it to the guidance counsellor by placing it in their pigeon hole.

• 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.

• It may be appropriate for the guidance counsellor to meet with two or more students in such circumstances such as bullying.

• 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.

The Guidance Counsellor and Chaplain 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. 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. There may be situations when the guidance counsellor or chaplain feel the need to refer the student on to an external agency.

**1.9. Confidentiality**

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.

**1.10. Reporting Procedures**

Reporting procedures are in line with the Department of Health’s Child First Guidelines in conjunction with the Designated Liaison Person (Ms. Rachel O’Connor - Principal). The Guidance Counsellor will refer students to other professionals when ethically or legally required to do so. The student is informed of the limits of confidentiality at the beginning of a session. If it is felt it is in the student’s best interests to inform a teacher/parent/guardian/management of a difficulty, this is done with the knowledge and ideally the agreement of the student. The Guidance Counsellor may need to consult or seek advice from significant adults regarding individual students e.g. parents, school principal / deputy principal, the School Care Team, class teacher or other outside agencies. These consultations always respect the student’s needs and maintain appropriate confidentiality.

**1.11. Meetings with Parents**

**Protocols and procedures**

Parents may make an appointment with the guidance counsellor by doing the following:

• Contacting the guidance counsellor directly

• Contacting the principal or office who then liaise with the guidance counsellor

• Through their son or daughter in the school

It is often the case whereby the guidance counsellor feels the need to arrange a meeting with the parents or guardians in relation to issues that have arisen when seeing their son/daughter.

**1.12. Student Care Team (SCT)**

The Student Care Team represent the pastoral guides and supports within the school. The coordination between its members is an invaluable resource in maintaining communications and connections between students, teachers, parents and management. The meetings take place at 9:40AM every Tuesday. Records are taken and kept in the Guidance office.

The members of the Care Team are as follows:

Principal (DLP) Rachel O’Connor

Deputy Principal (DDLP) Tracey Edwards

Chaplain Marie McCabe

Home School Liaison Officer Ann Cadogan

Guidance Counsellor Mary Harris

**Rationale behind the Student Care Team:**

**1.** To work in collaboration with each other to pool our resources in managing, supporting and containing the issues around care within the school, for the well-being of our students.

2. To establish an effective line of communication around complex issues, that responds sensitively to the needs of staff, students and parents.

3. To best utilize time spent in meetings with each other (formal and informal) and reduce the chances of duplicating care resources.

4. To maximize on the pro-active approach to care within the school.

5. To have a documented support structure to meet the new legal requirements of the Safety & Welfare at Work Act 2005.

- Risk Assessment.

- Documentation of prevention, intervention and postvention.

- Health Surveillance (Bullying, Suicide, Self-harm, Bereavement, Absenteeism etc.)

6. To provide collegial support in dealing with complex health and welfare issues.

**The Role of the Student Care Team**

**•** The SCT is largely responsible for the co-ordination of student care within the whole school network, parents and outside agencies.

• The SCT meets on a weekly basis. This is followed by a Student Support Team meeting.

• Class Teachers are the first port of call for subject teachers should there be concerns about individual students. All Class Teachers have frequent contact with the students. Any Class Teacher who has received concerns about a student and feels that the situation needs to be referred to the SCT may do so with any member of the team.

• The SCT take referrals around individual and general issues of concern relevant to Student Care and Wellbeing.

• When individual issues of concern arise within, or are referred to, the SCT, referrals will be made to the relevant personnel within the school network

Referrals to the following take place during the SCT meetings:

• Principal & Deputy Principal

• Class teachers

• Guidance & Counselling department

• Learning Support department

• Parents

• Outside Agencies

• In-school Management

• Other as necessary

When general issues of concern arise within, or are referred to, the SCT, referrals will be made to the relevant personnel within the In-School Management structure as is appropriate. The SCT is not a decision-making body on general issues of concern or school policy. The SCT will report back to staff on any new recommendations where a staff decision will betaken on the issues.

**Student Support Team (SST)**

The Student Support Team is part of the support system in a school. That system encompasses a range of supports that cater for the learning, social, emotional and behavioural needs of students. Essentially, a student support team is a student-focused mechanism put in place by a school in order to:

• Co-ordinate the support available for students in the school

• Facilitate links to the community and other non-school support services

• Enable students with support needs to continue to access a full education

• Assist staff to manage those students effectively

• Ensure new staff members are briefed about policies and procedures relating to student well-being and support

• Advise school management on the development and review of effective student support policies and structures

• Meetings are held once a week, comprising the Care Team and BFL Co-ordinator. Once a term, on alternate weeks, the following are invited along to join the SST in order to monitor progress of students, assess students who may need special care or consideration: SEN Co-ordinators, Project worker and the School Completion Coordinator. There is a specific referral form which teachers, ISA’s etc. are asked to complete. This is then passed onto the Year Head who passes it directly on to a member of the Care Team

**1.13. ICT in Guidance**

It is a known fact that “The notion of lifetime employment at one job has already started to disappear” (Negroponte, 1995: p.227). The generation at school leaving age now will probably change their career approximately four or five times during their lifetime. Guidance Counsellors will not be there for them during these times. It is therefore imperative that the best way a student can be guided is by helping them learn how to think and learn how to learn:

Thus from guidance designed to be a “once-off”, limited to the “moment” when a career “for life” is chosen, in direct relationship with initial qualifying training, we are moving towards an idea of guidance designed to be a process which develops throughout a person’s life, the sum of micro-decisions, multiple reorganizations of an individual life, alternation of periods of employment, unemployment, training, implying the validation of professional experience, individual skills analysis, etc.

(Taupin, 1997:p.25)

The concept of lifelong learning and guidance is still relatively new, and yet essential today. Career decision-making will become a part of everyday life. Perhaps up until now, guidance counsellors were seen as holders of vital information. It is now imperative that they hand over the power and responsibility that goes with information, to their students. Teach them how to access it, evaluate it, use it and then discard it if it is no longer of use.

Access to information is no longer a problem; access to the right information is now becoming the issue. At a conference in 1996 on ICT in Guidance, Ms Niamh Bhreathnach, T.D. former Minister for Education stated that one of the key roles for guidance counsellors ‘will be to sift through those mountains of electronic junk to find the nuggets of valid wisdom and information that they need’ (Bhreathnach, 1997:p.12). It is essential that we teach students how to ask the right questions, in formatting the information they require.

How much ICT is incorporated into a student’s guidance, is dependent on the need and ability of the client. What is coherent with each student’s guidance is the value the guidance counsellor tries to empower of the advantage of using different methods of information gathering and processing and the power each method holds, especially ICT.

**1.14. Annual Presentations made to Parents**

First Year

• Information nights before child arrives and in October/November after school has commenced

• Subject choice evening

Third Year

• Options after Junior Cert – Subject choice

Fifth and Sixth Year

• College Applications Evening - CAO system, PLC’s etc., HEAR and DARE, Grants And Accommodation (Guest speakers: Maynooth University and WIT)

**1.15 Psychometric Testing**

Psychometric tests are a series of standardised tests used to measure intelligence, ability, aptitude, values and career interest and identify personality traits of students. All psychometric tests are administered by the Guidance Counsellor who is qualified in psychological / psychometric testing at level A and B and all feedback and interpretation is given by the Guidance Counsellor.

The Guidance Counsellor uses a range of psychological tests for prediction of academic performance, categorisation of occupational interests, assessment of behaviour, educational and career planning, personal and social development.

Information from these tests is supplemented by other records on the student that are held in the school. State examination results (Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate) and Mock Examination results enable the GC to assist a pupil in decision-making.

**Definition:**

The term ‘assessment’ refers generally to the gathering and interpretation of information related to a student’s learning abilities, learning attainments, learning strengths and learning needs.

Why assess?

Assessment is part of good teaching and learning and takes place for the following reasons:

• To monitor a student’s progress and to provide the teacher with information to make decisions about what and how the student is learning. This information allows the teacher to identify the next steps in progressing the students learning and adapt her/his teaching strategies and/or learning activities as appropriate.

• To provide the students and parents with information regarding progress.

• To establish baseline data in relation to a student’s attainments in certain subjects.

• To assess a student’s eligibility for additional support and services and to inform consultations with the NEPS psychologist where necessary.

• To assist in the identification of students who may need to be referred to an outside professional agency for assessment or direct intervention.

Legislation:

The Education Act (1998) requires schools to regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to students and their parents. In fulfilling this requirement, schools develop assessment procedures, which provide an accurate account of a student’s progress and achievement.

**Rationale:**

RCS recognises the importance of assessment across the whole student body, standardised, formative and summative. This policy aims to formalise ‘testing’ across departments and to aid the tracking of student’s attainment as they progress through RCS.

The following is a list school policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to the Assessment & Change of Level Policy:

• Mission statement

• The School Care Team

• Code of Behaviour

• Special Educational Needs / Learning Support Policy

The Board has ensured that the necessary policies, protocols or practices as appropriate are in place in respect of each of the above listed items.

**Formative Assessment:**

Definition:

Formative assessment involves a range of strategies designed to give students, teachers and parents, feedback about student’s understanding of elements of their learning in courses.

RCS Protocol:

In line with the demands of the syllabus in each curriculum area, teachers set regular homework and comment on the merits of work and make suggestions for improvement.

Grades/ marks may be awarded at the discretion of the Teacher and may be returned, either with the initial work, or may be given later.

Assessment work may be differentiated to suit the needs and abilities of the individual.

**Summative Assessment:**

**Definition:**

Summative assessment refers to the assessment of learning and aims to provide a summary of the achievements of the learner.

**RCS Protocol:**

Third and Sixth years have mock examinations usually in February/ March and the certificate exams in June. They also sit formal school exams in Term 1.

Fifth, Second and First years have exams in December and May. They also have regular in-class exams.

TY’s and LCA’s are assessed in a variety of ways at varying intervals, student self-assessment, project work, skill development assessment, written exams, oral presentations etc. Please see individual Programme Plans for further details.

The mode of assessment may include: written examinations, practicals, aurals and/or oral work and Assessment for Learning (\*AFL)

Each Subject Department sets out examinations in the most appropriate format.

Mock exams are set and corrected internally, reviewed annually.

All summative assessments are co-ordinated by a Post Holder.

**\*Assessment for Learning**

At the heart of assessment for learning is the concept that students who truly understand and are involved in their learning have accelerated rates of achievement. Assessment-capable students know what they need to learn, where they are with that learning and what their next learning steps are. To create the dynamic in the classroom that enables students to take charge of their learning, teachers need to have, or to develop, a genuine view of both the students and of themselves as learners. They must build their own capacity, and enable students to build theirs, for learning to learn.

AFL is based on the concepts:

1. Providing effective feedback to students.

2. Students’ active involvement in their own learning.

3. Adjusting teaching to take account of the results of assessment.

4. Recognising the profound influence of assessment on students’ motivation and self-esteem - both crucial influences on learning.

5. Ensuring pupils assess themselves and understand how to improve.

**Reports:**

Reports for Third and Sixth Year Students are forwarded to Parents/Guardians, following house exams and following the Mock Exams.

Reports for Fifth, Second, First Years, TY’s and LCA’s are forwarded to Parents/Guardians in January and June.

The reports template is computer generated (except TY & LCA) and allows Teachers to distinguish levels. A mark and grade are awarded, and a comment can be generated from a menu. Alternatively, Teachers may compose a unique comment.

The school report generates an absence/day missed report.

The school report generates a merits/demerit report.

Reports are checked by the Principal and Deputy Principal and are signed off on by the Principal.

Standardised/ Psychometric Testing\*: Specific tests may vary

**Student Tracking:**

Prior to entrance to RCS all incoming First Years sit standardised tests.

In February, the following tests are administered to Incoming First Years;

1. CAT4\*

2. ‘Reading age’ test – NGRT\*

In September, the following tests are administered to First Years;

3. WRAT4 – Spelling and Mathematical Computation Subtest.

In May, the following tests will be administered to Second Years;

4. Dictation

In Dec/Jan, the following test will be administered to Third Years;

5. DATS for Guidance.

These tests, along with Teacher-led exams and School Self Evaluation (e.g. TL21) will help the school to determine several things, including;

• Those students with Special Educational Needs.

• Areas where a student may display a Specific Learning Difficulty.

• An area where a student excels.

• To help initiate the creation of an IEP (Individual Education Plan) the IEP will be drawn up by the SEN Team in conjunction with parents and school management.

• A Students attainment and progression in subject areas.

• How Students make informed decisions about subject choice.

• Habits and systems about exam performance.

• To establish if students need to apply for Reasonable Accommodation (RACE) for state exams.

### 24.ii Student Assessment & Change of Level Policy

**RCS School Policy 2015**

All Students will be encouraged to attempt at higher level until the Mock Examinations\* in the year of the Certificate Examination. Students will be informed of this from first year onwards. Levels will be agreed with the students and permission to change levels will only be granted following the procedures below.

\*This is except for Students doing practical subjects where the practical element of the exam is completed before the mock exams

Procedures to change levels:

• Following the Mock Examination, the student will first meet with the teacher to discuss changing level for a certificate examination.

• The subject teacher will either write a note in the journal or phone call will be made to the parent/guardian or a meeting will be organised with the parent/guardian of the student.

• All LC students must meet with the Guidance Counsellor to discuss the implications of changing levels.

• A decision will then be made by the student and parents, in consultation with the teacher and school management, as to whether the student should change level.

• Students will be discouraged from changing levels on the day of the examination unless it is an exceptional circumstance.

• JC examination students may only change level with the written permission of the Deputy Principal/Principal.

• JC examination students must have decided on the level that they will sit BEFORE the state examinations. This date is set by the Department of Education and Skills.

• RCS recognises the right of LC examination student to change levels on the day of the examination in June.

Review and Evaluation:

This policy has been made available to school personnel and the Parents’ Association and is readily accessible to parents on request.

A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management in 2016 or sooner if deemed necessary.

These tests, along with Teacher-led exams will help the school to determine several things, including;

• Those students with Special Educational Needs.

• Areas where a student may display a Specific Learning Difficulty.

• Areas where a student may excel.

• To help initiate the derision of an IEP (Individual Education Plan) that will be drawn up by the SEN Team in conjunction with parents and school management.

• A student’s attainment and progression in subject areas.

• How students make informed decisions about subject choice.

• Habits and systems about exam performance.

1.17. Students with Special Needs (See Draft SEN policy, included)

The Guidance Counsellor works in conjunction with the Learning Support Co-ordinator.

• All information regarding the special needs of new and existing students is given to staff at the beginning of the school year.

• The Home School Liaison Officer and the Guidance Counsellor and on some occasions, the Learning Support Co-ordinator visit the feeder primary schools and correlate relevant information related to students with SEN with the Learning Support Co-ordinator. All this information is kept on file and is available to all staff.

• There is frequent collaboration with the Guidance Counsellor regarding subject choices for students with special educational needs. Individual students are discussed and where necessary appointments made to meet with Guidance Counsellors to discuss further education/career options.

• Parents are welcome to meet with the Guidance Counsellors and Learning support teachers to explore options for further education.

• Learning Support Department has access to the test reports in order to monitor student’s needs.

• The Learning Support Department refers students to the Guidance Counsellors for motivation, direction, subject choice, career research, personal difficulties, exam stress, study skills and time management.

• The Guidance Counsellor works in conjunction with the Learning Support Co-ordinator when referring to the N.E.P.’s Psychologist. The Guidance Counsellor should always be mindful of the need to keep up to date on the issues relating to students with special educational needs.

• On occasion, the Guidance Counsellor may invite the Occupational Disability Officer from the HSE into the school in order to advise those students who have special needs or health issues, concerning their progression from school.

**1.18. Links / Distributed Guidance**

**Links with class teachers/tutors**

The guidance counsellor is there to advise and assist class teachers and tutors. As class teachers have the most contact time with students, their input on their progress or lack of is of interest to the guidance counsellor. Referrals of students may be made with whom the teachers have concerns. Certain information regarding the student may be given out to class teachers in order to prepare them for the students they may have in their class.

**Links with Year-Heads**

The year-head should keep the guidance counsellor up-to-date on any issues concerning student in their year and vice versa. Again, referrals may be made through the year-head.

**Links with Coordinators**

The guidance counsellor and the coordinators work closely through all the programmes in the school (TY, LCA, and LCVP). It is during these programmes that important decisions are made concerning future choices. In transition year, students are choosing courses and subject for leaving cert. In LCVP and LCA, students are choosing work experience and for making future career plans. The guidance counsellor has a huge impact on all these programmes. Coordinators are welcomed along to career events or talks in order to support their students.

**Links with NEPS**

The guidance counsellor links with NEPS, firstly in order to refer students for psychological assessment and then to receive advice on how best to accommodate and support students with special needs or of special concern.

**Links with Learning Support Coordinator**

Throughout the year, the guidance counsellor and learning support coordinator have meetings and discussions regarding students who are of concern about learning support. Lists are composed together for referral to NEPS. Progress of students is constantly assessed and monitored. Issues such as exemptions in languages and DARE applications are an essential component of both departments and therefore require regular focus.

**Links with Social Workers, GP’s, Psychiatric services**

The guidance counsellor may often have to deal with social workers of students who are entering the school, or they may have to refer students through the DLP or DDLP once they are in the school. It is essential that the social worker keeps the guidance counsellor informed of any developments in the student’s life and vice versa, issues in school must be referred to the social worker. GP’s and other psychiatric services are essential links for the guidance counsellor in order to work with the student on a holistic level.

**Links with Employers and the Local Community**

It is essential that the school link with the wider community. The school does not operate in isolation. Local employers and the community offer a wide range of resources to the students throughout their time in school, e.g., offering work placements, mentoring, sponsorships to name but a few. Therefore, it is an essential part of the role of the guidance counsellor to maintain this network. `

**Links with Colleges /Admissions Offices, HEAR and DARE Liaison officers etc.**

It is an essential component of guidance within a school to maintain close links with colleges and admission officers in order to receive information for the student’s career choices. Admissions officer and lectures are invited to the school on a regular basis to talk about courses and services available in their college. HEAR and DARE Liaison officers are in regular contact with the school, an essential link for students availing of these access routes.

**Links with SPHE teachers/Coordinator**

Guidance and SPHE overlap in many ways. The two “subjects” do not work in isolation. The guidance counsellor advises the SPHE teachers on topics being dealt with in class. Resources are shared, and suggestions made between the guidance counsellor and the teachers. Student may be referred for counselling as a result of issues arising in the SPHE class. The SPHE coordinator and the guidance counsellor work on a plan together for the year groups in order to cover the wide range of topics on the course.

**2. Guidance Programme**

Programme Levels

Junior Cert SPHE Common

TY Guidance/WE and SPHE Common

5th yr. Guidance Common

6th yr. Guidance Common

Guidance Subject Co-ordinator 2018/2019: Mary Harris

Subject Teachers 2018/2019:

Ms Mary Harris LCA1, LCA2, 5A, 5B, 5C, 6A, 6B (Guidance)

Miss Aoife Power 2A, 2B, 2C and 2D

Miss Aoife Power 3A, 3B and 3C (SPHE)

Ms Sharon Walsh TY (SPHE) 5th Yr (Religion) and 6th Yr RSE (Tutor)

Ms Mairin Dunne 5th Yr RSE (Religion)

Ms McCabe 6th Yr RSE (Tutor)

**2.1. Time Allocation & Student Grouping**

**Time Allocation:**

1st SPHE 2nd SPHE 3rd SPHE TY SPHE AND GUIDANCE 5th RSE AND GUIDANCE 6th RSE AND GUIDANCE LCA 1&2

**GUIDANCE**

1 x 40 mins 1 x 40 mins 1 x 40 mins 2 x 40 mins 2 x 40 mins, every 3rd week 2 x 40 mins, every 2nd week 1 x 40 mins

**Grouping of Students**

All SPHE, RSE and Guidance classes are of mixed ability

Student Access to Subject / Level:

All students must undertake SPHE and Guidance although they may be removed with parental consent from the RSE module at junior and senior level.

**2.2. Textbooks & Course Materials**

Year Textbooks Course Materials (range & variety of resources) Location of shared resources

1st Wellbeing

“Friends for Life” programme Teacher Notes/ Handouts/ Worksheets

Other Textbooks

Internet material from various sources, TV Documentaries/ Reports

Overheads/ Acetates, Powerpoint Presentations, Newspaper Articles

DVDs, Art material Guidance office

SPHE Dept. Press in Staff Room, Teacher’s Classroom,Internet

Year Textbooks Course Materials

(range & variety of resources) Location of shared resources

2nd Healthy and Wellbeing SPHE 2, Edco.

Teacher Notes/ Handouts/ Worksheets

Other Textbooks, Internet material from various sources

TV Documentaries/ Reports, Overheads/ Acetates, Powerpoint Presentations

Newspaper Articles, DVDs, Art material Guidance office

SPHE Dept. Press in Staff Room, Teacher’s Classroom, Internet

3rd Teachers own material

Subject Choice booklet

Information leaflets re subjects and programme options Teacher Notes/ Handouts/ Worksheets

Other Textbooks , Internet material from various sources

TV Documentaries/ Reports

Overheads/ Acetates, Powerpoint Presentations, Newspaper Articles

DVDs, Art material, Open Days Guidance office, SPHE Dept. Press in Staff Room

Teacher’s Classroom, Internet

Year Textbooks Course Materials

(range & variety of resources) Location of shared resources

TY Guidance:

Essential Guidance, Qualifax, Subject Choice booklet Information leaflets re subjects and programme options

SPHE: SPHE classwork, Sexual Health Programme by Squashy Couch,Guest Speakers/ Open Days

Notes/ Handouts, Internet material from various sources, TV Documentaries/ Reports

Overheads/ Acetates, Powerpoint Presentations, Newspaper Articles

TY Folder, Teachers classroom, SPHE press in staffroom,Guidance office with SPHE resources

Computer rooms

5th Essential Guidance programme

Teachers own material Teacher Notes/ Handouts, Other Textbooks

Internet material from various sources, TV Documentaries/ Reports

Overheads/ Acetates, Powerpoint Presentations

Newspaper Articles, DVDs, Open Days Guidance office

Teacher’s Classroom, Internet/computer rooms

Year Textbooks Course Materials

(range & variety of resources) Location of shared resources

6th REACH programme, Teacher’s own material Guest Speakers

Notes/ Handouts, Internet material from various sources

Reports, Overheads/ Acetates, Powerpoint Presentations

Newspaper Articles, Open Days Guidance office

Teacher’s Classroom, Internet/computer rooms

LCA Guidance module Guest Speakers

Notes/ Handouts, Internet material from various sources

TV Documentaries/ Reports, Overheads/ Acetates

Powerpoint Presentations, Newspaper Articles, DVDs, Art Material

Open Days Guidance office, SPHE Dept. Press in Staff Room

Teacher’s Classroom, Internet

**Resource deficits for the subject department.**

**•** IT facilities not always working

Means by which the subject department can eliminate this resource deficit.

• Update of computer rooms

**2.3. Planning for Students with Special Needs**

**•** Individual teachers are informed at the beginning of each year of the students within the school who have SEN.

• Teachers are given information about the specific nature of each student’s Special Educational Diagnosis and some suggestions (including examples of effective teaching strategies) for how best to accommodate these students within the classroom.

• A central Resource timetable is published at the start of the year. Classroom teachers are encouraged to liaise directly with Resource/Learning Support teachers in relation to students with SEN. They can seek advice, ask for resources or request the Resource teacher does follow up work in the SPHE subject area.

• Teachers always take SEN students’ needs into account when planning lessons/homework/feedback/assessments, for example ensuring that teacher notes/material given is, in so far as possible, explained using language appropriate to the capacity of the student and or giving fewer questions to learn for chapter tests.

• Teachers also use photocopied resources for use with weaker students. Teachers circulate amongst the group and work with both the weaker and/or more able students.

• As a department we realise and try to facilitate differentiation for not only weaker students, SEN students, but also the gifted students in our classes.

• Teachers are advised that some students may be absent from their class as it is a non-exam subject in order to accommodate various programmes run in the school, e.g., Catch Up Literacy, BFL programmes etc.

• Teachers also ensure students physical needs within the classroom setting are accommodated in so far as possible with respect to appropriate seating, lighting, IT equipment etc.

• Teachers are also very willing to provide extra support in the form of extra tuition if needed in certain circumstances for both the gifted student and student with SEN.

• Students are advised and supported about applications through DARE

**2.4. Cross-Curricular Planning**

**•** Links between Guidance and SPHE

 All aspects of SPHE programme

 RSE

• Links between Guidance and LCVP

 Career investigation

 CV preparation

 Interview skills

• Links between Guidance and LCA

 Career investigation

 CV preparation

 Interview skills

• Links between Guidance and TY

 Career investigation

 Study, subject choice, decision making, emotional health

• Links between Guidance and ICT

 Websites, social networking and Application procedures

• Links between Guidance and English

 Communication skills

 Letter writing

 Interview skills

**2.5. Effective Teaching Methodologies**

Examples of the following methodologies are used:

• Assessment for Learning approaches – including target setting, Comment only Marking/Wait time on Questioning

• Student Centred Approaches – self-directed learning peer teaching, research, Poster making, Self-assessment of work, Reflections, ICT-research, open days

• Traditional Methods – including teacher delivery of course content, regular student questioning, reading, group work, pair work, and research techniques.

• A Variety of Resources are used to cater for different learning styles e.g.: Video clips/CD Rom//DVD/, Power-point presentations, Guest Speakers, Visits/Interviews. Where possible classes are brought to the Computer Room.

**Effective Teaching Methodologies**

**•** Whole Class Teaching

• Power-point presentations

• REACH programme / Essential Guidance Programme

• Discussion

• Group work

• Pair Work

• Use of ICT

Incorporation of a Variety of Resources into the lessons such as

• Text books

• Videos/DVD

• CD’s

• Magazines

• Newspapers

• Internet

• Posters

• Project Work

• Brainstorming Sessions

• Guest speakers

• Art

• Role Play

• Case Studies

**2.6. Availability / Use of ICT Facilities**

**•** School is equipped with Broadband Internet Access and operates a pier to pier network

• School is wireless WIFI enabled everywhere, including GYM

• All Guidance classes are timetabled to the IT Rooms

• Some teachers use their own personal laptops and a fixed/portable overhead data projector if available

• Very often ICT is used for Career guidance research and application procedures

• Both Students and Teacher rely on the internet for relevant Guidance updates- classroom is equipped with network points for same

• Many students have internet access in their homes (computer room is open on a weekly basis at lunch for those not having home access) and use it for research/homework/task work.

**2.7. Provision for Health and Safety Requirements**

**•** We follow Health and Safety guidelines as outlined in the School’s Health & Safety Policy

• The above is reviewed on an annual basis in consultation with the whole staff and the Health and Safety Committee

• Standard classroom health and safety provisions are put in place by each teacher as part of their normal classroom management. There are no subject specific requirements

• Any accident or incident during Guidance class or activities related to Guidance are recorded in an official report book/accident form provided by the office.

**2.8. Homework Procedures**

**•** In general, homework in Guidance is based on student’s own research and reflection. This can be carried out for example, through worksheets, career investigations or presentations. In LCA, students’ complete tasks and key assignments.

• Homework is corrected in a variety of ways. Most commonly the work is corrected by eliciting feedback from students, and then the teacher corrects work verbally.

• At senior level, students are actively researching their career or college choices. They are given reflection booklets/worksheets over school holidays to assist with their research.

**2.9. Assessments / Examinations Procedures**

In- House Assessment

Teachers will regularly assess student’s performance through participation and reflection.

**2.10. Record Keeping Procedures**

**•** Teacher keeps copies of notes given, worksheets completed

• Guidance interview sheet is kept in the guidance office.

• REACH programme / Essential Guidance Programme

• Attendance recorded in VS Ware

• All test/assessment results are recorded in teachers own journal (LCA)

• Where subject teacher is absent a record is kept of work handed out and completed.

**2.11. Reporting Procedures**

**•** Parents are informed of student progress through school reports after the completion of school examinations.

• Parent - teacher meetings are held on an annual basis

• Progress of Students are discussed with Year Head at meetings held prior to the relevant PTM

• Difficulties/Problems with students are also relayed to Year Head after which a meeting between the student with or without parent/year head may be sought.

• If a teacher is concerned about an issue with a student during class, they can refer the matter to the Year Head, Guidance Counsellor or Chaplain through the referral procedures.

### 24.iii Wellbeing Plan: (Currently in Draft Form- Nov 2018)

**Rationale for the Policy**

This policy has been introduced in order to allow the school to adequately respond to the changing and diverse needs of our pupils. RCS is committed to the nurturing of the whole person so that they may be guided with care and respect to respond to the demands of modern life with resilience, optimism and a feeling of ownership.

**Goals of the policy**

‘The goal of wellbeing is human flourishing, and flourishing rests on the following.... positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment’. The goal of this policy document is to outline clearly the school’s approach to the provision of wellbeing for all members of the RCS community, setting out the structure and supports that are in place both within the curriculum and the wider school community.

This policy will outline our belief that everybody in the school community is valued and has an opportunity to flourish through the following common approach:

• All staff contribute to promoting a caring and inclusive environment within the school that is supportive of school wellbeing.

• There is a shared vision and understanding of what student wellbeing means, which emphasises strengths and capacities.

• Respectful and caring relationships are fostered between staff and students, students and students, and staff and parents.

• There are structures in place designed to support the wellbeing of pupils.

The Scope of the Policy

This policy will impact on the whole school community. Therefore, it has been approved by the Board of Management in consultation with the Principal, Deputy Principal, school staff, parents and students.

**What is Wellbeing?**

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 place and belonging to a wider community. Wellbeing indicators are thus as follows – Active, Responsible, Connected, Resilient, Respected, and Aware. These indicators are representative of the following key skills that RCS strives to develop in our pupils:

• Being a confident and skilled participant in physical activity

• Being physically active

• Being able to act to protect and promote their wellbeing and that of others

• Making healthy eating choices • Knowing when and where their safety is at risk and enabling them to make the right choices

• Feeling connected to their school, friends, community and the wider world

• Understanding how their actions and interactions impact on their own wellbeing and that of others, in local and global contexts

• Feeling confident in themselves and having the coping skills to deal with life’s challenges

• Knowing where they can go for help

• Believing that, with effort, they can achieve

• Showing care and respect for others

• Having positive relationships with friends, peers, and staff members

• Feeling listened to and valued

• Being aware of their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, and being able to make sense of them

• Being aware of their personal values, and able to think through their decisions

• Being aware of themselves as learners, and knowing how they can improve Supporting & Promoting a Culture of Wellbeing in School

RCS promotes a warm, welcoming, encouraging and positive school culture in the following ways:

• The physical environment conveys a message of warmth, welcome and inclusion

• The school is a safe place for all students • There are spaces for students to congregate socially and to have quiet time

• The school building is accessible for all students

• Students and staff take pride and care in maintaining the physical environment • The school environment is conducive to promoting physical activity, and healthy eating choices

• Teachers have high expectations for all students

• There are open, positive, supportive relationships between teachers and students in class and outside

• A culture of collaboration and cooperation is promoted through day to day teaching, learning and assessment practices

• Students feel safe, secure and respected in their classrooms

• Students are encouraged to actively engage in their learning so that they may enjoy being at school

• Students receive regular formative feedback about their learning and how they can improve

• Students have regular opportunities to talk about their learning and what helps them to learn

• Teachers use active methodologies to develop the key skills in their subjects

• Teaching and learning is differentiated and provides an appropriate challenge to enable all students to engage and experience success

Recognising the Importance of Relationships for Wellbeing in School RCS recognises that true wellbeing can only be assured through the promotion and development of positive, nurturing and respectful relationships within our school community. We strive to achieve this in the following ways:

• Ensuring that student-teacher relationships are friendly, caring and respectful

• Making sure that staff are fully aware that they may be the one adult that a student turns to for support and help during a difficult time

• Fully informing students as to where to get support and how to access the care structures in the school

• Resolving behaviour issues with care, respect and consistency

• Ensuring that there is a shared vision and understanding of what student wellbeing means which emphasises strengths and capacities

• Encouraging students to show respect, care and concern for each other so that they feel safe and supported amongst their peers

• Recognising that staff are entitled to feel supported and cared for amongst their colleagues

• Providing forums for students so that their voices may be heard, and they are involved in making decisions about their life in school

• Making sure that students know that their feedback is valued and, where appropriate, acted upon • Ensuring that parents feel welcome, respected, and listened to as partners in the education of their children

• Sharing information with parents as to how they can support their child’s wellbeing

• Maintaining strong links with the local community Wellbeing & the Curriculum Here at RCS we have chosen to strongly prioritise and highlight wellbeing within our school community.

This is reflected strongly in our curricular provision:

• There is a coherent and coordinated approach to the provision of CSPE, PE, SPHE and Guidance as part of the wellbeing programme in junior cycle

• Staff are afforded opportunities to work collaboratively in planning for these subjects and CPD is actively supported

• Curricular provision is informed by student and parental feedback

• Guidance-related learning is an important aspect of the wellbeing curriculum in junior cycle

• The guidance counsellor works collaboratively with staff in relation to the wellbeing programme and its implementation

• The guidance counsellor actively supports students in junior cycle, both through the teaching of Guidance, and counselling support on an individual basis

**RCS’s Curricular & Extra-Curricular Wellbeing Provision in Junior Cycle**



**RCS’s Curricular & Extra-Curricular Wellbeing Provision in Senior Cycle**



**Policy & Planning for Wellbeing**

**•** School policies are developed and reviewed in partnership with students, parents and staff

• Policy documents are accessible and shared with students and parents

• Policies are enacted with fairness and compassion

• Appropriate planning time is allocated to wellbeing, which is an important feature of whole-school and subject planning

• Staff are supported if they wish to pursue wellbeing CPD and encouraged to share their resources with colleagues

• Wellbeing has been identified as a topic for SSE – 2019 2020

The Wellbeing Committee is currently doing research on Wellbeing and their focus for 2018 2019 are the Wellbeing Indicators and Teacher Wellbeing.

### 24.iv Interventions and Wellbeing initiatives currently active in RCS 2018/2019:









**Ratification & Review**

This Wellbeing Plan is currently in draft form and will be brought to the Board of Management in 2019.

### 24.v SPHE - Social, Personal & Health Education

**3.1. Introduction**

At Ramsgrange Community School, emphasis is placed on developing the whole person, spiritually, morally, academically, artistically and physically. The ethos is inclusive. The school is under the shared trusteeship of the St Louis order and the VEC.

Social, personal and health education (SPHE) provides opportunities to foster the personal development, health and well-being of the individual adolescent, to help him/her to create and maintain supportive relationships and become an active and responsible citizen in society. Through our SPHE programme that is planned and consistent throughout the school, students can develop a framework of values, attitudes, understanding and skills that will inform their decisions and actions both now and in the future. Since SPHE has a moral and a spiritual dimension, its development and implementation are influenced significantly by the ethos or characteristic spirit of our school. The SPHE programme reflects the unique ethos of everyone’s experience in school by incorporating the school’s mission statement.

The learning and teaching climate that prevails in the classroom, the methodologies and approaches used and the relationships that the students experience and witness in the school, all contribute to their social, personal and health development. Similarly, many of the themes and topics addressed in the various subjects have a social, personal or health perspective, as will many of the incidental happenings that occur in the everyday life of the school. There are also particular issues that are intrinsic to SPHE that need to be explored and examined in some detail.

Our SPHE programme caters for all these dimensions by providing learning opportunities in a combination of three ways:

• A positive school climate and atmosphere fosters the health and well-being of all the members of the school community. It reflects a safe and secure environment where students experience a sense of belonging and know that the concerns and contributions of parents, adolescents and teachers are considered. A positive school climate and atmosphere nurtures self-confidence and self-worth and promotes respectful and caring relationships throughout the school. It therefore provides the context in which work carried out in a range of subjects, including SPHE, is lived out and makes sense

• Discrete SPHE time provides for the teaching of some elements of the programme during designated class periods. This time can be used to develop and practice skills, deal with sensitive issues or explore issues that are not addressed in other areas of the curriculum. To use this time effectively it may be more appropriate for the teacher to organise it in block periods and use it as required rather than confining the time to a set period in each week

• An integrated approach allows for many aspects of SPHE to be dealt with in the context of relevant subject areas. Through a variety of learning experiences across the curriculum students work together, solve problems, make decisions, engage in dialogue and reflect critically. Some subject areas also provide the most appropriate context for exploring aspects of SPHE: for example, developing a sense of care and respect for the environment could be fostered through science and history, while safety in water could be appropriately explored through physical education.

Implementation in this way enables us to adopt a coherent approach to the programme, take cognisance of the learning experience in the home and make use of the most appropriate learning and teaching strategies.

As students’ progress through an SPHE programme, they will encounter a wide range of issues. These will include substance misuse, relationships, sexuality, personal safety, bullying and general physical well-being. The SPHE curriculum is structured in such a way that these issues are not explored in isolation; rather the emphasis is on building a foundation of skills, values, attitudes and understanding relevant to all these issues, with specific information provided where necessary.

**3.2. The SPHE Curriculum**

**A definition of SPHE**

SPHE promotes intrapersonal development by helping students to recognise, understand and accept themselves as unique individuals who feel valued and loved. It provides opportunities to nurture self-worth and self-confidence, helping the adolescent to set and assess his/her own goals and to be able to manage his/her own behaviour. SPHE enables the adolescent to build a sense of self-efficacy which in turn can increase his/her sense of personal control, promote self-awareness and sexual awareness and enable self-directed learning.

An SPHE programme particularly contributes to the development of personal attributes and skills, such as learning how to manage feelings, how to resolve conflicts and how to cope with new and demanding situations. SPHE ensures that health messages are planned, implemented and reinforced and provides clarification of some of the misinformation that adolescents may receive. It also aims to enable them to develop a sense of personal responsibility for their own health and for the decisions and the choices they make in relation to their behaviour and actions.

**3.3 Rationale for SPHE Policy**

As part of their social development adolescents need to learn to appreciate other people in their lives and to know how to create and maintain positive, healthy relationships. An SPHE programme can significantly contribute to interpersonal development by helping them to acquire a range of communication skills and to understand the ways in which they can show respect, care and consideration in their dealings with others. In school, adolescents can learn how to develop and sustain relationships based on mutual respect and responsibility and can begin to understand the importance of trust and honesty in human interactions.

Students also need to learn that personal motives should be balanced with a sense of social responsibility. SPHE plays an important role in developing an understanding of the democratic way of life and individual and group rights and responsibilities. It provides opportunities for them to learn about, and actively participate in, the various communities to which they belong and to develop a sense of a shared commitment.

Diversity and difference characterise the society in which adolescents live. However, prejudice and discrimination are all too often a feature of human relationships. A respect for and an appreciation of human and cultural diversity can and should be promoted at every level of the school. Through SPHE students can become aware of some of the prejudices and attitudes that fail to respect the dignity of others. They are given opportunities to develop an understanding of their own culture and traditions and equally to acquire a growing appreciation of the positive contributions made by different groups in society. As adolescents learn to understand and practise equality, justice and fairness in school situations they will be enabled to challenge prejudice and discrimination as they experience it in their own lives both now and in the future.

Children and adolescents live in an age in which they are bombarded daily with information from a variety of sources. They are also under increasing commercial pressure where marketing techniques are employed widely to appeal to all ages. SPHE encourages children and adolescents to become more discerning in their use of the media and to learn about and become aware of the techniques and strategies used in advertising and in the media in general.

At RCS, management and staff are committed to developing and delivering an SPHE programme that works in conjunction with our school ethos and mission statement and in doing so, creating an atmosphere both inside and outside of the classroom that is open, informative, non-judgmental and caring and as a result fostering a sense of responsibility, determination and humility in our students.

**3.4. Our Aims**

The aims of social, personal and health education are

• to promote the personal development and well-being of the adolescent

• to foster in the adolescent a sense of care and respect for himself/herself and others and an appreciation of the dignity of every human being

• to promote the health of the adolescent and provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects

• to enable the adolescent to make informed decisions and choices about the social, personal, sexual and health dimensions of life both now and in the future

• to develop in the adolescent a sense of social responsibility, a commitment to active and participative citizenship

• To enable the adolescent to respect human and cultural diversity and to appreciate and understand the interdependent nature of the world.

3.5. Our Objectives

When due account is taken of intrinsic abilities and varying circumstances, the SPHE curriculum should enable the student to:

• be self-confident and have a positive sense of self-esteem

• develop a sense of personal responsibility and come to understand his/her sexuality and the processes of growth, development and reproduction

• develop and enhance the social skills of communication, co-operation and conflict resolution

• create and maintain supportive relationships both now and in the future

• develop an understanding of healthy living, an ability to implement healthy behaviour and a willingness to participate in activities that promote and sustain health

• develop a sense of safety and an ability to protect himself/herself from danger and abuse

• make decisions, solve problems and take appropriate actions in various personal, social and health contexts

• become aware of, and discerning about, the various influences on choices and decisions

• begin to identify, review and evaluate the values and attitudes that are held by individuals and society and to recognise that these affect thoughts and actions

• respect the environment and develop a sense of responsibility for its long-term care

• develop some of the skills and abilities necessary for participating fully in groups and in society

• become aware of some of the individual and community rights and responsibilities that come from living in a democracy

• appreciate and respect the diversity that exists in society and the positive contributions of various cultural and social groups

• Promote the values of a just and caring society in an age-appropriate manner and understand the importance of seeking truth and peace.

**3.6. Shared Responsibility**

SPHE does not begin or end in school. An adolescent’s understanding of the world, their own role and place in society and consequently their ways of behaving are significantly influenced by the family and the home environment. While this continues throughout their lives, other factors, such as the media, friends, peers and individual experiences, become increasingly influential.

In RCS, our SPHE programme is most effective when it is based on a consistency in approach and where the responsibility is shared by parents, teachers, children and adolescents, board of management, health professionals and relevant members of the community. Close consultation between the partners is an essential element in the planning process and in regular reviews of the programme. This partnership approach helps to ensure that students are provided with a consistent experience in SPHE and can make connections between life at home, in the school and in the community.

**3.7. A Broad & Balanced Programme**

It is important that planning takes place at both a school and class level to ensure that the programme reflects a spiral approach, where similar aspects are revisited in different ways according to the age, stage of development and readiness of the adolescent. It is also essential that the content chosen for every class includes a balance between learning skills, fostering and exploring attitudes and developing understanding. Planning for SPHE will always be informed by the ethos of the school and developed within the context of the school plan.

In addressing sensitive issues, it will be necessary to consider the different levels of emotional and physical development of the students and to adapt the programme accordingly. It will be particularly important in multi-class situations to seek co-operation from other teachers or make alternative arrangements, so that individual needs are met.

The Education Act (1998) emphasises that schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them.

The recommended time allocation for SPHE is one class period per week or equivalent. Through participating in the SPHE programme the young person will encounter a wide range of issues through a variety of learning experiences. These issues will be addressed in ten modules, each of which appears in each year of the three-year cycle. The emphasis will be on building skills, understanding, attitudes and values important in all these areas.

The ten modules are:

• Belonging and Integrating

Developing and enhancing group skills and communication skills. Learning to plan personal and group goals and targets. Examining the dynamics of family relationships and understanding individual responsibilities as a member of the school community. Identifying consequences and types of loss. Recognising bullying and being aware of school policy. Identifying staff for help.

• Self-management: A sense of purpose

Reviewing effective work and study practices including organising homework, personal work schedules and study skills. Increasing awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses. Understanding the importance of teamwork and identifying sources of personal support.

• Communication Skills

Practising the skills of listening and self‐expression. Being sensitive to the opinion of others. Learning and using appropriate communication. Learning the skills appropriate to conflict resolution. Understanding different types of communication.

• Physical Health

Learning the importance of personal hygiene. Exploring the meaning of a balanced diet and physical exercise for general health and well-being. Examining eating patterns and personal exercise. Looking at the symptoms of common ailments. Being aware of occasions when help may be needed.

• Friendships

Defining the nature and characteristics of good friendships. Changing friendships and the impact of gender of friendships. Relationships between siblings. Identifying and developing skills for dealing with bullying behaviour.

• Relationships and Sexuality

In planning for the RSE module individual schools will be guided by its RSE policy which will have been prepared in consultation with parents, teachers and management authorities. This module is designed to develop communication and decision-making skills in relationships. To look at the causes of conflict in relationships. Explore some aspect of sex stereotyping. Give young people knowledge of the physical, emotional and psychological changes related to adolescence. Have a clear understanding of male and female reproductive systems and the development stages from conception to birth. To emphasise the three 'R's, respect, rights and responsibility.

• Emotional Health

Recognising the common moods and feelings in adolescence and respecting the feeling of others. Looking at issues of body image and self‐confidence. Appreciating stress and the consequences of stress. Developing skills for expressing feelings.

• Influences and Decisions

Evaluating some of the strongest influences on attitude and behaviour and heightening awareness of who influences them and why. Learning to respect the individuality and uniqueness of each person. Learning skills to make and apply decisions. Thinking ahead.

• Substance Use

Examining the use and misuse of medicines and drugs. Examine ways of avoiding smoking. Implication of alcohol use and patterns of alcohol use in Ireland. Effects of drug use.

• Personal Safety

Examine ways of keeping safe, road safety, and fire drills. Exploring potential Hazards travelling to and from school. Looking at areas where they might be at risk of attack, assault, abuse, intimidation or where their personal safety might be threatened. Sources of crisis support such as help agencies.

**3.8. Approaches & Methodologies**

The methodologies and approaches used in the classroom are crucial to the student’s social, personal and health development. As active participants in their own learning, students can make sense of what is being learned, make informed judgements and construct new meanings. It is more likely that adolescents will develop a sense of ownership over what they have learned and be able to transfer it to different situations when they have been actively involved in the learning process. While independent learning is fostered, it is equally essential that adolescents are given opportunities to interact with others and with their environment and to learn to cooperate with their peers.

A wide variety of active learning strategies are used in SPHE in order to take account of the individual needs and the wide range of objectives in the curriculum. These strategies include:

• Discussion

• Drama activities – Role Play

• Games

• Multimedia programmes

• Accessing the internet

• Video extracts

• Photographs

• Debates

• Artwork

• Projects

• Case studies

• Carrying out surveys and interpreting data.

• Guest speakers

As part of any learning and teaching strategy in SPHE students are encouraged to critically reflect on their work and explore possibilities for transferring what they have learned to situations in their own lives.

**3.9. Students with Special Needs**

All students should have the opportunity to participate in and benefit from the full range of experiences offered in SPHE. In planning for SPHE account should be taken of the range of difference in the school so that all students will be given the opportunity to obtain maximum benefit from the programme.

**3.10. SPHE & Literacy**

SPHE provides a context in which adolescents are given opportunities to develop and enhance their literacy skills and to increase their vocabulary related to the social, personal and health aspects of their lives. In asking appropriate questions, giving opinions, exploring ideas, or making responses, they can become increasingly fluent in their use of language and can improve many of the skills they may have learned in other areas of the curriculum. Such confidence and competence in using literacy skills will be particularly significant in enabling adolescents to access critical information relating to their own health and well-being, both now and in later years. This facility can also contribute to building positive relationships by enhancing communication and fostering genuine understanding.

The exploration of language and literacy skills, their usage in relating to others is central to any SPHE programme. Students should become aware of the power and the influence of language. When used positively, language can build up, affirm and show respect to another human being but if used in a negative manner can hurt, diminish or demean. Students need to recognise and become sensitive to the ways in which they themselves use language in their relationships and in their everyday interactions.

Through SPHE students can begin to appreciate the connection between language, literacy and identity. A planned programme throughout the school also provides children with opportunities to explore the language used in various media and to recognise the values, attitudes and viewpoints being promoted and fostered.

**3.11. SPHE & Numeracy**

At all times during an SPHE lesson, the teacher will be aware of numeracy issues appropriate to the students in the class. In conjunction with the ethos of the school, numeracy is an integral aspect of every subject and indeed every class. Numeracy may involve discussing the nutrient ingredients when studying healthy eating or time management when referring to study time-tables. The awareness of the teacher in relation to numeracy, regardless of the topic is essential.

**3.12. SPHE and Information & Communication Technologies**

ICTs can support the learning and teaching of SPHE in the classroom. Students can develop self-confidence and motivation through using and becoming familiar with computers. Other aspects of SPHE such as learning to take turns, to share and to co-operate can be developed as students use computers in a planned and appropriate manner. Computers can also be particularly helpful in enhancing adolescent’s decision-making skills and in helping them to become discerning and judicious users of various technologies.

Students can use computers in SPHE to gather information on specific topics or to collate and present data. While there are many CD-ROMs available on health and social issues, the internet also provides a wealth of up-to-date information and can indicate further avenues of investigation. A list of appropriate websites used in class is available from the SPHE Coordinator. It is attempted to timetable SPHE classes in the computer room where possible.

**3.13. Assessment**

Assessment in SPHE guides the teacher in improving the learning experiences for the student and in continually refining and developing the programme to suit individual needs, interests and abilities. It can be particularly helpful in enabling adolescents to see how they are progressing and to recognise and appreciate their own achievements. The assessment relates to that which can be effectively assessed during his/her time in school. Students are asked to write in their reflective diary or copy after each lesson. Students may be given a work-sheet as a conclusion or summary for a lesson. Teachers may comment on end of term reports. Teachers are available during parent teacher meetings to speak with parents or guardians concerning any issues which may arise.

**3.14. Sensitive Issues / Participation / Confidentiality / Referral**

While the SPHE programme is a compulsory subject on the Junior Certificate curriculum, parents have the right to withdraw their child from the Relationships and Sexuality Education module.

A standard letter is sent to parents outlining the content of the course for that year group. Parents are asked to respond if they wish to withdraw their child. It will be necessary for parents of any students opting out of the Relationships and Sexuality Education module to make suitable arrangement with School management for the supervision of their child at these times.

The teacher, with reference to the agreed procedures for SPHE will answer questions of a sensitive nature pertinent to the lesson content.

Only material which has been outlined in the RSE course content for that year will be addressed in class. This is to ensure that parents can be informed of the content in advance. The choice of topics for each year has been carefully considered and consulted upon to ensure age appropriateness and a due regard to the ethos of the school. It is important to be aware that in these circumstances the school cannot be responsible for information subsequently passed on by participating pupils.

Class teachers will not give advice on personal matters to individual students, but they will refer students to the Guidance Counsellor, Chaplain or to outside agencies in consultation with parents.

If a teacher comes into possession of sensitive information e.g. previously unreported sexual abuse, drug related behaviour, serious crime, suicidal behaviour, they will handle the information sensitively and they will follow D.E.S guidelines in informing the relevant authorities.

**3.15 The Role of Visitors**

At times visitors are welcome into the SPHE classroom under the supervision of the class teacher. Topics covered range from bullying and positive mental health to issues concerning sexual health and drugs.

All SPHE guest speakers will be made aware of and requested to comply with the school’s SPHE policy. The presentations of guest speakers will be negotiated with the relevant SPHE teachers before delivery to students.

All presentations must have appropriate content and be appropriate to the age of the students.

Guest speaker’s work is supplementary to the existing core delivery of teacher’s work.

The SPHE teacher will remain in the classroom for the presentation.

**3.16. Timetable / Teacher Allocation**

On the timetable one class a week for each class group will, ideally, is allotted to SPHE in Junior Cycle. At Senior Cycle, SPHE will be taught as part of the R.E. programme. 3.17. SPHE Co-ordinator

An SPHE co-ordinator has been appointed and given the role of coordinating programme development in this area. The Coordinator will work with the SPHE Teachers to ensure a coherent and consistent delivery of the programme during each year of school and maintains records of meetings and updates. The Coordinator will work with the various partners in developing the programme to meet the emerging needs of students.

**3.18. Curriculum Planning & Development / In-service**

The school recognises that all school staff needs development and information regarding the SPHE programme. The value placed on SPHE by the school will be evident by the commitment on the part of management to develop a core of trained SPHE teachers. Teachers directly involved in the SPHE programme in the school require support. They will understand and a familiarity with the methodologies associated with education in this area. In-career development is an integral part of this programme. Management are responsible for the relevant training needs of SPHE teachers. All teachers assigned to SPHE will have access to in-service for the programme. Provision will also be made for the SPHE teachers directly involved to meet during the school year during subject planning days.

As part of the core curriculum, SPHE will have a budgetary allocation in line with its stage of development, its teaching methodologies and timetabled allocation.

**3.19. Review & Evaluation**

All aspects of the school community will be involved in the review and evaluation of the SPHE programme. A review will be carried out by the Board of Management, Management, Parent representatives, Co-ordinator and SPHE teachers. The student body will be involved through the student council.

**4. Special Educational Needs & Learning Support Policy (Draft Form)**

**4.1. Introduction**

Ramsgrange Community School aims to create and sustain a caring, supportive and safe environment in which staff and students feel valued, motivated and stimulated in their efforts to grow as human beings and to realise their full potential. We believe that our mission statement is best achieved in a safe and secure environment, which, while recognising individual rights and responsibilities, encourages commitment, and shared responsibility for the achievement of excellence and for the common good.

Ramsgrange Community School believes that all children and young adults should be valued equally, irrespective of any individual needs or differences and is committed to making effective provision, by way of partnership with the Department of Education and other agencies, for those students in its schools who have special educational needs. Ramsgrange Community School is committed to the highest standards and ensuring that all students achieve to their true abilities in an inclusive environment.

All staff must commit to supporting and nurturing students, and to supporting their families and those who work with them, where appropriate. The best possible working practices must be based on respect, trust, honesty and integrity.

**4.2. Definition of SEN - Special Educational Needs**

Section 1 of the Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act defines special educational needs in the following terms:

“Special educational needs mean in relation to a person, a restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability, or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition…”

In the context of this policy the term ‘Special Educational Needs’ shall include students who have additional educational needs and who would historically have received learning support and/or resource hours.

In the context of this policy Support Teachers shall include Learning Support and Resource teachers.

In adherence with the NCCA (Draft) Guidelines for Teachers of Students with General Learning Disabilities we acknowledge that the broad aims of education for pupils with special educational needs reflect those relevant to all students and include:

• Enabling the student to live a full life and to realise his or her potential as a unique individual through access to an appropriate broad and balanced curriculum.

• Enabling the student to function as independently as possible in society through the provision of such educational supports as are necessary to realise that potential.

• Enabling the student to continue learning in adult life.

4.3. Strategies to meet the needs of students with SEN

At Ramsgrange Community School we acknowledge that subject teachers and teachers providing additional teaching support can meet most of the needs of students with special educational needs through careful planning, using differentiated teaching methods, identifying appropriate learning outcomes, adapting teaching materials and using assessment to build on student’s strengths. The assistance of ISA’s and in-class support staff can further facilitate this differentiated learning environment. All staff are encouraged to update their professional knowledge and skills in the area of special needs through attendance at appropriate in-service.

**4.4. Allocation of hours**

Additional support teaching hours are allocated to the school in keeping with the regulations and guidelines by the National Council for Special Educational Needs (NCSE) and the Department of Education and Skills (DES). Hours provided to the school are allocated to students on a needs basis.

The function of additional teaching support is to ensure that students who have low levels of achievement in basic literacy and/or numeracy are identified and provided with the supports they require to meet the challenges of the curriculum available to them. Priority is given to those identified by a psychological report as having a learning difficulty or an additional support need.

Students in exam years and those performing at or below the 10th percentile on standardised tests of literacy/mathematics are allocated support as per the DES Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs Post-Primary Guidelines.

4.5. Selection of Students

Following examination of the entrance tests, a visit is made to all feeder primary schools by the Home School Liaison Officer, guidance counsellor and/or SEN co-ordinator. Information relating to whether each student has had an educational assessment, has been in receipt of learning support, has an Irish Exemption from the DES, or has any other difficulties is obtained.

An application will be made to the DES for additional resources both human (Inclusion Support Assistants) and physical (IT supports etc.) for students who have been appropriately assessed and who meet the criteria for such support.

If a student has not been identified as having special educational needs until after enrolment, the permission of parents will be sought the student assessed by the NEPS Psychologist. The number of referrals for assessment is limited to those granted by NEPS and thus referrals are made on a needs basis only.

**4.6. Criteria for referral into National Educational Psychology Service (NEPS)**

The following are criteria used by the Student Support Team to refer students into NEPS.

This list is in no order of importance, neither is it exhaustive.

• Teacher referrals

• Referrals from CAMHS

• Referrals in relation to RACE

• Referrals in relation to DARE

• Previous Psychological reports which may need review

• Behavioural referrals

• Underachievement in school tests/exams

• Students who are flagged due to results in entrance assessments

• Parent concerns

• Concerns raised by Primary schools

4.7. Identification of students with SEN

The identification process will usually involve the following:

• Liaison with Primary Schools

• Specific section on the admissions/enrolment form

• Liaison with parents

• Observations by the subject teachers, tutors, support teachers, Chaplain and guidance counsellor as appropriate.

• Formal assessments/testing.

• Form on SEN Noticeboard in staffroom for any staff member to fill out if they feel a student in Ramsgrange Community School may have a learning difficulty/ special educational need. This form is submitted to care team initially.

4.8. Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management

The overall responsibility for the provision of education to all students, including students with special educational needs, lies with the Board of Management.

The BOM duties include:

• To ensure that all students with learning support/special educational needs are identified and assessed.

• To ensure that the school has a comprehensive special educational needs policy in place, which has been developed collaboratively with all the relevant partners, to monitor the implementation of that policy and to ensure its evaluation.

• To ensure that a broad, balanced, relevant, progressive, continuous and differentiated curriculum is provided in the school to ensure in as far as is practicable that students with special educational needs leave school with the skills necessary to participate to the level of their capacity in an inclusive way in society and to live independently in their adult lives.

• To ensure that necessary resources are sought on behalf of students with special educational needs.

• To ensure that a special educational needs co-coordinator/ co-ordinator are appointed from among the teaching staff.

• To promote the development of positive partnership with parents and other relevant agencies/personnel and to ensure that parents are informed of their child’s special educational needs and how those needs are being met.

• To ensure that parents are consulted about and invited to participate in the making of all significant decisions concerning their child’s education.

• To ensure that this Special Educational Needs Policy forms part of the School Plan.

• To develop a whole school approach to literacy and numeracy as required under Section 14 of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004.

**Principal**

Under current legislation the Principal of the school has the overall responsibility for ensuring that the special educational needs of the students are met.

The Principal has responsibility for all aspects of the day-today management of policy and provision for students with special educational needs. As outlined in Section 18 of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004, the Principal may delegate certain functions to appropriate teachers.

The principal’s duties include:

• Appointing a special educational needs co-coordinator/ co-ordinator from among the teaching staff and to work closely with the co-ordinator.

• To inform the Board of Management of issue relevant to special educational needs.

• In consultation with the special educational needs coordinators and other relevant personnel to liaise the Department of Education and other agencies regarding needs and provision. This also includes applications for reasonable accommodation and exemptions in relation to state examinations, as well as assessments.

• To ensure the effective and efficient use of resources, including the allocation of resource hours and funds. This should include equality of access and opportunity for students with special educational needs in terms of resources.

• To actively promote a whole school approach to special educational needs and to make all staff aware of their responsibilities in this area and to organize appropriate staff development in this area.

**Mainstream Teachers**

The mainstream teacher has the responsibility for ensuring that all students, including those with special educational needs, are provided with a learning programme and environment that enables them to gain access to the curriculum and to advance their learning. Mainstream teachers should make themselves aware of the special educational needs of students in their classes. They should have access to all information that is relevant to teaching a student with special educational needs.

Their duties include:

• To make provision for students with special educational needs in their classes and subject areas.

• To be part of a whole school approach in relation to Special Educational Needs as well as literacy/numeracy.

• To develop a positive ethos in the classroom for fostering an inclusive approach to meeting the social and educational needs of all students including students with special educational needs.

• To identify personal training needs and to secure training where needed. This will be supported by school management subject to the availability of adequate resources.

• To inform the SEN co-ordinators of any concerns re students’ learning through the Student Support Referral Form.

Special Educational Needs Co-Coordinators

The SEN co-ordinators should work closely with the Principal and Deputy Principal, ISA’s and other support teachers to ensure the needs of the students are being met

The strategic duties of the Special Educational Needs Coordinators include:

• To have an overview of the management of the provision that is being provided in the school

• To facilitate effective systems of communication between all staff and colleagues involved in the provision.

• To ensure all staff and colleagues involved are working within school policy in relation to special educational needs

• To ensure that all provision in the school has the effect of integrating the student into a safe, secure, supportive learning environment.

• To ensure that all action taken supports a student's progress, well-being and learning.

• To be aware of issues of attendance and child protection as they relate to Special Educational Needs and refer such issues of concern in relation to child protection to the DLP or a member of care team as appropriate in the school.

• To supervise the day-to-day operation of the school’s special educational needs policy, and to work closely with and under the overall direction of the school principal.

• To engage in personal professional development.

• To liaise with and advise other teachers.

• To meet regularly with the special educational needs team, home school community liaison officer, the guidance counsellor and other relevant personnel, as appropriate.

• To manage Inclusion Support Assistants under the direction of the Principal.

• To liaise with parents of students with special educational needs and include them in the formulation of Student Support Files for their child.

• To ensure the distribution of suitable learning resources and teaching aids, subject to those resources and teaching aids being made available by the Department of Education and Science or other agencies.

• To liaise with external agencies including primary schools, National Educational Psychological Service, National Council for Special Education, Special Education Support Service, Health Boards and Voluntary bodies.

• In consultation with the Principal to ensure that Student Support Files are in place, as required.

• To develop practices to aid the identification of students with special educational needs.

• To co-ordinate the provision for students with special educational needs and keep a register of needs and provision.

• Generating the school’s Special Educational Teaching timetable.

• Administering standardised literacy and numeracy assessments for screening and/or diagnostic purposes in co-operation with the Guidance Counsellor.

• Sharing relevant information about students’ needs with teachers.

• Contributing to the development of learning plans.

• Completing applications for Irish Exemptions.

• Completing applications to the NSCE for additional supports.

• Completing applications to NEPS for educational assessments.

• Completing applications to the Examinations Commission for RACE.

**Teachers involved in the provision of Support**

Teachers providing supplementary teaching to students with special educational needs are expected to give this work the same status as other work e.g. preparation time, punctuality, recording student attendance, maintaining a record of work covered etc. They should request information from the SEN co-ordinators relating to the needs of their assigned student(s) and are required to participate in the production and review of learning plans with the SEN co-ordinators. They should liaise with the mainstream subject teacher where appropriate.

**Support Teachers**

The work of the Support teacher includes the following

• Assessment and identification of students with special needs.

• Recommending and devising appropriate materials for students in terms of concepts, relevance, readability, layout and presentation.

• Consulting with colleagues on appropriate methodology to help obviate learning barriers.

• Consulting with colleagues to devise a range of teaching and learning strategies.

• Contributing to cross-curricular issues concerned with the broader ideas of learning and teaching throughout the school.

• In-Class Support: In-class support is planned work with a group of children where two or more teachers are working together.

• Withdrawal- where a student or small group of students are withdrawn under direction of the SEN co-ordinators for resource/learning support.

• Team-teaching – in line with best practice team teaching has timetabled across different subject areas and year groups.

• Support teachers provide diagnostic assessments, monitoring, advice as well as direct teaching to students with special educational needs either on an individual or small group basis.

• Assessing and recording student needs and progress.

• Setting specific, time-related targets for each student and agreeing these with the subject teacher, principal and/or the Special Educational Needs Coordinator.

• Advising subject teachers regarding adapting the curriculum, teaching strategies, suitable textbooks, use of Information Technology and suitable software and a range of other related matters.

• Meeting and advising parents, when necessary, accompanied by the principal, Deputy Principal and/or the Special Needs Coordinator.

• Short meetings with other relevant professionals, in the students’ interest – e.g. psychologists, speech and language therapists, visiting teachers, special school or special class teachers where relevant.

• Support teachers should be involved in the development and delivery, or the organisation of delivery, of Student Support Files, and in the context of a whole school approach to the issue.

**Class Tutors**

Class Tutors can facilitate the inclusion of an individual student with special educational needs by monitoring the student’s progress within the class.

Guidance Counsellor

The Guidance Counsellor assists students with special educational needs at the different stages of schooling and in making career decisions. Individualised guidance and support for students with special educational needs is part of the support structure in the school. The Guidance Counsellor works in partnership with the SEN co-ordinators to administer assessments on incoming students and in the collaboration of results.

**Home School Liaison Co-ordinator**

Ramsgrange Community School has a Home School Liaison Co-ordinator available who provides support to parents of students with special educational needs. The Co-ordinator also works with feeder primary schools collating information on incoming students.

Inclusion Support Assistants - This should be read in conjunction with ISA policy.

Inclusion Support Assistants (ISAs) work closely with and under the direction of the Principal and the special educational needs coordinator and the individual subject teachers in the implementation of the school’s policy as it relates to individual students or groups of students. ISAs play a very important role in the health and safety of the student/s and in his/her/their social and emotional development.

The Principal in accordance with the guidelines of the Department of Education and Science (circular 0030/2014) assigns the duties of Inclusion Support Assistants. The ISA is privy to confidential information pertaining to SEN pupils and as such confidentiality is of paramount importance.

Where a student allocated access to an ISA is absent, the ISA shall follow the list of students who require ISA access on SEN Noticeboard.

The allocation of an Inclusion Support Assistant to assist a student should be balanced against the student’s needs to develop independence and to gain access to education in school alongside and in the same way as other students. Care should be taken, therefore, to ensure that the deployment of an Inclusion Support Assistant does not serve to segregate the student with special educational needs from their classmates or to make them more dependent on assistance from others.

The duties of Inclusion Support Assistants include tasks of a non-teaching nature such as:

• Assisting students write, take notes and write down homework etc.

• Assisting students to board and alight from school buses. (Where necessary, travelling as escort on school buses may be required.)

• Special assistance as necessary for students with difficulties e.g. helping physically disabled students with typing or writing.

• Assisting with clothing, feeding, toileting and general hygiene.

• Assisting on out-of-school visits, walks and similar activities.

• Assisting the teachers in the supervision of students with special educational needs during assembly, recreational and dispersal periods.

• Accompanying individuals or small groups who may have to be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom.

• Generally assisting the subject teachers, under the direction of the Principal and/or the Special Educational Needs Coordinator, with duties of a nonteaching nature.

• Participation with school development planning, where appropriate, and co-operation with any such changes with policies and practices arising from the school development process.

• In consultation with the SEN co-ordinators, develop Personal Pupil Plans as required by National Council for Special Education.

• Support the implementation of targets from the plan and monitor and review targets as necessary.

Parents

**PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS**

We aim to ensure that the school and parents to work in close partnership with each other in the identification of need, the setting of educational targets and working with the child.

Ramsgrange Community School affirms that parents of students with special educational needs will be informed of such needs and how they are being met. In addition, parents must be involved in all significant decisions relating to their child’s education. Wherever possible, students will be included in discussion and decision-making regarding identification, target setting and progress.

Parents can support the work of the school by providing a home environment in which there are opportunities for adults and children to participate together in language, literacy, and mathematical activities and where school and school work are positively encouraged.

Parents are asked to supply information on their child’s special educational needs at the time of enrolment and are required to give consent to the school to administer assessments on their child during their time at the school. Parents of students with educational assessments are requested to allow the school share relevant information from these reports with mainstream teachers for appropriate programme planning.

**Students**

Students should, as appropriate contribute to the evaluation of their progress by participating in appropriate assessment activities, including self-assessment. They should develop ownership of the skills and strategies that are taught during supplementary teaching and learn to apply these to improve their own learning. Students at senior cycle who are withdrawn from a subject are expected to use their time appropriately to complete briefs for practical subjects, complete LCVP assignments and study towards their examinations.

4.9. International students with English Language Needs

Ramsgrange Community School will carefully plan how students from minority ethnic backgrounds with low levels of English are to be taught and integrated.

Ramsgrange Community School must introduce initiatives to encourage students from minority ethnic backgrounds to mix with students in and out of class.

The school through its normal operating procedures shall ensure that adequate additional teaching support is applied for and allocated as per the regulations of the Department of Education.

4.10. Assessments

Please read this section in conjunction with Ramsgrange Community School assessment and change of level policy.

Students in our school will be assessed as follows:

• Standardised diagnostic testing on entry to the school

• Assessment through teaching in general subject areas

• Informal in-house assessment

• Follow up assessment and testing

• Referral to the National Educational Psychological Service as appropriate. (Parental consent must be sought for psychological assessments as per the NEPS model of service.)

• Original records of such assessments shall be maintained in the school as the property of Ramsgrange Community School.

4.11. Student Support Files (SSF’s)

The Student Support File is a special programme written by the school for named students so that each child can work at improving their skills and knowledge at their own pace. The Student Support File is a collaborative process involving the school, the parents, the student (where appropriate) and other relevant personnel and agencies.

The Principal in consultation with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators shall be responsible for the development of a Student Support File.

4.12. Resources

Application for Additional Resources:

The SEN co-ordinators will make applications to the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), through the Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO) for additional resources on behalf of individual students on receipt of the following:

a) Duly completed forms as specified by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE).

b) Current psychological reports, as appropriate.

c) Other relevant support documentation, as appropriate.

Once the Department of Education decides in relation to resources, the school will notify the student and parents. Should a student in receipt of resource (SEN) support leave the school for whatever reason, the school should notify the SENO, through the relevant form issued by the NCSE each February.

Physical Resources allocated to a student shall always remain the property of Ramsgrange Community School .

We endeavour to deploy resources in a way that best promotes the students’ learning and development, with full accountability for all resources allocated. This includes the deployment of resources for the specific purpose for which they are intended.

**4.13. Gifted & Talented Students (READES)**

RAMSGRANGE EXCEPTIONALLY ABLE AND DUAL EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS

Students who score in the top ten percentile of norm referenced ability tests, administered by the school, will be termed gifted for the purpose of this policy. The school will enhance the educational development of gifted students by the provision of a suitable curricular programme, by employing appropriate educational strategies, and by fostering an ethos conductive to high achievement.

Ramsgrange Community School recognises that exceptionally able students have needs.

Identification of students with high ability comes from a successful amalgamation of evidence from a variety of sources including assessments and diagnostic tests, observations and class work.

Exceptionally able students have special educational needs. Because regular schoolwork may not provide sufficient challenge they may experience boredom, which can lead to frustration at school. In addition, many may feel isolated and uncomfortable with their ability. This can lead to them under-achieving in school to conform. There are several approaches Ramsgrange Community School takes that can be of help and sometimes a combination of all of these may be needed.

• Differentiation

• Open ended project work

• Special classes: Have special classes available for a group of high ability students, perhaps on a weekly basis, where resources allow.

• Enrichment Activities: Providing access to activities such as lunchtime clubs e.g. chess, astronomy, quizzes, debates, music groups, drama. Particularly try to facilitate students meeting others with similar interests even if they are in different year groups.

Students are also encouraged:

• to take extra subjects

• take part in the All Ireland Linguistics Olympiad

• join the CTYI

• attend summer schools

• apply for scholarship programmes

4.14. Curricular Modifications

Curricular modifications include:

• Reduced Curriculum

• Reduced Timetable

These are considered for individual students where deemed necessary. The individual students will be considered in consultation with the SEN co-ordinator, Guidance Counsellor, Principal, Deputy Principal, parents/guardians and student.

**4.15. Irish Exemptions**

Students with special educational needs, who were granted an Irish Exemption from the DES in primary school or other secondary school in the case of transfer, where possible, are withdrawn from Irish class and receive learning support at these times. A copy of the certificate of exemption is necessary. JCSP classes will be timetabled at the same time as Irish class to provide extra support to these students.

The school will consider granting an Exemption from Irish when a written request is made by the student’s parents/guardians and the school is furnished with a copy of a psychological report not more than two years old containing a recommendation for an Exemption from Irish.

Exemptions from Irish are sought where appropriate and in accordance with Circular M10/94 Revision of Rule 46 of the “Rules and Programme for Secondary Schools”.

**4.16. Reasonable Accommodation**

Applications are made for all students who meet the criteria for Reasonable Accommodations for State Examinations. The procedures set down by the Department of Education and Science and the Examinations Commission will be strictly adhered to.

Provision will also be made, where appropriate and feasible, to assist students in formal school exams in keeping with State Examination provisions.

**4.17. Monitoring & Reviewing**

Monitoring of the Special Educational Needs Policy is an ongoing and developmental process. This policy will be reviewed annually or more frequently on the legislative changes which are ongoing in this area.

The effectiveness of this policy relies on:

• Whole school policies

• Committed SEN team

• Parental involvement

• The direction of resources towards students in greatest need

• The development of a team approach involving parents, teachers and relevant support personnel e.g. psychologists, speech and language therapists etc.

• Effective communication between all parties involved

• The provision of appropriate time allocation and support services by the Department of Education. Additional Teaching Support hours are critical here. Additional support services (National Educational Psychological Service, Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists, Inclusion Support Assistants) are of vital importance to provide a professional, holistic service.

### 24.vi Inclusion Support Assistant Policy

5.1. Introduction

The term ‘special educational needs’ includes a broad spectrum of children with different abilities and educational difficulties who may require extra teaching support and/or extra support with care needs.

Most children with special educational needs thrive in school with the support of their teachers and without the need for additional care support, over and above that which is provided by the child’s class or subject teacher. However, some children do need additional care support to make their attendance at school possible.

The ISA scheme was put in place to provide for the minority of students who have significant need for care support and who would not be able to attend school without such additional support.

Inclusion Support Assistants (ISAs) play an important role in assisting the teacher to support students with special educational needs who have significant care needs. They are allocated to the school and work under the direction of the principal/teachers. The ISA usually supports a few students with care needs in the school.

This policy statement has been drawn up in consultation with the Board of Management, Staff, Parents and Students of Ramsgrange Community School. This policy has been formulated in accordance with circular 0030/2014 and the National council for special education (NCSE). This Policy outlines the role and function of the ISA in Ramsgrange Community School (RCS). This policy should also be read in conjunction with the Special Educational Needs Policy for Ramsgrange Community School.

5.2. Aim

The aim of the ISA in Ramsgrange Community School is to support and facilitate those pupils with SEN to enable them to reach their full potential.

5.3. Role of ISA (See Circular 0030/2014)

At all times ISA’s endeavour to create an environment which is conducive to achieving the aims of Ramsgrange Community School and recognise that the aims of ISA’s are best achieved in a caring, mutually supportive and respectful manner.

Inclusion Support Assistants are recruited specifically to assist Ramsgrange Community School in providing the necessary non-teaching services to pupils with assessed special educational needs.

ISA’s play a very important role in the health and safety of the pupil/s and in his/her/their social and emotional development.

ISA’s should be aware of all Ramsgrange Community School Policies, particularly those policies relating to Safety, Health and Welfare at Work, the Policy for Special Needs Education and the school’s Fire Drill.

The duties of the ISA have been delineated by the Principal on behalf of the Board of Management.

Their work is assigned and supervised by the Principal/Deputy Principal.

The ISA’s are part of the SEN team.

ISA duties include:

• To provide special assistance as necessary for children with difficulties, for example, helping SEN pupils with typing, writing, computers or any other equipment as required.

• To assist with clothing, feeding, toileting and general hygiene and being mindful of the health and safety needs of the pupil.

• To assist on out-of-school visits, walks, examinations and similar activities.

• To assist the teachers in the supervision of pupils during assembly, recreation and dispersal from the classroom for one reason or another.

• To accompany individuals or small groups who may have to be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom for one reason or another.

• To provide general assistance to the class teachers, under the direction of the Principal, with duties of a non-teaching nature. It is accepted that the ISA may not act as either substitute or temporary teachers. In no circumstance will they be left in sole charge of a class or group of children.

• To participate with school development planning, where appropriate, and co-operation with any such changes with policies and practices arising from the school development process.

• To engage with parents of SEN pupils in both formal and informal structures as required and directed by school management. Any contact with parents to be logged.

• To assist in preparation and tidying up of classroom.

• To assist school children to board and alight from school buses. Where necessary travel as escort during school hours on school buses may be required.

• To assist with other duties appropriate to the grade as may be determined by the needs of the pupils and the school from time to time. Inclusion Support Assistants may be re-assigned to other work when SEN pupils are absent or when urgent work demands arise.

• To keep detailed daily records of student progress to be available to management and SENO when required.

• To formulate, review and update a Personal Pupil Plan for each student, in conjunction with SEN team and management. These Personal Pupil Plans must be copied into the students’ files and will be reviewed by the SENO on an annual basis.

5.4. Function of the ISA

• To assist the pupils assigned to them in accessing as much of the normal curriculum as possible.

• To assist the class teacher in implementing the curriculum.

• To help pupils carry out assigned tasks.

• To help pupils learn and adopt new skills.

• To praise, support and encourage pupils and to be a positive influence in the class.

• To facilitate periods of time-out for pupils where appropriate only under the direction of management, i.e. Principal or Deputy Principal.

• To encourage and support pupils to be as independent as possible.

• To foster co-operative learning and facilitate development of friendships.

• To facilitate running of social clubs/group activities at lunchtimes where required as part of lunchtime supervision duties.

5.5. Confidentiality

ISA’s will carry out their duties in a caring, professional and confidential manner. Information on SEN pupils shall only be disclosed on a need to know basis to the relevant people.

ISA’s can, and should have, access to relevant information contained in students’ files. This information can be obtained from SEN Co-ordinators.

While supporting the pupil’s development in ways that will foster security and confidence, ISA’s must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with school management in order to safeguard children.

5.6. Termly ISA Meeting

Where possible, the school’s complement of ISA’s will meet, on a termly basis with the Principal/Deputy Principal and SEN teachers, to discuss and develop any SEN related matters. These meetings aim to encourage commitment, team spirit and provide an opportunity for the ISA’s to pool their skills for the overall benefit of the pupils and school.

A record of these meetings should be kept in a Meetings record binder. The Deputy Principal will be responsible for taking and filing the minutes of these meetings.

6. DEIS – Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools

Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) the Action Plan for Educational Inclusion, was launched in May 2005 and remains the Department of Education and Skills policy instrument to address educational disadvantage. The action plan focuses on addressing and prioritising the educational needs of children and young people from disadvantaged communities, from pre-school through second-level education (3 to 18 years).

DEIS provides for a standardised system for identifying levels of disadvantage and an integrated School Support Programme (SSP).

836 schools are included in the programme in the 2016/17 school year. These comprise 646 primary schools (330 urban/town schools and 316 rural primary schools) and 190 second level schools.

What is DEIS, and how were second level schools selected to participate?

DEIS is the most recent programme aimed at addressing the educational needs of children and young people from disadvantaged communities. DEIS was introduced in 2006/2007 by the Department of Education and Science, now renamed the Department of Education and Skills (DES). About 340 urban primary, 340 rural primary, and about 200 second level schools that were assessed as having the highest levels of disadvantage were invited to participate in the School Support Programme (SSP)1 component of DEIS. Under the SSP, existing interventions for schools and school clusters/communities with concentrated levels of educational disadvantage were consolidated (DES, 2005).

At second level, there are currently 194 schools nationwide in receipt of additional resources under DEIS.

In the current school year, participating schools receive some or all of the following measures under the SSP:

• From the 2012/13 school year, all DEIS post-primary schools will be targeted for additional support through an improved staffing schedule of 18.25:1. This is a 0.75 point improvement compared to the existing standard 19:1 which applied in non-fee charging schools. Circular 0009/2012

• DEIS grant paid based on level of disadvantage and enrolment – DEIS Funding Guidelines

• Access to Home School Community Liaison services

• Access to Schools Meals Programme

• Access to a range of supports under School Completion Programme

• Access to Junior Certificate Schools Programme (JCSP)

• Some JCSP schools have a library

• Access to Leaving Certificate Applied Programme (LCA)

• Access to planning supports

• Access to a range of professional development supports

Additional funding under School Books Grant Scheme In RCS, we have embraced our DEIS status. It allows us to tackle issues such as attendance, retention, progression, literacy and numeracy on a wider level within the community. We are committed to developing our DEIS plan regularly in order to meet the demands of a changing culture and changing world. It is through DEIS that we are able to provide initiatives such as computer coding, subsidised trips to universities/colleges, book grants, HCSL amongst many others. Through DEIS, students fulfil one out of three of the criteria for applying through the HEAR scheme, which is hugely beneficial for those applying to university. Details of all initiatives are available on our website, www.ramsgrangecommunityschool.ie.

### 24.vii School Completion Programme

The School Completion Programme (SCP) was set up as part of Department of Education and Skills (DES) DEIS Strategy – Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools.

Its aim is to increase the numbers of young people staying in primary and second level school and in doing so improve the numbers of pupils who successfully complete the Senior Cycle, or the equivalent.

The SCP operates in 470 primary schools and 224 post-primary schools. There are 124 local SCP projects employing 248 full-time, 627 part-time and 2,211 sessional and other staff. Each of the 124 local SCP projects is led by a management committee comprising school principals, HSCL co-ordinators, parents and voluntary and statutory agencies. At a national level, SCP is supported by a national leadership team within the Senior Management Team of the Educational Welfare Services of the Child and Family Agency, with responsibility for overseeing the operation and work of the local projects.

SCP work focuses on targeting and providing supports to young people identified to be most at risk of early school leaving and includes:

• Identifying and supporting children at risk of not reaching their potential in the educational system because of poor attendance, participation and retention via initiatives such as breakfast clubs; homework clubs; afterschool supports; mentoring programmes; and therapeutic interventions;

• Ensuring that schools have in place the appropriate procedures to monitor, identify and respond to attendance, participation and retention issue;

• Implementing transfer programmes to support young people transitioning from primary to post-primary school.

7.1. Key Worker

The role as an SCP (school completion programme) key-worker is to work with individuals one to one or with small groups of students to improve school attendance, participation and retention. In Ramsgrange Community School, the key worker is Clodagh Russell. As a result of the addition of a key worker within the school, students who are targeted are in receipt of consistent, intensive and yet practical methods by which to help and support them through their time in second level education. This has proven to be invaluable.

Talkabout Programme targeting 3rd yr students

Lockers programme targeting all junior cycle students

7 Habits of Highly Effective Teenagers targeting Senior cycle students

Squashy Couch targeting all TY, LCA 1 & LCA2 students

Transfer Programme Easter camp for incoming 6th class/1st yr students

Keywork

• Check and Connect

• Retracking

• Project/Exam Support

• Literacy/Numeracy

Weekly contact with parents/guardians of students who have engaged with the programme

HSCL contact and Student Support Team meetings

Liaising with EWO and other support agencies

### 24.viii Home School Community Liaison Coordination

Coordinator: Ann Cadogan

“The underlying policy of the Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) Scheme is one that seeks to promote partnership between parents and teachers. The purpose of this partnership is to enhance pupils’ learning opportunities and to promote their retention in the education system. In addition, the HSCL Scheme places great emphasis on collaboration with the local community. The HSCL Scheme is the pioneer in involving the school in the life of the community and involving the community and its agencies in the life of the school.” The Home School Community Liaison Scheme in Ireland: From Vision to Best Practice written by the HSCL Coordinators, 2005-2006.

An integrated services intervention practice model, incorporating the work of its three service strands, (statutory EWS, HSCL & SCP)

 The thrust of the scheme is preventative, ensuring that interventions are put in place, which will impact positively on parents and children, in order to improve educational outcomes.

 The scheme is solution-focused, building on the strengths of parents and carers through empowerment and capacity-building.

 Visiting families in their home setting is a crucial element in establishing trust, assessing needs, and monitoring the effect of plans and interventions put in place to bring about improved outcomes for children.

 Partnership with the two other service strands, within Educational Welfare Services, of the Child and Family Agency, other relevant support services and voluntary and statutory agencies is essential to increasing effectiveness, reducing duplication and providing an integrated delivery of service to marginalised children and their families.

HSCL Coordinator facilitates courses and classes for parents to help them support their children's learning. The provision of a parent’s room facilitates this and effectively, the school becomes a centre of welcome, where parents enjoy the hospitality of other parents in a warm and cheerful atmosphere, situated within their child’s school.

On a yearly basis the HSCL action plan includes

• The provision of leisure, curricular, parenting and personal development programmes for parents.

• Within the Educational Welfare Services of the Child and Family Agency, working collaboratively with the statutory Educational Welfare Service and the School Completion Programme (SCP) to address issues which impinge on the school attendance, participation and retention of children at risk of educational disadvantage and early school leaving.

Facilitating partnership with teachers, parents, pupils and community agencies in formulating school policies.

The HSCl yearly action plan links directly to the DEIS and SIP plans.

The work of the HSCL supports all the tenets of these plans.

Attendance , Retention, Attainment, Literacy , numeracy,transitions,wellbeing ……..as outlined in the plans.

Summary of the work

First year Induction

We at Ramsgrange Community School are constantly endeavouring to make the transition from primary to secondary school as successful as possible.

Easter Camp

Our one day Easter camp is eagerly anticipated by the sixth class students who participate with enthusiasm. The feedback is always extremely positive with the general consensus from the students that they feel less anxious and more excited about the big move in September. The activities included art and gardening .Three of our parents facilitated these workshops. Another two parents hosted the coffee morning for the parents of our sixth class students. Other activities comprised of games in the gym, a treasure hunt and baking.

The students, in their evaluations express excitement at the prospect of starting in RCS, that they were glad have to had the opportunity to make new friendships and were becoming more familiar with the school environment.

Beginnings workshops

This year, we are broadening the scope of our transfer programme with the introduction of an induction morning in school for the students and his/her parent(s).

It ran from 9.20-11.30. The parents are being requested to accompany the child to the school and participate in the induction workshop. The parent will then bring the child back to the primary school.

Five workshops were rolled out in March and April and attended by 90 students and their parents. We are putting on an extra induction morning for those students and parents who were unable to attend the scheduled programme on Friday 18th May;

The response and feedback from both parents and students was very positive.

Parents, even those with children already attending RCS saw the value in the workshops, the school structures, understanding the time table. Students and their parents enjoyed the tour of the school. Their class teachers in the primary schools expressed their full support for this initiative. Four of our parents facilitated the workshops, helping with the catering, school tours and the preparations and tidying up of the room.

99% of the cohort will have availed of the workshops. A further morning is arranged (May 18th) for those who were unable to attend at the scheduled time.

It was a very worthwhile and successful initiative and lays the grounds for an even stronger and smoother transition. Our gratitude to the primary school authorities who fully cooperated and supported us, our Meitheal leaders, our school secretary, our guidance counsellor, M. Harris, who met with the parents each day and was available to address their queries, and our school staff and of courses our parent volunteers.

Full report of this induction initiative with the principal.

Community Arts

Every wed from 9.30 to 12.30 on the stage.

New parents are always welcome.

The group continues to meet every Wed and is thoroughly enjoying the work as well as the social aspects of being part of this vibrant creative group.

They recently held an art exhibition of their works at St. Michael’s theatre in New Ross. There was a launch night on April! 3th and the exhibition ran until May 8th.

It was titled Together Art

This is what they had to say by way of an introduction

“We are a diverse group of adults, both men and women of all ages and nationalities such as Irish, English, Russian, French, Thai, and Glaswegian and of course our German tutor.

The group’s primary aim is to connect parents to other parents and to the wider community. To get the opportunity to learn something new while exploring art as well as enjoying the chat over the cup of coffee.

We are on a big adventure having our first Art Exhibition in St. Michael’s theatre and our next stop is Le Louvre, Paris.”

Parents in the classroom

The ‘maths for fun’ programme. It is a six week programme designed and delivered by parents with the HSCL as lead.

It includes topics such as measuring and estimating weights, volumes, lengths. Board games, cards, rings and plastic dart games all contribute to bringing math’s to the students and parents in a fun yet learning environment.

Reading with the First years. Book: Spirit of the Titanic

Our volunteer parents can be seen working their way through the very moving account of a boy who has died in an accident in the building of the Titanic and now finds him existing as a ghost on the ship as she takes her maiden voyage.

The first years are enjoying the book and discovering lots of new phrases, building their vocabulary and becoming enthralled in the adventures of Samuel, the ghost as the tragedy unfolds.The lesson includes word games and puzzles which are enjoyed by parents and students. We plan on showing the film Titanic to the first years when the book is completed.

Five parents facilitate the workshop and enjoy a coffee and sandwich before they leave.

Get involved

Parents are encouraged in particular, while participating in the classroom activities to think about volunteering in other capacities in the school.

One of our parents helps with the LCA art initiative

Another of our volunteers has been giving French tuition to small groups of third year students for several weeks now.

Initially concentrating on the oral work but now helping them with letter writing.

Garden group

Parents are encouraged to join our community garden group.

Our volunteer gardeners continue to play a very important role in maintaining and improving our community garden. They never miss a Tuesday morning and they can be heard laughing heartily in my office as they take their coffee break.

On April they hosted a table quiz in the Fort Conan as a fund raiser for upkeep of the garden. It brought together the gardeners’ friends, families and local community. The atmosphere of fun and friendliness is testament to the group’s popularity in the community. It has become a hardy annual in our calendar and is always well supported.

‘Review ‘coffee morning

Towards the end of the school year parents are invited to attend a workshop to review their child’s and their own experience of their first year at RCS.

Parents who attend are encouraged to give a full and frank review of how the school and its structures supported the child and the parent in the first year. It is a comprehensive review and we as a school can learn and be informed of how those parents feel about the supports and communication coming from the school staff, structures and interventions.

Copy of full review will be provided to the principal and board of management.

Coffee morning for Parents of exam class students

Coffee morning theme; preparing yourself and your child for the period before and during the examinations

In attendance will be Ann Cadogan HSCL, Mary Harris Guidance Counsellor and year heads.

An overview will be presented by M Harris on how the student and parent can prepare for the exam period. Routine and being prepared will be emphasized as is the importance of exercise, diet and sleep.

Staying away from social media to be encouraged. Parents them to be encouraged to be aware of their own anxiety levels and could indeed join their exam student in their anti-stress routine.

Homework club

Our homework club will be provided for the whole of the school year to first, second and third year students. This is always a big uptake. Tea and sandwiches are provided free of charge.

We are grateful to our SNAs who manage the club so effectively.

Home visits

Home visits will offered to all new parents with most parents being in a position to avail of this opportunity to engage on a one to one with the coordinator.

The trust created is evidenced by the willingness of the parent to further engage in any supports or interventions offered to them or their children as a result of this collaborative meeting.

Contact is maintained with our target families throughout the year.

Working with the BFL teacher, JCSP coordinator,SCP coordinator and key worker , SEN team as well as year heads , guidance counsellor and chaplain on a regular basis helps to maintain the strong links between school, home and the community.

To finish our year we will be hosting our annual picnic to all our volunteers as a token of our gratitude for the invaluable contribution they make to our school community.

### 24.ix NCSE Behaviour for Learning - Behaviour for Learning Programme

The NCSE has been in RCS since 2013. The NCSE provides both Level 1, Level 2 & Level 3 support to the school.

In 2017, RCS were allocated a Behaviour for Learning Teacher. (BFL)

The BFL Teacher is Ms. Linda Rogers.

The NCSE Advisor for RCS is Mr. Gerry McQuaid

(The NCSE now has responsibility for services previously provided by the SESS, NBSS and Visiting Teacher Service.)

The Behaviour for Learning Teacher works with students at the old NBSS Level 2 & Level 3 Targeted and Individualised Support. They also help with Level 1 Interventions.

The BFL teacher works with identified students, individually or in groups on Behaviour for Learning programmes that are designed to meet their social, emotional, wellbeing and behavioural and academic needs, so they can achieve and succeed in school. These students are selected through weekly Student Support Meetings, where their needs are assessed, and appropriate interventions are run by the BFL teacher, in conjunction with SET.

LEVEL 3 SUPPORT

Students who are offered NCSE Level 3 support may present with a variety of challenging behaviours, including social skills deficits; low self-esteem; difficult relationships with adults/peers and poor concentration and attention difficulties in most subjects. Many of the students are also persistently at risk of suspension and/or expulsion. The severity of their behaviour in classrooms not only hinders their own educational progress but may also impede that of their peers.

The Behaviour for Learning Programme aims to explore ways in which an individual teacher, allocated with 22 hours per week, can develop a school ‘Behaviour for Learning Programme’ specifically targeted at students in need of intensive individualised intervention (NCSE Level 3).

An individual Student Behaviour Plan is developed for each student in receipt of Level 3 support.

Rather than responding after young people present with chronic behaviours (‘a wait to fail’ intervention model), a school's ‘Behaviour for Learning Programme’ also includes preventive strategies and early intervention approaches for all students i.e. NCSE Level 1 support

LEVEL 2 SUPPORT

Additionally, the Behaviour for Learning Programme teacher facilitates the planning, implementation and evaluation of effective responses to challenging behaviour at small group/class and/or year group level i.e. Level 2: targeted support for some students.

LEVEL 1 SUPPORT

The BFL Teacher also helps promote a school-wide approach to positive behaviour as fundamental to our Behaviour System in RCS. BFL teacher, Year Heads, SPHE Teacher, Guidance, Chaplain and all teachers work with school on vision, mission, systems, structures, policies, practices, rules, routines and expectations.

**RCS under the Guidance of NBSS launched its’ new School Vision in 2014.**

Our new vision, **RCS – Respect, Community, and Success** has reinvigorated pride in our school and what we stand for.

The NCSE Belonging Plus+ transition and transfer programme explicitly teaches first year students about their new school’s expectations, rules and routines. Class rules are displayed and used as visual reminders and cues.

NCSE Level 1 school-wide support assists schools in strengthening, developing and evaluating proactive and preventative systems, structures, policies, practices and initiatives with respect to behaviour.

The aim of this support is to stimulate the creation of school cultures that actively promote positive behaviour to enrich the learning and teaching experiences of all members of the school community.

Level 1 school-wide support for all students is comprised of a range of evidence based practices and strategies that assist schools in developing a school-wide approach to positive behaviour.

As part of Level 1 support, partner schools are required to select a number of representative staff members to form a Positive Behaviour Strategy Team.

The NCSE provides support and training in a number of key behaviour and learning approaches, methodologies and issues, as identified by school staff and the school’s Positive Behaviour Strategy Team, in consultation with the NCSE.

Among the areas NCSE has provided support and training in are:

• Rules & Routines

• Expectations, Rewards and Consequences

• Code of Behaviour Review

• Strategies for Encouraging, Praising and Motivating Students

• The Management of Low-Level Disruption

• The Management of High-Level Disruption

• Development of Pastoral Care Systems for Behaviour Improvement

• Belonging Plus+ The NCSE Transition and Transfer Programme

• The Development of Student Support Teams or Care Teams

• Academic Literacy, Language and Learning

• Explicit Teaching of Comprehension Strategies for All Subject Areas

• Explicit Teaching of Vocabulary Strategies

• Adolescent Literacy Programmes and Resources

• Study Skills and Learning Strategies for Junior and Senior Cycle Students

• Explicit Teaching of Social Skills

• Social and Emotional Literacy

• Positive Health and Wellbeing Initiatives

• Solution Focused Approaches to Behaviour Improvement.

Programmes Used Level 3 (1-1) Level 2 (Small Group) Level 3: Whole Class

• Alert

• Working Things Out

• Friends

• Getting It Together

• Vocabulary Enrichment Programme

• SNIP

• Catch Up Literacy

• Why Try

• Check & Connect

### 24.x Chaplaincy

10.1. Context

The Chaplain in Ramsgrange Community School is Marie McCabe. The Chaplain can be contacted through the office on 051 389211.

The school chaplain is available to all students and staff as well as parents. The Chaplain responds to the spiritual and religious needs of the students and the whole school community respecting the denominational, religious and personal convictions of all.

The Chaplain works in co-operation with the Principal, Board of Management, RE department, teachers and pupils, participating in care meetings, student support, school planning, evaluation, and in-service.

10.2. Pastoral Role

The school Chaplain exercises their pastoral role by:

• Meeting students individually or in small groups

• Access to class groups

• Provision of liturgical functions – Masses, prayer services, meditation

• Responding to the daily pastoral needs of staff and students

• Fundraising

• Co-ordinating the Meitheal programme

• Member of the Care Team

• Co-ordinates the Lourdes Diocesan Pilgrimage selection

• Co-ordinates the Young SVP Conference

• Co-ordinates the John Paul II Awards.

• Central Role in anti-bullying policy

• To animate the spiritual life of the school

• To support the RE department

• Contributing to the School’s pastoral care team

• To be a resource and spiritual support to the staff

• Maintaining a close link with the local church communities

• Facilitating the provision of retreats for students/staff

• To be concerned with the implementation of the school’s ethos

The Chaplain, while not in a formal disciplinarian role, at all times supports and promotes the discipline policies in the school. The Chaplain is available to help in pastorally addressing the underlying causes of a pupil’s undisciplined behaviour.

Ultimately, the Chaplain seeks to open an awareness of the love of the heart of Christ within each member of the school community and to help them work together in recognizing the needs both within and outside of the community.

**10.3. ACCS: The role of a School Chaplain**

Provision is made for the appointment of a Roman Catholic Chaplain in all Community Schools. The School Chaplain is appointed by the Board of Management on the nomination of the local Bishop. The terms and conditions of such appointment are set out in DES CL 57/2008. The Chaplain is appointed in addition to the school allocation of whole-time teacher equivalents, and is paid a teacher’s salary by the Department of Education and Science.

The Chaplain is required to teach four hours of class instruction per week. Other Chaplaincy duties include visitation of homes, religious services, retreats and celebrations, as well as counselling. The Chaplain is also expected to take an interest in the extra-curricular activities of the school, to encourage young people to be involved in the community, to be available during state examinations and to be in contact with the adult education student body.

Chaplaincy is a full-time job and requires full-time commitment. As a staff member, the Chaplain is expected to share in the corporate responsibility for discipline and good order. In this context, it is reasonable to expect that the Chaplain shares supervisory duties, but it is important that the special role of the Chaplain in developing the spirituality of students and in providing a strong Christian witness is not compromised by too much involvement as a disciplinarian. Although no specific provision is made for the appointment of a Chaplain in Comprehensive Schools, Boards of Management are advised to seek such an appointment as a matter of equity. In the case of the five Protestant Comprehensive Schools the appointment of a School Chaplain should, of course, be subject to the nomination of the appropriate Church authorities.

### 24.xi Meitheal

11.1. Context

The Meitheal Programme in Co. Wexford is a training programme for students at senior level in secondary schools. In this programme the students are trained to become mentors for incoming students at junior level. It is a programme based on pro-respect between students and one that enables students to take responsibility for the happiness of others and for the safety and well-being of all who share a school environment.

11.2. Training

The programme is advertised among senior students who are invited to become Meitheal Leaders in their respective schools. All applicants are interviewed and a selection is then made. The students who are chosen to become Meitheal Leaders undergo a training programme in the summer prior to their return to school the following September. This training programme covers the areas of:-

• personal development

• identity

• self-esteem

• communication skills

• listening skills

• assertiveness skills

• group dynamics

• group management

and many other skills that are necessary for the students to develop if the programme is to be successful.

After their training the students return to their respective schools as sixth years and each is given responsibility for a number of incoming first years. It is then the task of the Meitheal Leaders to ensure the smooth transition of these young people into the school and to be able and available to assist them in any way necessary during their first few days in school.

After this initial work it is then expected that the Meitheal Leaders will work with the junior students, developing a relationship of trust and mutual respect.

The hope for the remainder of their first year is that if the junior student should experience difficulties or anxieties of any kind that they can turn to their Meitheal Leaders and find in them understanding, respect, advice and assistance.

11.3. Review & Evaluation

In Ramsgrange Community School, the Meitheal programme has proven to be effective in promoting the happiness of students in general as well as reducing instances of bullying, isolation and early school leaving.

It is vital to the success of the programme that there are teachers in each school who will volunteer to act as overseers of the programme within each school. It will be their function to organise the day to day running of the programme and provide any in-school assistance or back-up that is needed. It is also hoped that the programme co-ordinator will be in a position to offer in-service to these teachers, educating them in the principles and ethos of the programme and offering support and resources to them for the successful organisation of the programme in their respective schools.

**12. LAOS – Looking At Our Schools 2016 – A Quality Framework for Post Primary Schools.**

12.1 – The Principles of LAOS 2016

The quality framework takes a holistic view of learning and of the learner. It emphasises the need for students to develop a broad range of skills, competences and values that enable personal well-being, active citizenship and lifelong learning. Learning experiences for all students should therefore be broad, balanced, challenging and responsive to individual needs. The quality framework sees students’ well-being as intrinsic to this holistic view of learning, both as an outcome of learning and as an enabler of learning. It recognises the crucial role of schools in promoting and nurturing students’ well-being through their practices in the key areas of school environment, curriculum, policies, and partnerships. Support for students’ well-being is therefore integrated into the two dimensions of this framework, and is explicitly referenced at key points. The quality framework recognises the importance of quality teaching and draws on a wide body of research that suggests that excellence in teaching is the most powerful influence on student achievement. It acknowledges the pedagogical skills required to enable high-quality learner experiences and outcomes. A Quality Framework for Post-Primary Schools 7 It views career-long professional development as central to the teacher’s work and firmly situates reflection and collaboration at its heart. The framework holds that improving the quality of students’ learning should be the main driver of teacher learning. The quality framework views schools as dynamic learning organisations, where teachers are enabled to work individually and collectively to build their professional capacity in order to support continuous improvement in teaching and learning. It holds that schools should assume responsibility for the quality of the education they provide and should be explicitly learner-centred. It views students as active agents in their learning who engage purposefully in a wide range of learning activities and who respond in a variety of ways to different learning opportunities. The quality framework sees external and internal evaluation as complementary contributors to school improvement and capacity building. It maintains that the most powerful agent of improvement is a well-integrated system of evaluation that combines the external perspective with the reflective and collective insights of school leaders, teachers, parents and students. The quality framework sees leadership and management as inseparable. The framework defines school leadership by its impact on learning. It sees leadership that is focused on creating and sustaining environments that are conducive to good learning as paramount and acknowledges that effective leadership is essential for schools to be places where successful learning happens. It is a fundamental principle of the framework that, for schools to be led effectively, they must be managed effectively. Therefore, both leadership and management skillsets are always considered as serving the school’s core work: learning and teaching. The quality framework refers generally to school leaders, and more specifically to school patrons, boards of management, principals and deputy principals, as appropriate. The term ‘school leaders’ typically refers to these formal leadership roles, and also includes teachers with posts of responsibility and those who have undertaken roles related to the school’s priorities. The framework also recognises that all teachers play a leadership role within the school. The leadership and management dimension is therefore intended to assist all teachers in gaining a perspective on their own leadership roles in the school and how they can develop and expand their leadership skills over time.

**12.2 LAOS in RCS**

Actions to date so far:

2017-2018

• All Staff were given a copy of LAOS 2016 via email.

• The Principal spoke about LAOS at Staff briefing during Needs & Priorities Review.

2018 – 2019

• Staff reminded at briefing about the importance of LAOS 2016 in September.

• LAOS was spoken about at Staff meeting in October.

• Meeting held with APIs and APIIs to discuss how to incorporate LAOS into annual review.

• LAOS has been linked to DEIS Plan – Numeracy, Literacy and Attainment so far, this academic year.

• LAOS has also been linked to SSE – SIP Plans for RCS.

• Principal has already sent 1 of 4 surveys to staff re: Leadership and Management Domains

• LAOS was uploaded to VSWARE for easy of accessibility

12.3 LAOS 2016 and Guidance:

Step 1: Identification of Links between LAOS 2016 and Guidance

Step 2: To gather data either qualitative or quantitative to ascertain whether the Standards are executed in either an effective or highly effective manner.

Learning & Teaching:

Domain Standard Statement of Effective Practice

1 2 C

2 4 B, C, F

3 1 F

4 1 C

Feedback on Leadership and Management is currently being done by the Principal over a 4-week period.

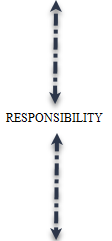
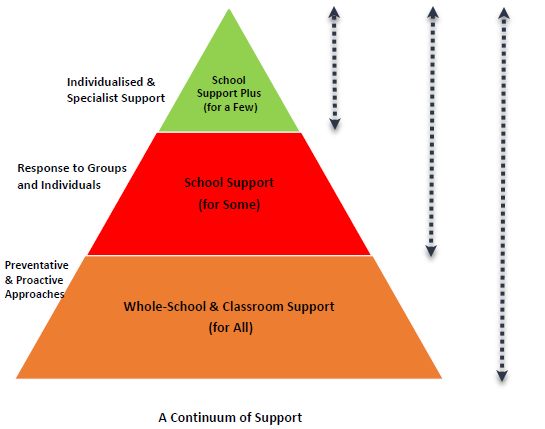
**Wellbeing and Guidance**

***Wellbeing*** is present when the individual realises 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. The key indicators of wellbeing are active, responsible, connected, resilient, respected and aware.

There is a clear link between Wellbeing and the provision of Guidance in our school. It is not however the sole responsibility of the Guidance and Student Care Team. It is a whole school responsibility Whole School Guidance is delivered on a continuum of support. This is where the school is broken down into three sections; support for all, support for some and support for few. Those with the highest needs will receive the highest levels of support. We also apply this model for wellbeing. All staff involved in the education of students has a role in each stage of the continuum.

Support for all involves all of the students in the school. This is displayed through a positive classroom environment, ensuring students are aware of teacher expectations in the classroom, differentiated teaching where required and monitoring student behaviour. This is the first level of support to ensure that all students are supported throughout their school lives. Teachers will be the first line in screening students to ensure their educational and behavioural needs are being met. If there are any concerns identified the teacher can refer on to class teacher, Year Head, Learning Support, School Chaplain, Guidance Counsellor, one of the Deputy Principals or Principal. Once a student is identified and a need for extra help established, the teacher has a continued role. This involves differentiated teaching methods, continued supervision of the student’s progress, gathering information, interventions and monitoring the situation. Once a student has been identified as needing extra support they move into the next category: support for some. Support for some involves individual support, educationally through Individual Education Plans (IEP’s), gathering information from parents, teachers and the students themselves, behavioural support and implementing agreed strategies on a one to one level and in class. Progress of the student will be monitored and reviewed so that strategies can be adapted to suit the student’s needs. Some students may need further support, this is offered in the final stage, support for few. Here students may be supported by internal and external personnel. Internally students may be supported on a daily basis by teachers and on a one to one basis by the Guidance Counsellor, School Chaplain or Learning Support teacher. External help may be in the form of school-based agencies like a NEPS psychologist, engagement with CAMHS or a private counsellor.

Schools have a pivotal role to play in connecting character development in children and young people to individual and collective wellbeing, which in the longer term will shape the values and attitudes of the society in which they live. Teachers play an important role in providing learning experiences and opportunities that develop and shape the character and wellbeing of children and young people. Experiences that develop character by promoting mindfulness (self-regulation and behaviour), curiosity, courage, resilience, ethics and leadership benefit children and young people as they grow and develop. Schools focus on giving children and young people voice, being active learners and developing strong character qualities that will enable them to succeed, thrive and contribute positively throughout life.

To ensure success of whole school guidance, the Guidance Counsellor will collaborate with subject teachers and the Student Care team to ensure that cross curricular links are made, that all teachers are doing their best to ensure that student wellbeing is to the fore and that social and emotional growth is supported. To assist in this all teachers will be made aware of the ten actions outlined by the document ‘Wellbeing in Post-Primary Schools’ to ‘promote the emotional health and wellbeing of a school community’. Collaboration between the School Guidance Counsellor, Deputy Principals, School Chaplain, Learning Support Department and Pastoral Care Team are essential to ensure early intervention is made where necessary. Teachers will also be made aware of the Continuum of Support and how they fit into the continuum.

This continuum of support is provided with an understanding that school is only one facet of a student’s life. Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model of human development explains that an individual exists within co-existing systems (see diagram below) of which school is only a minor part. It is with this understanding in mind that we endeavour to deliver a wellbeing programme which enables students to make responsible and respectful decisions within their own context.

**13. Review**

The Whole School Guidance Plan is very much a working document especially at whole school level. Each Subject Department Plan (Section 34) has a heading – In Class Career Guidance Provision. This is revised bi-annually by all staff members with their subject area. The Whole School Guidance Plan and its Appendices are reviewed and updated as necessar

## Health and Safety (2018) (Compiled as a separate document due to size) – updated H&S to go to BOM in May 2019

**Health and Safety Policy Statement**

It is the policy of Ramsgrange Community School to promote high standards of health and safety within the school to ensure that compliance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, S.H.W.W. (General Application) Regulations 2007 and associated legislation are achieved.

In addition to our commitment to the safety of our staff and students, it is our policy to ensure the safety of visitors and members of the public and to discharge our duties to contractors and others who may be affected by our activities.

Ramsgrange Community School undertakes to ensure that adequate resources are provided to implement the Health and Safety Policy. The Management will therefore ensure that:

• Adequate resources are provided to ensure that proper provision can be made for health and safety.

• Adequate numbers of suitably trained personnel are available to undertake all work activities.

• Sufficient resources are available to provide necessary information and training with respect to health and safety.

All employees of the school are expected to demonstrate their commitment towards a safe and healthy work and study environment by complying with this health and safety policy and associated procedures.

It is our intention to monitor this Safety Statement regularly and fully review its effectiveness each year. All staff and students are encouraged to put forward suggestions for improvement through the consultation procedure.

This Safety Statement is available to all our staff, students, contractors and members of the Health and Safety Authority.

SIGNED:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ DATE:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Ms Rachel O’ Connor, Principal

## Child Protection Policy Annual Review carried out on March 12th, 2019 **– see CP folder full Child Protection Documentation**

**Ramsgrange Community School : Child Safeguarding Statement**

Ramsgrange Community School is a post-primary school providing post-primary education to pupils from First Year to Leaving Certificate Year.

In accordance with the requirements of the Children First Act 2015, Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017, the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017 and Tusla Guidance on the preparation of Child Safeguarding Statements, the Board of Management of Ramsgrange Community School has agreed the Child Safeguarding Statement set out in this document.

1. The Board of Management has adopted and will implement fully and without modification the Department’s Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017 as part of this overall Child Safeguarding Statement
2. The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is **Ms. Rachel O’ Connor**
3. The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is **Ms. Tracey Edwards**
4. The Board of Management recognises that child protection and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of school life and must be reflected in all of the school’s policies, procedures, practices and activities. In its policies, procedures, practices and activities, the school will adhere to the following principles of best practice in child protection and welfare:

The school will:

* recognise that the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations;
* fully comply with its statutory obligations under the Children First Act 2015 and other relevant legislation relating to the protection and welfare of children;
* fully co-operate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child protection and welfare matters;
* adopt safe practices to minimise the possibility of harm or accidents happening to children and protect workers from the necessity to take unnecessary risks that may leave themselves open to accusations of abuse or neglect;
* develop a practice of openness with parents and encourage parental involvement in the education of their children; and
* fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters.

The school will also adhere to the above principles in relation to any adult pupil with a special vulnerability.

1. The following procedures/measures are in place:

* In relation to any member of staff who is the subject of any investigation (howsoever described) in respect of any act, omission or circumstance in respect of a child attending the school, the school adheres to the relevant procedures set out in Chapter 7 of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017 and to the relevant agreed disciplinary procedures for school staff which are published on the DES website.
* In relation to the selection or recruitment of staff and their suitability to work with children, the school adheres to the statutory vetting requirements of the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016 and to the wider duty of care guidance set out in relevant Garda vetting and recruitment circulars published by the DES and available on the DES website.
* In relation to the provision of information and, where necessary, instruction and training, to staff in respect of the identification of the occurrence of harm (as defined in the 2015 Act) the school-
* Has provided each member of staff with a copy of the school’s Child Safeguarding Statement
* Ensures all new staff are provided with a copy of the school’s Child Safeguarding Statement
* Encourages staff to avail of relevant training
* Encourages Board of Management members to avail of relevant training
* The Board of Management maintains records of all staff and Board member training
* In relation to reporting of child protection concerns to Tusla, all school personnel are required to adhere to the procedures set out in the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017, including in the case of registered teachers, those in relation to mandated reporting under the Children First Act 2015.
* In this school the Board has appointed the abovenamed DLP as the “relevant person” (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) to be the first point of contact in respect of the school’s child safeguarding statement.
* All registered teachers employed by the school are mandated persons under the Children First Act 2015.
* In accordance with the Children First Act 2015, the Board has carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while attending the school or participating in school activities. A written assessment setting out the areas of risk identified and the school’s procedures for managing those risks is attached as an appendix to these procedures.
* The various procedures referred to in this Statement can be accessed via the school’s website, the DES website or will be made available on request by the school.

**Note:** The above is not intended as an exhaustive list. Individual Boards of Management shall also include in this section such other procedures/measures that are of relevance to the school in question.

1. This statement has been published on the school’s website and has been provided to all members of school personnel, the Parents’ Association (if any) and the patron. It is readily accessible to parents and guardians on request. A copy of this Statement will be made available to Tusla and the Department if requested.
2. This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed annually or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this statement refers.

This Child Safeguarding Statement was adopted by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ [date].

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson of Board of Management Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

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

## Child Safe Guarding Risk Assessment March 2019

**Written Assessment of Risk of Ramsgrange Community School**

In accordance with section 11 of the Children First Act 2015 and with the requirement of Chapter 8 of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017*, the following is the Written Risk Assessment of Ramsgrange Community School.

1. **List of school activities**

|  |
| --- |
| * Daily arrival and dismissal of pupils * Recreation breaks for pupils * Classroom teaching * One-to-one teaching * One-to-one counselling * Outdoor teaching activities * Sporting Activities * School outings * School trips involving overnight stay * School trips involving foreign travel * Use of toilet/changing/shower areas in schools * Annual Sports Day * Mentoring programme personnel * Fundraising events involving pupils * Use of off-site facilities for school activities * School transport arrangements including use of bus escorts * Care of children with special educational needs, including intimate care where needed, * Care of any vulnerable adult students, including intimate care where needed * Management of challenging behaviour amongst pupils, including appropriate use of restraint where required * Administration of Medicine * Administration of First Aid * Curricular provision in respect of SPHE and RSE * Prevention and dealing with bullying amongst pupils * Training of school personnel in child protection matters * Use of external personnel to supplement curriculum * Use of external personnel to support sports and other extra-curricular activities * Care of pupils with specific vulnerabilities/ needs such as * Pupils from ethnic minorities/migrants * Members of the Traveller community * Lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBTQi+) children * Pupils perceived to be LGBTQi+ * Pupils of minority religious faiths * Children in care * Children on CPNS * Recruitment of school personnel including - * Teachers/SNA’s * Caretaker/Secretary/Cleaners * Sports coaches * External Tutors/Guest Speakers * Volunteers/Parents in school activities * Visitors/contractors present in school during school hours * Visitors/contractors present during after school activities * Participation by pupils in religious ceremonies/religious instruction external to the school * Use of Information and Communication Technology by pupils in school * Application of sanctions under the school’s Code of Behaviour including detention of pupils, confiscation of phones etc. * Students participating in work experience in the school * Students from the school participating in work experience elsewhere * Student teachers undertaking training placement in school * Use of video/photography/other media to record school events * After school use of school premises by other organisations * Use of school premises by other organisation during school day * Breakfast club * Homework club/evening study |
|  |

1. **The school has identified the following risk of harm in respect of its activities -**

|  |
| --- |
| * Risk of harm not being recognised by school personnel * Risk of harm not being reported properly and promptly by school personnel * Risk of child being harmed in the school by a member of school personnel * Risk of child being harmed in the school by another child * Risk of child being harmed in the school by volunteer or visitor to the school * Risk of child being harmed by a member of school personnel, a member of staff of another organisation or other person while child participating in out of school activities e.g. school trip, swimming lessons * Risk of harm due to bullying of child * Risk of harm due to inadequate supervision of children in school * Risk of harm due to inadequate supervision of children while attending out of school activities * Risk of harm due to inappropriate relationship/communications between child and another child or adult * Risk of harm due to children inappropriately accessing/using computers, social media, phones and other devices while at school * Risk of harm to children with SEN who have particular vulnerabilities * Risk of harm to child while a child is receiving intimate care * Risk of harm due to inadequate code of behaviour * Risk of harm in one-to-one teaching, counselling, coaching situation * Risk of harm caused by member of school personnel communicating with pupils in appropriate manner via social media, texting, digital device or other manner * Risk of harm caused by member of school personnel accessing/circulating inappropriate material via social media, texting, digital device or other manner |

1. **The school has the following procedures in place to address the risks of harm identified in this assessment -**

|  |
| --- |
| * All school personnel are provided with a copy of the school’s *Child Safeguarding Statement* * The *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017* are made available to all school personnel * School Personnel are required to adhere to the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017* and all registered teaching staff are required to adhere to the *Children First Act 2015* * The school implements in full the SPHE curriculum * The school implements in full the Wellbeing Programme at Junior Cycle * The school has an Anti-Bullying Policy which fully adheres to the requirements of the Department’s *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* * The school has a yard/playground supervision policy to ensure appropriate supervision of children during, assembly, dismissal and breaks and in respect of specific areas such as toilets, changing rooms etc. * The school has in place a policy and clear procedures in respect of school outings * The school has a Health and Safety Statement * The school adheres to the requirements of the Garda vetting legislation and relevant DES circulars in relation to recruitment and Garda vetting * The school has a code of conduct for school personnel (teaching and non-teaching staff) * The school complies with the agreed disciplinary procedures for teaching staff * The school has a Special Educational Needs policy * The school puts a care plan in place in respect of students who require intimate care * The school –   + - Has provided each member of school staff with a copy of the school’s Child Safeguarding Statement     - Ensures all new staff are provided with a copy of the school’s Child Safeguarding Statement including student placement teachers.     - Encourages staff to avail of relevant training     - Encourages board of management members to avail of relevant training     - Maintains records of all staff and board member training * The school has in place procedures for the auditing of First Aid and provision of training. * The school has in place a code of behaviour for pupils * The school has in place an AUP policy in respect of usage of ICT by pupils * The school has in place a mobile phone policy in respect of usage of mobile phones by pupils * The school has in place a Critical Incident Management Plan * The school has in place a Home School Liaison Officer and related procedures * The school has in place procedures for the use of external persons to supplement delivery of the curriculum * The school has in place procedures for the use of external sports coaches * The school has in place a policy and clear procedures for one-to-one teaching activities – this is currently in draft form * The school has in place a policy and procedures for one-to-one counselling - this is currently in draft form * The school has in place a policy and procedures in respect of students undertaking work experience in the school * The school has in place a policy and procedures in respect of pupils of the school undertaking work experience in external organisations |

|  |
| --- |
| **Important Note:** It should be noted that risk in the context of this risk assessment is the risk of  “harm” as defined in the Children First Act 2015 and not general health and safety risk. The definition  of harm is set out in Chapter 4 of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post- Primary*  *Schools 2017* |

In undertaking this risk assessment, the board of management has endeavoured to identify as far as possible the risks of harm that are relevant to this school and to ensure that adequate procedures are in place to manage all risks identified. While it is not possible to foresee and remove all risk of harm, the school has in place the procedures listed in this risk assessment to manage and reduce risk to the greatest possible extent.

This risk assessment has been completed by the Board of Management on 13th March 2018. It shall be reviewed as part of the school’s annual review of its Child Safeguarding Statement.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

## Anti-Bullying Policy (2019) – Reviewed Annually

**Anti-Bullying Policy (2019)**

Note: This policy has been amended in accordance with Circular 0045/2013, January 2013.

This Bullying Policy is reviewed annually by the Student Support Team and brought to the BOM each December.

Bullying will not be tolerated in Ramsgrange Community School. All staff, students and parents will know what the school policy on bullying is and what they should do if bullying arises. There is a whole school/community approach to bullying behaviour in our school.

The school community includes Parents, Students, Staff and Board of Management.

**Definition of bullying**

Bullying is defined as (CC 0045/2013) ‘unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time’. In addition, in the context of Circular 0045/2013 ‘placing a once off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour’.

Every student has a right to an education free from fear and intimidation. The purpose of this policy is to protect that right.

**Types of Bullying**

(a) Student Behaviour

A students’ behaviour is intimidating and/or of a bullying nature when:

¨ someone deliberately excludes or isolates another student by writing insulting remarks about them anywhere on the students personal or school property or any communal student area e.g. toilets, notice boards. This is also done through texts, nasty web postings, emails, and instant messages.

¨ someone says/writes unpleasant comments to/about another person e.g. name calling, being sarcastic, spreading rumours, teasing, making sexually abusive comments or gestures

¨ someone may push, hit, kick and/or threaten another student, trip another student, make any physical contact or use any form of violence, severe or in any other way, against another student

¨ someone takes or damages another student’s property, demand or extort another student’s money; or coerce another student into doing the same.

¨ someone uses very aggressive body language toward another student. This could take the form of a particular tone of voice or a facial expression, which conveys aggression and/or dislike towards another student

¨ someone openly/anonymously engages in abusive or inappropriate behaviour through any social media including telephone messages, internet websites, text messages, MMS messages etc. in order to bully/intimidate another person.

¨ someone uses persistent name-calling or you ‘slag’ another student by making very personal remarks about them, which are hurtful, insulting or humiliating e.g. another student’s physical appearance, accept, distinctive voice character, academic ability, sexual orientation, race, religion, where they live, social background or nationality.

¨ someone attempts to intimidate or abuse any school personnel. This includes teachers, substitutes, Special Needs assistants, cleaning staff, office staff and visitors.

¨ someone prevents another person from participating fully in any school activity

**b)Teacher Behaviour**

A teacher may engage in, instigate or unwittingly reinforce bullying behaviour in a number of ways as recognised by the Department of Education and Skills.

¨ Using sarcasm or other insulting or demeaning form of language when addressing students

¨ Making negative comments about a student’s appearance or background

¨ Humiliating or intimidating a student directly or indirectly

¨ Using any form of inappropriate physical contact

**Procedures for Noting and Reporting an incident of Bullying Behaviour**

In accordance with Circular 0045/2013 the following procedures reflect that the primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and restore as far as is practicable the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame.)

• All reports of bullying will be noted, investigated and dealt with by our teachers. In that way it is hoped that students will gain confidence in ‘telling’.

• When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, teachers will refer cases to the School Chaplain or Guidance Counsellor and the Year Head.

• The Chaplain and/or Guidance Counsellor will meet both parties individually to discuss the matter and to seek possible solutions. An attempt will be made to get the perpetrator to see the situation from the target’s point of view.

• A written record of the incident will be placed in the files of all students involved. This will be done by the Year Head or whoever dealt with it. (If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually and then will be met as a group.)

• If the perpetrator is involved in a further incident it will be referred to the Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal for further consideration.

• If it is concluded that he/she has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the Code of Behaviour and Discipline. His/her parents or guardians will be informed, and a meeting arranged.

• The parents of the target will be informed in the first instance and kept informed during the process.

• Follow up meetings by the School Chaplain/Guidance Counsellor will be arranged with the two parties involved separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the target is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect.

• Where possible the necessary Counselling provision will be made within our school for both parties. Referrals will be made when appropriate.

• In certain cases, however, it may be necessary to invite the assistance of other local persons and formal agencies such as general medical practitioners, Gardaí, health boards with their social workers and community workers.

Our anti-bullying school policy also embraces those members of the wider school community. They are encouraged to play a positive role in assisting our school to counter bullying behaviour by reporting such behaviour to parents and/or schools as appropriate.

In accordance with Circular 0045/2013 the Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management setting out:

1. The overall number of bullying cases reported.

2. Confirmation that these cases have been, or are being dealt with in accordance with school policy

3. The Board will do an annual review of the policy and make a written statement that the review has been completed. This will be published on the school website and made readily available on request.

**Sanctions**

Students are aware that if they are involved in bullying the following will happen:

• They will be warned to stop immediately.

• A record will be placed in their file by the Year Head or investigator.

• If a further incident occurs involving the perpetrator the student will be referred to the Year Head and Deputy Principal as a Discipline Matter.

• Their parents will be informed, and the student will be sent home until a meeting with the Parents and the Year Head is arranged.

• More serious sanctions ranging from suspension to exclusion will apply to students who engage in continual serious bullying incidences

**Evaluation of effectiveness of school policy on bullying behaviour**

All Ramsgrange Community School policies are subject to regular review.

**Preventative Strategies:**

The following preventative strategies are now in place in our school:

• The whole school, including pupils, parents / guardians and teachers are involved in the ongoing formation of the school’s Anti-Bullying Ethos.

• After admission to the school students sign an anti-bullying agreement in their journal and are informed about the School’s Anti-Bullying Programme.

• The open and easy access to the Chaplain and Guidance Counsellor play a significant role in preventing bullying in the school

• The Anti Bullying Workshop (first given by Dr. Stephen Minton) is given to all years by the Tutors during Tutor time.

• Parents will be invited to an Anti-Bullying information evening that will be organised bi-annually and this will happen before Christmas each year.

• The school’s Anti-Bullying Policy will be circulated to new staff members in Ramsgrange Community School and training in procedures given periodically.

• Our Anti-Bullying Policy is given in the Student Journal and is repeated by the class tutor at the beginning of every year.

• All Parents are informed of our policy and procedures during the Induction and Transition Programme into 1st year and at Parent information evenings.

• Discussion in SPHE and R.E. Classes (Anti-Bullying Programme – STOP is delivered).

• It is addressed as part of the Pastoral Care system in the school (e.g. Guidance Counsellor, Chaplain, Class Teachers, Tutors, Year Heads, Home School Community Liaison Officer).

OUR STAFF MEMBERS SHARE A COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY, UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE PRINCIPAL, TO ACT IN PREVENTING BULLYING/AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR BY ANY MEMBER OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY.

**Appendix 1 – Effects of Bullying**

**Signs and Symptoms of Bullying**

A student may indicate by signs or behaviour that he/she is being bullied. Staff and parents must be aware of these possible signs and they should make enquiries if a student:

Is frightened or walking/taking the bus to or from school

Begs to be driven to school

Changes his/her usual routine

Is unwilling to go to school

Begins truanting or educational performance declines

Becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence

All of a sudden start stammering, withdrawing, has nightmares, has difficulty in sleeping, cries frequently, is not eating, is vomiting or bedwetting.

Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away or unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour. It may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more especially after longer school holidays.

Cries himself/herself to sleep at night or has nightmares.

Feels ill in the morning or patterns of physical illnesses (e.g. headaches, stomach aches) develop.

Begins to do poorly in schoolwork.

Comes home with clothes torn and /or books damaged.

Has possessions to ‘missing’ or spontaneous out –of-character comments about either other student’s or teacher’s possessions missing or damaged.

Asks for money or starts stealing money.

Has lunch or other monies continually ‘lost’

Has unexplained cuts or bruises

Comes home starving (lunch money stolen)

Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable

Is bullying other students or siblings

Is frightened to say what’s wrong

Gives improbable excuses for any of the above

These signs and behaviour could indicate other problems, but bullying will be considered a possibility and will be investigated.

**Appendix 2 – Effects of bullying**

**Effects of Bullying**

Students who are being bullied may develop feelings of insecurity and extreme anxiety and thus may become more vulnerable. Self-confidence may be damaged with a consequent lowering of their self-esteem. While they may not talk about what is happening to them, their suffering is indicated through changes in mood and behaviour. Bullying may occasionally result in feelings of hopelessness, loneliness and isolation in victims. It is, therefore, important to be alert to changes in behaviour as early intervention is desirable.

**Appendix 3 – Programme for Work with Victim and Bullies**

**Programme for work with victims and bullies**

Students who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others. Victims may need counselling and opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem and to develop their friendship and social skills whenever this is needed. The learning strategies applied within our school will allow for the enhancement of the student’s self-worth. Students who observe incidents of bullying behaviour will be encouraged to discuss them with their teachers. Counselling provision will be made within our school for bullies and their victims.

**Appendix 4 – Community**

**Community networking to counteract bullying in our school**

In Ramsgrange Community School there is a whole community approach to the problem of bullying behaviour. Our school as a community is made up of management, teachers, non-teaching staff, students and parents/guardians. However, incidents of bullying behaviour may extend beyond our school gates. It is known that they can occur on the journey to and from school. Therefore, our anti-bullying school policy also embraces those members of the wider school community who come directly in daily contact with our students. School bus drivers, school wardens and local shopkeepers are encouraged to play a positive role in assisting our school to counter bullying behaviour by reporting such behaviour to parents and/or schools as appropriate.

**Monitoring, Reviewing and Evaluating**

The school will monitor, review and evaluate the policy and all related work and procedures on an ongoing basis to ensure legal compliance and the maintenance of best practice.

## Acceptable Use Information and Communications Policy (October 2018)

**Rationale:**

Our Students engage confidently with Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in their social and recreational lives. ICT integration in the classroom can be a hugely positive addition to the learning environment. ICT can bring rich and varied learning resources into the classroom which can lead to the creation of a more dynamic, rewarding and productive learning environment. ICT, in whatever form, should be considered as a tool which can assist and support the delivery of the curriculum.

The aim of this Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) is to ensure that pupils will benefit from learning opportunities offered by the school's Internet resources and mobile phones in a safe and effective manner. Internet use and access is considered a school resource and privilege. Teachers will also be mindful when assigning homework that all students may not have access to resources such as mobile phone and internet access at home. Therefore, if the school AUP is not adhered to this privilege will be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions - as outlined in the AUP - will be imposed.

\*Users refer to students, teachers, administrative staff, other members of school staff and visitors using the school facilities.

**What is ICT?**

ICT (information and communications technology - or technologies) is an umbrella term that includes any communication device or application, encompassing radio, television, mobile phones, computer and network hardware and software, satellite systems and so on, as well as the various services and applications associated with them, such as videoconferencing and distance learning.

**Digital Rights and Responsibilities:**

The definition of digital rights and responsibilities is having the right and freedom to use various types of digital technology while using the technology in an acceptable and appropriate manner.

**Other school policies:**

The following is a list of school policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to AUP

• Mission Statement

• Anti-Bullying

• The School Care Team

• Extra-curricular activity

• Code of Behaviour

• Class Tutor system

• Major Incidents procedures

The Board has ensured that the necessary policies, protocols or practices as appropriate are in place in respect of each of the above listed items.

**Acceptable Use – Guidelines and Procedures:**

1. When using the Internet, all school staff (both teachers and support staff) must comply with all copyright, libel, fraud, discrimination and obscenity laws, and all school staff are expected to communicate in a professional manner consistent with the rules of behaviour governing employees in the Education Sector and Teaching Council Code of Conduct.

Staff & Students should ensure that students know and understand that no Internet user is permitted to:

• retrieve, modify the security settings/configuration of the school’s PC and IT facilities, send, copy or display offensive messages or pictures;

• use obscene or racist language;

• harass, insult or attack others;

• damage computers, computer systems or computer networks;

• violate copyright laws;

• use another user’s password;

• trespass in another user’s folders, work or files;

• intentionally waste resources (such as on-line time and consumables);

• use the network for unapproved commercial purposes.

Students are responsible for their own IT equipment; these items are not covered by the school’s insurance.

**2. Location and Supervision**

It is an absolute requirement that the school ensures that access to the Internet provided to staff and students is a filtered service. The filtering service is provided by N.C.T.E. The school management reserves the right to review such access and revoke Internet access. Staff are informed that the I.C.T. system in the school records websites visited.

Internet access for students will be available only on computers/mobile phones that are in areas of the school such as classrooms, libraries, study rooms, computer laboratories or where permission is granted by the Teacher. Machines, which are connected to the Internet, must be in full view of people circulating in the area.

**3. Internet & Mobile Phones as a Teaching Resource**

Our School supports the use of teachers’ resources in their teaching and learning activities, to conduct research, and for contact with others in the education world.

Staff are encouraged to investigate the possibilities provided by access to this electronic information and communication resource, and blend its use, as appropriate, within the curriculum.

The use of ICT, including mobile phones, is solely at the discretion of the teacher. Any breach of such privileges will result in withdrawal of same.

The use of mobile phones is not allowed at break times.

Examples of Acceptable and Unacceptable Use of the I.C.T. facilities available to staff in Ramsgrange Community School:

a. On-line activities which are encouraged include:

• use of email and computer conferencing for communication between colleagues, between students(s) and teacher(s), between student(s) and student(s), between schools and industry;

• use of the Internet to investigate and research school subjects, cross-curricular themes and topics related to social and personal development;

• use of the Internet to investigate careers and further and higher education;

• development of students’ competence in ICT skills and their general research skills.

• Use of mobile phone cameras for research and documentation purposes

• Use of appropriate educational APPs

b. On-line activities which are not permitted include:

• visiting internet sites that contain obscene, hateful, pornographic or otherwise illegal material;

• downloading text or images which contain material of a pornographic, racist or extreme political nature, or which incites violence, hatred or any illegal activity;

• using the computer to perpetrate any form of fraud, or software, film or music piracy;

• using the internet to send offensive or harassing material to other users;

• downloading commercial software or any copyrighted materials belonging to third parties, unless this download is covered or permitted under a commercial agreement or other such licence;

• hacking or accessing unauthorised areas;

• publishing defamatory and/or knowingly false material about Ramsgrange Community School, your colleagues and/or our students on social networking sites, 'blogs' (online journals), 'wikis' and any online publishing format;

• revealing confidential information about Ramsgrange Community School in a personal online posting, upload or transmission - including personal information and information relating to our students, staff and/or internal discussions;

• undertaking deliberate activities that waste staff effort or networked resources;

• introducing any form of malicious software into the school network;

• searching, viewing and/or retrieving materials that are not related to the aims of the curriculum or careers information that is relevant to students;

• copying, saving and/or redistributing copyright protected material, without approval;

• subscribing to any services or ordering any goods or services, unless specifically approved by the Principal;

• playing computer games or using other interactive ‘chat’ sites;

• publishing, sharing or distributing any personal information about any member of staff without their permission (such as: home address; email address; phone number, etc.)

Any breach of this Internet Acceptable Use Policy may lead to disciplinary action as outlined in the Code of Behaviour. All staff (teachers, student teachers, SNAs, ancillary staff) that use the school's internet service is required to sign this agreement confirming their understanding and acceptance of this policy.

Teacher’s signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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

All activity on the Internet is monitored and logged.

Sanctions for breach of Policy as per Code of Behaviour 2010

In the event of the non-co-operation of a student, the following procedures apply:

Reason with the student while making sure that they understand the consequences of their actions for everyone involved.

In the event of negative behaviour occurring in class, subject teachers have a range of sanctions available to them.

These include:

• Verbal reprimand

• Loss of privileges at the discretion of the event organiser.

• Moving the pupil to a different location within the class

• Assigning extra work

• Detaining the pupil at breaktime / lunchtime

• Issue Incident Report

• Possible referral for counselling session.

• Note sent to parents in Student Journal.

• Referral to Class Tutor on Discipline slip.

• Referral to Deputy Principal in the case of gross misbehaviour.

This list is not exhaustive. In the event of a disciplinary incident occurring, which, in the view of the class teacher is of sufficient severity to require further sanctioning, the matter must be referred to the relevant Class Tutor and, if necessary, the Year Head or Deputy Principal.

Any sign of sustained improvement needs to be met with approval.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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

Note: Survey feedback as per Circular 0038/2018 included as Appendices to this Policy.

Appendix 1: Parent Survey

Response Summary:

• 53% have read the AUP Policy

• 73% said that their child uses their smartphone to complete homework

• 45% are aware that students may use phone in class under a teacher’s instruction

• 90% are happy that phones are banned outside of the class room

• 21% have visited www.webwise.ie

Appendix 2: Teacher Survey

Response Summary:

• 81% have read the AUP Policy

• 41% use their phone in class for educational purposes & 45% use it sometimes

• 35% allow students to use their phones in class for educational purposes & 45% allow students to use their phones sometimes

• 97% are happy that phones are banned outside of the class room

• 100% know what the sanction for wrongful use of phone is

• 47% have visited www.webwise.ie

Appendix 3: Student Survey

Response Summary:

• 10% have read the schools AUP

• 15% said that teachers allow them to use their phones in class for educational purposes & 77% said that they can use them sometimes

• 57% use their smartphone to help with homework & another 31% use it sometimes

• 33% are happy that phones are banned outside of the class room

• 75% know what the sanction for wrongful use of phone is

• 2% have visited www.webwise.ie

• Students were asked what they use their phones for:

o 42% phone calls

o 35% sending texts including Whats App

o 86% Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Amino etc.

o 17% to read the news

o 55% to listen to music/books

o 36% to help with homework

Actions will be devised based on these results.

## Substance Misuse Policy (2015)

**THE SCHOOL POSITION**

Ramsgrange Community School is committed to addressing the needs of the whole school in relation to drugs. It is necessary that all involved work together to implement this policy. It is vital that parents/guardians actively work with the school to implement this policy to ensure their children's health and safety. In this policy "Drug" is defined as any substance which changes the way the body functions, mentally, physically or emotionally. The School recognises that drugs both legal and illegal are available in the local community and that the School, as part of that community, has an important role in terms of education, prevention, support and the handling of drug related incidents.

**THE SCHOOL ETHOS**

As stated in the School's mission statement, Ramsgrange Community School is a welcoming, open and inclusive school. Our aim is to develop each of our students as a whole person by promoting an atmosphere of respect, honesty, and fairness in which all in the school community can achieve their full potential. It also is committed to fostering the development of personal responsibility. This is the ethos which guides the Schools Substance Use Policy.

• The School does not accept the possession, use or supply of drugs, as defined above, in the school, or during any school related activity by any member of the school community.

• The School does not accept the possession, use or supply of alcohol or tobacco (including E-Cigarettes, ‘Vaping’ or equivalent) in the school or on school activities by any student.

• The School does not accept the misuse of solvent based substances.

• Students may only have prescribed or "over the counter" medicines for legitimate personal use accompanied with written permission from parents/guardians. (see Appendix 1)

• Students who have in their possession and take medical drugs in school long term must inform school management in writing. (All medical forms to be completed in Appendix 1 and returned to the Principal)

• The School management must be informed in writing if a student has a medical condition and relevant teacher, e.g. P.E. teacher must be informed also.

• A student or teacher may not give another student any prescribed or "over the counter "medicine.

• Chemicals in school laboratories will be held under lock and key. Students will handle and use such substances only under their teacher's supervision.

The policy is focused in four key areas:

1. Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programmes.

2. Managing Drug Related Incidents.

3. Training and Staff Development.

4. The Role of the Parents

1. Alcohol, Tobacco ( including E-Cigarettes or equivalent thereof) and Drug Education Programmes.

The School is committed to providing an Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programme for all students. Our educational aims are:

• To increase the self-esteem and confidence of our students.

• To equip our students with personal and social skills.

• To enable our students to make informed, healthy and responsible decisions.

• To provide clear and age appropriate information on drugs.

• To minimise the harm caused by drug abuse by offering supportive interventions.

These aims will be achieved by:

1. Teachers are offered Drug Awareness training, through SPHE, and other relevant in-service courses. Resource materials are also available to staff regarding drug awareness.

2. Outside speakers are used where appropriate to reinforce the work done in class.

3. Parents/Guardians will be consulted on the need for drug education and will be informed of what is happening in the School. Drug information and drug awareness sessions are organised for parents.

4. Student Drug Education will be achieved through:

o SPHE, LCA and TY Programmes

o Outside speakers when/ where appropriate.

**2. Assessing and Managing Alcohol, Tobacco, Drug Related Incidents**

We acknowledge that in all situations involving drugs, there needs to be a balance between the needs of the student, the needs of the school community, the reputation of the school and legal considerations. Assessing a drug incident: If a drug incident (incidents involving, student use or possession of licit and illicit drugs at school or during school activities) is brought to the attention of a staff member, it is important to:

• Take time to listen and assess before responding.

• Separate fact from rumour.

• In situations of suspected use, possession or supply all details must be recorded and reported to School Management immediately.

• School Management must then complete a drug incident report.

**Managing a drug incident**

1. Incidents will be reported to the Principal.

2. In the event of a drug incident, the school will seek to strike a balance between the welfare of the student or students involved and the welfare of the school community as a whole.

3. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be informed by the Principal.

4. The school reserves the right to suspend or remove temporarily from the school any student involved in a suspected drug incident pending a further and complete investigation of the incident. Furthermore, the principles of the school’s Code of Behaviour apply and following due investigation it may be necessary for the Board of Management to exclude such a student in very serious circumstances.

5. The Principal will take all the steps required to fully investigate and assess any drug incident and will take whatever time is deemed necessary to do this.

6. The Principal will inform the Gardai if any incident involves illegal activity.

7. The school recognises the importance in limiting, as far as is practicable, the number of people involved in investigating and managing a drug incident. It is the aim of the school to involve only those directly concerned with the student. In addition to the Principal, these may include the Deputy Principal, the Year Head, the Guidance Counsellor and specific staff directly involved with the incident.

8. The Principal, in the presence of a staff member, will take possession of any banned or prohibited substances and drugs paraphernalia associated with a drug incident, carefully recording all such items. All items will be handed to the Gardai.

9. The Principal, Deputy Principal or relevant Year Head will seek statements from all persons involved in, concerned with, or having knowledge of the incident and will record these statements.

10. The Principal will liaise with any appropriate outside authority, if necessary, and seek advice or assistance as is deemed appropriate in relation to the investigation of the incident. A record will be kept of all communications with outside agencies.

11. On completion of the preliminary investigation and in the event of an investigation continuing, the school will put the full particulars of the incident to the students concerned and their parents/guardians in the following manner:

a. Copies of all records deemed relevant to the position of the student concerned and to the nature of the complaints or allegations that a student is facing will be made available to the student and his/ her parent(s)/guardian(s). A student will be given an opportunity to make his/ her reply to the matters at issue and any representations that she/ he would wish to make or have made on his/ her behalf.

b. The school will allow the student concerned reasonable time to respond to the matters at issue and will take into account any response so made and any other relevant extraneous considerations or mitigating circumstances that may be appropriate to the specific case.

12. The Principal shall inform the student and his/ her parents/ guardians of the school’s findings by registered letter. If the investigation finds that the student is guilty of, or involved or implicated in, an incident, the Principal will indicate the penalty or sanctions imposed

13. The matter may be referred to the Board of Management for further consideration. The student/parent(s)/guardian(s) will again be given an opportunity to make a reply to the matters at issue. The decision of the Board will be conveyed by registered letter outlining where necessary procedures for appeal.

14. The school can, at its sole discretion, postpone the issue of sanctions to take account of mitigating circumstances or representations that it considers should be taken into account.

15. The school will ensure that pastoral supports are offered to those affected by an incident of substance abuse.

16. The Principal or Deputy Principal will handle all media enquiries. They will not comment on individual cases but will refer to the school policy and procedures in place to manage any drug related incident.

Note: Where the contents of this policy relate to the school’s Code of Behaviour, the tenets of the Code will apply.

**Disciplinary Procedures**

Drug incidents are complex and in situations where the school rules regarding drugs are broken, sanctions and punishments will be implemented depending on the nature of the offence. These will be consistent with the Code of Behaviour, where drug related incidents are regarded as gross misbehaviour and will be dealt with accordingly.

**3. Training & Development:**

**Staff and Board of Management**

The School will facilitate drug information and awareness training for staff and Board of Management.

**Parents/Guardians**

The School will provide opportunities to attend drug workshops and information evenings. The School Substance Use Policy is available to all parents/guardians from the school and on the school website www.ramsgrangecommunityschool.ie

**Students**

The School will offer all students programmes relating to alcohol, tobacco and drug education within the context of the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate programmes.

**4. Role of the Parents**

The school acknowledges the central role of parent(s)/guardian(s) in the implementation of this policy. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are asked:

• To acknowledge the importance of these programmes.

• To recognise that they are in partnership with the school in relation to informing and educating their children regarding substance abuse.

• To assist and co-operate fully with the school as it seeks to deal justly and effectively with any incidents that may arise.

**Monitoring, Reviewing and Evaluating**

The school will monitor, review and evaluate the policy and all related work and procedures on an ongoing basis to ensure legal compliance and the maintenance of best practice.

## School Tours/Trips & Extracurricular Sporting Activities Policy 2016

**Scope of our Policy**

This policy applies to all members of the staff of Ramsgrange Community School who take students off campus. It is applicable to the students participating in the activity (trip/tour or outing/sporting event) and to their parents/guardians.

The Code of Behaviour of Ramsgrange Community School applies to all students of Ramsgrange Community School and relates to all school activities both during and outside of normal school hours; it applies both on and off the campus and anywhere students are clearly identified or identifiable as students of Ramsgrange Community School.

**The Code of Behaviour also applies to all outings and to tours, whether or not they involve an overnight stay.**

**•** Before a student is accepted for an activity, his/her previous behaviour may be taken into consideration.

• Parents/guardians will be notified, in advance, of all activities and both parents and student should sign the appropriate consent form. In this way parents, students and teachers enter into a partnership promoting good and appropriate behaviour at all times.

**Rationale for having tours/outings and the need for a relevant policy**

**1.** Ramsgrange Community School exists to provide an effective education service to all its students and is committed to the education, in the broadest sense of the word, of all students who attend the school.

2. Ramsgrange Community School provides an academic education which also recognises that exposure to a variety of experiences and cultures is part of a holistic education.

3. The curriculum content of some subjects requires field studies/tours/outings/recreational activities, which take place off campus.

4. Tours assist in developing social skills bonding between students, as well as providing teachers with an opportunity to get to know students in a non-classroom environment and to build links with the local community and other nationalities.

5. There should be a balanced programme of outings and tours for the school year that does not prove too costly to parents and does not overburden the school timetable.

6. All educational tours must be consistent with the rationale as specified by the Department of Education and Skills in Circular Letter M 20/04. All reasonable efforts will be made to satisfy all of the criteria contained in this circular.

7. To assist staff in the planning of tours and outings, so that they are aware of all necessary procedures that must be observed to provide for the health and safety of staff and students. It also ensures that tours and outings take place efficiently and smoothly and that the standard of supervision is firmly within guidelines and standards.

8. To clarify expectations of behaviour for all tours and to outline the conditions whereby a student may be refused permission to be included on a trip.

9. To involve all members of the school community in ratifying this policy on tours/outings in order to promote partnership, ownership and implementation of the policy.

**Objectives**

1. That the health, safety and welfare of our students is safeguarded by ensuring that reasonable care has been taken when considering the nature of the trip chosen, the level of supervision provided, the venue, the means of transportation, the demands on the physical ability of the students, having regard to their age and capacity, and the dangers to which they may be exposed.

2. That students gain maximum educational benefit and enjoyment from all trips/outings. For example, school trips/outings should broaden each pupil’s cultural and intellectual experience; foster independence/ maturity/ team building; enhance student’s social skills; improve language acquisition skills; create positive memories of school; promote greater understanding between different cultures; encourage travel/ studying abroad; promote involvement of all students; improve communication skills.

3. Finally, that, staff are aware that the degree of care required of them should be that of a “careful parent”, which would vary with the circumstances and the age of the student.

**Content of policy:**

**1.** Day Tours within Ireland (including Northern Ireland)

2. Overnight tours, inside or outside the Republic of Ireland

3. General Guidelines for the Extra/Co-Curricular sporting activities.

4. Appendices

Please note that all appendices are available on computer/website for completion and downloading. They will not be distributed to parents and students as part of the policy.

**Appendix 1: Tour Proposal Form**

**Appendix 2: “Parental Permission Letter and Form**

**Appendix 3: To Do” Checklist for Tours and Outings**

**Appendix 4: Bus Requisition Form**

**Hiring a Bus.**

Tours/Trips or excursions will necessitate the hiring of a bus. Standard Transport Requisitions and ordering procedures apply. The Tour Leader should ask the following questions of all Bus Companies;

1. The drivers name and whether or not he/she possesses a Driver Certificate in Professional Competence . (This is not required if non-commercial).

2. Whether or not the coach/minibus has safety belts installed. If not, this bus company cannot be hired for the trip.

3. Will all children be informed of the importance of wearing safety belts by the driver?

4. It is the Bus Company’s responsibility, with the assistance of the Tour Leader, to monitor the wearing of safety belts.

In the following pages the different regulations for different types of excursion are outlined:

1. School Tours and overnight trips, inside or outside the Republic of Ireland

2. Day Trips within Ireland (including Northern Ireland)

3. Sporting Trips / Activities.

**School Tours and overnight trips, inside or outside the Republic of Ireland.**

**a)** Members of staff, who wish to take students on an overseas trip, must submit their request for approval to the Principal, by completing the Educational Outing Form in Appendix 1. Included in the proposal, should be the educational or other benefits that the students will derive from the trip.

b) The number of students participating varies depending on the nature of the trip and the staff/student ratio will be appropriate to the age group and as recommended by the travel agency (if involved).

c) Sufficient teachers, assistants and care workers must accompany students at all times.

d) Students with special needs must be accompanied by the appropriate Care Assistant.

e) Students with “complex medical needs” as determined by the school, may be required to be accompanied by a Parent/ Guardian. The cost of the tour and procedures, including Garda Vetting, are the responsibility of the accompanying, appropriate adult.

f) The initial letter to parents should contain a draft itinerary and deadline for registering and payment of non-refundable deposit. Parents must be made aware that the organiser reserves the right to make minor changes to the itinerary.

g) If a passport is required, a photocopy of the student’s passport must be included with the deposit. All passports must be valid for at least six months following the trip.

h) Visas may be necessary for the destination and some countries require them to be processed together. There may be an additional cost to secure a visa. Parents should be informed that students with non-EU passports may need visas for EU countries.

i) Students must organise and have their E111 or European Health Insurance Card for travel to countries in the EU.

j) It is important to impress upon parents that the onus is on them to ensure that their son/daughter has all necessary up-to-date documentation well in advance of the trip.

k) Parents should be informed in good time if there are any mandatory or recommended inoculations for the destination. It is important that parents realise that the onus is on them to make arrangements for their son/daughter to receive all necessary inoculations.

l) Students must attend all information meetings and co-operate with all requests pertaining to the trip.

m) Following receipt of the deposit, parents will receive the Permission Letter and Form all sections of which must be completed, and the form returned to the organiser by specified date. Details of accommodation, travel arrangements, any special local conditions, personal items that the student needs to bring, guidelines for spending money and money for extras such as meals and excursions will also be sent to parents.

n) Mobile phone communication between teachers/supervisors and students on the trip may be necessary. A list should be made of participants’ mobile phone numbers (as given on the Permission Form) and students should have the mobile phone number of the trip leader – to be carried with them at all times while on the trip. A mobile phone is available from the School, as staff members are not required to give their personal mobile phone numbers to students.

o) The trip organiser should have two emergency contact numbers; usually this will be the Principal and the Deputy Principal.

p) If necessary two members of staff should carry out inspection of rooms or personal property (bags, suitcases etc.) with the student present. This will only be done for good reasons based on reasonable grounds, such as concern for physical safety, suspected possession or use of a banned substance or other concerns.

a. If a search is deemed necessary, the student should be asked to empty his/her own pockets, suitcase / bags or to search the clothing that he/she is wearing.

b. If a student is found to be in serious breach of any of the rules in the School Code of Behaviour, the staff in charge must contact the Principal immediately.

q) An Accident/Incident Report Form must be completed for all accidents or incidents which have occurred. Examples of reportable incidents include persistent lateness at the rendezvous point; not staying with the group; rudeness to teachers; and serious breach of school rules, particularly in relation to alleged or proven alcohol or substance abuse.

**School Tours: Roles and Responsibilities:**

Board of Management

1. To ensure that the policy is developed and evaluated.

2. To approve the policy

3. To ensure that all aspects of the policy are adhered to prior to and during the tour.

Principal/ Deputy Principal

1. To establish structures and procedures for the implementation of the policy

2. To monitor and support the implementation of the policy

3. To promote and foster school tours.

**Tour Leader/Director**

1. It is recommended that one teacher be nominated as the Tour Leader/Director of the tour who will be expected to ensure that it is conducted in accordance with agreed standards.

2. When the tour is sanctioned by the Principal/ Board of Management the school tour organiser will inform the pupils and parents concerned. When numbers are confirmed she/ he will invite staff members to join the team.

**Tour Team organisation and planning**

1. Tour Team and Reserve List: A Tour Team, led by the Tour Leader/Director should be put in place as soon as possible. A reserve list is advisable in case a member of the team should subsequently be unable to travel.

2. Organising Roles: The Tour Leader/Director should meet the full Tour Team at the outset so as to discuss individual duties and nominate a Deputy Tour Leader. Ideally all members of the Tour Team should be involved in organising the tour, taking up duties in one of the following areas. (a) Tour Finances – the Tour Leader or Deputy Leader (b) Group Passport – the Tour Leader or Deputy Leader – for reasons of privacy some students may obtain their own passports. (c) E111 forms and insurance – any member of the Tour Team (d) The Tour Itinerary – cultural passes, internal tours – any member of the Tour Team (e) General needs – medical kit, home contact numbers, medical services’ contacts in area to be toured etc. – any member of Tour Team.

3. Planning Tour Supervision: Prior to leaving each teacher should be assigned a small number of students and be known to the students as their Group Leader. If possible, these groups should remain unchanged throughout the tour.

4. Planning Tour Supervision Rota: The Tour Leader should place teachers on a Supervision Rota for use in the various types of overnight accommodation used or provide contact details to the Host Family.

**Professional Responsibilities of the Tour Team**

Here is the agreed statement of the professional responsibilities and duties of staff for the duration of the tour as outlined below...

Mindful of the DES guidelines regarding Child Protection (3.1.1 and 3.1.2) the following must be observed:

1. Teachers will act in a responsible manner (including the consumption of alcohol) having regard to the fact that they are in the company of and responsible for the care of students. Teachers will maintain the same standards of care as apply in a school situation.

2. It is important that the rules agreed by teachers and parents and signed by students are enforced by all teachers while away with student, especially with regard to the consumption of alcohol by students.

3. The organising teacher must ensure that adequate travel and school insurance is in place.

4. Teachers must inform the Principal of his/her intention and proposed itinerary before informing pupils, other staff members or parents.

5. The proposed itinerary, dates of departure and return, age-group of students (year) and estimated cost of the trip should be discussed with the Principal.

6. Written permission from the Board of Management at least 2 months in advance must be sought.

7. Parents should be consulted 2 months prior to departure for foreign trips. Any overnight trip will require one months’ notice.

8. Provide information re: cost of trip, pocket money and any additional costs which may arise.

9. Discuss discipline code with students and parents.

10. Organise insurance/ passport/ E111/ Point of contact

11. School trips that are not deemed to have an educational benefit must take place within school holiday period as per DES circular.

12. Inform teachers of the purpose of the trip to promote cross curricular learning in the class before and after the class.

13. Written reporting back to Principal and Board of Management. Arrangements should be made for a summary report from the School tour leader to the Principal and the Board of Management outlining: the achievements of the tour, a financial statement, any difficulties or problems which arose during the course of the tour.

**Parents**

**1.** Sign consent form giving permission to their son/daughter to go on the tour.

2. Parents should be made aware of

• The purpose of the trip.

• The itinerary and duration of the trip.

• The costs involved and method of payment.

• The rules of behaviour to be observed.

• Information regarding insurance and indemnity.

• The documentation required.

3. Attend Scheduled meeting and sign Rules and Procedures Form supporting the rules that are in place.

4. Inform the Tour Leader of any medical condition(s) of which the leader should be aware of to ensure the health and safety of all students while in the teachers’ care. Parents should be made aware of their duty to inform the Tour leader of any relevant Health or Safety issues which might affect their children.

5. Organise all relevant documentation for their child.

6. The signed permission of parents must be an essential pre-requisite for the participation of their children in any school tour.

**Day Trips within Ireland (including Northern Ireland)**

**1.** Day trips may take place during the school day and/or may extend beyond normal school hours.

2. Day trips must have the approval of the Principal/Deputy Principal.

3. Members of staff who wish to take students on a day trip must put their request in writing to the Principal/Deputy Principal by completing the Trip Proposal Form in Appendix 1. Included in the proposal should be the educational or other benefits that the students will derive from the trip.

4. Once the Principal/Deputy Principal has approved a trip, the organiser should:

a. In order to inform parents/guardians, forward brief details of the trip to the Deputy Principal and prepare a letter home to be co-signed by the Principal and Trip Organiser.

b. Organise the relevant bus/transport.

c. Collect student contribution to the cost of the activity.

d. The staff member should include it in the monthly calendar and /or on the staff notice board.

e. Place a list of students participating in the trip on the Staff notice Board and copy to the secretarial staff

5. On all day trips there must be an appropriate ratio between the number of students and the number of adults traveling. This ratio will vary depending on the nature of the trip and the age of the students traveling. Students in First Year will require most supervision. On a private coach there should be at least one member of staff in addition to the driver.

6. Sufficient adults, assistants and care workers must accompany students at all times. Students with special needs must be accompanied by the appropriate Care Assistant.

7. Day trips may involve a financial cost to the student. For example, a fee may be charged to cover the cost of transportation to/from sporting events which students are required to pay in advance.

8. The School will always have the mobile/contact numbers of the Coach Company or staff involved in case of delays or any other occurrences.

9. For trips that extend beyond normal school hours, it is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that arrangements are in place for their son/daughter’s journey to/from the School. The organiser of the trip must be informed in advance of these arrangements.

10. Students will return to the school. Exceptions will be made on an individual basis where a note/contact has been obtained from parents / guardians in advance of alternative travel arrangements.

11. An Accident/Incident Report Form must be completed for all accidents or incidents which have occurred. Examples of reportable incidents include persistent lateness at the rendezvous point; not staying with the group; rudeness to teachers; and serious breach of school rules, particularly in relation to alleged or proven alcohol or substance abuse.

**Sporting Trips / Activities**

**1.** Each Coach is responsible for taking a properly equipped first-aid kit to his/her match.

2. At the start of each academic year each Coach should ask students to complete a brief form outlining their medical history. This will be signed by parents/guardians. This should be kept securely and shredded at the end of each year by the Coach. If a Coach has concerns about any condition raised in this form, they should contact parents.

3. If a minor accident occurs the Coach will treat it on the spot and report the incident to parents/guardians through the Student Journal or by phone call.

4. In the event of a serious accident;

a. The Coach will ring a Doctor/Ambulance/or other mode of transport directly.

b. If a child is to be taken to A and E the driver should be over 21 and have a full licence for 3 years at least.

c. In these cases, there should be more than the driver and the injured student in the car. This can be done is by;

i. Delegating responsibility for the remaining group to the accompanying Parent/SNA/PLC Students while the Coach (the designated person) stays with the injured party.

ii. Two other students, or an adult, accompany the Coach and the injured student to the A&E or doctors’ surgery.

d. The Coach will contact the Principal/Deputy Principal with the details of the incident in order that this information can be relayed to parents/guardians. This information should include;

i. The nature of the injury.

ii. Details of where the injured student is being brought and how.

iii. Details of who is delegated the role of leader in accompanying/supervising the main group to their destination.

5. Any accident deemed to be of a serious nature is recorded on an accident report form, a copy of which is submitted to the Principal. The Coach will apprise students of the necessary safety equipment for each respective sport.

6. The Coach organises transport to and from all matches, using a recognised coach company. In the case of local venues, parents may be asked to provide transport. Coaches/Parents will never accompany a student alone in a car without the express permission of the child’s parents/guardians.

7. When an away match is organised during school hours, the number of adults traveling must be dependent upon the staffing requirements of the activities in school. Generally, one teacher will travel with a team. The needs of the students in school must receive priority when organising such matches and wherever possible one teacher and an accompanying adult will travel with teams.

8. At least one male supervisor will accompany all boys’ teams and at least one female supervisor will accompany all girls’ teams. In mixed-sex events both male and female supervisors will accompany teams where possible.

a. The ‘recommendation’ for activities involving supervising 13 to 18-year olds is what is called the two-adult rule. ( ratio: 1 adult for 10 older students) This recommendation is based on ‘More is Better’ but it is not possible to achieve this all of the time.

b. Trips/Activities with a high level of risk attached, such as sporting activities, will require TWO teachers – curriculum permitting.

c. The school will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that adequate supervision is available while being cognisant that appropriate arrangements should be made for the conduct of those teachers’ classes in their absence in accordance with Circular PPT 01/03. Ramsgrange Community School will on all occasions take into account the effect that the absence of accompanying teachers will have on the normal work in the school and number of teachers absent should be kept to the minimum level required.

d. Students with special needs must be accompanied by the appropriate Care Assistant or their parent/guardian.

e. SNA/PLC students over 18 years and parents can supervise students once cleared by the Garda vetting process and they are trained in our Child Protection policies. Two PLC students are recommended always for tasks/activities commensurate with their age.

f. When parents and PLC Students over 18 years of age are involved in our supervisory duties, we will bring this to the notice of our BOM.

9. An Accident/Incident Report Form must be completed for all accidents or incidents which have occurred. Examples of reportable incidents include persistent lateness at the rendezvous point; not staying with the group; rudeness to teachers; and serious breach of school rules, particularly in relation to alleged or proven alcohol or substance abuse.

**Professional Responsibilities of the Staff**

Staff must exercise an appropriate duty of care to all students. Our Child Protection Guidelines are central to this approach.

**NB: It is impossible to create policy for all school related activities. Once a tour/trip is organised the level of risk should be assessed by the Tour Director/Organiser and resources discussed with the Principal or Deputy Principal.**

**Review and Evaluation of the Policy**

**The policy will be reviewed after three years and amendments will be proposed to the Board if necessary.**

## School Attendance Strategy (2018)

**The school’s vision and values in relation to attendance**

Ramsgrange Community School is a welcoming, open and inclusive school. Our aim is to develop each student as a whole person by promoting an atmosphere of respect, honesty and fairness in which all the school community can achieve their full potential. The school’s vision is respect, community and success. This mission and vision permeate all facets of school life including the promotion of attendance. The school values that every student attends school every day to reach his/her full potential. We promote a whole school approach in relation to attendance; the student, the parent, the class tutor, the subject teacher, the year head, the deputy principal and the principal all play a key role in striving for excellent attendance.

**The school’s high expectations around attendance**

Ramsgrange Community School expects that students attend school every day and that they would attend all their classes each day. A student should only be absent from school if it is extremely necessary. A written reason for absence is required upon immediate return to school.

**How attendance will be monitored**

A register of all students who have been enrolled in to the school is maintained by the principal. Attendance is taken daily by the principal/ deputy principal first class in the morning. The attendance details are monitored daily by the school’s attendance officer. Parents of students who are absent are contacted each morning by the attendance officer. All explanations /phone calls /notes are recorded on the VSWARE system. (e.g sick, family, holidays). Names of students who have not explained absence are taken and these are followed up with when the student returns.

On a weekly basis an up to date cumulative report of students’ absences is given to Year Head which in turn is given to the Tutors for follow up at tutor meetings. The tutors then speak to target students and set individual targets with those students for the following week.

Attendance graphs/bar charts compiled weekly for each year’s attendance are displayed around the school. Names of Students who have been absent for a few days with no explanation are given to HSCL who follows up. There is monthly attendance meeting with P, DP, HSCL and the attendance officer.

On a termly basis, letters are sent out when students miss over 10 days. Certificates are given out at assemblies to students who have no absences, and students who have had 2 days or less absences are entered in a draw. Parent/ Teacher meetings- attendance notices and absence figures are displayed for all years. Reports are made to TUSLA, four times a year. School reports at Christmas and Summer include no of days absent. Awards day at end of school year- students are awarded for excellent attendance. Deputy principal meets with all year heads every fortnight and identifies target students and discusses suitable interventions. The link between attendance and attainment is conveyed to students through tracking both in the school journal, and to the parents through texts and posters at PTM’s.

**Summary of the main elements of the school’s approach to attendance:**

**• Target setting and targets**

**• The whole-school approach**

**• Promoting good attendance**

**• Responding to poor attendance**

**Target setting and Targets**

Targets are reviewed on an annual basis at the DEIS attendance review meeting. The Data gathered includes

1. Absence rates

2. List of poor attenders

3. Number of suspensions and expulsions

Our targets currently are as follows:

1. That the total percentage of students who have unexplained absence is reduced to less than 25%. 2017/18 it was 36%.

2. To reduce the number of students arriving to school late on more than 5 occasions in one year to less than 30 (8.2%) students.

2017/2018 it was 36 students (11.2%)

3. To reduce the number of students who miss more than 20 days to 12.5%

2017/2018 it was 12.5%

4. To reduce the Average number of days missed per student to less than 11.5 days

2017/2018 it was 15 days.

5. Number of students who lost days through suspension to less than 15 students

2017/2018 20 students were suspended

**The Whole school approach.**

Ramsgrange has a welcoming, open and inclusive culture.

Continued commitment to make the school as safe as possible for all students with work on anti-bullying awareness, LGBT awareness, child protection procedures.

Health awareness and promotion of healthy living through SPHE programme. The provision of breakfast and lunch for all students.

Encouragement of parental involved in all aspects of school life. Discussion of the importance of attendance at all parent evenings & meetings.

Comprehensive transition programme from primary to secondary to help all students settle in well in the initial few months.

JCSP, LCA & TY programmes offered to cater for all students’ needs.

Mentoring programme provided by both teachers and senior students.

Homework club and supervised study provided.

Care Team and student support team liaise with tutors and year heads.

**Promoting good attendance**

Good attendance will be promoted at all meetings with parents and also at student assemblies.

Links between good attendance and attainment will be promoted at all opportunities.

Text messages promoting good attendance are sent to parents. Attendance figures are available on all school reports.

A wide array of extra-curricular activities is provided for students in order to enhance their enjoyment of school.

Rewards are in place for good attenders at assemblies and Awards Day.

Weekly rewards for previously poor attenders to modify behaviour if they achieve 5 full days attendance each week.

Attendance league between year groups is displayed each week around the school.

**Responding to poor attendance.**

Extra resource hours put in place to help with numeracy and literacy if required.

BFL will work with students where behaviour is a problem.

SCP key worker will meet with students at risk to review and meet their needs.

Interventions are put in place where required i.e CAMHS referral, BFL referral, Counselling, GP referral, rewards, meetings with parents, extra resources etc.

Making students' aware of no of days that they have missed and setting individual short-term targets with them. Students track this in their school journal.

**School roles in relation to attendance**

Board of Management- ratifying attendance strategy and DEIS attendance plan

Principal- collecting roll, sending letters, meeting with parents, part of attendance team, liaising with external agencies.

Deputy Principal- collecting roll daily, meeting with year heads, part of attendance team, monitoring students arriving late, meeting with students and parents.

HSCL Co-ordinator- visiting families, meeting with students, promoting parent involvement within the school, part of the attendance team.

Student support Team- putting interventions in place

Care Team- putting interventions in place

Attendance Team- monitoring and reviewing targets and target students.

SCP attendance Officer- collecting and collating all information in relation to attendance.

SCP key worker- putting interventions in place for target students

Year Heads- following up with tutors in relation to target students.

Class Tutors- monitoring daily and weekly attendance, meeting with target students weekly.

Subject Teachers- keeping an up-to-date roll

Parents- ensuring son/daughter attends school every day where possible.

Students- attend school every day.

**Partnership arrangements (parents, students, other schools, youth and community groups)**

Parent Volunteer groups

Student Council

Feeder Schools

South West Wexford School Completion Programme

Other DEIS Schools

Youth New Ross

TUSLA Social Work Department

Education Welfare Officer

CAMHS

Local GPs

**How the Statement of Strategy will be monitored**

Late stamps will be monitored on a Termly basis – repeat offenders will be spoken to in the first instance and then contact will be made with home Attendance Officer and Deputy Principal. Attendance Officer updates the Principal and Attendance Team when students are missing for a number of days without explanation and contact is made with Parent/ Guardian. NEWB Forms returned. Attendance Officer at Student Attendance Team Meetings. Attendance Figures will be looked at on an ongoing and annual basis. Any patterns e.g. familial will be identified and interventions put in place. Interventions will be monitored, and their effectiveness discussed at annual review meetings. The Principal will continue to send letters to those that miss certain amount of days. The Attendance Officer will continue to inform Principal of ongoing absences. The Attendance Officer will continue to send texts and make phone calls home. Home visits from the HSCL will continue.

**Attendance Team will continue to meet regularly and do a full review on an annual basis.**

**Review process and date for review**

6th December DEIS attendance core team meeting

An annual review of attendance strategy will take place in December each year for full review.

Strategy was reviewed on 12th December 2018

**Date the Statement of Strategy was approved by the Board of Management**

29th January 2018.

## Uniform Policy March 2019

**School Mission Statement:**

Ramsgrange Community School is a welcoming, open and inclusive school. Our aim is to develop each of our students as a whole person by promoting an atmosphere of respect, honesty, and fairness in which all in the school community can achieve their full potential.

**Rationale and Values underlying the Uniform Policy:**

Establish an identity

Equality on both a social and economic basis

Encourage good dress code

Educational benefit for future employment

Health and Safety

**Desired outcomes of Uniform Policy:**

Sense of belonging created

Sense of equality increased

Standardisation of the dress code

Neat and tidy student

Helps promote health and safety of students

Cost effective for parents

**Uniform:**

Navy school trousers/skirt

Navy school sweater with embossed crest – Wallace’s, Wellington Bridge or Kennedys, New Ross.

Light blue polo shirt with embossed crest – Wallace’s, Wellington Bridge or Kennedys, New Ross.

Dark socks

Plain low-healed navy or black school shoes. Runners or sports shoes of any kind are not permitted.

Navy school jacket with crest available from Wallace’s. (Compulsory for all students from September 2014)

Alternative Option available: O’ Neill’s. (Deposits & orders taken annually in June)

**Guidelines for items not covered under ‘Uniform’:**

Only one stud earring per ear is allowed for Health and Safety reasons. No ‘spacers’ or ‘spikes’ allowed.

No facial piercings allowed (eyebrow bars/studs, nose studs/ bars/ tongue studs etc.)

Excessive jewellery is not allowed.

Excessive Make-Up is not allowed.

Appropriate gear must be worn for PE classes and other sports.

**Uniform Monitoring and Procedures:**

School management will monitor and implement the Uniform policy on a daily basis, however, it is the responsibility of the Parent/Guardian to ensure that each student is in correct uniform for attendance in school each day.

All students should be in full uniform each day.

Anyone wearing excessive make up will be asked to remove it.

Anyone wearing excessive or inappropriate jewellery will have the item confiscated and returned at the end of the term. Repeat offenders will be asked to remain at home until compliance with the full uniform policy is guaranteed.

In the unlikely event that a student comes to school not in full uniform, the following procedures will apply;

The student must go to the Physics Lab between 8.45am and 8.55am

They must bring a note explaining the reason for the absence of correct uniform

They will be given a uniform or part thereof for the day. The borrowed items must be returned the next school day

Should a student not present themselves to room 31 or refuse to co-operate, they will be sent home with a letter stating that should remain at home until compliance with the full uniform policy is guaranteed

**Review, Monitor & Evaluation:**

This Policy will be reviewed by School Management in consultation with relevant school partners.

Management reserves the right to alter this policy that ensures the best interests of the students are adhered to at all times.

## Protected Disclosures Policy 2016

**Rationale:**

**Legal Basis for schools having a Protected Disclosures Policy:**

Protected Disclosures Act 2014 (PDA)

The PDA places a requirement on every public body (encompasses schools) to establish and maintain procedures for the making of protected disclosures by workers who are, or were employed, by the public body and for dealing with such disclosures.

**Key provisions in the PDA include:**

A prohibition on penalising workers who make protected disclosures and a wide definition of ‘worker’

A broad range of ‘relevant wrongdoings’

A ‘stepped disclosure system’ which encourages workers to report to employers in the first instance

**What is a Protected Disclosure?**

A protected disclosure is a disclosure of information which, in the reasonable belief of the worker, tends to show one or more relevant wrongdoings;

came to the attention of the worker in connection with the worker’s employment;

and is disclosed in the manner prescribed in the Act.

A protected disclosure should contain “information” which tends to show wrongdoing. The ordinary meaning of disclosing “information” is conveying facts, such as stating that particular events have occurred. This is different to simply making an allegation on the basis of a suspicion that is not founded on anything tangible.

**What is a Relevant Wrongdoing?**

Committing an offence;

The failure to comply with a legal obligation;

A miscarriage of justice;

Danger to health and safety of an individual;

Damage to the environment;

The unlawful or improper use of public funds or resources;

An act or omission of a public body which is oppressive, discriminatory, grossly negligent or constitutes gross mismanagement;

and

The concealment or destruction of information evidencing any of the above matters or the likelihood of any of the above matters occurring.

The Relevant Wrongdoing may have already taken place, be happening or be likely to happen.

**What is not a Relevant Wrongdoing:**

A failure to comply with obligations arising under the worker’s contract of employment, e.g., a failure to pay an employee overtime where provided for in the employee’s contract of employment;

Grievances concerning the worker’s contract of employment and /or duties in employment or concerning work relations with another individual or that fall within the scope of a grievance procedure applicable to the worker;

Matters falling within the scope of the school’s complaints, disciplinary procedures, and / or other internal employment policies and procedures.

**Who is a Worker (as far as a school is concerned)?**

All current and former employees (including permanent, temporary, fixed-term, casual and substitute);

Contractors and consultants engaged to carry out work or services for the school;

Agency workers;

Individuals on work experience pursuant to a training course and trainees of/with the school

**What is a Stepped Disclosure System?**

The PDA provides for a stepped disclosure process with separate & increasingly onerous requirements, depending on the recipient of the disclosure.

The process is designed to encourage workers to make disclosures to their employer in the first instance, to specified third parties in certain other circumstances and to make the disclosure of information to the public as a last resort.

In the first instance, disclosure should be made orally or in writing to the Principal.

Where the disclosure involves the Principal, the worker should make the disclosure in writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

The worker can make an external disclosure to prescribed persons as set out in S.I. 339/2014 – Protected Disclosures Act 2014

Workers must comply with the disclosure process provided in the PDA in order for the disclosure to be classified as a “protected disclosure” and for the worker to qualify for protections under the PDA.

**Other school policies:**

The following is a list of school policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to Protected Disclosures;

* + Mission Statement
  + Anti-Bullying
  + The School Care Team
  + Major Incidents procedures
  + Grievance Procedures
  + Complaints Procedures
  + Teaching Professional Code of Conduct

The Board has ensured that the necessary policies, protocols or practices as appropriate are in place in respect of each of the above listed items.

**1 INTRODUCTION & SCOPE:**

1.1 Ramsgrange Community School is committed to creating a workplace culture that encourages the making of protected disclosures and provides protection for disclosers.

1.2 This policy will allow workers to make disclosures without fear of penalisation or threat of less favourable treatment, discrimination or disadvantage.

1.3 All disclosures of wrongdoing in the school shall, as a matter of routine, be the subject of an appropriate assessment and / or investigation and the identity of the discloser shall be adequately protected.

1.4 Overall responsibility for this Policy rests with the Board of Management of the school.

1.5 The day-to-day responsibility for this Policy is delegated to the Principal

1.6 The school considers that the most appropriate way to deal with disclosures of information relating to wrongdoing is at local level within the school, however, it does recognise that there may be circumstances where this is not appropriate.

1.7 This Policy does not replace legal reporting and disclosure requirements under other legislation, e.g. child protection reporting obligations.

1.8 This Policy does not replace the school’s normal day-to-day operational reporting or its existing policies and procedures relating to grievances, bullying, harassment, disciplinary, dignity at work and other complaints.

**2 DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION**

2.1 This is different to simply making an allegation regarding a relevant wrongdoing, for example, claiming that an individual’s health and safety has been endangered. Disclosing information involves providing some details and particulars.

2.2 Workers are not required or entitled to investigate matters themselves to find proof of their suspicion and should not endeavour to do so. All workers need to do, and should do, is disclose the information that they have, based on a reasonable belief that it discloses a wrongdoing and, where the information relates to individuals, that it is necessary to disclose that information.

2.3 The information must come to the attention of the worker in connection with his / her employment.

**3 REASONABLE BELIEF**

3.1 A worker must have a reasonable belief that the information disclosed shows, or tends to show, wrongdoing. The term “reasonable belief” does not mean that the belief has to be correct. Workers are entitled to be mistaken in their belief, so long as their belief was based on reasonable grounds.

3.2 No worker will be penalised simply for getting it wrong, so long as the worker had a reasonable belief that the information disclosed showed, or tended to show, wrongdoing.

**4 PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDS**

4.1 This Policy protects workers from penalisation for making a disclosure of information which the worker reasonably believes, or suspects is a relevant wrongdoing.

4.2 Penalisation means any act or omission that affects a worker to the worker’s detriment, and in particular includes:

o Suspension, lay-off or dismissal;

o Demotion or loss of opportunity for promotion;

o Transfer of duties, change of location of place of work, reduction in wages or change in working hours;

o The imposition or administering of any discipline, reprimand or other penalty;

o Unfair treatment;

o Coercion, intimidation or harassment;

o Discrimination, disadvantage or unfair treatment;

o Injury, damage or loss, or

o Threat of reprisal.

4.3 Penalisation by any person, including workers, school management, members of the Board of Management will not be tolerated. Any person who threatens to penalise or penalises a worker for making a disclosure pursuant to this policy will be subject to disciplinary action.

4.4 The protection from penalisation applies even if the disclosure is not subsequently confirmed or upheld as well-founded.

4.5 If an employee of the school experiences penalisation he / she should notify school management and the matter will be assessed / investigated and appropriate action taken where necessary.

**5 CONFIDENTIALITY**

5.1 The school is committed to protecting the identity of the worker making a protected disclosure and ensuring that protected disclosures are treated in confidence.

5.2 However, there are circumstances, as outlined in the 2014 Act, where confidentiality cannot be maintained, for example, where the Discloser makes it clear that he/ she has no objection to his or her identity being disclosed and/or the identity of the Discloser is critical to an investigation of the matter raised.

5.3 If it is decided that confidentiality cannot be maintained in the context of an investigation, the school will inform the Discloser in advance that his /her identity will be disclosed. The Discloser may request a review of this decision and a review will be carried out, where practicable.

**6 ANONYMOUS DISCLOSURES**

6.1 Where the worker withholds their identity in making a disclosure it is more difficult to assess the disclosure and take appropriate action.

6.2 The school will act upon the disclosure to the extent that this is possible but may be restricted in their ability to investigate the matter in the absence of the knowledge of the identity of the discloser.

6.3 Important elements of the Policy & Procedures will be difficult or impossible to apply unless the worker’s anonymity lifts. E.g. Keeping the discloser informed and protecting a discloser from penalisation.

**7 PROCEDURE FOR MAKING A PROTECTED DISCLOSURE**

7.1 Who should the Discloser make the disclosure to?

7.1.1 In the first instance, disclosures should be made orally or in writing to the Principal. Where the disclosure is made orally, the Principal shall take a note recording the disclosure in consultation with the Discloser.

7.1.2 Where the disclosure involves the Principal, the Discloser should make the disclosure in writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

7.1.3 A person to whom a disclosure is made must take reasonable steps to protect the identity of the Discloser.

7.1.4 A written disclosure should be made on the Notification Form attached.

7.2 Assessment Meeting

7.2.1 The Recipient will arrange to meet with the Discloser within [10] school days of receipt of the disclosure to discuss it on a strictly confidential basis. The Recipient will need to clarify at this point if the disclosure is appropriate to the Policy or is a personal employment complaint more appropriate to other school procedures, for example a Grievance Procedure or a Dignity at Work Policy.

7.2.2 The Discloser may be accompanied at this meeting by a trade union representative or a work colleague from the school. the meeting will be private and confidential, and its purpose is twofold:

(a) So that the Recipient is satisfied the disclosure made falls within the scope of this policy and not some other internal policy, and

(b) So that the Recipient can determine the appropriate course of action in response to the disclosure made.

7.2.3 If the Recipient is unclear whether the disclosure qualifies as a protected disclosure, it will be treated as such and pursuant to this Policy until such time as it is deemed not to constitute a protected disclosure.

7.2.4 The course of action, as determined by the recipient, will take one of the following forms:

(a) Meetings between the Recipient and Discloser to clarify matters and/or agree an outcome, and/or

(b) An investigation by the Principal, or

(c) An investigation by the Chairperson / a Sub-Committee of the Board of Management, or

(d) An investigation approved by the Board of Management to be carried out by an independent third party.

7.2.5 It is the general intention of this Policy that the recipient will communicate with the Discloser in writing within [10] school days of the Assessment Meeting taking place to formally acknowledge receipt of the disclosure made and to advise the outcome of the Assessment Meeting.

7.2.6 If it appears to the Recipient that the disclosure made falls to be more properly addressed under another process or within the scope of another internal school policy and procedure, the recipient will communicate this to the Discloser.

7.2.7 The Discloser may seek a review of the outcome of the Assessment Meeting. The review will be undertaken by a person who was not involved in the Assessment Meeting.

7.2.8 Disclosures may, in light of the nature and /or seriousness of the matters raised, be referred immediately to the appropriate authorities. For example, if the disclosure relates to criminal activity, the recipient will refer the matter immediately to An Garda Síochana.

7.3 Investigation

7.3.1 Where an investigation is undertaken, the Discloser’s involvement in that investigation will depend on the subject matter of the disclosure made and the detail provided by the Discloser.

7.3.2 The investigation will be conducted in a full, fair and objective manner with regard to the principals of natural justice and fair procedures. Its format and who assists and/or is involved in the investigation will be determined by the Investigator(s) by reference to the subject matter of the disclosure made. Where the information disclosed relates to alleged wrongdoing on the part of an individual, the principles of natural justice and fair procedures will be complied with vis-á-vis that individual, as appropriate.

7.3.3 The Investigator(s) may deem it necessary to meet with the Discloser in the course of the investigation and in such circumstances the Discloser may be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague from the school.

7.3.4 In any event, the objective is that the investigation will be undertaken promptly and efficiently. Having regard to the duration and nature of the investigation, it may be appropriate to inform the Discloser in writing of the investigation’s progress and likely timeframe for its conclusion. However, it is important to note that sometimes the need for confidentiality and legal considerations may prevent the Investigator(s) from giving specific details of an investigation.

7.4 Communication

7.4.1 It is important that the Discloser feels assured that a disclosure made under this Policy is taken seriously and is kept informed of the steps which are being taken in response to the disclosure. In this regard, the Investigator(s) undertake to communicate with the Discloser as follows:

(a) The Recipient will acknowledge receipt of the disclosure and arrange to meet with the Discloser as outlined above;

(b) If an investigation takes place, the Investigator(s) will keep the Discloser informed of actions, where possible, in that regard including the outcome of any investigation. However, in this regard, it is important to note that sometimes the need for confidentiality and legal considerations may prevent the Investigator(s) from giving the Discloser specific details of an investigation.

7.5 Disciplinary Action

7.5.1 Where a disclosure is made in accordance with this Policy, but the information disclosed is not subsequently upheld by an investigation, no action will be taken against the Discloser who will be protected against any penalisation.

7.5.2 However, a disclosure made in the absence of a reasonable belief will not attract the protections of the 2014 Act and may result in disciplinary action against the Discloser. In addition, disclosure of a wrongdoing does not necessarily confer any protection or immunity on a Discloser in relation to any involvement they may have had in that wrongdoing.

7.6 Records

All records of disclosures will be securely maintained so as to comply with the requirements for confidentiality under the 2014 Act and data protection obligations.

**8 MAKING A DISCLOSURE EXTERNALLY**

8.1 The aim of this Policy is to provide workers with an avenue within the school to make disclosures in relation to wrongdoing. The Board of Management is confident that such issues can be appropriately dealt with “in house” and encourages workers to report such disclosures internally. The Board acknowledges that there may be circumstances where a worker wishes to make a disclosure externally, and the legislation governing disclosures provides for a number of avenues in this regard.

8.2 It is important to note that while a worker need only have a reasonable belief as to wrongdoing to make a disclosure internally, if the worker is considering making an external disclosure he or she has different and potentially more onerous obligations depending to whom the disclosure is made.

8.2.1 Disclosure to a Prescribed Person (section 7 of the 2014 Act)

S.I. 339 of 2014 prescribes certain external bodies and persons as appropriate recipients of disclosures of relevant wrongdoings falling within their prescribed remit.

It should be noted that a worker disclosing to a prescribed person must reasonably believe that the relevant wrongdoing falls within the scope of matters in respect of which the person is the prescribed recipient and that the information disclosed, and any allegation contained in it, are substantially true. This standard is different from that applying to internal disclosures.

Examples of prescribed recipients of disclosures of relevant wrongdoings under the S.I. are the CEO of the State Examinations Commission, the Director of the Teaching Council, the Data Protection Commissioner.

8.2.2 Disclosure to a Minister (section 8 of the 2014 Act)

Where a worker is an employee of the school’s Board of Management, the worker may make a protected disclosure to the Minister for Education & Skills where the worker reasonably believes the information being disclosed shows/tends to show wrongdoing.

8.2.3 Disclosure to Legal Adviser (section 8 of the 2014 Act)

Where a worker makes a disclosure in the course of obtaining legal advice from a barrister, solicitor, trade union official or official of an excepted body.

8.2.4 Disclosure to other persons outside the workplace (section 10 of the 2014 Act)

Certain criteria and conditions must be fulfilled in order for such a disclosure to be protected and workers are advised to seek Union or other advice/assistance if they are considering making a section 10 protected disclosure.

**REVIEW AND AMENDMENTS**

This policy may be reviewed, and amendments made, and employees will be informed accordingly.

Signed: --------------------------------------------------------------- Chairperson, Board of Management.

Dated:------------------------------------------------------------------

## Personal Data Security Breach Code of Practice Form May 2018

**Purpose of Code of Practice**

This Code of Practice applies to *Ramsgrange Community School.*

**Obligations under Data Protection**

The school as data controller and appropriate data processors so contracted, are subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Acts, 1988 and 2003 and exercise due care and attention in collecting, processing and storing personal data and sensitive personal data provided by data subjects for defined use.

The school has prepared a **Data Protection Policy (currently in draft)** and monitors the implementation of this policy at regular intervals. The school retains records (both electronic and manual) concerning personal data in line with its **Data Protection Policy** and seeks to prioritise the safety of personal data and particularly sensitive personal data, so that any risk of unauthorized disclosure, loss or alteration of personal data is avoided.

**Protocol for action in the event of breach**

In circumstances where an incident gives rise to a risk of unauthorised disclosure, loss, destruction or alteration of personal data, in manual or electronic form, the school will follow the following protocol**:**

1. The school will seek tocontain the matter and mitigate any further exposureof the personal data held. Depending on the nature of the threat to the personal data, this may involve a quarantine of some or all PCs, networks etc. and requesting that staff do not access PCs, networks etc. Similarly, it may involve a quarantine of manual records storage area/s and other areas as may be appropriate. By way of a preliminary step, an audit of the records held or backup server/s should be undertaken to ascertain the nature of what personal data may potentially have been exposed.
2. Where data has been“damaged”(as defined in the Criminal Justice Act 1991, e.g. as a result of hacking), the matter must be reported to An Garda Síochána. Failure to do so will constitute a criminal offence in itself (“withholding information”) pursuant to section 19 Criminal Justice Act, 2011. The penalties for withholding information include a fine of up to €5,000 or 12 months’ imprisonment on summary conviction.
3. Where the data concerned is protected by technological measures such as to make it unintelligible to any person who is not authorised to access it, the schoolmay conclude that there is no risk to the data and therefore no need to inform data subjects or contact the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner. Such a conclusion would only be justified where the technological measures (such as encryption) were of a high standard.
4. Depending on the nature of the personal data at risk and particularly where sensitive personal data may be at risk, the assistance of An Garda Síochána should be immediately sought. This is separate from the statutory obligation to report criminal damage to data arising under section 19 Criminal Justice Act 2011 as discussed at (2) above.
5. Contact should be immediately made with the data processor responsible for IT support in the school.
6. In addition and where appropriate, contact may be made with other bodies such as the HSE, financial institutions etc.
7. Reporting of incidents to the Office of Data Protection Commissioner:All incidents in which personal data (and sensitive personal data) has been put at risk shall be reported to the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner as soon as the schoolbecomes aware of the incident (or within 2 working days thereafter), save in the following circumstances:
   * When the full extent and consequences of the incident have been reported without delay directly to the affected data subject(s) **and**
   * The suspected breach affects no more than 100 data subjects **and**
   * It does not include sensitive personal data or personal data of a financial nature[[[1]](#footnote-2)].

Where all three criteria are not satisfied, the schoolshall report the incident to the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner within two working days of becoming aware of the incident, outlining the circumstances surrounding the incident (see further details below). Where no notification is made to the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner, the school shall keep a summary record of the incident which has given rise to a risk of unauthorised disclosure, loss, destruction or alteration of personal data. The record shall comprise a brief description of the nature of the incident and an explanation why the school did not consider it necessary to inform the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner. Such records shall be provided to the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner upon request.

1. The school shall gather a small team of persons together to assess the potential exposure/loss. This team will assist the principal of the school (and the school’s/ETB’s DP Compliance Officer) with the practical matters associated with this protocol.
2. The team will, under the direction of the principal, give immediate consideration to informing those affected[[[2]](#footnote-3)]. At the direction of the principal, the team shall:
   * Contact the individuals concerned (whether by phone/email etc.) to advise that an unauthorised disclosure/loss/destruction or alteration of the individual’s personal data has occurred.
   * Where possible and as soon as is feasible, the *data subjects* (i.e. individuals whom the data is about) should be advised of
     + the nature of the data that has been potentially exposed/compromised;
     + the level of sensitivity of this data and
     + an outline of the steps the school intends to take by way of containment or remediation.
   * Individuals should be advised as to whether the school intends to contact other organisations and/or the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner.
   * Where individuals express a particular concern with respect to the threat to their personal data, this should be advised back to the principal who may, advise the relevant authority e.g. Gardaí, HSE etc.
   * Where the data breach has caused the data to be “damaged” (e.g. as a result of hacking), the principal shall contact An Garda Síochána and make a report pursuant to section 19 Criminal Justice Act 2011.
   * The principal shall notify the insurance company which the school/ETB is insured and advise them that there has been a personal data security breach.

10. Contracted companies operating as data processors: Where an organisation contracted and operating as a *data processor* on behalf of the school becomes aware of a risk to personal/sensitive personal data, the organisation will report this directly to the school/ETB as a matter of urgent priority. In such circumstances, the principal of the school should be contacted directly. This requirement should be clearly set out in the data processing agreement/contract in the appropriate data protection section in the agreement.

1. A full review should be undertaken using the template [Compliance Checklist](http://www.dataprotectionschools.ie/Document-Library/Compliance-Checklist.doc) and having regard to information ascertained deriving from the experience of the data protection breach. Staff should be apprised of any changes to the Personal Data Security Breach Code of Practice and of upgraded security measures. Staff should receive refresher training where necessary.

## RCS Homework Procedures 2015 (Currently being revised by PBST)

**These procedures described were devised by the Procedures Committee in 2014 & 2015 and are to be followed by all staff. They will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.**

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If homework is incomplete or not done, the following procedures will apply:

**1st time**: Chance/Verbal Warning

**2nd time**: Note in Journal & Sanction given by Teacher (to be followed up on)

**3rd time**: Text home (ask Bridget/Orla in office to do this for you) and further Sanction by Teacher

**4th time**: 2nd Text home (Inform Bridget/Orla that this is 2nd text) by Subject Teacher & Class Tutor to be informed.

**5th time**: Year Head informed, and phone call made home, name of Student to be put into Homework Book in the Staffroom and Sanction given by Subject Teacher.

Phone call made home by Year Head. Parent asked to sign the journal and also to sign each piece of homework each night for two weeks.

No improvement after two weeks, Deputy Principal informed. A Meeting with Parents regarding homework with Management is arranged.

**Further Homework Issue/s**: Behaviour System is followed.

## Facebook and Social Media Policy and Procedures 2016– In conjunction with ACCS Guideline issued March 2019.

**Rationale:**

Our Students, Parents and the whole School Community engage confidently with Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in their social and recreational lives. The use of Facebook as a way of promoting our school can be a hugely positive addition. Facebook should be considered as a tool which can assist and support the positive promotion of Ramsgrange Community School.

The aim of this Policy is to ensure that the whole school community understands the boundaries that must be respected when engaging with the school Facebook page.

**What is Facebook?**

Facebook is a popular free [social networking](http://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/social-networking) website that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and video, send messages and keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues. The site, which is available in 37 different languages, includes public features such as:

* Marketplace - allows members to post, read and respond to classified ads.
* Groups - allows members who have common interests to find each other and interact.
* Events - allows members to publicize an event, invite guests and track who plans to attend.
* Pages - allows members to create and promote a public page built around a specific topic.
* Presence technology - allows members to see which contacts are online and chat.

Within each member's personal profile, there are several key networking components. The most popular is arguably the Wall, which is essentially a virtual bulletin board. Messages left on a member's Wall can be text, video or photos. Another popular component is the virtual Photo Album. Photos can be uploaded from the desktop or directly from a camera. There is no limitation on quantity, but Facebook staff will remove inappropriate or copyrighted images.  An interactive album feature allows the member's contacts (who are called generically called "friends") to comment on each other's photos and identify (tag) people in the photos. Another popular profile component is status updates, a [microblogging](http://searchmobilecomputing.techtarget.com/definition/microblogging) feature that allows members to broadcast short Twitter-like announcements to their friends.

All interactions are published in a news feed, which is distributed in real-time to the member's friends.

**Digital Rights and Responsibilities:**

**The Digital Age of Consent in Ireland is 16 years.**

The definition of digital rights and responsibilities is having the right and freedom to use various types of digital technology while using the technology in an acceptable and appropriate manner.

**Other school policies:**

The following is a list of school policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to AUP

* + Mission Statement
  + Anti-Bullying
  + The School Care Team
  + The AUP Policy – currently in Draft Form
  + Extra-curricular activity
  + Code of Behaviour
  + Class Tutor system
  + Major Incidents procedures

The Board has ensured that the necessary policies, protocols or practices as appropriate are in place in respect of each of the above listed items.

**The purpose having of a school/ Subject Facebook page is to provide;**

* Communication with parents regarding specific events & activities, including homework & assignments on subject pages.
* Communication with new or prospective parents
* Communication with wider audience regarding positive advertisement of school & enrolment dates
* Communication with wider audience of school life via possible communication tours -photos of pupil’s projects, notice boards, etc.
* Links to any updated information that appears on our website.
* communication between parents, especially new parents
* Continued advancement of our school communication system with information shared via paper notes, email, website & now Facebook
* contact with past parents and pupils.

**Those using our social networking site must abide by the following;**

* Users cannot advertise products or services on our school Facebook page
* Users should not post anything on the page that could be deemed as offensive – inappropriate or harmful comments/content will be removed immediately
* Users should not engage in giving negative feedback on Facebook, it is more appropriate to deal with the school directly on such matters.
* Users will not mention individual staff members in a negative light on the school Facebook Page.
* Users should not ask to become “friends” with staff as failure to respond may cause offence
* To use Facebook, one must be 13 years of age or older.
* The Digital Age of Consent in Ireland is 16.

**The sanction for breaking these rules is automatic BLOCK and removal from our Facebook page.**

## One to One Meeting/ Teaching/ Counselling Policy – Draft Form

One-to-One Policy – Counselling and Teaching

Mission Statement ……

It is the policy of this school that one-to – one counselling and teaching is often in the best interest of the student. Where one-to one session occur, this will take place in an open environment i.e. staff member and pupil visible through a glass panelled door.

**One-to-One counselling (External Counsellor/Guidance Counsellor) Procedure**

General

The external counsellor is a fully qualified IACP counsellor and garda vetted. The guidance counsellor is a fully qualified guidance counsellor member of the Teaching Council and Garda Vetted. As a full member of the (IACP) Irish Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy the counsellor is compliant with IACP the Code of ethics and practice for Counsellors/Psychotherapists. The guidance counsellor is a full member of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC) and is available to attend five sessions of Supervision through the IGC each academic year. The counsellor will have sensible regard for the student’s beliefs and values. They will work in ways to promote the students’ personal autonomy, freedom of choice and self-direction. The counsellor records a list of students detailing who they met on a one-to-one basis and relevant notes regarding the sessions. All one-to-one meetings with students take place in the counselling/guidance office or Comms Room meeting office. Any concerns (Child Protection) that the counsellor has regarding the safety of a student is discussed with the Principal (DLP) as a matter of urgency. If the principal is unavailable, the issue will be discussed with the Deputy Principal (DDLP).

**Responsibilities and Duties of the Counsellor:**

Students may be referred to the external counsellor by the Student Support Team following consultation with the Principal. Students may be referred to the Guidance Counsellor by the Student Support Team, Year Head, SEN team or can self-refer. In the sessions the counsellor should always be mindful of their role and explain the boundaries within the counsellor/student relationship their qualifications, areas of expertise and relevant limitations. He/she should also explain the nature of counselling activities involved and the reasons for undertaking them and the benefits to the student in the case of counselling any referral options which may benefit the student where any presenting issue is beyond the external counsellor’s current level of competency

confidentiality in the counselling process and the limits of confidentiality the students right to engage in and withdraw from involvement in the process at any stage seeking consent in advance from parents/guardians for the student to attend counselling session(s). Written permission will be obtained from at least one parent/guardian prior to the commencement of therapy. keeping all written records in a locked filing cabinet in the guidance counselling/Principal’s office. When making or keeping records, care should be taken to distinguish between fact, observation and opinion and, to include only such information as is required for the purpose of professional involvement with the student. Where a decision is made, the basis for the decision is noted. Statutory and data protection responsibility with regard to records applies to all media, whether written hardcopy, electronic or digitally recorded.

**One-to-One Meeting/Teaching with Students**

General

All one-to-one meetings with students take place in an open environment with a glass panelled door. One to one teaching may occur between students and Special Education teachers. Work carried out by Special Needs Assistants will also be completed in an open environment under the direction of a class teacher. From time to time outside professionals may be required to meet with/assess students in a one to one setting. This includes visits from external agencies for example, NCSE, NEPS, SEC, TUSLA etc. All personnel working with children on a one to one basis must be Garda Vetted.

**Responsibilities and Duties of Teachers**

Teachers have a responsibility to inform students of the extent and limitations of confidentiality with respect to the schools’ policies and safe guarding of the wellbeing of the student. Students should be informed of the limits of confidentiality where information about them may need to be shared. If issues of safety override those of confidentiality and a concern around child protection arises the concern will be discussed with the DLP as a matter of urgency. DLP/Principal will inform parents of any child protection related issues in line with Child Protection procedures.

**Record Keeping and Access to Records**

All written records are kept in a locked filing cabinet in the teacher's office and/or recorded on School IT based reporting system. When making or keeping records, care should be taken to distinguish between fact, observation and opinion and, to include only such information as is required for the purpose of professional involvement with the student. Where a decision is made, the basis for the decision is noted. Statutory and data protection responsibility with regard to records applies to all media, whether written, hardcopy, electronic or digitally recorded. For SEN students all student support files recorded and stored in accordance with the SEN Policy.

Review etc…

## 

## School Inclusion and Additional Educational Needs Policy (Draft)

**1. Introduction**

At Ramsgrange Community School (RCS) we aim to create and sustain a caring, supportive and safe environment in which our staff and students feel valued, motivated and stimulated in their efforts to grow as human beings and to realise their full potential. We believe that our mission statement is best achieved in a safe and secure environment, which supports and recognises individual rights and responsibilities, encourages commitment, and shared responsibility for the achievement of excellence in the interests of the common good.

At Ramsgrange Community School we believe that the interests of all children and young adults should be valued equally and equitably, irrespective of any individual needs or differences we are committed to making effective provision, in partnership with the Department of Education and other agencies, for all students in our school with special educational needs and disabilities. In Ramsgrange Community School we are committed to the highest standards and we strive to ensure that all our students achieve their full potential in an inclusive and accessible environment.

All staff are committed to supporting and nurturing all students, and to supporting our families and those who work with them, where appropriate. Our working practices are based on respect, trust, honesty, integrity and equity.

**2. Rationale**

The purpose of this policy is to:

* Comply with legislation (Education Act 1998, Equal Status Act, 2000) ;
* Provide practical guidance to staff, parents and other interested parties about our SEN procedures and practices;
* Outline the framework for addressing additional differences and abilities in our school;
* Fulfil DES circular 0013/17 -Circular to the Management Authorities of all Mainstream Primary Schools; Special Education Teaching Allocation, and new 2017 Guidelines for Primary Schools: Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools).

**3.** **Aims of the Policy**

This policy aims to outline our procedures and practices of how we:

* Identify additional needs and strengths that our pupils may have;
* Allocate resources to effectively meet the needs of students with variable abilities;
* Divide the roles and responsibilities among our school community in relation to pupils with additional needs ;
* Track, monitor, review and report on the progress of students with variable abilities;
* Communicate information between the Special Education Team(SET), principal, staff and parents/guardians.

**4. Definition of Special Educational Needs & Inclusion**

Section 1 of the Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act defines special educational needs in the following terms:

“Special educational needs mean in relation to a person, a restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability, or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition…”

In the context of this policy the term ‘Special Educational Needs’ (SEN) shall include students with learning support and resource needs. It also includes the Inclusion of students with disabilities and but no SEN needs.

In the context of this policy Support Teachers shall include Learning Support and Resource Teachers.

In adherence with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) (Draft) Guidelines for Teachers of Students with General Learning Disabilities we acknowledge that the broad aims of education for students with special educational needs reflect those relevant to all students and include:

* Enabling the student to live a full life and to realise his or her potential as a unique individual through access to an appropriate, broad and balanced curriculum;
* Enabling the student to function as independently as possible in society through the provision of such educational supports as are necessary to realise that potential;
* Enabling the student to continue learning in adult life.

A reference to ‘integrated settings in mainstream classes’ – See DES

**5. Roles and Responsibilities**

**5.1. Board of Management**

The overall responsibility for the provision of education to all students, including students with special educational needs, lies with the Board of Management.

The Board of Management (BOM) is responsible:

* To ensure that all students with learning support/special educational needs are identified and assessed;
* To ensure that the school has a comprehensive special educational needs policy in place, which has been developed collaboratively with all stakeholders – parents, students, staff, BOM to monitor the implementation of that policy and to ensure its evaluation;
* To ensure that a broad, balanced, relevant, progressive, continuous, differentiated and accessible curriculum is provided in the school to ensure, as far as is practicable, that students with special educational needs leave school with the skills necessary to participate to the level of their capacity in an inclusive way in society and to live independently in their adult lives;
* To ensure that necessary resources are sought on behalf of students with special educational needs;
* To ensure that a relevantly qualified special educational needs co-coordinator/ co-ordinators are appointed from among the teaching staff (where possible);
* To ensure that parents/guardians are informed of their child’s special educational needs and how those needs are being met; suggesting parents are not aware?
* To promote the development of positive partnership with parents/guardians and other relevant agencies/personnel;
* To ensure that parents/guardians are consulted with regard to and invited to participate in the making of all significant decisions concerning their student’s education.
* To ensure that this Inclusion and Additional Support Policy forms part of the School Plan;
* To develop a whole school approach to literacy and numeracy as required under Section 14 of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004

**5.2. Principal**

Under current legislation the Principal of the school has the overall responsibility for ensuring that the special educational needs of the students are met.

The Principal has responsibility for all aspects of the day-today management of policy and provision for students with special educational needs. As outlined in Section 18 of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004), the Principal may delegate certain functions to appropriate teachers.

The principal’s duties include:

* Appointing a relevantly qualified special educational needs co-coordinator/ co-ordinators from among the teaching staff (where possible) and to work closely with the co-ordinator;
* To inform the Board of Management of issues relevant to special educational needs;
* To inform Parents of issues relevant to special education needs;
* In consultation with the special educational need’s coordinators and other relevant personnel to liaise the Department of Education and other agencies regarding needs and provision. This also includes applications for reasonable accommodation and exemptions in relation to state examinations, as well as assessments;
* To consult with parents, where relevant, regarding the school and student’s needs and provision;
* To ensure the effective and efficient use of resources, including the allocation of resource hours and funds. This should include equality and equity of access and opportunity for students with special educational needs in terms of resources;
* To actively promote a whole school approach to special educational needs and to make all staff aware of their responsibilities in this area and to organize appropriate staff development in this area.

**5.3. Mainstream Teachers**

The mainstream teacher has the responsibility for ensuring that all students, including those with special educational needs, are provided with a learning programme and environment that enables equitable access to the curriculum and to advance their learning. Mainstream teachers should make themselves aware of the special educational needs of students in their classes. They should have access to all information that is relevant to teaching a student with special educational needs.

Their duties include:

* To make provision for students with special educational needs in their classes and subject areas;
* To be part of a whole school approach in relation to Special Educational Needs as well as literacy/numeracy;
* To develop a positive ethos in the classroom for fostering an inclusive approach to meeting the social and educational needs of all students including students with special educational needs;
* To identify personal training needs and to secure training where needed. This will be supported by school management subject to the availability of adequate resources;
* To inform the SEN co-ordinators of any concerns about a students’ learning through the SEN referral form that can be found on the SEN Noticeboard in staffroom.

**5.4. Special Educational Needs Co-Coordinators**

The SEN co-ordinators should work closely with the Principal and Deputy Principal, ISA’s (formerly SNA’S), Parents and other support teachers to ensure the needs of the students are being met

The strategic duties of the Special Educational Needs Coordinators include:

* To have an overview of the management of the provision that is being provided in the school
* To facilitate effective systems of communication between all staff and colleagues involved in the provision.
* To ensure all staff and colleagues involved are working within school policy in relation to special educational needs
* To ensure that all provision in the school has the effect of integrating the student into a safe, secure, supportive learning environment.
* To ensure that all action taken supports a student's progress, well-being and learning.
* To be aware of issues of attendance and child protection as they relate to Special Educational Needs and refer such issues of concern in relation to child protection to a member of the Care Team in the school as appropriate.
* To supervise the day-to-day operation of the school’s special educational needs policy, and to work closely with and under the overall direction of the school principal.
* To engage in personal professional development.
* To liaise with and advise other teachers.
* To meet regularly with the special educational needs team, home school community liaison officer, the guidance counsellor and other relevant personnel, as appropriate.
* To manage Inclusion Support Assistants under the direction of the Principal.
* To liaise with parents of students with special educational needs and include them in the formulation of Student Support Files for their child.
* To ensure the distribution of suitable learning resources and teaching aids, subject to those resources and teaching aids being made available by the Department of Education and Science or other agencies.
* To liaise with external agencies including primary schools, National Educational Psychological Service, National Council for Special Education, Special Education Support Service, Health Boards and Voluntary bodies.
* In consultation with the Principal to ensure that Student Support Files are in place, as required.
* To develop practices to aid the identification of students with special educational needs.
* To co-ordinate the provision for students with special educational needs and keep a register of needs and provision.
* Generating the school’s Resource & Learning Support timetable.
* Administering standardised literacy and numeracy assessments for screening and/or diagnostic purposes in co-operation with the Guidance Counsellor.
* Sharing relevant information about students’ needs with teachers.
* Contributing to the development of learning plans.
* Completing applications for Irish Exemptions.
* Completing applications to the NSCE for additional supports.
* Completing applications to NEPS for educational assessments.
* Completing applications to the Examinations Commission for RACE.

**5.5. Teachers involved in the provision of Support, Special Education Teachers (S.E.T.)**

Teachers providing supplementary teaching to students with special educational needs (SET) are expected to give this work the same status as other work e.g. preparation time, punctuality, recording student attendance, maintaining a record of work covered etc. They should request information from the SEN co-ordinators relating to the needs of their assigned student(s) and are required to participate in the production and review of learning plans with the SEN co-ordinators. They should liaise with the mainstream subject teacher where appropriate.

SET

The work of the SET includes the following

* Assessment and identification of students with special needs.
* Recommending and devising appropriate materials for students in terms of concepts, relevance, readability, layout and presentation.
* Consulting with colleagues on appropriate methodology to help obviate learning barriers.
* Consulting with colleagues to devise a range of teaching and learning strategies.
* Contributing to cross-curricular issues concerned with the broader ideas of learning and teaching throughout the school.
* In-Class Support: In-class support is planned work with a group of children where two or more teachers are working together.
* Withdrawal- where a student or small group of students are withdrawn under direction of the SEN co-ordinators for resource/learning support.
* Team-teaching – as deemed appropriate.
* Support teachers provide diagnostic assessments, monitoring, advice as well as direct teaching to students with special educational needs either on an individual or small group basis.
* Assessing and recording student needs and progress.
* Setting specific, time-related targets for each student and agreeing these with the subject teacher, principal and/or the Special Educational Needs Coordinators.
* Advising subject teachers in regard to adapting the curriculum, teaching strategies, suitable textbooks, use of Information Technology and suitable software and a range of other related matters.
* Meeting and advising parents, when necessary, accompanied by the principal, Deputy Principal and/or the Special Needs Coordinators.
* Short meetings with other relevant professionals, in the students’ interest – e.g. psychologists, speech and language therapists, visiting teachers, special school or special class teachers where relevant.
* Support teachers should be involved in the development and delivery, or the organisation of delivery, of Student Support Files, and in the context of a whole school approach to the issue.

**5.6. Class Tutors**

Class Tutors can facilitate the inclusion of an individual student with special educational needs by monitoring the student’s progress within the class.

**5.7. Guidance Counsellor**

The Guidance Counsellor assists students with special educational needs at the different stages of schooling and in making career decisions. Individualised guidance and support for students with special educational needs is part of the support structure in the school. The Guidance Counsellor works in partnership with the SEN co-ordinators to administer assessments on incoming students and in the collaboration of results.

**5.8. Home School Liaison Co-ordinator**

Ramsgrange Community School has a Home School Liaison Co-ordinator available who provides support to parents of students with special educational needs. The Co-ordinator also works with feeder primary schools collating information on incoming students.

**5.9. Inclusion Support Assistants (Inclusion Support Assistants)**

This should be read in conjunction with ISA policy.

Inclusion Support Assistants (ISAs) work closely with and under the direction of the Principal and the special educational needs coordinator and the individual subject teachers in the implementation of the school’s policy as it relates to individual students or groups of students. In particular, ISAs play a very important role in the health and safety of the student/s and in his/her/their social and emotional development.

The Principal in accordance with the guidelines of the Department of Education and Science (circular 0030/2014) assigns the duties of Inclusion Support Assistants. The ISA is privy to confidential information pertaining to SEN pupils and as such confidentiality is of paramount importance.

Where a student allocated access to an ISA is absent, the ISA shall follow the list of students who require ISA access on SEN Noticeboard.

The allocation of an Inclusion Support Assistant to assist a student should be balanced against the student’s needs to develop independence and to gain access to education in school alongside and in the same way as other students. Care should be taken, therefore, to ensure that the deployment of an Inclusion Support Assistant does not serve to segregate the student with special educational needs from their classmates or to make them more dependent on assistance from others.

The duties of Inclusion Support Assistants include tasks of a non-teaching nature such as:

* Assisting students write, take notes and write down homework etc.
* Assisting students to board and alight from school buses. (Where necessary, travelling as escort on school buses may be required.)
* Special assistance as necessary for students with particular difficulties e.g. helping physically disabled students with typing or writing.
* Assisting with clothing, feeding, toileting and general hygiene.
* Assisting on out-of-school visits, walks and similar activities.
* Assisting the teachers in the supervision of students with special educational needs during assembly, recreational and dispersal periods.
* Accompanying individuals or small groups who may have to be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom.
* Generally assisting the subject teachers, under the direction of the Principal and/or the Special Educational Needs Coordinator, with duties of a nonteaching nature.
* Participation with school development planning, where appropriate, and co-operation with any such changes with policies and practices arising from the school development process.
* In consultation with the SEN co-ordinators, develop Personal Pupil Plans as required by National Council for Special Education.
* Support the implementation of targets from the plan and monitor and review targets as necessary.

**5.10. Parents**

PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

We aim to ensure that the school and parents to work in close partnership with each other in the identification of need, the setting of educational targets and working with the child.

Ramsgrange Community School affirms that parents of students with special educational needs will be informed of such needs and how they are being met. In addition, parents must be involved in all significant decisions relating to their child’s education. Wherever possible, students will be included in discussion and decision-making regarding identification, target setting and progress.

Parents can support the work of the school by providing a home environment in which there are opportunities for adults and children to participate together in language, literacy, and mathematical activities and where school and school work are positively encouraged.

Parents are asked to supply information on their child’s special educational needs at the time of enrolment and are required to give consent to the school to administer assessments on their child during their time at the school. Parents of students with educational assessments are requested to allow the school share relevant information from these reports with mainstream teachers for appropriate programme planning.

**5.11. Students**

Students should, as appropriate contribute to the evaluation of their progress by participating in appropriate assessment activities, including self-assessment. They should develop ownership of the skills and strategies that are taught during supplementary teaching and learn to apply these to improve their own learning. Students at senior cycle who are withdrawn from a subject are expected to use their time appropriately to complete briefs for practical subjects, complete LCVP assignments and study towards their examinations.

**6. ASD Class**

The aim of the ASD Class is to provide a caring learning environment, which facilitates the nurturing of each pupil’s full educational potential. The achievement of this aim informs all of the planning processes and activities which occur in our school. The Principal, Teachers, Support staff and Parents are partners in their children’s education with co-operation and communication between home and school being vital ingredients in the educational process. We share the same purpose – the care and well-being of the students in our care. A great emphasis is placed on the areas of communication, daily living skills, social skills and literacy.

The ASD class strives to create a supportive and caring environment for each pupil. With a team of dedicated teachers and support staff, the school provides individual attention catering for the uniqueness of each pupil’s personality. The aim is to enable the children to attain their educational potential and fulfil their role in society.

**Break-time Procedures**

Students are permitted to access the room 9 at break time and lunch time. Supervision is provided for a specified list of students during this time and social skills are practised. However, students are also encouraged to be independent and avail of the facilities of the school during break times.

**Integration and Inclusion of pupils from the ASD Class into Mainstream Classes**

Section 2 of the Education for Persons with Special Needs Act 2004 states ‘A child with special educational needs shall be educated in an inclusive environment with children who do not have such needs unless the nature or degree of those needs of the child is such that to do so would be inconsistent with:

* The best interests of the child as determined in accordance with any assessment carried out under this act, or
* The effective provision of education for children with whom the child is to be educated.

The amount of integration/reverse integration that each child receives in Ramsgrange Community School is collectively decided upon by those professionals who deal with the child each day i.e. teachers (both special education teachers and mainstream), the Principal and support staff. The views of parents and other interested parties such as Psychologists, Speech Therapists and Occupational Therapists will be taken into account. However, the school’s decision is final.

**Enrolment into ASD Class**

Enrolment and application for a place in our ASD class is in accordance with our Admissions Policy, 2018.

**ASD Class notification of vacancies**

* The Principal will notify the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) of the number of vacancies in the existing classes for the following year. The SENO will also be informed of the names of students on the application list.
* When the places for the following school year have been filled, the Principal will inform the SENO of the names of the students who remain on the waiting list without places.
* The SENO will also be informed if vacancies arise during the school year following recommendation from the admissions committee.

**ASD Class Transition Programme**

* The SEN Co-ordinator and/or ASD Class Co-ordinator will endeavour to visit schools and observe incoming students in their existing placements. This will happen during the second or third term of the school year.
* Transitional Programmes will be arranged on an individual basis with successful applicants in consultation with parents, educational staff and other relevant personnel.

**Staff Roles**

**Principal/ Deputy Principal**

With reference to the Education for Persons with Special Needs Act 2004, the role of the principal entails:

1. Direct responsibility for co-ordinating an effective whole school approach to integration

2. Responsibility for the provision of in-service training and adequate resourcing

3. Monitoring the effectiveness of the policy and making relevant adjustment following consultation

4. Working with parents and out-of-school agencies.

**Special Class Teachers**

1. Will identify the appropriate curriculum area the child in the Autism Unit should experience

2. Ensure ISA support is available during any period of integration

3. Collaborate and consult with mainstream teachers in setting specific, measurable, achievable, relevant short-term and long-term targets

4. Assume responsibility for an ongoing student support file in consultation with the relevant support services, parents and the Principal.

**Class Teachers**

1. Will differentiate teaching programmes to meet the needs of the child from the ASD class

2. Provide a suitable seating arrangement in a mainstream setting

3. Collaborate with the Special Class Teacher and the ISA

4. Provide feedback on progress.

**7. International students with English Language Needs**

Ramsgrange Community School will carefully plan how students from minority ethnic backgrounds with low levels of English are to be taught and integrated.

Ramsgrange Community School must introduce initiatives to encourage students from minority ethnic backgrounds to mix with Irish students in and out of class.

The school through its normal operating procedures shall ensure that adequate additional teaching support is applied for and allocated as per the regulations of the Department of Education.

**8. Gifted & Talented Students**

EXCEPTIONALLY ABLE STUDENTS

Students who score in the top five percentile of norm referenced ability tests, administered by the school, will be termed gifted for the purpose of this policy. The school will enhance the educational development of gifted students by the provision of a suitable curricular programme, by employing appropriate educational strategies, and by fostering an ethos conductive to high achievement.

Ramsgrange Community School recognises that exceptionally able students have particular needs.

Identification of students with high ability comes from a successful amalgamation of evidence from a variety of sources including assessments and diagnostic tests, observations and class work.

Exceptionally able students have special educational needs. Because regular schoolwork may not provide sufficient challenge, they may experience boredom, which can lead to frustration at school. In addition, many may feel isolated and uncomfortable with their ability. This can lead to them under-achieving in school in an effort to conform. There are several approaches Ramsgrange Community School takes that can be of help and sometimes a combination of all of these may be needed

1. Differentiation
2. Open ended project work
3. Special classes: Have special classes available for a group of high ability students, perhaps on a weekly basis.
4. Enrichment Activities: Providing access to activities such as lunchtime clubs e.g. chess, astronomy, quizzes, debates, music groups, drama. Particularly try to facilitate students meeting others with similar interests even if they are in different year groups.

Students are also encouraged:

* to take extra subjects
* take part in the All Ireland Linguistics Olympiad
* join the CTYI
* attend summer schools
* apply for scholarship programmes

**9. Identification of students with SEN**

The identification process will usually involve the following:

* Liaison with Primary Schools
* Specific section on the admissions/enrolment form
* Liaison with parents
* Observations by the subject teachers, tutors, support teachers, Chaplain and guidance counsellor as appropriate.
* Formal assessments/testing.
* Referral form on SEN Noticeboard in staffroom for any staff member to fill out if they feel a student in Ramsgrange Community School may have a learning difficulty/ special educational need.

If a student has not been identified as having special educational needs until after enrolment, the permission of parents will be sought, to have the student assessed if deemed necessary by the assigned NEPS Psychologist. The number of referrals for assessment is limited to those granted by NEPS and thus referrals are made on a need only basis.

**10. Meeting the Needs and Allocating Resources**

**10.1. Resources**

Application for Additional Resources:

The SEN co-ordinators will make applications to the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), through the Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO) for additional resources on behalf of individual students on receipt of the following:

1. Duly completed forms as specified by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE).
2. Current psychological reports, as appropriate.
3. Other relevant support documentation, as appropriate.

Once the Department of Education makes a decision in relation to resources, the school will notify the student and parents. Should a student in receipt of resource (SEN) support leave the school for whatever reason, the school should notify the SENO, through the relevant form issued by the NCSE each February.

Physical Resources allocated to a student shall remain the property of Ramsgrange Community School at all times.

We endeavour to deploy resources in a way that best promotes the students’ learning and development, with full accountability for all resources allocated. This includes the deployment of resources for the specific purpose for which they are intended.

**10.2. Allocating Resources**

Once pupils’ needs have been identified, Special Education Teachers (SETs) are deployed to address these needs as required. We deploy SETs in a variety of ways in order to effectively meet pupils’ needs. We aim to strike a balance between team teaching, in-class support, group and individual support while ensuring that the needs of children with additional needs are met inclusively.

Importantly, the level and type of support reflect the specific targets of individual pupils as set out in their support plans and are informed by careful monitoring and review of progress. In this way, following a period of intervention, some pupils may no longer require additional teaching supports; some may require the same level, while others may require more intensive supports.

In planning the allocation of additional teaching supports, the over-riding principle is that resources are deployed to address the identified needs of pupils. Importantly, those with **the highest level of need should have access to the greatest level of support.** We consider methodologies best suited to promoting meaningful inclusion such as differentiation, heterogeneous grouping, team-teaching and small group teaching. In addition to literacy and numeracy difficulties, many pupils will have specific needs in such areas as oral language, social interaction, behaviour, emotional development, motor skills and application to learning.

Twice yearly, in September and in January the SENCOs and SETs formally meet to review children’s needs, the resources in place and progress made using the Continuum of Support problem-solving model of assessment and stage approach flow charts. The SENCOs then bring this information to the end of term SET team planning meetings. As a SET team, we review all support and allocate resources for the subsequent term / year.

We cross-reference the needs of pupils at School Support and School Support Plus levels and consider common needs that can be met by grouping, to ensure effective and efficient teaching and learning approaches.

### 38.i Team Teaching – Our TL21- Teaching and Learning for the 21st Century

**(Full Details of Team-Teaching Targets can be seen in SIP Section of School Plan**

**Aim:** The use of Team Teaching in RCS is to promote greater inclusion and to make a positive impact to Teaching and Learning in the classroom.

**What is Team Teaching?** A group of two or more teachers working together to plan, conduct and evaluate the learning activities for the same group of students’. Geotz, 2000

Why Team Teaching? Why team teaching?

‘*Wherever possible teaching needs should be met in the main classroom’*

*Team teaching fits that view*

**Advantages:**

Helps the more able students and those with SEN.

Teachers will transfer innovative teaching methodologies to other classrooms.

Creates flexibility in teaching.

Helps to re-enforce a confident class atmosphere.

**Challenges:**

Sharing the control and responsibility

Define evaluation and how we monitor the progress

**Inspectorate:** Chief Inspector’s Report (DES 2013)

In a number of instances, inspectors advised schools to explore models of in-class support instead of relying exclusively on a model of support that involved withdrawing pupils from the mainstream classroom. (DES 2013 p.52)

Inclusion is about the presence, participation and achievement of all students with a particular emphasis on those groups who may be at risk of marginalisation, exclusion or underachievement in the education system.

**Team Teaching in RCS:**

There is no prescribed best way to Team Teach. It depends on the teachers in the classroom and students’ needs.

Do not divide class in two – it is not recommended by DES as it does not represent good use of SEN hours.

Focus on Junior Level students across subjects.

Both teachers are trained in the subject. For example, two Maths teachers Team Teach Maths. Subject specific

Team Teaching committee has been established.

Team Teaching is promoted on open night.

Parent/Teacher meetings. Both teachers meet with parent.

Both teachers take responsibility for the correcting and assessment of students’ work.

Both teachers fill out a Team-Teaching Planner and Reflection in conjunction with the SEN Department.

**SELECTION PROCESS FOR ALLOCATING ADDITIONAL TEACHING SUPPORT**

**Stage 3 School Support Plus**

Children with identified complex needs by an external professional such as a,

* Physical Disability
* Hearing Impairment
* Visual Impairment
* Emotional Disturbance
* Moderate General Learning Disability
* Severe/Profound General Learning Disability
* Autistic Spectrum Disorder
* Assessed Syndrome
* Specific Speech and Language Disorder/Impairment Individual Education Plans

**Types of Support**

In-Class Support

Team-Teaching

Group Withdrawal

Individual Withdrawal

**Personnel**

SET teacher

Mainstream Teachers

SNA

Outside Agencies

**Stage 2 School Support**

* Students for whom English is an additional language or children whom English is an additional language newly arrived in Ireland.
* Children on or under a mean Percentile (as determined by SET Team on an annual basis, dependent on needs of year group) in Literacy Standardised Tests
* Children with an identified need assessed by external professionals who are not on or below a mean Percentile (as determined by SET Team on an annual basis, dependent on needs of year group) in Literacy and/or Numeracy such as

1. Borderline Mild General Learning Disability

2. Mild General Learning Disability

3. Specific Learning Disability

4. Attention Deficit Disorder/ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

* Children who have not made adequate progress after interventions at Stage 1 of continuum

**Stage 1 Classroom Support**

**Types of Support**

In-Class Support

Team-Teaching

**Personnel**

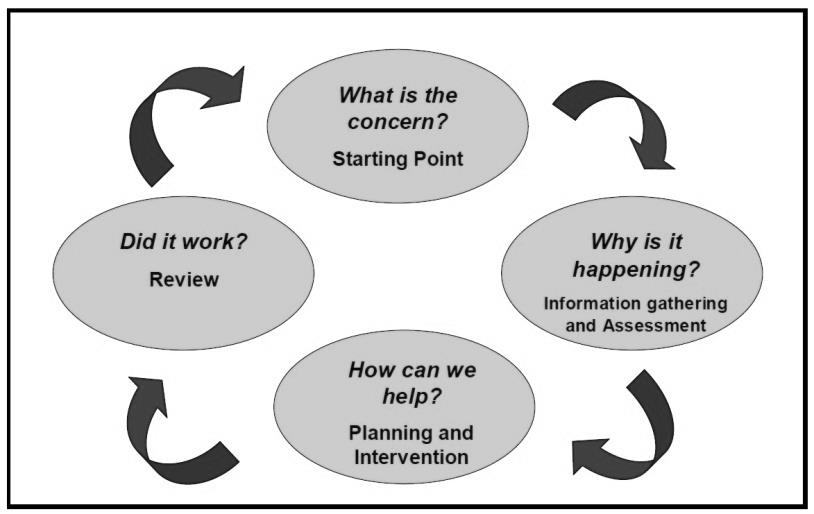
SET teacher

Class Teacher

**10.3. Continuum of Support**

We use the Continuum of Support Framework set out by the Department of Education to identify and support children with additional needs. In conjunction with this framework, we recognise that special educational needs occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe, and from transient to long-term and that pupils require different levels of support depending on their identified additional needs. By using this framework, it helps us implement a staged approach to ensure that our support and interventions are incremental, moving from class-based interventions to more intensive and individualised support, and are informed by careful monitoring of progress.

The Continuum of Support is a problem-solving model of assessment and intervention that enables us to gather and analyse data, as well as to plan and review the progress of individual pupils.

This problem-solving process is illustrated as follows:

Identification of educational needs is central to our policy and the new allocation model. By using the Continuum of Support framework, we can identify pupils’ educational needs, to include academic, social and emotional needs, as well as needs associated with physical, ­­­­sensory, language and communication difficulties. This, in turn, allows us to identify and respond to needs in a flexible way.

**The Continuum of Support suggests the following levels of support:**

**STAGE 1 CLASSROOM SUPPORT**

Classroom Support is the most common, and typically the first response to emerging needs. It is a response for pupils who have distinct or individual educational needs and who require approaches to learning and/or behaviour which are **additional to or different** from those required by other pupils in their class. Problem-solving at this level typically begins when a parent or teacher has concerns about an individual pupil. The teacher, Class Co-ordinator and parents discuss the nature of the problem and consider strategies which may be effective. Classroom Support incorporates the simple, informal problem-solving approaches commonly used by class teachers to support emerging needs.

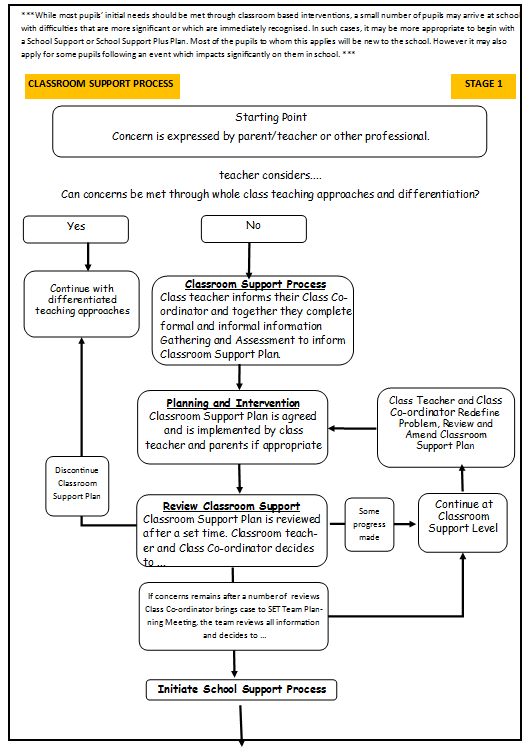
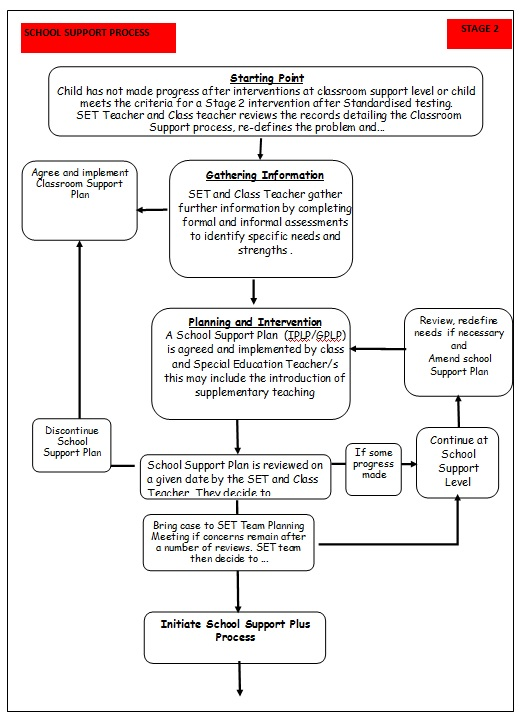
**STAGE 2 SCHOOL SUPPORT**

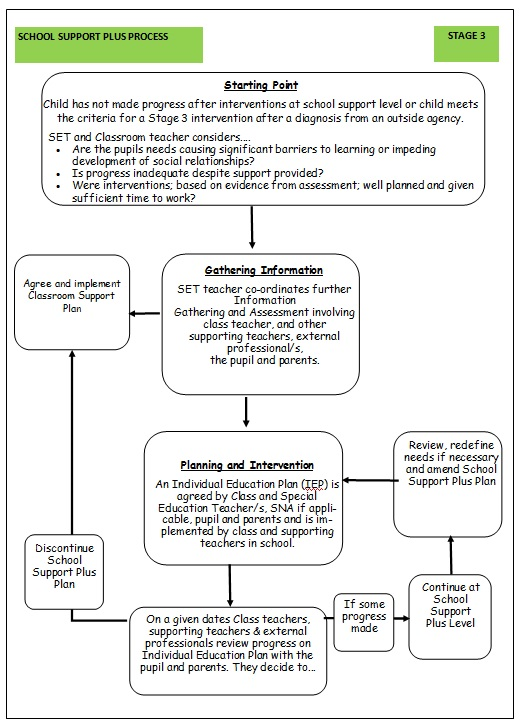
In some cases, interventions at classroom support level are not enough to fully meet the pupil’s special educational needs. School Support may, therefore, be required. The class teacher needs to involve the Special Education Teacher Team (SET Team) in the problem-solving process at this point and it involves more systematic gathering of information and the development and monitoring of a School Support Plan.

**STAGE 3 SCHOOL SUPPORT PLUS**

If a pupil’s special educational needs are **severe and/or persistent**, they are likely to need intensive support. School Support Plus will generally involve personnel outside the school team in the problem solving, assessment and intervention process. However, the information from Classroom and School Support work will provide the starting point for problem-solving at this level. Classroom support and school support will continue to be an important element of his/her individual education plan.

The flow diagrams below outline how we gather information to identify needs and support children with additional needs. A more comprehensive explanation of each stage can be in the Continuum of Support – Guidelines for teachers

[https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-****/neps\_special\_needs\_guidelines.pdf](https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/neps_special_needs_guidelines.pdf)

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**10.4. Strategies to meet the needs of students with SEN**

At Ramsgrange Community School we acknowledge that subject teachers and teachers providing learning support can meet most of the needs of students with special educational needs through careful planning, using differentiated teaching methods, identifying appropriate learning outcomes, adapting teaching materials and using assessment to build on student’s strengths. The assistance of SNA’s and in-class support staff can further facilitate this differentiated learning environment. All staff are encouraged to update their professional knowledge and skills in the area of special needs through attendance at appropriate in-service.

**10.5.** **Tracking, recording and reviewing progress**

Provision for pupils with special educational needs is enhanced through clear identification processes and careful planning of interventions to address academic and/or personal and social development needs. Identification of needs, planning, target-setting and monitoring of outcomes are essential elements of an integrated and collaborative problem-solving process

**Student Support File**

The Student Support File is a special programme written by the school for named students so that each child can work at improving their skills and knowledge at their own pace. The Student Support File is a collaborative process involving the school, the parents, the student (where appropriate) and other relevant personnel and agencies.

The Principal in consultation with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators shall be responsible for the development of a Student Support File.

We use a Student Support File to plan interventions and to track a pupil’s pathway through the Continuum of Support. It facilitates us in documenting progress and needs over time and assists us in providing an appropriate level of support to pupils, in line with their level of need. Our Student Support File is based on the NEPS template and is stored on the school MIS. All support files should include:

* Cover sheet with pupil’s details
* A timeline of actions
* Record of support received
* Standardised/ Diagnostic test scores
* Support plans (See below)
* Checklists

A class teacher or class coordinator should open a Student Support File once a child is placed on Stage 1 –Classroom Support on the continuum. This is stored digitally on the MIS in Pupil Records and a paper copy is stored in the class teacher’s assessment folder and SEN filing cabinet stored in SENCO’s room. At the end of the year, a copy of the information gathered is moved to the Child’s SEN file in the SENCO’s filing cabinet.

If, after a number of reviews, the child’s case is moved to School Support, this information is then transferred to an orange folder and into the child’s SEN file in the SENCO’s room. It is the responsibility of the class teacher and the allocated SET to access and update the information in the Student Support File. The same system is in place for children on School Support Plus.

**Support Plans**

We use three different support plans for the three stages of support on the Continuum of Support.

**Stage 1 – Classroom Support**

A Support Plan at stage 1 is a Classroom Support Plan. (CSP) This is a simple plan which is drawn up by the Class Teacher in collaboration with the SEN Class Coordinator which outlines the pupil’s additional educational needs and the actions, including individualised teaching and management approaches, which will be taken to meet the pupil’s needs. The plan may also include home-based actions to be taken by the pupil’s parents to support their child’s development. The Classroom Support Plan should include a review date. This could be at the end of a school term.

**Stage 2 – School Support**

A Support Plan at stage 2 is a Group or Individual Profile and Learning Programme (GPLP/IPLP). This plan is drawn up by the class teacher and appointed SET teacher. It will set out the nature of the pupil’s learning difficulties, define specific teaching, learning and behavioural targets and set a timescale for review. The plan should, for the most part, be implemented within the normal classroom setting and complimented by focused school-based intervention programmes. Depending on the nature of the needs and on the school context, additional teaching might be within a small group or individual or a combination of both either in class or on a withdrawal basis. Home-based actions may also be included. After the plan has been drawn up, it should become a working document through the careful monitoring of the pupil’s response to the actions taken.

**Stage 3 – School Support Plus**

A Support Plan at stage 3 is an Individual Education Plan (IEP). This plan is drawn up by the class teacher and appointed Special Education Teachers, in consultation with the child’s parents/guardians, professionals external to the school and (if appropriate) the child based on the information gathered. It will set out;

* The nature and degree of the pupil’s abilities, skills and talents
* The nature and degree of the pupil’s special educational needs and how those needs affect his/her educational development
* The present level of educational performance of the pupil
* The special educational needs of the pupil
* The special education and related support services to be provided to the pupil to enable the pupil to benefit from including:
* Strategies for supporting the pupil’s progress and inclusion in the classroom setting
* Individual and/or small group/special class interventions/programmes
* Specific methodologies/programmes to be implemented
* Specific equipment/materials and/or IT supports, if required to support learning and access to the curriculum
* Support required from an Inclusion Support Assistant (SNA), if appropriate
* The goals which the pupil is to achieve over a period not exceeding 12 months

The pupil’s priority learning needs, long and short-term targets to be achieved, the monitoring and review arrangements to be put in place

IEP meetings are coordinated by an appointed IEP coordinator. This is usually one of the child’s Special Education Teachers. Parents will be invited to at least two out of three meetings depending on the needs of the child.

**SEN Records**

**Individual SEN Files**

All pupils’ SEN files are stored in a locked filing cabinet in the SENCO’s room. It is the responsibility of SETs to update and manage the files of the children on school support and school support plus that they support. The following should be stored

* Student Support File (orange folder)
* Psychological Report (blue folder)
* Copy of referrals made to outside agencies
* Copy of reports from outside agencies
* Record of SEN meetings with parents, outside agencies and inter- school meetings
* Record of SEN correspondence between parents, outside agencies and school staff

**Year Group SEN Files**

Whole year group SEN records are stored in a locked filing cabinet in the SENCO’s room. It is the responsibility of the SEN Class Coordinators to manage and update these. The following should be stored in these black, whole class SEN folders:

* CAT IV Results
* NGRT Results
* WRAT IV Results
* DATS Results

**Communication between SET Team/Principal/Class Teachers**

SENCO timetables have been organised so that each Wednesday is our designated co-ordination time. This allows all staff the opportunity to attend pupils support planning meetings, care team meetings, Team Teaching Planning Meetings, SEN consultation/planning/review meetings, when necessary. This facilitates regular SET team planning meetings with the principal. In order to make effective use of this time, a SEN calendar is drawn up at the beginning of the year and cover buddies are assigned.

**11. Information Gathering and Assessment**

Please read this section in conjunction with Ramsgrange Community School Assessment and Change of Level Policy, 2015.

Students in our school will be assessed as follows:

* Standardised diagnostic testing on entry to the school
* Assessment for learning (AFL) and assessment of learning (AOL) through teaching in general subject areas. Examples of these types of assessment include, self-assessment, questioning, teacher observation, portfolios of work, student presentations, classroom-based assessments and teacher designed tasks and tests
* Informal in-house assessment
* Follow up assessment and testing
* Referral to the National Educational Psychological Service as appropriate, please see criteria listed below. (Parental consent must be sought for psychological assessments as per the NEPS model of service.)
* Original records of such assessments shall be maintained in the school as the property of Ramsgrange Community School.

**Criteria for referral into the National Educational Psychology Service (NEPS).**

The following criteria are used by the Student Support Team to refer students into NEPS. This list is in no particular order of importance, neither is it exhaustive.

* Teacher referrals
* Referrals from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
* Referrals in relation to Reasonable Accommodations in Certificate Examinations (RACE)
* Referrals in relation to Disability Access Route to Education (DARE)
* Previous Psychological reports which may need review.
* Behavioural referrals not already dealt with through BFL teacher.
* Underachievement in school tests/exams
* Students who are flagged due to results in entrance assessments
* Parent concerns

**Assessment Procedures in Ramsgrange Community School**

***Current schedule for assessment (refers also to RCS Assessment Policy):***

**Incoming 1st years**

Incoming 1st years undertake Entrance Exams in February prior to starting secondary school. They complete CAT IV and NGRT. Results entered into Assessment and Tracking spreadsheet. Results analysed by SEN team. Correlate results with any information already received i.e. Psychological reports etc. Liaison with Primary Schools in relation to students with standard scores below 85 and / or reading ages in excess of 2 years deficit. These students prioritised for additional teaching support on entry to secondary school.

**1st years**

All of 1st year cohort are tested in September of 1st year. The WRAT IV Spelling and Maths tests are administered (Green version of test). Results entered into Assessment and Tracking spreadsheet. Results analysed by SEN team. Anyone with standard score below 85 in either test (who hasn’t already been identified through entrance assessment results) is offered additional teaching support. These students might also be highlighted for support in classes where team teaching occurs. Results will be shared with relevant staff and it may be necessary to differentiate work.

**2nd years**

As part of the 2nd year Christmas Exam timetable the entire cohort undertake a sample of dictation. This is then analysed for the purpose of calculating a spelling and grammar error rate. Samples can then be used if relevant to apply for Reasonable Accommodations.

In March of 2nd year the entire cohort are tested in Spelling and Maths again using the alternate version of the WRAT IV (Blue version). Results are entered into the Assessment and tracking spreadsheet and progress is compared to results obtained on entry to the school.

**3rd years**

In October / November of 3rd year relevant individual testing is undertaken with students for the purpose of applying for Reasonable Accommodations in the State Exams. Students will have been identified through recommendations from Psychological Reports, scores from in-house assessments and by referrals from teachers.

In January /February the DATS for Guidance are administered to all 3rd years. The Differential Aptitude Test is an aptitude test used to determine and measure an individual’s ability to acquire, through future training, some specific set of skills. This test covers several areas including, Verbal Reasoning, Numerical Ability, Abstract reasoning, Perceptual Speed and Accuracy, Mechanical Reasoning, Space Relations, Spelling, and Language Use. The tests are performed under exam conditions and are strictly timed. The test is also age related.

These tests can be used to help an individual:

1. Choose among educational and career options based on strengths and weakness.

2. Help an individual understand why they do well or poorly in certain subjects.

3. Can suggest new career options not previously considered.

4. Change or raise educational and career aspirations.

**5th & 6th year**

Tests for RACE may need to be done in 5th year if a student has not been identified before this point, this would be highly unusual but does occasionally happen, particularly if the student transferred from another school.

We continually review the assessment and screening tests which we use in order to balance the needs of our pupils and the need to provide information for appropriate supports. Therefore, some deviation may occur from the following lists.

**Tests which we have in school and use regularly:**

* CAT IV
* NGRT
* WRAT IV
* Dyslexia Screener
* DATS
* Maths Competency Test

**Tests which we have in school but do not use regularly:**

* Neale Analysis
* DRA
* Vernon Maths Test

**12. Curricular Modifications**

Curricular modifications include:

* Reduced Curriculum
* Reduced Timetable

These are considered for individual students where deemed absolutely necessary. The individual students will be considered in consultation with the SEN co-ordinator, Guidance Counsellor, Principal, Deputy Principal, parents/guardians and student.

**13. Irish Exemptions**

Students with special educational needs, who were granted an Irish Exemption from the DES in primary school or other secondary school in the case of transfer, where possible, are withdrawn from Irish class and receive learning support at these times. A copy of the certificate of exemption is necessary. JCSP classes will be timetabled at the same time as Irish class so as to provide extra support to these students.

The school will consider granting and Exemption from Irish when a written request is made by the student’s parents/guardians and the school is furnished with a copy of a psychological report not more than two years old containing a recommendation for an Exemption from Irish.

Exemptions from Irish are sought where appropriate and in accordance with Circular M10/94 Revision of Rule 46 of the “Rules and Programme for Secondary Schools”.

**14. Reasonable Accommodation**

Applications are made for all students deemed in need of Reasonable Accommodations for State Examinations. The procedures set down by the Department of Education and Science and the Examinations Commission will be strictly adhered to.

Provision will also be made, where appropriate and feasible, to assist students in formal school exams in keeping with State Examination provisions.

**15. Monitoring and Reviewing**

Monitoring of the Special Educational needs & Learning Support Policy is an ongoing and developmental process. This policy will be reviewed annually or more frequently on the legislative changes which are ongoing in this area.

The effectiveness of this policy relies on:

* Whole school policies
* Committed SEN team
* Parental involvement
* The direction of resources towards students in greatest need
* The development of a team approach involving parents, teachers and relevant support personnel e.g. psychologists, speech and language therapists etc.
* Effective communication between all parties involved
* The provision of appropriate time allocation and support services by the Department of Education. Resource hours are critical here. Additional support services (National Educational Psychological Service, Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists, Inclusion Support Assistants) are of vital importance to provide a professional, holistic service.

This Policy will be reviewed in 2020 or sooner as deemed appropriate

## Critical Incident Plan (January 2019)

**Context**

Ramsgrange Community School aims to protect the wellbeing of its students by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. The school has taken a number of measures to create a coping, supportive ethos in the school. The school has also formulated a number of policies and procedures to be followed with a view to ensuring the physical and psychological safety of both staff and students during the normal course of the school day and in the event of a critical incident.

**Creation of a coping supportive and caring ethos in the school**

We have put systems in place to lessen the probability of the occurrence of an incident. These include measures to address both the physical and psychological safety of both staff and students.  
 **Psychological Safety**

**T**he school aims to create an open and encouraging environment in the school where students can talk about their difficulties and seek help for the same through the following:

* Year Head / Tutor Care Teams
* Meitheal Scheme
* Student Mentoring (Check n connect)
* SPHE Programme
* Chaplain
* Code of Behaviour
* Drugs policy
* Anti-Bullying policy
* Guidance policy
* Care-team
* Counseling
* SCP Key worker
* Acceptable use policy
* Child protection policy
* Referrals to outside agencies
* Staff are informed of difficulties affecting individual students and are aware and vigilant to their needs
* Staff has access information which may help and support members of the school community.
* The school has developed links with outside agencies which may be contacted in the event of an emergency and for onward referral of its member

**Definition of Critical Incident:**

Ramsgrange Community School recognises a critical incident to be “***an incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of the school, and disrupts the normal running of the school***”

Critical incidents may involve students, staff, the school or the local community.

Examples of a critical incident might be;

* The death of a member of the school community, through sudden death, accident, suicide or terminal illness.
* A serious accident or tragedy in the school community.
* Serious damage to the school through fire, flooding, vandalism etc.
* The disappearance of a member of the school community
* A physical attack on a staff member or student
* Intrusion into the school.

**AIM OF PLAN:**

The aim of the Critical Incident Plan is that in the event of such an incident as outlined above, the plan will help staff and management to respond quickly and effectively and to maintain control of the situation. The plan will also help the school to return to normality as soon as possible and limit the effects of the incident on staff and students.

**RATIONALE:**

* Elements of preparedness in place
* Guidelines/Steps known to all staff
* Schools role in responding is recognised
* Schools role in support and partnership with other agencies.

**Team:**

Ramsgrange Community School has set up a Team consisting of the following personnel.

* The Principal
* The Deputy Principal - Staff liaison
* The School Clerical Officer - Administration
* The School Chaplain
* The School Guidance Counsellor
* Home School Liaison Officer
* Teacher representing year group

The Team may co-opt other members of staff to assist them, should they deem it necessary.

* The membership of the Critical Incident Management Team will be renewed at the start of each school year, and all staff will be informed of its membership.
* Where appropriate, in-service training will be provided for members of the Critical Incident Management Team
* The Critical Incident Management Team will prepare and agree an outline Critical Incident Management Plan which will be general in nature.
* The Critical Incident Management Team will meet at least once a year to review the role of the Team and the outline Response Plan. Meetings will be chaired by the Principal or his/her designate.
* Other areas of responsibility may be delegated by the team leader to other members of the team.

**Role of Team Leader**

* The team leader alerts team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting of the team.
* Co-ordinates/delegates tasks of the other members.
* Liaises with The Board of Management and the Department of Education and Science & NEPS.
* In the case of bereavement, liaises with the bereaved family.

Other areas of responsibilities which may be delegated by the team Leader to other members of the team would include:

* Contacting Emergency support services
* Briefing and advising the staff and noting their feelings and concerns.

**Gardai Liaison**

(This may be seen as part of the team leader’s role)

* Liaises with the Gárdaí
* Ensures that information about deaths or other developments is checked out for accuracy before being shared.

**Staff liaison**

* Leads briefing meetings for staff on the facts as known, gives staff members an opportunity to express their feelings and ask questions, outlines the routine for the day
* Advises staff on the procedures for identification of vulnerable

students

* Provides materials for staff
* Keeps staff updated as the day progresses
* Is alert to vulnerable staff members and makes contact with them individually
* Advises them of the availability of the Staff support services and gives them the contact number.

**Student liaison**

* At post-primary level, may co-ordinate information from tutors and year heads about students they are concerned about
* Alerts other staff to vulnerable students (appropriately)
* Provides materials for students
* Keeps records of students seen by external agency staff
* Looks after setting up and supervision of ‘quiet’ room where agreed

**Community/agency liaison**

* Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of
  + Key parents, such as members of the Parents Council
  + Emergency support services and other external contacts and resources
* Liaises with agencies in the community for support and onward referral
* Is alert to the need to check credentials of individuals offering support
* Coordinates the involvement of these agencies
* Reminds agency staff to wear name badges
* Updates team members on the involvement of external agencies

**Parent liaison**

* Visits the bereaved family with the team leader
* Arranges parent meetings, if held
* May facilitate such meetings, and manage ‘questions and answers’
* Manages the ‘consent’ issues in accordance with agreed school policy
* Ensures that sample letters are typed up, on the school’s system and ready for adaptation
* Sets up room for meetings with parents
* Maintains a record of parents seen
* Meets with individual parents
* Provides appropriate materials for parents (from their critical incident folder)

**Media liaison**

* In advance of an incident, will consider issues that may arise and how they might be responded to (e.g. students being interviewed, photographers on the premises, etc)
* In the event of an incident, will liaise where necessary with the SEC; relevant teacher unions etc.
* Will draw up a press statement, give media briefings and interviews (as agreed by school management)

**Administrator**

* Maintenance of up to date telephone numbers of
  + Parents or guardians
  + Teachers
  + Emergency services
* Takes telephone calls and notes those that need to be responded to
* Ensures that templates are on the schools system in advance and ready for adaptation
* Prepares and sends out letters, emails and faxes
* Photocopies materials needed
* Maintains records

**Record keeping**

In the event of an incident each member of the team will keep records of phone calls made and received, letters sent and received, meetings held, persons met, interventions used, material used etc.

*School secretary* will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials, etc.

**Confidentiality and good name considerations**

The management and staff of Ramsgrange Community Schoolhave a responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of the people involved in any incident and will be sensitive to the consequences of any public statements. The members of the school staff will bear this in mind .

**Procedures in the Event of a Crisis**

1. On hearing news of the event, the Principal will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Management, and will, as soon as possible, call a meeting of the Critical Incident Management Team.
2. The team, under the direction of the Principal, will establish the facts relating to the case. This may involve liaison with the Gardai or other reliable source of information such as hospitals or parents.
3. A written report detailing the facts relating to the situation will be prepared and agreed by the Team members and will be disseminated to all interested parties as soon as possible. It is the intention of the School authorities that rumour and/or speculation will be avoided in such distressing situations.

**Staff members will have the option of excusing themselves**

**from direct involvement in dealing with traumatic situations.**

**IN RELATION TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS OR RELATIVES**

The Critical Incident Management Team will set out a plan for informing parents/ guardians or relatives in the event of a crisis involving students away from home and will also agree on what supports can be offered to affected people. The Team may decide that, depending on the nature of the crisis, some communication may need to be in person, while in other circumstances, information may give over the phone or to assembled groups.

Priority will be given to those most directly affected by the crisis.

The same prepared statement will be used by all members who are informing parents/guardians.

Information will be given in a sensitive manner.

In instances where a child has not yet come home, team members will try to help parents/guardians in dealing appropriately with their child when she gets home.

Parents/guardians will be informed of the support that will be available to them and their children.

**Agendas**

**Agenda for CIMT Meeting**

* Share details

1. Agree facts
2. Agency check. i.e. NEPS pack
3. Phone line
4. Media
5. Liaison with bereaved family[ies]
6. Arrange timetable for the day – as far as possible **maintain normal routines**
7. Arrange a staff meeting – supervision

**Agenda for Staff Meeting**

1. Share information
2. Allow time for emotional response
3. Schedule for day – Routine
4. OK to be upset
5. How to share facts with students
6. NB – seek booklet for script.
7. Provide literature
8. Identifying vulnerable students/staff members
9. Students with learning difficulties.
10. Cultural sensitivity and awareness re; service/mass
11. Support for staff
12. Quiet room/Media room/Agency room
13. Staff will have the option of excusing themselves from direct involvement in dealing with traumatic situations.

**Agenda for Informing Pupils**

* Decide who will inform pupils and how
* Adjust information to the age of the Child
* Provide facts and avoid speculation
* Allow pupils to ask questions
* Danger of rumour mill
* Discuss possible range of reactions
* Normalise reactions
* Allow pupils to process the information and to talk about their emotional response.
* Support is best given by the adults known to the children
* Separate arrangements for immediate class of child[ren] who are directly involved-Arrangements for siblings/close friends/relations

**Short Term Actions continued**

* Inform parents/guardians – tell what reactions their children might have.
* Absentee students/staff
  + Contact absentee student/staff necessary
  + Appoint a staff member to speak with them when they return
* Dealing with the media – press Statements.
* Meeting with staff at the end of Day 1 to review the day.

**Dealing with the Media**

* Media spokesperson
* Pro-active approach
* No student interviews
* No photos of the deceased
* Media statement – if appropriate
* Interviews – sensitive language, short,
* Factual and to the point.

**Consultation and communication regarding the plan**

All staff were consulted and their views canvassed in the preparation of this policy and plan.

Students and parent representatives were also consulted and asked for their comments.

Our school’s final policy and plan in relation to responding to critical incidents has been presented to all staff.

Each member of the critical incident team has a personal copy of the plan.

All new and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan

The plan will be updated annually

**Critical incident rooms**

In the event of a critical incident,

1. *Staff room* will be the main room used to meet the staff
2. *Central Area* for meetings with students
3. *Oratory/Principals Office* for parents
4. *Principals Office* for media
5. *Oratory/Guidance Room* for individual sessions with students
6. *Home School Liaison Office* for other visitors

**TEAM**

ROLE NAME MOBILE

**Team Leader Ms. Rachel O Connor**

**Garda Liaison**

**Staff Liaison Ms. Tracey Edwards**

**Student Liaison Ms. Marie McCabe**

**Parent Liaison Ms. Ann Cadogan**

**Community Liaison**

**Media Liaison Mr. Rachel O’ Connor**

**Administrator Ms. Orla Marks**

**EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST**

**HOSPITAL Wexford –051 9142233 Waterford- 051 848000**

**FIRE BRIGADE 999**

**CAREDOC 059 9138199 1850 334999**

**LOCAL GPS Dr. Byrne -051 389215 Dr. Cox -052 397111**

**HSE/Community Care Team/ ChildCare New Ross-051 421445 Wexford-053 9123522**

**SCHOOL INSPECTOR 01 8896553**

**NEPS PSYCHOLOGIST Dublin-01 8892700 Wexford-053 9143300**

**DES 018896400**

**ASTI 1850 418400 01 6040160 TUI 01 4922588**

**PARISH PRIEST/CLERGY Ramsgrange – 051 389148 Duncannon-051 389118**

**SUICIDE RESOURCE OFFICE 051 874013**

**STATE EXAMS COMMISSION 090 6442700**

**EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE SERVICE 1800 411 057**

**Daily Routines**

**Short term actions – Day 1**

* Gather accurate information
* Who, what, when, where?
* Convene a CIMT meeting – specify time and place
* clearly
* Contact external agencies
* Arrange supervision for students
* Hold staff meeting All staff
* Agree schedule for the day
* Inform students – (close friends and students with learning
* difficulties may need to be told separately)
* Compile a list of vulnerable students
* Contact/visit the bereaved family
* Prepare and agree media statement and deal with media
* Inform parents
* Hold end of day staff briefing

**Medium term actions - (Day 2 and following days)**

* Convene a CIMT meeting to review the Team leader
* events of day 1
* Meet external agencies
* Meet whole staff
* Arrange support for students, staff, parents
* Visit the injured
* Liaise with bereaved family regarding funeral arrangements
* Agree on attendance and participation at funeral service
* Make decisions about school closure BOM

**Follow-up – beyond 72 hours**

* Monitor students for signs of continuing distress Class teachers
* Liaise with agencies regarding referrals
* Plan for return of bereaved student(s)
* Plan for giving of ‘memory box’ to bereaved family
* Decide on memorials and anniversaries BOM/Staff, parents and
* students

**Review response to incident and amend plan Staff/BOM**

**All Template Letter shave been scripted and emailed to relevant CIMT members.**

## DEIS and DEIS Planning 2018 2021

Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) the Action Plan for Educational Inclusion, was launched in May 2005 and remains the Department of Education and Skills policy instrument to address educational disadvantage. The action plan focuses on addressing and prioritising the educational needs of children and young people from disadvantaged communities, from pre-school through second-level education (3 to 18 years).

DEIS provides for a standardised system for identifying levels of disadvantage and an integrated School Support Programme (SSP).

Ramsgrange Community School is a DEIS Rural Band 1 school.

**The DEIS Plan is in a separate Folder given its size . Also included in the folder are minutes of planning meetings.**

## Board of Management and Senior Management Team Strategic 3-Year Plan - draft

**We are pleased to present this short to midterm Strategic Plan for Ramsgrange Community School. This planning document marks the beginning of another important stage in the continuous development of our school. The Plan provides a blueprint for the future of the school which builds on its traditions and values. We look forward to seeing this plan translated into actions which will further enhance the opportunities and educational provision for students in Ramsgrange Community School. This plan acts as a support to the core target setting document in our school – The DEIS Plan, 2018-2021.**



|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Area of School Plan** | **Timeline** | **Targets** | **Initiatives / Strategies** | **Success Criteria**  **DEIS PLANNING** | **Monitoring & Evaluation Procedures** |
| **School Improvement Planning**  **School Improvement Planning**  **School Improvement Planning** | **2018/21**  **2018/21**  **2017/20** | **Target One**  **Implementation of the Junior Cycle reform, with a particular emphasis on Wellbeing and Resilience**  **Target Two**  **Integrating SEN/ASD into mainstream with a particular emphasis on differentiation and inclusivity.**  **Target Three**  **Establish and support a real Student Voice** | ***For 2018 / 2019***  **Currently Wellbeing being embedded into curriculum for all students with;**  **Tutor Class - 1 class per week**  **Tutor Focus lesson plans to look at the Indicators of Wellbeing and other relevant topics.**  **Formulation of our Wellbeing Plan**  ***For 2019 / 2020***  **Tutor Class continues**  **Wellbeing embedded into JC in Ramsgrange Community School**  ***For 2018 / 20***  ***Focus on differentiation in the classroom to support all levels of ability***  **‘Differentiation’ approach to classroom activities, questioning, tasks and learner outcomes making tasks more individual and student centred.**  **A focus on appropriate instructional and assessment tools that are fair, flexible, challenging, and engage students in the curriculum in meaningful ways.**  **Policy development in the area of students with extra additional needs including the Gifted & Talented students and students in our ‘Unit’.**  **Policy development and planning for the successful inclusion of all in to school life in Ramsgrange Community School.**  **Identification criteria for our Gifted and Talented students and agreed whole-school procedures on how best to support these students.**  ***For 2018 / 20***  **Further develop student involvement and participation in decisions related to Teaching & Learning in the classroom**  **Monitor student learning to provide on-going feedback that can be used by instructors to improve their teaching and by students to improve their learning**  **Influential student voice at policy developmental level**  **Continue links between student representatives and the Board of Management.** | **Student attendance**  **Successful school completion**  **Successful transitions of students**  **Data gathered in school and centre for education (e.g. via survey, interview, checklists)**  **Information from Inspection Reports**  **Are we meeting the requirements of the JC Indicators of Wellbeing?**  **Is our goal of a differentiated classroom to maximise student growth and individual success being realised? Have we agreed systems on how to measure this progress?**  **Is there an improvement in overall student achievement? Are students realising their potential? Have we school wide systems in place to gather such data?**  **Are levels of student engagement higher in the classroom?**  **Is there a whole-school approach to supporting our students with extra / additional learning needs?**  **Have we progressed to a whole-school understanding of how to identify and best support our gifted and talented students?**  **Is there an increase in the quality of feedback being received from teachers for students? We are developing systems to monitor and evaluate success of different initiatives (T&L group)**  **Is there a measurable improvement in student engagement and attainment? Students feel that they are learning from the feedback given to them from teachers.**  **Has the student voice been listened to in a meaningful way in relation to policy formation? Students have played an active part in policy making.**    **Student representatives regularly meet and update the Board of Management in relation to their involvement in school activities.** | **Focus on JC Indicators of Wellbeing in planning through subject departmental development**  **Data gathered through consultation with students, parents, teachers and other staff members through the School Self Evaluation process.**  **Review and implementation of recommendations from Inspection Reports.**  **On-going formal and informal evaluation procedure**  **Focus on JC Indicators of Wellbeing in planning through subject departmental development**  **Data gathered through consultation with students, parents, teachers and other staff members through the School Self Evaluation process.**  **Review and implementation of recommendations from Inspection Reports.**  **On-going formal and informal evaluation procedure**  **Focus on JC Indicators of Wellbeing in planning through subject departmental development**  **Data gathered through consultation with students, parents, teachers and other staff members through the School Self Evaluation process.**  **Review and implementation of recommendations from Inspection Reports.**  **On-going formal and informal evaluation procedure** |
| **Area of School Plan** | **Timeline** | **Targets** | **Initiatives / Strategies** | **Success Criteria** | **Monitoring & Evaluation Procedures** |
| **STRATEGIC PLAN**    **STRATEGIC PLAN**  **STRATEGIC PLAN**  **STRATEGIC PLAN** | **Short Term**  **1-3 years**  **2018-‘21**  **Short Term**  **1-3 years**  **2018/’21**  **Short Term**  **1-3 years**  **2018/’21**  **Short Term**  **1-3 years**  **2018/’21** | **School Improvement Planning**  **Promote and facilitate the development of student voice, student participation, and student leadership**  **Curriculum Review**  **Successful implementation of new JC**  **Policy development and whole school planning in the areas of an inclusive educational environment for Ramsgrange Community School.**  **Application for additional School Accommodation. ASD Unit and projected enrolment have put the school under pressure in terms of space.**  **Develop and implement a system to promote professional responsibility and accountability**  **Investigate the viability of creating a games (match) pitch (astro-turf) on the school grounds**  **Promotion of an ethos of positive behaviour (whole-school approach)**  **Development of leadership capacity within the school**  **Continued development of our digital strategy**  **Policy development in the areas of Assessment & Reporting for Ramsgrange Community School** | **Outlined above**  **Outlined Above**  **Full curricular audit/review and engage advice from experts where exploring different options. Move to 1 hour classes and change Taster Modules for 1st years**  **All management and teachers to be registered for JCT CPD and relevant training**  **Develop school website with more JC information for all**  **Embed Wellbeing**  **Develop policies around SLARS and assessment at Junior Cycle**  **Our SST (Guidance and SEN departments and Care Team) to lead policy development in the area of Inclusive Education in RCS.**  **Continued Support of a Gay / Straight Alliance for our students.**  **Assess individual needs, learning preferences and goal.**  **Application made and ongoing correspondence with Buildings Unit in Tullamore.**  **The principal meets teachers annually to discuss their work and their professional development**  **Start the process by getting independent expert advice.**  **Analyse costs etc. involved / investigate possible grants etc.**  **Review of current code of behaviour. Include Students on the Review Team. Roll out of Restorative Practice Training to Staff.**  **Empowering teachers to take on leadership roles and to lead learning, through the effective use of distributed leadership models.**  **Continued work on our Digital Learning Framework.**  **Continued purchasing of hardware for staff.**  **Moving more organisational tasks to an electronic platform on Microsoft 365.**    **A whole-school approach to be driven by a Working Group. Relevant CPD for staff to promote a plan for assessing and reporting on all relevant aspects of students’ learning using both assessment of learning and assessment for learning.** | **Outlined above**  **Outlined Above**  **Having a curriculum in place that meets the needs of our student body.**  **All teachers / management participate in CPD**  **Website section on the new JC to be maintained and Wellbeing to be further developed containing information for all to view**    **The successful development of a Whole School policy-based approach to our SEN students and those with extra and additional needs.**  **Creating an environment where people of all cultural orientations and academic abilities can freely express who they are, their own opinions and points of view, fully participate in teaching, learning and feel safe from abuse.**  **Increase in space and facilitates to meet growing demand.**  **A culture of professional, collaborative review becomes embedded in the professional relationship between SMT and teaching staff.**  **Progress made in analysis of cost implications / planning etc. School has applied for the Capital Sports Grant 2018.**  **A whole school approach rewarding students for positive behaviour within our new / revised code of behaviour**  **Continued support of our progressive middle management team to meet the ever-changing needs and priorities of Ramsgrange CS. Teachers empowered and supported to take on leadership roles in key areas.**  **Teachers and students in RCS can access the use of digital technologies in teaching, learning and assessment so that learners are equipped with the necessary skills to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing society and working place.**  **Policy document will be produced Teachers at RCS have a consistent approach to selecting and using planning, preparation and assessment practices that progress students’ learning and tailor assessment strategies to meet individual learning needs. A school-wide consistent approach to reporting about informed discussions, either orally or written, between teachers, parents and student about how to improve learning.** | **Outlined above**  **Outlined Above**  **Exam results from school-based assessment strategies and from for the SEC**  **Outlined above and through Shared Vision and the SSE process.**  **Review and Evaluation procedures to be developed among the SMT using the LAOS 2016 document as our benchmark**  **Review and Evaluate using the LAOS 2016 document as our benchmark for highly effective school organisation**  **Review and Evaluate using the LAOS 2016 document as our benchmark**  **On-going evaluation based on outcome of initial investigations**  **Data gathered through consultation with students, parents, teachers and other staff members through the School Self Evaluation process.**  **Data gathered through consultation with teachers and SMT team through the School Self Evaluation process.**  **Data gathered through consultation with students, parents, teachers and other staff members through the Digital Strategy Group and the School’s Self Evaluation process.**  **Review and Evaluation procedures to be developed among the SMT using the LAOS 2016 document as our benchmark. Data gathered through consultation with students, parents, teachers and other staff members through the School’s Self Evaluation process.** |

**Developing, Implementing and Reviewing the Plan**

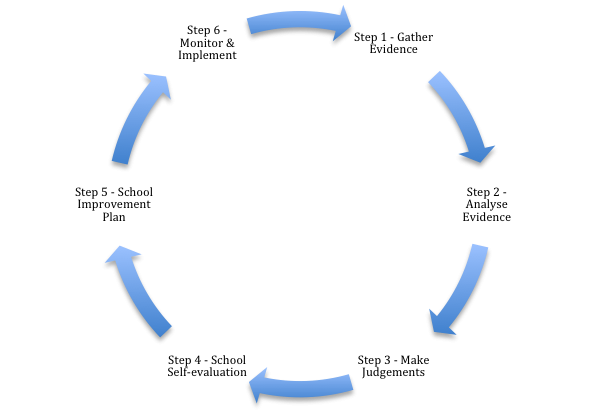
**This planning document is a visionary document for areas of work to be addressed and progresses in Ramsgrange Community School. It is a supplementary document to our DEIS Plan 2018 2021.**

**Following approval by the Board of Management, the strategic plan 2018-2021 will be launched. Goals and targets will be allocated to the relevant staff committees, Principal and Deputy Principals. The school’s Senior Management Team and Board of Management will be responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of the plan.**

**The Board of Management, Principal and Deputy Principal will complete a progress review at the end of each academic year. The review will include an analysis of the relevance of future targets and the inclusion of new targets and projects that are deemed appropriate by the Board of Management, Principal and Deputy Principals.**

**The Strategic Plan is currently a working document. Medium term and long-term planning targets will be built in when agreed upon and deemed appropriate by the Board of Management.**

Mission - Vision- Aims



Context

## Second Cycle of School Self Evaluation 2016-2020

**A New Cycle of School Self Evaluation (SSE), 2016-2020**

Systematic school self-evaluation was introduced in 2012/13 as a collaborative, reflective process of internal school review, focused on school improvement. Circular 0040/2012 required all schools to engage in the process and set out its purpose and rationale. The circular made explicit reference to the application of the process to schools’ implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, and to the introduction of a reformed junior cycle programme.

A new four-year cycle of self-evaluation is beginning, and the focus is still firmly on teaching and learning. You can now look back on the road you have travelled so far, and then look forward so as to map out the road ahead – knowing what is working well in your school; knowing what has improved because of your actions in the first SSE cycle; and beginning to investigate what particular aspect of teaching and learning you should focus on next.

While the focus remains on teaching and learning, there have been some changes and developments we’d like you to know about. You’ll get a complete picture, along with lots of resources, on our redesigned website:

<http://schoolself-evaluation.ie/post-primary/sse-2016-2020/>.

Firstly, there’s a new SSE circular, 0040/2016, setting out the requirements for school self-evaluation over the next four years. The circular gives schools more flexibility and choice in how they manage and focus the SSE process in the 2016-2020 cycle.

***Summary:***

* School self-evaluation is a way of working that provides one coherent internal improvement process for schools. It incorporates school development planning and DEIS action planning for improvement
* In the next cycle of school self-evaluation (2016-2020), schools should continue to focus on teaching and learning
* Schools have flexibility to focus their school self-evaluation on aspects of teaching and learning according to the needs of the school
* Schools should select a minimum of two and a maximum of four aspects of teaching and learning as the focus for their self-evaluation process from 2016 to 2020.
* Typically, most schools will use the process to assist them in introducing and embedding relevant aspects of the Junior Cycle Framework, as outlined in circular 0024/2016
* Schools should maintain a brief record of their self-evaluation in the form of a short self-evaluation report and school improvement plan
* Once annually, boards of management should complete a policy and legislative checklist of their ongoing process of policy development and review, and their compliance with requirements, as an internal record
* Each year, schools should create a very brief summary of the self-evaluation report and school improvement plan and communicate it in a way that makes it accessible and meaningful to parents and the school

Along with the new circular, you’ll find new SSE Guidelines (<http://schoolself-evaluation.ie/post-primary/sse-2016-2020/>) for 2016-2020.

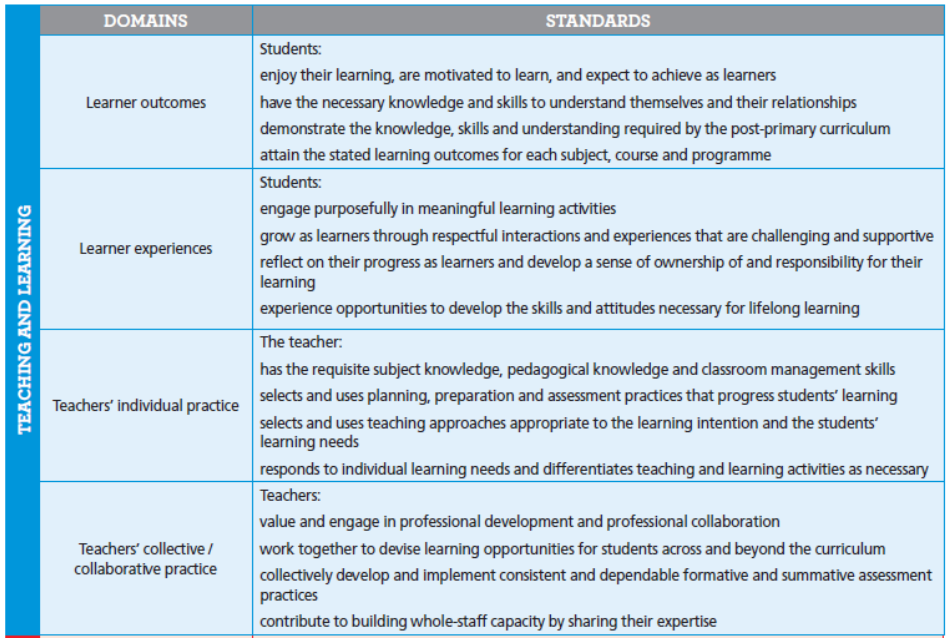
**A brief introduction to Looking at our School 2016**

Looking at Our School 2016 - A Quality Framework for Post-Primary Schools is designed to give a clear picture of what good or very good practices in a post-primary school look like. The framework covers two dimensions of the work of schools: teaching and learning, and leadership and management. The teaching and learning dimension are the one you’re asked to focus on in your school self-evaluation process from 2016 to 2020.

You can access Looking at Our School 2016 - A Quality Framework for Post-Primary Schools at <https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/>. We hope you’ll find an opportunity to read the Introduction (pages 6 to 11) as well as the Framework itself.

As you can see in the graphic below, which is taken from page 12 of Looking at our School 2016, the teaching and learning dimension has four domains, two related to learning and two related to teaching.

‘Learner outcomes’ and ‘Learner experiences’ are probably familiar to you from the first SSE Guidelines. But for these new Guidelines, a more detailed look at ‘Teachers’ practice’ and have separated it into two domains: Teachers’ individual practice; and Teachers’ collective/collaborative practice. The second one of these is worth explaining a bit. Collaborative practice, where teachers work together and co-operate with each other, is a familiar concept. Collective practice focuses more on the impact that teachers working together have on their students’ learning experiences and outcomes.

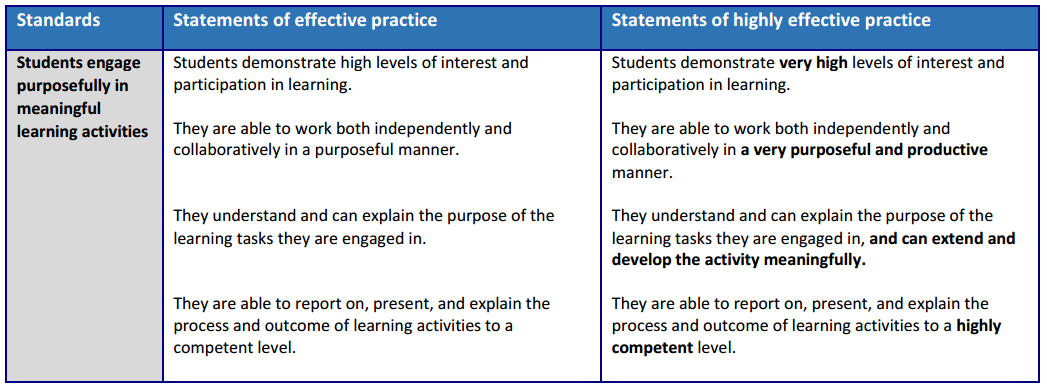
OVERVIEW OF THE TEACHING AND LEARNING DIMENSION

Each domain has four standards that cover the essential actions and dispositions belonging to that domain. You’ll notice that all the standards are describing what students and teachers do, and how and why they do it. Most of them combine a number of elements, and that’s not surprising. As we all know, teaching and learning are complex and multi-faceted processes.

Delving further into the framework, you’ll find a number of statements linked to each standard. These offer a more detailed picture of specific practices related to each standard, and what these practices look like at an effective level and at a highly effective level. When using this framework as a benchmark to help you evaluate practice in your school, you should begin by looking at the statements of effective practice. That will help you to 3 identify what you are already doing well. It will also help to identify areas that need development to bring them up to the level of good and effective practice.

You’ll notice that the statements of highly effective practice contain words and phrases in bold type. These are the points that distinguish between effective and highly effective practice. You may find them useful when considering how to develop and improve on what is already good practice in your school.

DOMAIN 2: LEARNER EXPERIENCES



You’ll probably recall some of the central and critical questions that you were encouraged to ask yourselves as a school when you embarked on the SSE process. These are the questions that asked you to consider your existing practices, to identify what was working and what needed improvement, and to use the evidence you gathered to decide the best plan of action to achieve that improvement. Here are some of those questions, rephrased in a way that shows how you can use Looking at our School 2016 to evaluate and develop practices in your school.

***Critical SSE Questions rephrased using Looking at our School 2016***

• How well are we doing? How close is our practice to these statements?

• What are our strengths? What areas of our practice are highly effective?

• What are our areas for improvement? Where are we not yet reaching effective practice?

• How can we improve? How can we work towards (highly) effective practice?

## School Self Evaluation – School Improvement Plans- these plans act to complement the DEIS Planning Process are not standalone documents.

**School Improvement Plans – Literacy – the full plans including Targets are to be seen in the SIP Folder.**

**2015/2016**

**Summary of our Main Strengths**

1. Our DEIS plan has focused on Literacy and therefore;
   1. There is awareness of Literacy amongst staff and they see themselves as having a role to play in developing literacy skills.
   2. Teachers wherever possible use concrete materials or link practice to real life.
   3. We actively encourage the involvement of parents in the advancement of their children’s literacy skill levels through programmes such as Paired Reading, delivered by trained parents.
2. A dedicated staff that is willing to engage with programmes in order to enhance student literacy and professional development.
3. Parents are confident in their ability to help their child with literacy issues.
4. Our cohort of first year students’ literacy ability correlates positively with the STen norms.
5. Strong tradition and culture of cross-curricular activities.

**Summary of the areas prioritised for improvement**

1. The continued development of common teaching approaches to Oral Language Development, Spelling, Grammar and Comprehension and to language related to literacy across the curriculum.
2. The continuous development of a literacy rich environment.
3. Ensuring that first year students improve their competence in oral, reading and written literacy as identified by WRAT4, CAT4, NGRT & Survey Monkey Questionnaire.
4. Embedding a culture of ‘literacy confidence’ across the stakeholders in RCS.
5. Increasing the up-take of higher level English both at junior and senior cycle.
6. Develop awareness around literacy life skills oral and reading literacy and the role of all stakeholders in nurturing those skills.
7. The promotion of the KeyWord Journal as a focal point for developing and implementing our literacy strategy. Encourage the use of the KeyWord Journal as a tool in developing Formative Assessment for learning strategies around literacy.

**2017/2018**

EVALUATION OF 2016/ 17 Targets TARGET 1: To increase the proportion of students taking HL JC English from 57% to 60% by 2017

EVALUATION: 42 / 65 students sat Higher Level English in June 2017 Junior Certificate English. This = 65%, This target was achieved.

TARGET 2: To increase the proportion of students ‘who like talking and reading out loud’ from 35% to 60% in 2017. EVALUATION: Decreased to 45.5 %. Target not achieved. \* Following discussion and analyses of this target by the English Department and DEIS team , this target will be adapted and modified next year to enable more meaningful gathering of data that is more relevant and SMART. The word ‘like’ in the May 2017 Target Poll was deemed too strong and may not have elicited truly accurate data and this figure of 45.5% may not represent the true picture. This will be changed to “feel comfortable” which the team felt was less polarising. \* Going forward in 2018 / 19/ 20 this target will be split into two, separating the “talking aloud” (changed to Speaking”) and the “reading aloud” (will remain but as a separate target) \*Both of these targets will be assessed through a short written Scaling Poll: 1=not comfortable, 2 = sometimes, 3 = Very comfortable, administered by the First Year English Teachers October 2018. \*It was also noted that there was a considerable difference in the data returned from the four First Year classes polled. This requires some investigation and in future, Focus Groups from the four classes polled might be assembled to tease out the discrepancies between classes. The team decided against Focus Groups of this cohort as too much time has elapsed since the poll was taken and 2018 Targets are moving to the current 1st Years, who will be tracked for 2018 / 19/ 20.

DRAFT Target 3: To increase the proportion of students who like ‘Reading for Pleasure’ from 50% to 55% in 2017. EVALUATION: Target Reached 55.5%. This was very encouraging, and a reflection of the many initiatives taken across all classes to encourage reading for pleasure. This will be revised upwards for 2018 as the school are embracing a range of focussed Reading for Pleasure initiatives 2017/18 Academic Year. (‘ Well Read’, JCSP ‘DEAR’, ‘Catch Up Literacy’) Target 4: To involve Parents more in building the Literacy Capacity of Students . EVALUATION: No accurate data to compare / asses This Target will Change for the 2017/18 Academic Year. We acknowledge we must gather data on Parent Involvement first.

TARGETS 2017 / 18

Target 1: To increase the percentage of Third Year students taking HL JC English from 60% to 62%. \*Whilst this target was exceeded in the 2017 Junior Certificate, based on Christmas & Summer Assessments, student ability and English Department analyses of the current 3rd Years, a 2% increase from the 2017 Target was considered more realistic and achievable. REVIEW DATE SEPTEMBER 2018

Target 2: To increase the percentage of First Year students ‘who feel comfortable reading out loud’ to 55%. \*This is a decrease from the 2017 target of 60% but is a more realistic and achievable target, considering a result of 45.5% in the 2017 similar Target. \*This will be assessed through a short-written Scaling Poll: 1=not comfortable, 2 = sometimes, 3 = Very comfortable, administered by the First Year English Teachers October 2018. \*Students will be asked to add their name to the poll for future tracking purposes. \*for the purposes of comparing data, ‘sometimes’ & ‘Very Comfortable’ responses will be combined for this DEIS Target. \*The English department will analyse this data in greater detail, tracking individual students’ responses and using same to implement remedial measures, interventions with students who are consistently falling into the ‘not comfortable’ category. POLL FIRST YEARS OCTOBER 2017 REPOLL AND REVIEW MAY 2018

**2018/2019**

**Summary of our Main Strengths**

1. Our DEIS plan has focused on Literacy and therefore;
   1. There is awareness of literacy amongst staff and they see themselves as having a role to play in developing literacy skills.
   2. Teachers wherever possible use concrete materials or link problems to real life.
   3. We actively encourage the involvement of parents in the advancement of their children’s literacy skill levels through programmes such as Paired Reading, delivered by trained parents.
2. A dedicated staff that is willing to engage with programmes in order to enhance student literacy and professional development.
3. Parents are confident in their ability to help their child with literacy issues.
4. Working in tangent with the new Junior Cycle to promote and encourage Oral Literacy across the student body.
5. Strong tradition and culture of cross-curricular activities.

**Summary of the areas prioritised for improvement**

1. The continued development of common teaching approaches to the encouragement of students speaking and reading out loud in class and across the curriculum.
2. The continuous development of a literacy rich environment. This will be implemented though an organised and systematic roll out Keyword notebooks, professional collaboration via SLARS and department meetings, involvement and participation in events such as Debating, Soroptimist etc.
3. Embedding a culture of ‘literacy confidence’ across the stakeholders in RCS.
4. Increasing the up-take of higher-level English both at junior and senior cycle.
5. Developing the confidence of students in reading and talking out loud through positive relationships in the class room.
6. The promotion of the Keyword Notebook as a focal point for developing and implementing our literacy strategy. Encourage the use of the Student Journal as a tool in developing Assessment for Learning strategies around literacy.

**School Improvement Plans – Numeracy – the full plans including Targets are to be seen in the SIP Folder.**

**2015/2016 – Targets Set**

**Summary of our Main Strengths**

1. Our DEIS plan has focused on Numeracy and therefore;
   1. There is awareness of numeracy amongst staff and they see themselves as having a role to play in developing numeracy skills.
   2. Teachers wherever possible use concrete materials or link problems to real life.
   3. We actively encourage the involvement of parents in the advancement of their children’s numeracy skill levels through programmes such as Maths for Fun, delivered by trained parents.
2. A dedicated staff that is willing to engage with programmes in order to enhance student numeracy and professional development.
3. Parents are confident in their ability to help their child with numeracy issues.
4. Our cohort of first year students’ numeracy ability correlates positively with the STen norms.
5. Strong tradition and culture of cross-curricular activities.
6. **Summary of the areas prioritised for improvement**
7. The continued development of common teaching approaches to percentages, data gathering/analysis and language related to numeracy across the curriculum.
8. The continuous development of a numeracy rich environment.
9. Ensuring that first year students improve their competence in a range of mathematical concepts and operations identified by the criterion referenced test, such as percentages, data analysis and literacy for numeracy.
10. Embedding a culture of ‘numeracy confidence’ across the stakeholders in RCS.
11. Increasing the up-take of higher level maths both at junior and senior cycle.
12. Develop awareness around numeracy life skills Basic Maths and the role of all stakeholders in nurturing those skills.
13. The promotion of the Student Journal as a focal point for developing and implementing our numeracy strategy. Encourage the use of the Student Journal as a tool in developing Assessment for Learning strategies around numeracy.

**2017/2018 – New Targets Set**

**Summary of our Main Strengths**

1. Our DEIS plan has focused on Numeracy and therefore;
   1. There is awareness of numeracy amongst staff and they see themselves as having a role to play in developing numeracy skills.
   2. Teachers wherever possible use concrete materials or link problems to real life.
   3. We actively encourage the involvement of parents in the advancement of their children’s numeracy skill levels through programmes such as Maths for Fun, delivered by trained parents.
2. A dedicated staff that is willing to engage with programmes in order to enhance student numeracy and professional development.
3. Parents are confident in their ability to help their child with numeracy issues.
4. Our cohort of first year students’ numeracy ability correlates positively with the STen norms.
5. Strong tradition and culture of cross-curricular activities.
6. **Summary of the areas prioritised for improvement**
7. The continued development of common teaching approaches to percentages and language related to numeracy across the curriculum.
8. The continuous development of a numeracy rich environment. This will be implemented though an organised and systematic roll out of our new Target “Maths in Your Eyes” (see below)
9. Ensuring that first year students improve their competence in a range of mathematical concepts and operations identified by the criterion referenced test, such as percentages, data analysis and literacy for numeracy.
10. Embedding a culture of ‘numeracy confidence’ across the stakeholders in RCS.
11. Increasing the up-take of higher level maths both at junior and senior cycle.
12. Develop awareness around numeracy life skills Basic Maths and the role of all stakeholders in nurturing those skills.
13. The promotion of the Student Journal as a focal point for developing and implementing our numeracy strategy. Encourage the use of the Student Journal as a tool in developing Assessment for Learning strategies around numeracy.

**2018/2019 – New Targets Set**

**Summary of our Main Strengths**

1. Our DEIS plan has focused on Numeracy and therefore;
   1. There is awareness of numeracy amongst staff and they see themselves as having a role to play in developing numeracy skills.
   2. Teachers wherever possible use concrete materials or link problems to real life.
   3. We actively encourage the involvement of parents in the advancement of their children’s numeracy skill levels through programmes such as Maths for Fun, delivered by trained parents.
2. A dedicated staff that is willing to engage with programmes in order to enhance student numeracy and professional development.
3. Parents are confident in their ability to help their child with numeracy issues.
4. Strong tradition and culture of cross-curricular activities.
5. **Summary of the areas prioritised for improvement**
6. The continued development of common teaching approaches to percentages and language related to numeracy across the curriculum.
7. The continuous development of a numeracy rich environment. This will be implemented though an organised and systematic roll out of our new Target “Maths in Your Eyes” (see below)
8. Ensuring that first year students improve their competence in a range of mathematical concepts and operations identified by the criterion referenced test, such as percentages, data analysis and literacy for numeracy.
9. Embedding a culture of ‘numeracy confidence’ across the stakeholders in RCS.
10. Increasing the up-take of higher-level maths both at junior and senior cycle.
11. Develop awareness around numeracy life skills Basic Maths and the role of all stakeholders in nurturing those skills.
12. The promotion of the Student Journal as a focal point for developing and implementing our numeracy strategy. Encourage the use of the Student Journal as a tool in developing Assessment for Learning strategies around numeracy.

**School Improvement Plans – Learning and Teaching – the full plans including Targets are to be seen in the SIP Folder.**

**2016/2017** - ***The focus of our evaluation is to identify and assess areas of Teaching & Learning with a particular focus on homework, specifically the transition from Junior to Senior Cycle.***

**Summary of our Main Strengths**

1. There is awareness of the importance of homework as a teaching and learning tool amongst staff and they see themselves as having a role to play in developing homework skills, with particular focus on our 5th year students.
2. A dedicated staff that is willing to engage in strategies to improve and enhance the homework experience for students.
3. Parents are confident in their ability to help their child with Teaching and Learning Strategies as illustrated in our DEIS parental survey.
4. Provision of Homework Club at lunch-times and after- school study for students.
5. All students are provided with access to StudyClix in order to enhance their learning experience.
6. **Summary of the areas prioritised for improvement**
7. That meaningful homework is assigned to all students in all non-practical classes each day. This homework may take many forms: reading, revising, oral work, research, written or project work.
8. That all homework is clearly displayed either before the class begins or in the early stages of the class. Students are made aware of the homework and their requirement to take it down in school journal.
9. Sufficient time is allocated at some point in the lesson to explain the homework that has been assigned; this explanation should focus on key-words/ concepts/difficulties that may cause confusion while the student is completing the assigned work. Teachers will make suggestions/ recommendations and identify where the student may find the necessary information in order to achieve Learning Outcomes.
10. To raise the awareness of the importance of homework and to work towards embedding a culture where homework is seen as an integral part of teaching and learning for all stakeholders.
11. Develop awareness around effective homework feedback strategies amongst teachers and students.

**2018/2019 *- The focus of our evaluation is to identify and assess areas of Teaching & Learning with a particular focus on Team Teaching***

**Summary of our Main Strengths**

1. There is awareness of the importance of Team Teaching as a teaching and learning tool amongst staff and they see themselves as having a role to play in developing Team-Teaching skills, with particular focus on our junior students.
2. A dedicated staff that is willing to engage in strategies to improve and enhance the Team-Teaching experience for students.
3. Parents are confident in their ability to help their child with Teaching and Learning Strategies as illustrated in our DEIS parental survey.
4. Provision of Homework Club at lunch-times and after- school study for students.
5. Management have provided training and support for those willing to be involved in Team Teaching. Careful consideration is given to those involved in Team Teaching regarding subject specialisms, willingness to participate etc.
6. **Summary of the areas prioritised for improvement**
7. To gather and represent the voices of the Principal, Deputy Principal, Teachers, Students and Parents around the concept of Team Teaching.
8. To research methods of how best to implement Team Teaching in RCS and to include such methods within our SEN policy.
9. How to spread the expertise of Team-Teaching methodologies amongst our staff and to give them opportunities to get involved.



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| --- |
| Break and lunch time supervision and also supervision in the morning and end of school day. |
| The promotion of good order and general supervision between classes. |
| Attendance at and engagement in, relevant continuing professional development (CPD) courses as necessary. |
| Assisting the Principal at / being available for, the duration of the State Examinations in June. |
| Being present in August to assist with student enrolment, teacher recruitment, start-up planning, timetabling, Leaving Certificate results and generally getting the school ready for the return of students and staff. |
| Attendance at meetings for parents / students / staff / outside agencies (during school hours / after school hours) throughout the school year when requested / when necessary. Attendance at Board of Management (BOM) meetings and involved in presentations to the BOM when/if necessary. |
| Policy development and implementation linked to effective overall school development planning and school improvement planning. |
| Working with the principal in planning initiatives for overall strategic planning for Ramsgrange Community School into the next decade and beyond.  Working on short, medium and long-term planning for the successful further, future development of our school. |
| Spearheading the *‘Shared Vision’* initiatives as we continue with our journey with our collective internal *‘School Self Evaluation’* review process. |
| Working closely with our school Care Team - overseeing that our ‘students at risk’ are identified and also ensuring that adequate supports are in place for those students at school level and, if necessary, with outside agencies. Following through at Care Team meetings on the effectiveness of interventions. |
| Academic monitoring of students ensuring that our students are reaching their academic potential. Working closely with class teachers, year heads and Guidance teachers in assessing the relevant data. When necessary, meeting with parents and implementing study plans and / or other necessary interventions for individual students who may not be reaching their academic potential. Following through on the effectiveness of the interventions with Year Head. |
| Working with subject departments on subject planning and review. |
| Oversee the successful implementation of the new Junior Cycle. |
| Assisting the principal in an overall *Curriculum Review* for 2018/’19. |

## Senior Management Team – Shared Responsibilities List

## Leadership and Management Needs and Priorities

**Ramsgrange Community School**

**Leadership and Management Needs and Priorities**

(based on consultation May 2017 and during 2018 2019 school year)

**This is a working document and may be updated as necessary as per Circular CL 03/2018**

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1. Our Improvement Plan – In My Classroom / Timeframe for Plan 2018 – 2020

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Target 1 | Actions in my classroom | Criteria for success …  How will I know if it is working in my classroom? | Targets achieved?  Further Actions/Suggestions |
| **Implementation of Junior Cycle with an emphasis on wellbeing and resilience​**  **Embed wellbeing** |  |  |  |
| Target 2 | Actions in my classroom | Criteria for success …  How will I know if it is working in my classroom? | Targets achieved?  Further Actions/Suggestions |
| **Integrating students with SEN and/or ASD into mainstream with an emphasis on inclusion and differentiation​**  **Differentiation – enrichment for all** |  |  |  |
| Target 3 | Actions in my classroom | Criteria for success …  How will I know if it is working in my classroom? | Targets achieved?  Further Actions/Suggestions |
| **Establish and support a real student voice​**  **Student Feedback (AFL, Questioning, Reflection)** |  |  |  |
| Target 4 | Actions in my classroom | Criteria for success …  How will I know if it is working in my classroom? | Targets achieved?  Further Actions/Suggestions |
| **Support Literacy in my classroom**  **Support Numeracy in my classroom**  **(as agreed by departments)** |  |  |  |

## External Evaluation

Actions to be found in each relevant Subject Department Plan.

**Guidance Inspection 2018**

Findings

• Teaching and learning was of a high quality, students were engaged purposefully in valuable activities to develop their career and education goals. • While students at senior cycle submit a small number of valuable guidance-related assignments, assessment of junior cycle guidance-related learning in not as well developed. • Guidance provision is very good with a comprehensive whole-school curricular and cocurricular guidance programme for students at both junior and senior cycle. • Students are very effectively supported by a wide range of interventions and teachers provide emotional, social, career and academic support. • Commendably, there is a highly integrated whole-school guidance approach to planning, all subject department plans include a section on subject-specific guidance activities. • Formal review and evaluation of the guidance programme through consultation with all partners is not a feature of the guidance planning process.

Recommendations

• The guidance department should review current assessment of guidance-related learning and explore how junior cycle guidance areas of learning could be included in the Junior Cycle Wellbeing Framework. • The whole-school guidance planning team should annually review and evaluate the guidance programme through consultation with teachers, students and parents.

**DEIS Evaluation 2016**

FINDINGS

The key findings arising from this evaluation are the following: • Senior management is actively promoting a culture of planning for improvement that supports equality of opportunity for all. • The quality of DEIS action planning is good; many valuable targets and actions that support students are in place in all themes. • Personnel with specific DEIS-related roles have a full understanding of their responsibilities in attaining targets. • There is scope to enhance the whole-school basis on which the targets are selected and reviewed and to embed DEIS action planning as a way of working among the whole staff. • At the time of the evaluation, the school was not responding quickly enough to the data for absenteeism. • The quality of planning, monitoring and outcomes for the themes of retention, progression and partnership is very good.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The key recommendations arising from this evaluation are the following: • Senior management should promote the DEIS plan as a working document to be implemented by all teachers and place DEIS planning on the agenda of every staff meeting. • Much earlier intervention is necessary for those students with a high number of absences. • Within the themes of attainment, literacy and numeracy, there is scope to increase the wholeschool targets and actions to be implemented by all teachers in daily classroom practice.

**Transition Year Inspection 2015**

The teaching and learning recommendations made in the body of the report should be implemented. • Greater curriculum diversity and choice to suit the needs and interests of students is recommended. • It is recommended that the organisation and planning of work experience be evaluated and reviewed. • TY subject planning requires substantial development with a focus on the development of key skills and the use of a common template such as the Transition Unit template.

Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection

The management and staff of Ramsgrange Community School are fully committed to the continuing development of the school. Following a review of the recommendations given in the Programme Evaluation Transition Year report which are considered by management as a means of building on our strengths outlined, we have planned the following:-

• the TY Draft policy will be finalised and enacted by the Board of Management before the end of the academic year 2015/2016 • the time provision for work experience is adjusted for 2015/2016 as had been already planned for before the inspection and advised to the inspector • The school is in a process of consultation with the PDST in relation to the integration of e-portfolios as one possible means of formalising end of year portfolio assessment and further promoting ICT skills development in our students • In relation to TY subject planning – a common template, with a focus on the development of key skills, has been devised and adopted in accordance with the Transition Unit template. Planning time to review and complete same will be given to staff in line with Whole School & Department Planning throughout this and every academic year

**CSPE – 2014**

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS • An appropriate balance should be maintained between global and directed questioning in order to ensure full student participation in lessons; greater use should also be made of higher-order questions to promote students’ critical thinking skills. • Greater attention should be given to the design and purpose of group work tasks to ensure that they facilitate collaboration and active learning. • School management should endeavour to assign teachers delivering CSPE to the same class group for another subject.

Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection

The management and staff of Ramsgrange Community School are fully committed to the continuing development of the school. Following a review of the recommendations given in the CSPE subject inspection report, which are viewed by management as a means of building on our strengths as outlined and addressing areas for further development, many have already been implemented while others are in the process of implementation.

**SPHE 2013**

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS • To build on good practices observed, all lessons should be structured to allow time for the exposition of intended learning outcomes and for students to engage in the application of their learning. • A class-based curricular programme for RSE in TY and sixth year should be further developed to fit developmentally with the fifth-year programme. • The RSE policy should be progressed as planned.

**TG and DCG 2011**

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

• The subject department should include differentiated teaching strategies in lessons to accommodate students of all ability levels.

• Students should receive formative assessments of portfolio work to supplement the formative assessments administered during lessons.

• The subject department should revisit the layout of the graphics classroom with regard to enhancing demonstration methods and classroom management strategies.

**Business Subjects 2010**

The following are the main strengths identified in the evaluation:

• The uptake of Business Studies is excellent in the school. • Senior management is to be praised for its ongoing commitment in the provision of ICT in the school and for the provision of specialist business classrooms that are print-rich and good learning environments. • The organisational, planning and collaborative practices of the business subject department are exemplary. The focus of planning it one that has the learning needs of its students at its core. • Lesson planning, structure, content and delivery were very good in observed lessons. A blend of traditional and active methodologies was used to engage and enthuse the learner. • The assessment practices of the subject department are very good and communication with home exemplary.

As a means of building on these strengths and to address areas for development, the following key recommendation is made:

• To further enhance planning, the student learning outcomes in lessons should be documented along with the methodologies and resources utilised for each topic.

Metalwork and Engineering 2009

As a means of building on these strengths and to address areas for development, the following key recommendations are made:

· School management should ensure that students in all programmes in the school’s senior cycle curriculum are provided with the opportunity to access an appropriate technology education.

· Active teaching and learning strategies should be adopted in all lessons, especially those that contain significant quantities of theoretical content, in order to maximise student engagement and learning.

· School management should initiate a full review of the school’s safety statement.

· The subject department should plan a schedule for students’ skill development using a variety of visually stimulating, multi-material and interesting projects.

· Formative feedback should be given to students to affirm their strengths and to help them identify areas for further development.

**French 2008**

As a means of building on these strengths and to address areas for development, the following key recommendations are made:

· School management should review their timetabling of thirty-five minute periods as part of their efforts to bring the school week in line with Department of Education and Sciences’ requirements of twenty eight hours instruction time.

· As part of ongoing planning the members of the French department should progress their desired learning outcomes for each year group in terms of what the students will be able to do as a result of their learning.

· students should be further encouraged to use French as the language of interaction in the classroom.

· Where relevant a more integrated approach to language skills development is recommended.

**WSE 2007**

The following are the main strengths identified in the evaluation:

A warm friendly atmosphere exists in the school. Staff are caring and are interested in developing the whole student. Students experience a secure and safe environment. A strong sense of community exists in the school and there is good co-operation between staff.

The board is aware of its role, responsibilities and statutory obligations.

A school advisory committee is in place in accordance with the deeds of trust of Community Schools.

Senior management is very approachable and available to the whole school community. The principal and deputy principal have complementary roles in the running of the school.

New teachers feel very supported by colleagues and by senior management. A new mentoring system is now in place.

The duties and responsibilities associated with each post are generally carried out in a competent and effective manner.

The school operates an effective class tutor and year head system.

There is an active parents’ association with representatives from each school year. Communication with home is constant. There are regular parent-teacher meetings.

The school has built up strong links with the wider community and in this way promotes the Community School ethos.

The school is in the process of expanding into the recently acquired Shielbaggan Outdoor Pursuits Centre building.

The curriculum at Ramgrange Community School provides good breadth and balance.

Good provision is made in the school for a wide range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.

SEN students and learning support students are well catered for at Ramsgrange Community School.

The well-structured guidance plan and counselling service is commended.

The personal, social and pastoral needs of students are well supported in the school.

As a means of building on these strengths and to address areas for development, the following key recommendations are made:

There is a need for a whole school approach to raising standards and school pride.

The board of management needs to adopt a stronger managerial and visionary role for the school.

School management should initiate an incremental process of strategic planning to ensure the school’s direction into the future. Senior management need to lead the school in this regard.

Many existing policies need urgent review in order to reflect current practice and to comply with legislation. It is recommended that all school policies are dated once adopted by the school.

There is a definite need for a more structured system of meetings between the assistant principals and the school principal in order to create a shared leadership in the school. There is a need for the duties and responsibilities around each post of responsibility to be defined and there should be greater balance in relation to the allocation of responsibilities. In addition, post holders should have the opportunity to change posts.

Planning sub-committees should be formed to plan for various priorities identified by the school

The school timetable needs major review. It is recommended that class contact hours be increased to 28 hours in accordance with circular M29/95.

The monitoring of student uptake of appropriate subject levels and analysis of student attainment data are practices, which the school should undertake annually.

There is a serious need for a root and branch review of the Transition Year programme. The written programme and the timetable should be addressed.

The school should develop strategies and practices to continue to improve the uptake of higher level in many academic subjects and to try to raise the expectations of its cohort.

**Appendix to School Self-Evaluation Report: legislative and regulatory checklist (Post-Primary)**

## Legislative and Regulatory checklist

This is not an exhaustive checklist. It is intended to assist the board of management in carrying out its leadership and management responsibilities and functions, as set out in the Education Act (1998), and within the context of its own school. The completed checklist will contain sensitive information and should be treated as confidential.

| Relevant area | Relevant legislation, rule or circular | | | Is your school fully meeting the requirements of the relevant legislation, rule or circular? | If no, indicate aspects to be developed |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Time in school   * Length of school year (minimum of 167 days for all year groups) * Length of school week (minimum of 28 hours for all year groups) | Circular M29/95 | | | Yes  No  Yes  No |  |
| Standardisation of school year | Circular 0009/2017 | | | Yes  No |  |
| Procedures for submission of data returns to the Department | Circular 0038/2014  DTR returns procedures information, updated annually on education.ie  Pod and PPOD | | | Yes  No |  |
| Repeating a year – conditions to be met | M2/95 | | | Yes  No |  |
| Annual returns to Tulsa on attendance, suspension and exclusion | Section 21 Education (Welfare) Act 2000 | | | Yes  No |  |
| Implementation of national agreement regarding additional time requirement | Circular 0043/2014  Circular 0045/2016, points 21-25 | | | Yes  No |  |
| Development of school plan | Section 21 Education Act 1998 | | | Yes  No |  |
| Engagement with school self-evaluation process | Circular 0040/2016 | | | Yes  No |  |
| Whole-school guidance plan | Section 21 Education Act 1998, Section 21 Education Act 1998, Circulars 10,11,12/2017 | | | Yes  No |  |
| Guidance provision in post-primary schools | Section 9(c), Education Act 1998, Circular PPT12/05, Circulars 10,11,12/2017 | | | Yes  No |  |
| Exemption from the study of Irish | Circular M10/94 | | | Yes  No |  |
| Implementation of national literacy and numeracy strategy | Circular 25/2012, Circular 42/2015, Interim Review and New Targets (2017, DES) | | | Yes  No |  |
| Arrangements for the Implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle with particular reference to school years 2017/18 and 2018/19 | Circular 0015/2017 | | | Yes  No |  |
| In-school management structures | Part V Education Act 1998,  0003/2018 | | | Yes  No |  |
| Approved allocation of teaching posts for 2018/19 | Circulars 0007, 0008, 0009/2018 | | | Yes  No |  |
| Leadership and management posts | Circular 0003/2018 | | | Yes  No |  |
| Parents as partners in education | Circular M27/91 | | | Yes  No |  |
| Digital Strategy  and  Grant Scheme for ICT Infrastructure | Circular 0001/2017 and 0011/2018  Digital Learning Plan  Use of the Digital Learning Framework | | | Yes  No  Yes  No  Yes  No |  |
| Implementation of Child Protection Procedures 2017 | Circular 0081/2017  Please record the following information in relation to child protection as reported to the board | | | Yes  No |  |
| Child Protection Oversight Report presented at each board meeting | | Yes  No |
| Number of reports submitted by the DLP to Tulsa and reported to the board | |  |
| Number of cases where the DLP sought advice from Tulsa and as a result of this advice, no report was made | |  |
| Number of cases where a mandated person other than the DLP made a report to Tulsa and notified the DLP | |  |  |  |
| Implementation of vetting requirements | National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012  Circular 0026/2015  Circular 0016/2017: Statutory Requirements for Retrospective Vetting  Child Protection Procedures 2017 | | | Yes  No |  |
| Implementation of complaints procedure as appropriate | Section 28 Education Act 1998  Please record the following information in relation to complaints made by parents during this school year | | | Yes  No |  |
| Number of formal parental complaints received | |  |
| Number of formal complaints processed | |  |
| Number of formal complaints not fully processed by the end of this school year | |  |
| Refusal to enrol | Section 29 Education Act 1998  Please record information in relation to appeals taken in accordance with Section 29 against the school during this school year | | | Yes  No |  |
| Number of section 29 cases taken against the school |  | |
| Number of cases processed at informal stage |  | |
| Number of cases heard |  | |
| Number of appeals upheld |  | |
| Number of appeals dismissed |  | |
| Suspension of students | Section 29 Education Act 1998  Please record information in relation to appeals taken in accordance with Section 29 against the school during this school year | | | Yes  No |  |
| Number of section 29 cases taken against the school |  | |
| Number of cases processed at informal stage |  | |
| Number of cases heard |  | |
| Number of appeals upheld |  | |
| Number of appeals dismissed |  | |
| Expulsion of students | Section 29 Education Act 1998  Please record information in relation to appeals taken in accordance with Section 29 against the school during this school year | | | Yes  No |  |
| Number of section 29 cases taken against the school |  | |
| Number of cases processed at informal stage |  | |
| Number of cases heard |  | |
| Number of appeals upheld |  | |
| Number of appeals dismissed |  | |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Policy | Relevant legislation, circulars, guidelines | Has the policy been approved by the Board of Management? | | If no, indicate aspects to be developed | |
| Enrolment policy | Section 15(2)(d) of Education Act  Equal Status Acts 2000-2011  Circular M51/93 | Yes  No | |  | |
| Attendance and participation strategy[[3]](#footnote-4) | Circular M51/93  Section 22, Education (Welfare) Act 2000 | Yes  No | |  | |
| Code of behaviour, including anti-bullying policy[[4]](#footnote-5)  Dignity in the Workplace Charter | Circular M33/91  NEWB guidelines *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools*  Section 23, Education (Welfare) Act 2000  Equal Status Acts 2000-2011  *Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-primary schools* 2013, and Circular 45/13  Section 8(2)(b), Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 | Yes  No | |  | |
| Child Protection Procedures and Child Safeguarding Statement | Circular 0081/2017 | Yes  No | |  | |
| Annual attendance report to Tulsa and Parents’ Association | Section 21, Education (Welfare) Act 2000 | Yes  No | |  | |
| Health and Safety Statement | Health and Safety Act 2005  Section 20 | Yes  No | |  | |
| Critical Incident Management policy | Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines and Resource Materials, NEPS 2016 | Yes  No | |  | |
| Data protection | General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)  May 2018: see [www.dataprotectionschools.ie](http://www.dataprotectionschools.ie) | Yes  No | |  | |
| Special educational needs / Inclusion policy[[5]](#footnote-6) | Education Act (1998)  Equal Status Acts (2000 to 2011),  Education (Welfare) Act (2000),  Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (EPSEN)[[6]](#footnote-7) (2004)  Disability Act (2005))  Circular 0014/2017 | Yes  No | | In draft form | |
| Relationships and sexuality education (RSE) policy | Circulars 37/2010, 23/2010, 0027/08 | Yes  No | |  | |
| Substance use policy | Department of Education and Skills Directive; guidelines issued to schools in 2002 | Yes  No | |  | |
| Internet acceptable use policy | National Council for Technology in Education (NCTE) Guidelines, 2012 ([www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie)) | Yes  No | |  | |
| For DEIS schools only:  DEIS Action Plan | DEIS Plan 2017  Department of Education and Skills Guidelines on the appropriate use of the DEIS Grant (updated annually) | | Yes  No | |  |

1. [] ‘personal data of a financial nature’ means an individual’s last name, or any other information from which an individual’s last name can reasonably be identified, in combination with that individual’s account number, credit or debit card number. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. [] Except where law enforcement agencies have requested a delay for investigative purposes. Even in such circumstances consideration should be given to informing affected data subjects as soon as the progress of the investigation allows. Where <Name of School/ETB> receives such a direction from law enforcement agencies, they should make careful notes of the advice they receive (including the date and the time of the conversation and the name and rank of the person to whom they spoke). Where possible, <Name of School/ETB> should ask for the directions to be given to them in writing on letter-headed notepaper from the law enforcement agency (eg. An Garda Siochána), or where this is not possible, <Name of School/ETB> should write to the relevant law enforcement agency to the effect that “we note your instructions given to us by your officer [insert officer’s name] on XX day of XX at XXpm that we were to delay for a period of XXX/until further notified by you that we are permitted to inform those affected by the data breach.” [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Under the provisions of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000) (section 22) the school’s attendance strategy should conform to the provisions stipulated. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Under the provisions of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000) (section 23) the school’s code of behaviour should conform to the specifications stated. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Section 9 of the Education Act (1998) requires a school to “use its available resources” to identify and provide for the educational needs of those “with a disability or other special educational needs.” [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. The EPSEN Act requires that schools be inclusive of and provide an appropriate education for students with special educational needs. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)