



GEMS Winchester School, Fujairah

COUNSELING POLICY

NAME OF POLICY	Counselling Policy
APPROVED BY	Principal
DATE APPROVED	
DATE OF REVIEW	
RELATED POLICIES	Behaviour Policy; Inclusion Policy



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1. Definition of Counselling

Counselling is the skilled and principled use of relationship to facilitate self-knowledge, emotional acceptance and growth and the optimal development of personal resources. The overall aim is to provide an opportunity to work towards living more satisfyingly and resourcefully. Counselling relationships will vary according to need but may be concerned with developmental issues, addressing and resolving specific problems, making decisions, coping with crisis, developing personal insights and knowledge, working through feelings of inner conflict or improving relationships with others. (BACP, 1986)

It is always at the request of the client and no one can be “sent” for counselling.

2. Role of a counselor

Schools are now employing counsellors to help them address the emotional needs that young people can have in response to experiences such as family breakdown, bereavement, loss, family and peer relationship difficulties, anxiety and bullying. Counselling can be an effective source of support for these students, enabling them to function better both in and outside school, enhancing their resilience and giving them resources to manage any future difficulties. Counselling at Gems Winchester, Fujairah is part of the Student Support Services within the school, and is an onsite response for those students needing the additional expertise that counselling brings to the overall pastoral support system.

The Counsellor will provide one to one counselling sessions, once a week for 20-40 minutes per client.



3. Statement of confidentiality

In the instance of risk to self or other, confidentiality may be broken and the named Child Protection Officers (Safeguarding leaders) shall be contacted. This will be outlined in the consent form for the young person.

4. Referral

Referral can come through the class teachers and subject teachers. Students may self-refer. This can also be through parent referral. Where this occurs, the relevant teacher will be informed. A consent letter will then be posted out to the parent/s to sign and return before counselling can begin or parent's concern can be discussed in phone calls. On receipt of the consent letter, the School Counsellor will make the first appointment with the student and suitability for counselling will be assessed. Parents and carers or outside agencies who feel a child would benefit from counselling should discuss this with their child's class teacher.

Counselor will also request for referral by evaluating the self-reflection forms send out to students. Parent consent will be requested after initial discussion with the student.

PASS data and Stress surveys can be used for Wellbeing follow ups and if in need of further sessions, parent consent will be collected for counselling sessions.

4.1 Reasons for Referral

Students who are experiencing the following challenges may require a referral to the school counsellor:

- o Anxiety
- o Depression
- o Low self-esteem
- o Family issues: separation, domestic violence, grief and loss, mental health of parents, disabilities of parents.



- o Learning difficulties
- o Traumatic experiences
- o Social skills difficulties – including bullying (victim/perpetrator), friendship difficulties, isolation, etc.
- o Anger Management
- o Oppositional and Defiant Behaviors
- o Suicidal/self-harm ideation and/or behaviors
- o Other mental health symptoms

5. Consent

A consent letter is posted out to the parent/carer of the child upon receipt of the referral. Once this has been returned, an initial assessment appointment will be made between the School Counsellor and the young person.

For a young person to be eligible to receive counselling, s/he must understand the nature of counselling and be able to make a valid verbal counselling contract, including the ability to understand the principle of confidentiality and the need for this to be overridden where the young person is alleged to be at risk of harm from self or other.

The Counselling Service at the WSF will take the following into consideration:

1. The young person has explicitly requested that their parent/carers have no knowledge about them receiving therapy/Counseling.



2. The Service has done everything it can to persuade the young person to involve their parent/carers.
3. Documentation clearly states why the young person does not want their parent/carers to be informed.
4. The young person understands the advice/information they have been given and have sufficient maturity to understand what is involved and what the implications are.
5. The young person can communicate their decision and reasons for it.
6. This is a rational decision based on their own religious belief or value system.
7. The young person is making the decision for themselves and not being coerced or influenced by another person.

6. Initial Assessment

After a referral has been made, an initial assessment form will be completed by the School Counsellor . An agreement to have counselling is then made by the young person. The School Counsellor will then arrange an appointment to see the young person at a mutually agreeable time in school hours.

7. Session Allocation

Appointments are made on a weekly basis for a maximum of 6 sessions. Any extension to these sessions is through discussion between the Head of Safeguarding and the Counsellor. Each session will last for approximately 20 minutes.

Appointments will be made to suit the timetable of the young person, so as not have a negative impact on their learning.



8. Confidentiality

Respecting the young person's privacy and confidentiality are fundamental requirements for keeping trust and respecting the young person's autonomy. The professional management of confidentiality concerns the protection of personally identifiable and sensitive information from unauthorised disclosure. Disclosure may be authorised by the young person's consent or the law. Any disclosures of a young person's confidences should be undertaken in ways that best protect the young person's trust and respect their autonomy. Client consent is the ethically preferred way of resolving any dilemmas over confidentiality, but exceptional circumstances may prevent the Counsellor from seeking client consent to a breach of confidence, due to the urgency and seriousness of the situation, for example, preventing the client causing serious harm to self or others. In such circumstances the Counsellor has an ethical responsibility to act in ways which balance the client's right to confidentiality against the need to communicate with others.

Confidential information about clients may be shared within teams:

1. where the client has consented or knowingly accepted a service on this basis;
2. the information can be adequately protected from unauthorised further disclosures;
3. the disclosure enhances the quality of service available to clients or improves service delivery.

9. Where counselling will take place

The counseling will take place in the Counselor's office. If there is any referrals by the teachers on behavioral issues, classroom observation will be done prior to the initial counselling session with the young person.

10. Sharing Information

While maintaining confidentiality, the Counseling service in some instances will be a multidisciplinary service by communicating with the teachers and other staffs.



Counsellors may find it necessary to liaise with, share information or refer the young person to another agency for further help. This should only happen with the young person's permission.

11. Record Keeping

The student who receive counselling will be placed on the Counselling Register. Follow up notes will be added.

12. Access to Records

The Head of Schools can be given access to the Student folders apart from the counsellor. In some cases, class teachers can be given the access.

13. Child Protection

If a counsellor has potential child protection concerns, this could lead to a breach of confidentiality in the interests of the child's safety. Therefore, as part of the initial assessment, the counsellor will explain the procedures and possible consequences of involvement by other agencies, and seek the client's views and consent.

Incidents of Child protection are reported into HSE/Guard website, safeguarding meetings are conducted on monthly basis by the Safeguarding leaders and Counsellor to make action on each reported incident.



14. Evaluation and Reporting to DSL

The DSL and the School Counsellor will meet regularly to review the service and address any weaknesses in the system.