



COUNSELLING POLICY

2023-24

Principal: Ms. Sadia Wajid

COUNSELLING POLICY

Counselling at Al Sadiq Islamic English School Dubai is offered to assist students to develop appropriate skills and attitudes and resolve problems in relation to personal, career and/or academic issues. Counselling is provided within the framework of the school community, involving staff and parents as required.

The school counsellor is the member of the School's Inclusion, Student Wellbeing Team and Pastoral team, and consequently work within a team-based framework. "Student wellbeing" refers to the promotion and maintenance of effective learning, positive mental health, good physical health, and the social wellbeing of students within the school's care.

Counselling services:

Student counselling is provided in respect of three broad aspects of development:

1. Social and Emotional
2. Career
3. Academic

1. Social And Emotional Counselling

Social and Emotional counselling services vary according to need, but may be concerned with:

- Developmental and mental health issues.
- Interpretation of educational and psychological reports
- Addressing and resolving specific personal problems
- Making decisions.
- Stress management
- Coping with relationship crises.
- Developing personal insights and knowledge
- Improving relationships with others.

2. Career counselling

Careers services and education is a vital component of students exploring their options and managing their future planning. The school aims to ensure that every student has access to group career counselling to discuss tertiary aspirations and future goals in collaboration with other universities, career talks and career fairs organized within school and outside school.

3. Academic counselling

Academic counselling is provided to students who may be experiencing difficulties with their studies. Discussion with a School counsellor can help students identify their areas of difficulty and develop strategies to facilitate improvement in their academic performance. Discussion with a School counsellor may lead to a referral to Achievement Centre to offer structured learning opportunities for students who may require additional assistance.

Focus Areas for Student Academic, Career and Personal/ Social Development

Year 1- 6 Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Classroom behavior• Good touch and bad touch• Good Manners• Awareness about bullying• Social skills development• Understanding emotions
Year 7-9 Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establishing Effective relationships• Behavior Management• How to overcome Exam Stress / Anxiety• Awareness about bullying• Social Skills development• Understanding of Self
Year 10 - 11 Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Career Exploration and Guidance• Establishing Effective relationships• Stress Management• How to overcome Exam Stress / Anxiety• Developing life skills and ‘Social Grace’• Emotional Management

Guidelines for the Department

Keeping the areas of need in mind, we intend to:

- To follow the guidelines laid down by the Ministry of Education for Special Needs in UAE/Federal Law 29.
- Adopt an open and accepting attitude towards children. Staff ensures that students and parents will feel free to talk about any concerns and will see the school as a safe place when there are difficulties. Students’ worries and fears will be taken seriously, and children are encouraged to see help from or confide in members of staff.
- Establish and maintain an ethos where students feel secure and are encouraged to talk and are listened to. Ensure that students know there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty.
- Provide opportunities to equip students with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse and develop inner strength though from time and as needed guidance class interventions.
- Ensure every effort is made to establish effective working relationships with parents and teachers.
- Ensure that the staff is aware of how and when to act on concerns of the students.
- Ensure that there is a clearly defined response when the need for counseling is identified.

- This should be in keeping with the nature of the problem, the age of the child and their emotional state. Some difficulties may be dealt with successfully within the classroom with the teachers.

COUNSELLING SUPPORT PROGRAMMES

1. Behaviour Management in the Classroom

Several Behavioural issues arise in the classroom as a result of various conditions that students have been assessed to have. The teachers are made aware of strategies that will assist in good classroom management for these students and promote an excellent learning environment.

(Refer to Behavior for Learning policy)

2. Child protection

As is required of all staff members of the School, the School counsellor is required to be familiar and comply with the school's policies for child protection.

(Refer to Child Protection and Safeguarding policy)

Approach

The above areas of development are enhanced and developed using the following approach:

➤ Individual Sessions

The school counsellor(s) use many different mediums to work with students during sessions. In individual sessions, students may draw, write, sing, play, or just talk. Sometimes we work on learning a specific skill such as deep breathing for anxiety. Other times we work on role-playing situations, such as a problem with a friend or having a difficult conversation. Main therapies that are used in sessions include cognitive behavioural therapy, behavioural therapy, psycho education, mindfulness training etc based on the type of concern. We also use rating scales and questionnaires like anxiety rating scales, self-evaluation, anger meter, self-reflection, behavioural tracker etc.

➤ Group Counselling

Such sessions are held with multiple students experiencing similar problems or issues, it can be helpful for them to be in a counselling group together. Group counselling helps students build relationships and feel that they are not alone in their experiences.

➤ Workshops

The school counselling programme addresses key issues faced by students of various age groups by designing and implementing workshops that provide students with key skills and techniques to navigate the world around them.

➤ *Training*

The counselling programme offers teachers and administrators various opportunities to expand their scope of practice to include counselling. Staff are aware of counselling policies and practices, how to identify indicators for student concern and how best to serve the counselling needs of our students.

REFERRALS

The school counsellor accepts referrals from teachers, inclusion team members, members of senior leadership team, parents and students. The school counsellor accepts immediate referrals depending on the situation by the Senior leadership team.

The following should be considered *emergency referrals* and referred immediately:

- Suspected evidence of child abuse, physical or mental.
- A child who is emotionally distressed (e.g. crying for long periods) or gets sick daily.
- A child who becomes unable to function in a normal way.
- Any behaviour change in a child that is sudden or unusual.
- A child undergoing a traumatic family experience.
- Indications of mounting hostility between a child and a teacher or his or her peer group.

A Teacher or Staff member may refer:

- Any child who themselves or whose parents / Guardian requests to see a counsellor.
- Students who need individual help beyond the time permitted in the classroom.
- Students with learning difficulties.
- Students demonstrating observable changes in behaviour that cannot be accounted for by the teacher.
- Students who are antisocial.
- Students who are constantly late for school or with their work.
- Students with frequent complaints of hurts or aches.
- Students who are fearful or nervous.
- Students who seem to seek only negative attention.
- Students unable to follow rules.
- Students who are often absent from school.
- Students entering a new class.
- Students who exhibit excessive aggressive behaviour.
- A group of students who are unable to resolve a conflict.
- Students who seem to be involved in bullying situations.

A Parent / Guardian should refer:

- Students who have experienced a death in the family or of a close friend.
- Students experiencing a divorce or separation in the family.
- Students who have experienced armed conflict and/or war.
- Students who have fled their home countries as refugees from war or other disaster.
- Students moving to a new community.

Referral Procedure:

The following procedures apply regarding referrals to the school Counsellor:

1. Referrals by class teachers or staff:

- a. Class teacher completes the referral form to be signed by the Head of Section followed up with the copy of incident reports/emails if available, as evidence.
- b. Referrals must be supported by fruitful observations about the counsellee's difficulties and current issues be it physical, emotional, social, and academic performance before handing it over to the Counsellor.
- c. The Counsellor will set an appointment with the student and discuss the concern further with the student.
- d. If the referral is in relation to academic progress, cognitive functioning or emotional and social issues, parents will be notified, and their consent will be needed.

2. Referrals by Parents/Carers:

- a. Parents/Carers should set an appointment with the School Counsellor.
- b. Parent/Carer consent will be signed for further counselling of the child.
- c. If the referral is in relation to emotional distress, anxiety, PST, abuse, loss, bereavement, healthy eating and peer relationship difficulties, liaison with other agencies is essential to sustain professional counselling standards so that the quality of their work with the student shall be monitored within the school setting.

3. Referrals to outside agencies

The counsellor may also refer a student to an external, appropriately qualified professional. A referral may occur:

- After the counsellor has made an informed decision that the student's situation requires assistance beyond the counsellor's professional training.
- Once a child is identified to have any Special Educational Need for further recommendations.
- Parents are provided with referral details and they make the decision to proceed with an appointment with the specialist.

A student will generally attend counselling on a voluntary basis. However, situations may arise where the school will request or require a student to attend counselling, for example, where

there are concerns about a student's wellbeing, or as part of rehabilitation in a behavioural contract.

COUNSELLING PROCESS

- First Step: Relationship Building.

After a referral of a child, initial counselling shall be made for rapport building. This is when the counsellor exerts effort to establish a climate conducive to mutual respect, trust, free and open communication, and understanding, from the very start of the session.

- Second Step: Problem Identification and Exploration.

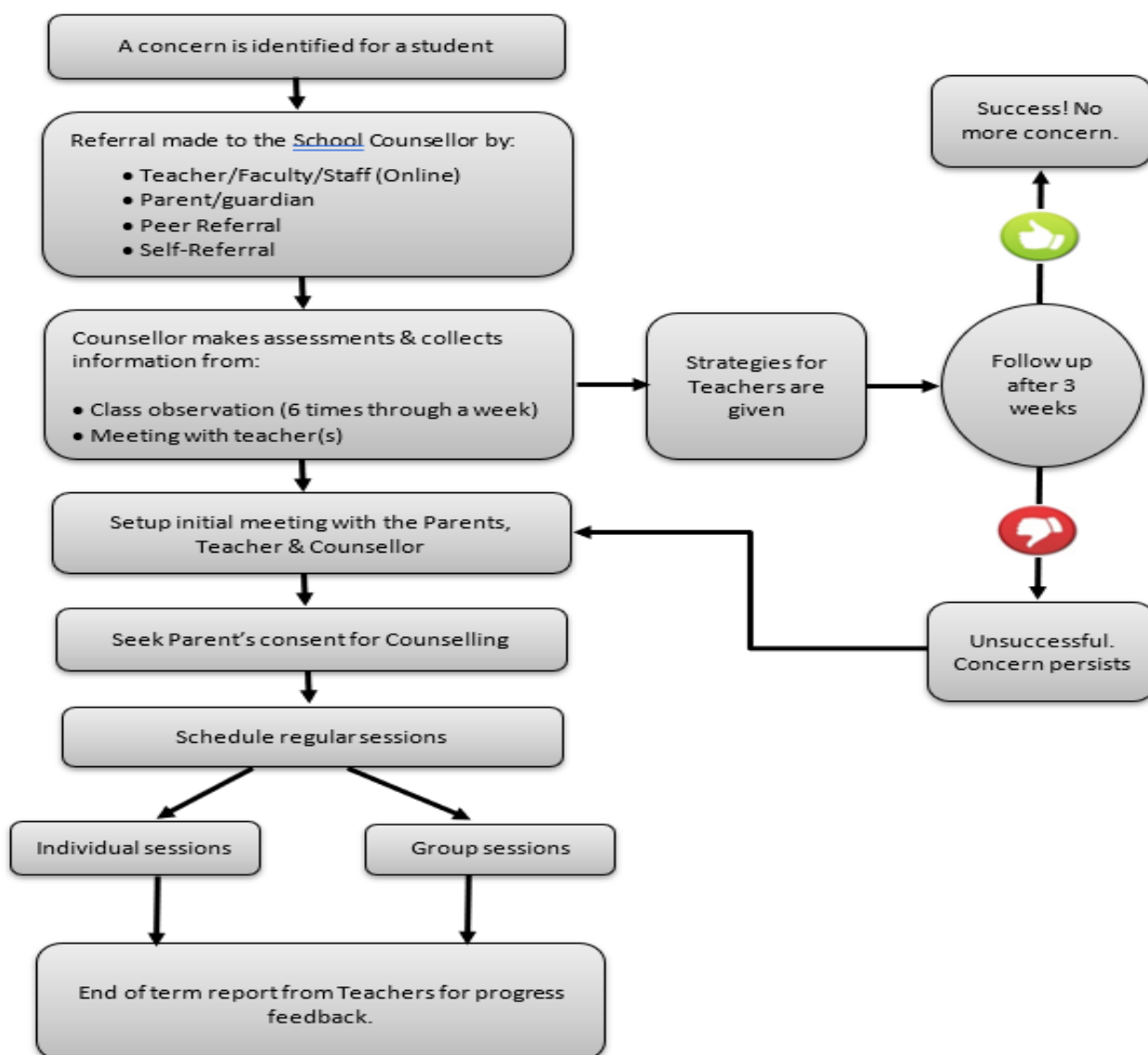
To bring about proper problem identification and exploration, the counsellor should ensure that the following actions are taken:

- Third Step: Planning for Problem Solving.

At this point, it is good to identify a specific, pertinent, and attainable goal.

- Fourth Step: Solution Application and Termination.

Counselling Referral Procedure Flow Chart:



CONFIDENTIALITY AND RECORD KEEPING

Counselling Folder/Paperwork

All counselling-related records are kept in a secure and private location. Access is granted to the SLTs and Counsellor. Each case referred to the counsellor is recorded and treated with confidentiality. Counselling records are kept separately from school records unless noted otherwise by school policy.

Parental consent/ access to counselling records

Parents and guardians of students of grades 1- 6 will be notified if the counsellor is to provide individual/group counselling for their child. Counselling is voluntary and parents/carers reserve the right to consent to or decline counselling services for their child. Parents will not be granted access to counselling records, which are considered property of the counsellor/school. Parents/carers of all students will be notified immediately if there is any concern regarding the safety of their child.

Recording of counselling sessions is kept to a minimum. The counsellor makes notes for own future reference without recording the details of the problems.

Process for review and development

The Counselling policy is reviewed every year to ensure that it is an accurate reflection of current practices at the school. The provision is monitored, and information records of students are updated and reviewed. School leadership team is consulted during the review.

POLICY	COUNSELLING POLICY	
Function	For Information and Guidance on Counselling	
Status	Ready For Implementation	
Audience	All Stakeholders	
Issued for	The School Community	
Date of Review	4 th October 2023	
Date of Next Review	1 st July 2024	
Reviewed by	Ms. Fatema Hussain (Head of Inclusion)	
	Ms. Nahla. (School Counsellor for FS – Year 5)	
	Ms Dagmawit Gebretensae (School Counsellor for Year 6 – Year 11)	
	Mr Julian Roy Williams (Director of Schools)	
Approved By	Ms. Sadia Wajid PRINCIPAL	