

# LORETO ABBEY DALKEY



## ONE-TO-ONE GUIDANCE COUNSELLING POLICY

**“Loreto Abbey is a caring, Christian community in which pupils have the opportunity to achieve academic excellence and to grow spiritually, emotionally, socially, creatively and physically in a healthy environment.”**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Whole School Guidance Policy, the Policy on Student Support, Critical Incident Policy, Child Protection Policy and Data Protection Policy.

### 1. Definition of Guidance Counselling

Counselling: empowering students to make decisions, solve problems, change behaviours and resolve issues in their lives. Such activity may be personal counselling, educational counselling, career counselling, or it may involve combinations of each. Counselling is a key part of the school guidance programme, offered on an individual or group basis as part of a developmental learning process and at moments of personal crisis. (NCGE, 2004, p. 21)

### 2. Relationship to the School’s Mission/ Vision / Aims

At the core of the school’s mission statement is the holistic development and care of the student. One-to-one guidance, as part of the school’s guidance service, complements the strengths of the student support system, including SPHE programmes and mentoring, by offering additional personal support to students who may benefit from educational, personal or vocational counselling.

### 3. Rationale

Each Loreto school aims to nurture respectful and caring relationships between teachers and students and to set each student on a pathway to personal excellence recognising different aptitudes and gifts (p. 30, *Continuing the Journey*). In the guidance department in Loreto Abbey Dalkey, respect for the student is at the heart of the counselling relationship. Through a counselling approach, we endeavour to (a) assist students in identifying their individual aptitudes and gifts, and, (b) encourage the use of these strengths to bring about positive change, particularly in the face of challenge.

### 4. One to One Counselling – General Procedures

All one to one meetings with the guidance counsellor takes place in the guidance office where staff members and students are visible through a glass panelled door. Any child protection concerns that the guidance 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 (DDL).

### 5. The Role of the Guidance Counsellor in One-to One Counselling.

Students may be referred to the Guidance Counsellors by members of the Student Support Team, Year Head, or can self-refer.

The guidance counsellor is a fully qualified member of the Teaching Council and is Garda vetted. 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 guidance 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 guidance counsellor has the responsibility to be mindful of :

- Their qualifications, areas of expertise and relevant limitations

- The boundaries within the counsellor/client relationship
- The rationale for undertaking the choice of counselling activities in the counselling process
- Accuracy around record keeping
- Confidentiality in the counselling process and the limits to confidentiality
- Any referral options which may be of benefit to the student where the presenting issue is beyond the guidance counsellor's level of competency
- CPD opportunities to supplement existing skills

**6. Procedures for accessing the school's guidance counselling service.**

To ensure the safe and effective delivery of the guidance programme, an appointments system for Personal Counselling/Careers/Vocational Guidance interviews operates. Appointments are made in consultation with the student. To reduce disruption, appointments may be made during careers classes, via the school email system or at the end of lunch breaks. Students are allowed to excuse themselves from class to make appointments but only with permission from their teacher. Students are asked not to wait outside the Guidance office to make an appointment – they are encouraged to use an appointment request form and one of the guidance counsellors will extract them from class later in the day. Each student is required to present their teacher with an appointment card, which the teacher is requested to sign. The class teacher has the right to refuse a student to leave for an appointment; in that instance the appointment is rescheduled.

**7. Procedure for Record-Keeping.**

Records of meetings are maintained in paper format and are filed securely in the guidance office along with records of various assessments and standardised tests. When making or keeping records, care is taken to distinguish between fact, observation and opinion and to include only such information as required for the purpose of professional involvement with the student. Student sensitive personal data, which covers records of all one to one guidance meetings, is handled in line with the school's data protection (retention of records) policy.

**8. Monitoring and Evaluation of Policy:**

At the end of every academic year, the guidance team will lead an evaluation of the policy and it will formally be review by the Board every three years.

**This policy was adopted by the Board of Management of Loreto Abbey Secondary School, Dalkey,**

**on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2019.**



**Signed:**

**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> June 2019

(Chairperson of Board of Management)



**Signed:**

**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> June 2019

(Principal)