



ST. MARY'S *Catholic High School, Dubai*

ACADEMIC AND CAREER GUIDANCE POLICY

2025-2026



Academic and Career Guidance Policy

Our Aim

We aim to:

- ❖ Develop students' self-awareness of strengths, interests and aspirations.
- ❖ Provide exposure to diverse global and local pathways (UAE, UK, USA, Canada, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand).
- ❖ Equip students with informed decision-making skills.
- ❖ Build confidence, resilience and employability competencies.
- ❖ Engage parents as active partners in career planning.

Introduction

Career guidance is an essential part of schooling that prepares students for their future. Careers are now increasingly seen as not being 'chosen' but as being constructed through a series of choices about learning and work that people make throughout their lives.

Objective

The decisions that young people make at school have a big impact on their lives – affecting not just their further education, training or employment, but also their social lives, finances and health outcomes. A key function of secondary schools is to prepare students to transition successfully toward a successful career path. This involves providing them with opportunities to build their general capabilities, support their interests and aspirations, and help them to make informed decisions about their subject choices and pathways. The programme intends to enhance our students' skill set to attain a tertiary level education and eventually enter the future workforce. The programme will entail the following (but will not be limited to):



INITIATIVES

- **Community Service and Volunteering :**

The school mandates a Community Service Programme for all Year 12 students. Structured volunteering opportunities are provided to Year 10 and Year 12 students during school events, enabling them to develop leadership, teamwork, responsibility and organisational skills. Volunteering activities are designed to enhance students' employability skills, social awareness and personal development.



- **Cognitive and Psychometric Assessments:**

- ❖ CAT4 testing to identify aptitude and learning strengths.
- ❖ External psychometric aptitude assessments for Year 8 and Year 11 prior to subject selection.
- ❖ Assessment outcomes are shared with students and parents to guide informed academic choices by external providers.

- **Career Guidance & Personal Development:**

External training and networking such as university events, UCAS and Common App information forum.

- **Co-Curricular Activities - Gavel Club & MUN Club**

Regular exposure and participation at local events such as Model United Nations and Gavel Club events. Students from Years 8 upwards also have opportunities to volunteer at school events.



- **International University Fair & Local UAE University Fair**

Fairs are organised within the school with compulsory slot for all students of Years 11, 12 and 13. Students and parents get an opportunity to meet university representatives, interact and extract information about different courses across the globe. These fairs aim at increasing student's awareness about universities within and outside UAE along with their entry requirements, deadlines, admission process etc. International Fairs are organised at the beginning of the academic year to support students in making timely decisions. All off campus university fairs held in the UAE are communicated to parents and students in the school weekly circulars.



- **Application and Placement Support:**

Students receive structured guidance through:

- ❖ Individual / Group counselling sessions on course choices.
- ❖ Course and University selection support 1-1.
- ❖ Personal Statement Guidance.
- ❖ UCAS profile view.
- ❖ CommonApp guidance and transcripts upload support.
- ❖ Application timeline management
- ❖ Recommendation letters reflecting academic and co-curricular achievements.

Students also receive structured information sessions on topics including:

- ❖ Writing an effective personal statement.
- ❖ CV building and profile development.
- ❖ Overview of international application processes.
- ❖ Country-specific entry requirements and timelines.

CAREER YEAR

YEAR 8:

- ❖ Full subject orientation day with subject specialist to finalize subject options for GCSE.
- ❖ A day dedicated to parents of Year 8 to meet subject specialist in school.
- ❖ Provide students and parents with information on psychometric aptitude testing arranged through the school by an external provider.

YEAR 9:

- ❖ Receive follow-up support in subject selection.
- ❖ Subject change policy in place to allow for change in GCSE subject options.

YEAR 10:

- ❖ Receive information on university fairs outside and guest speaker sessions through weekly circulars.
- ❖ Volunteer opportunities at school events.

YEAR 11:

- ❖ Explore career options at university fairs on campus.
- ❖ Attend university career fairs and guest speaker sessions.
- ❖ Volunteer opportunities at school events.

YEAR 12 – YEAR 13:

- ❖ Discuss career options and universities with governor for university and career guidance.
- ❖ Mandatory community service programme (Year 12).
- ❖ Attend university career fairs and guest speaker sessions.
- ❖ Receive personalized career guidance and follow-up support.



Inclusion and Equal Access

The school ensures equitable access to career guidance for all students, including:

The Academic and Career Guidance team works in collaboration with the Head of Inclusion to provide reasonable adjustments and personalised support for student/s of determination where required.

Safeguarding and External providers

- ❖ All external speakers, university representatives and providers are approved by senior leadership.
- ❖ Safeguarding protocols are followed during events and engagements.
- ❖ Parent consent is obtained where required.

Communication

- ❖ Weekly School Circulars
- ❖ Parent meetings and workshops
- ❖ Counselling appointments
- ❖ Official school communication channels

Roles and Responsibilities

Admissions Officer (AO) :

Our Admission Officer will work closely with the Senior Leadership Team to:

- ❖ Take responsibility for developing and running the school's career program.
- ❖ Be available every Friday in the school for one-to-one session with students (Other days whenever requested).
- ❖ Plan and manage career-related activities and events.
- ❖ Establish and develop links with internship providers, educational institutions and relevant organisations.
- ❖ Work closely with relevant staff, including the Head of Inclusion to identify the guidance needs of all our students, including those of special educational needs, determination and/or disabilities.
- ❖ Maintain application tracking and documentation.

Governor for Career Guidance Counselling :

- ❖ Meet Year 12 and Year 13 students at the start of the year for orientation.
- ❖ Be available every Friday in the school for one-to-one session with students.
- ❖ Engage with parents whether on-site or online via zoom.
- ❖ Assist students in Year 12 and Year 13 with application and university placements.

Senior Leadership Team :

Our Senior Leadership Team will:

- ❖ Provide clear advice and guidance for the school and can base a strategic careers plan.
- ❖ Support the AO and counsellors in developing their framework.
- ❖ Ensure the career team is allocated sufficient time and has the appropriate training to perform their duties to a high standard.
- ❖ Allow relevant external providers access to engage with students in Years 8 to 13 about educational qualifications, industry insights and other relevant subject areas.

Policy Review :

This Policy will be reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team to ensure alignment with KHDA expectations and evolving higher education requirements.

- September 2025
- Date for Review: June 2026