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OUR VISION

Educate Enlighten Empower



COUNSELLING POLICY

2024 - 2025



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COUNSELLING POLICY

VERSION DATE	APRIL 2021
LAST REVIEWED	APRIL 2024
NEXT REVIEW	APRIL 2026

Policy: Counselling Policy	Purpose: To support the holistic development of students by addressing their emotional, social, academic, and behavioral needs, fostering a positive and inclusive learning environment.
Target Group: Students	Implemented by: Department of Counselling
Issued For: All Staff, Parents, and Students	

1. INTRODUCTION

Sharjah Indian School's counselling program is designed to help students maximise their educational journey. This comprehensive, sequential, and developmental initiative is structured to support every student's preparation for their future. The program is built around three core pillars, which are essential for student's growth and development.

1. Academic Development
2. Emotional and Mental Health Concerns
3. Behavioral and Social Development
4. Career Development

The counselling program aims to empower and guide students, providing them with the necessary tools and support to succeed within school and make meaningful contributions to local and international communities. Our approach prioritizes building resilient, capable young people rather than repairing challenges later in life. It is a proactive, protective model focused on teaching students essential skills and techniques to help them thrive as individuals.

2. COUNSELLING POLICY OBJECTIVES

The school counselling policy aims to establish a comprehensive framework that promotes students' overall well-being, ensuring they receive the necessary support and are treated with respect and dignity. This policy aims to create a nurturing environment where students can thrive academically, socially, emotionally, and physically.

Through this policy, the school seeks to:

1. **Enhance Decision-Making Skills:** Empower students to make informed choices that positively impact their mental, social, and physical well-being.
2. **Foster Resilience and Joy in Learning:** Encourage students to embrace challenges and find joy in the learning process.
3. **Promote Healthy Lifestyles:** Instill an understanding of the importance of physical activity and healthy living, helping students recognize the long-term benefits of a balanced lifestyle.
4. **Establish Sustainable Well-being Patterns:** Support students in developing lifelong habits that contribute to their health and well-being, with a ripple effect on future generations.
5. **Provide Tools for Growth in an Inclusive Environment:** Ensure students have access to the resources and guidance they need to grow in a compassionate, supportive, and equitable environment.

By implementing these objectives, the policy aims to create a positive, well-rounded school experience that equips students with the skills and knowledge to lead fulfilling lives.

3. DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

1. Counselling – It is a goal-oriented relationship between a professionally trained, competent counsellor and an individual to help bring about a meaningful awareness and understanding of the self and environment, improving planning and decision making, and formulating new ways of behaving, feeling, and thinking for problem resolution and development growth. (Villar, 2009)

2. School Counsellor – School counsellors are an important part of the educational leadership team and provide valuable assistance to students regardless of whether they work in an elementary school, middle school, high school or beyond. They are educated and trained in addressing all students' academic, career and social/emotional development needs by designing, implementing, evaluating and enhancing a comprehensive school counselling program that promotes and enhances student success.

(American School Counselor Association).

4. GUIDELINES FOR THE COUNSELLING DEPARTMENT

The school counselling department operates according to the following principles to ensure a high standard of service, ethical practice, and collaboration with all stakeholders:

4.1 Role of the Student Counsellor(s):

1. Practice Within Professional Competence: Counsellors adhere strictly to their scope of professional competence, ensuring they provide services that align with their qualifications and expertise.
2. Uphold Ethical Standards and Legal Requirements: Counsellors comply with the ethical standards of the profession and adhere to relevant laws and regulations set forth by the UAE government and SPEA (Sharjah Private Education Authority)
3. Maintain and Enhance Professional Competence: Counsellors actively engage in ongoing professional development, including education, training, and consultations, to stay informed about the latest trends, knowledge, and skills essential to improving their practice and effectiveness.
4. Clear Communication of Counselling Purpose and Process: Counsellors inform students, parents, and teachers about the goals, processes, and purposes of counselling at the outset of the counselling relationship to ensure clarity and transparency.
5. Confidentiality: All information shared within the counselling process remains confidential. Counsellors take special care to protect sensitive emotional information, as well as student, staff, and parental records.

4.2 Role of Partners in the Counselling Process:

1. Administrators (Principal, Vice-Principal, and Non-Teaching Staff): Administrators play a critical role in supporting the counselling program by implementing and upholding policies and procedures. They collaborate with counsellors to establish partnerships with community resources that contribute to the counselling process.
2. Teachers: Teachers provide essential insights into students' behavior and performance, as they interact most frequently with students. By working closely with counsellors, teachers help assess and monitor student progress and well-being. Teachers also facilitate access to group counselling

workshops, and self-referrals to ensure students receive maximum benefit from the counselling program.

3. Parents/Guardians: Parents and guardians are vital partners in ensuring the success of the school counselling program. Counsellors work with parents to equip them with the tools necessary to support their child's emotional, social, and developmental needs. Parent involvement is integral to the effectiveness of all counselling initiatives.

4. Community Members (Psychologists, Psychiatrists, Medical, and Educational Professionals): The counselling department collaborates with external community resources, including psychologists, psychiatrists, and educational professionals, to provide workshops, assessments, and consultations that enhance students' personal and academic development.

5. CONFIDENTIALITY:

Confidentiality is a professional's promise or contract to respect clients' privacy by not disclosing anything revealed during counselling, except under agreed-upon conditions. (Journal of Professional School Counselling, 2002)

All students are entitled to confidentiality in their interactions with the school counsellor. This includes the safeguarding of personal, emotional, and developmental information, as well as adherence to strict record-keeping protocols that ensure privacy.

By following these guidelines, the school counselling department fosters a collaborative, ethical, and supportive environment that prioritizes student well-being and development.

6. PARENTAL CONSENT AND ACCESS TO COUNSELLING RECORDS

Parents and guardians will be informed if their child is recommended to receive individual or group counselling services. Counselling is a voluntary process, and parents/guardians have the right to provide or withhold consent for their child's participation in counselling.

Counselling records are confidential and are regarded as the property of the school and the counsellor. As such, parents and guardians do not have access to these records to ensure the privacy of the counselling process. In cases where concerns arise regarding the safety or well-being of a student, parents/guardians will be notified immediately.

7. SERVICES PROVIDED

The counselling program cover a broad range of student needs, including but not limited to:

- Emotional and Mental Health Counselling
 - Addressing issues like anxiety, depression, stress management, grief and trauma
 - Providing support for students facing family challenges such as divorce, illness or loss
- Academic Counselling
 - Helping students develop time management, study skills and coping strategies for academic challenges
 - Working with teachers to identify students with learning difficulties and offering appropriate interventions
- Social and Behavioral Counselling
 - Assisting with peer relationships, social skills, conflict resolution and managing interpersonal issues
 - Addressing bullying and promoting a safe school environment
- Career and College Counselling
 - Supporting students in career exploration, decision making and understanding the college application process
 - Providing information on scholarships, internships and extracurricular activities that align with students' future goals

8. COUNSELLING PROCESS

- Referral Process

Self-referral: Students may refer themselves for counselling by directly contacting the school counsellor

Teacher referral: Teachers may refer students if they observe emotional, social or academic difficulties

Parent/ guardian referral: Parents/ guardians can refer their children by contacting the counsellor

Peer referral: In some cases, peers may refer friends whom they believe need support

- Initial Assessment

The counsellor conducts an initial assessment to understand the student's needs and concerns. This may involve conversations with the student, teachers and parents/guardian

- Individual and Group Sessions:

Counselling is offered in both individual and group settings, depending on the nature of the concerns. Sessions typically last 30-40 minutes and are scheduled during the school hours.

- Monitoring and Review:

Progress is monitored through regular check-ins. Counsellors collaborate with teachers and parents to track the student's progress.

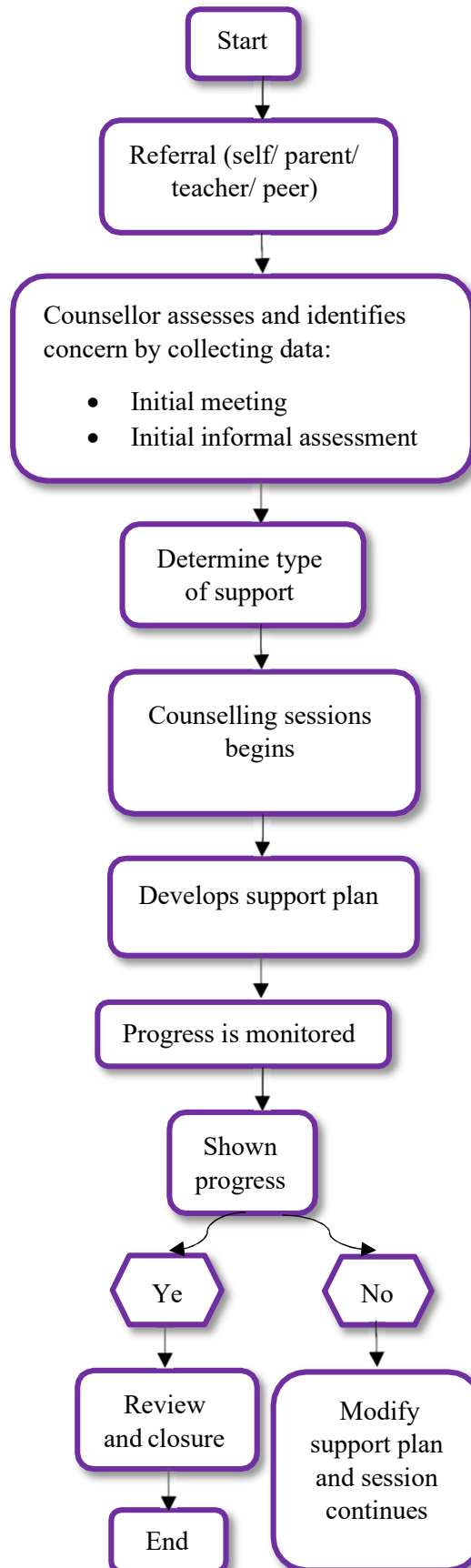
- Confidentiality and Consent

Counselling is confidential. For minors, parental/guardian consent may be required depending on the situation.

COUNSELING PROCESS



9. COUNSELLING PROCEDURE FLOWCHART



10. CRITERIA FOR STUDENTS TO ACCESS SCHOOL COUNSELLING SERVICES

School counselling services are available to all students. the following criteria ensure that students in need of support can access appropriate resources:

Emotional or Mental Health Concerns

- a. Students exhibiting signs of emotional distress (e.g., anxiety, depression, anger, mood swings)
- b. Students experiencing trauma (e.g., family issues, loss of a loved one, bullying or abuse)
- c. Students with self-harm tendencies or expressing thoughts of suicide

Academic Challenges

- d. Consistent underperformance in academics despite efforts and support from teachers
- e. Difficulty in managing time, organization or study skills, leading to poor grades or stress
- f. Test anxiety or significant difficulty coping with academic pressures

Social and Behavioral Issues

- g. Students struggling with peer relationships, social skills or conflict resolution
- h. Behavioral issues in the classroom such as disruptions, defiance or withdrawal
- i. Bullying involvement whether as a victim, perpetrator or witness experiencing distress

Family or Personal Circumstances

- j. Students undergoing significant family changes (e.g., divorce, separation, relocation, illness or financial hardship)
- k. Students in foster care or experiencing homelessness
- l. Students whose parents or guardians have requested counselling support due to changes in the home environment or family dynamics

Career and Future Planning Needs

- m. Students needing guidance on post-secondary education options (college applications, scholarships, financial aids)
- n. Career exploration for students uncertain about their future goals or pathways
- o. Students interested in developing skills for the workforce, internships or career planning

Referrals by Teachers, Parents or Peers

- p. Teacher referrals for students exhibiting concerning behaviors in the classroom or academic underachievement
- q. Parental/ guardian referrals for students experiencing difficulties at home that may affect school performance or mental health
- r. Peer referrals where friends notice emotional, social or behavioral difficulties in another student and seek help on their behalf

Self-referral

- s. Students can self-refer for counselling when they feel overwhelmed, stressed or in need of someone to talk to. This option ensures accessibility to those who recognize their own needs

Transition and Adjustment Issues

- t. New students struggling to adjust to the school environment
- u. Students transitioning from one grade level to another or preparing for graduation and the next steps in life (e.g., college or workforce)
- v. Students returning from prolonged absences due to illness, family issues or other disruptions

Students with Special Educational Needs

- w. Students with identified learning disabilities or other special educational needs who require emotional, behavioral or academic support
- x. Students struggling with integration or self-esteem issues due to their SEN status

Crisis Situations

- y. Immediate access to counselling for students involved in crises such as severe mental health episodes, substance abuse, abuse or neglect or life-threatening circumstance

11. LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

- ☐ Safeguarding/child protection policy
- ☐ Inclusion policy
- ☐ Health and Wellbeing Policy

12. APPENDICES

APPENDIX-A



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DEPARTMENT OF COUNSELLING

FACULTY/STAFF REFERRAL FORM

Student Name:

Date:

Grade &Section:

Referred by:

Area(s) of concern:

Personal/Social:

☐

Academic:

☐

Career:

☐

Reason for Referral:

Signature:



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DEPARTMENT OF COUNSELLING
STUDENT REFERRAL FORM

Dear counsellor

My name is _____ . I am in grade & section _____

My class teacher is _____

I need to talk with you about (please tick the box)

- ☐ Something very urgent
- ☐ Academic difficulties
- ☐ Get help with academic performance
- ☐ Family problems
- ☐ Emotional struggles (sadness, anger)
- ☐ Self-esteem or self-confidence
- ☐ Physical concerns (e.g., sleep, eating)

Other:

Date:

Sign



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PARENT/GUARDIAN REFERRAL FORM

I am requesting that the school counsellor talk with my child

Urgent today

☐

As soon as possible

☐

Student Name:

Grade &Section:

Class teacher:

Parent Name:

Contact Number:

Relationship to Student:

Concern:

Date:

Student Counsellor

Parent/Guardian Signature

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