



Richmond
CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

School Counselling Policy

Version 2.0

Prepared by	Sil Nossiter
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1.0	Feb 2011	Draft Document
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1. Background

Counselling at Richmond Christian College is offered to assist students to develop appropriate skills and attitudes and resolve problems in academic, psychological, emotional, and/or social contexts. Counselling is done within the framework of the whole school community, involving staff and parents as required. The counsellors are members of the School's Pastoral Care Committee, and consequently work within a team-based framework.

2. Referrals

Students

Counselling is generally on a voluntary basis. However, situations may arise where the School will request a student to attend counselling, for example, in relation to behavioral issues.

Referrals for Internal Counselling

Referrals may be made in one of three ways:

- By Staff
- Self-referral by the student
- By Parents and Carers

Referrals for Outside Counselling

Where the School in its discretion determines it is appropriate, a student (through their parents) may be requested to attend for counselling/treatment by external care providers. The rationale for such request may be that the student requires an intervention that is not deemed appropriate for the school counsellor to provide. This may occur for a number of reasons, such as the nature of the required intervention or the degree of involvement required. In making such a request, the following guidelines are to be followed:

- The request will be discussed with the student and their parent/s or carers and the rationale explained
- The student and their parents or carers will be provided with the name(s) of one or more suitable practitioners but they may consult whoever they wish
- The school counsellor will facilitate the referral if requested and, with consent, will be entitled to provide such reports to the external care provider as are in the School's opinion reasonably necessary
- The school counsellor will be entitled to receive reports from the external care provider as are reasonably necessary to satisfy the school counsellor that the issues that required the attendance at the external care provider have been satisfactorily resolved or are being managed to the School's satisfaction.

Parents

It may be deemed appropriate by RCC for counsellors to see a parent (s) or carer (s) in relation to issues affecting their child.

3. Therapies/Interventions Types of Therapies/Interventions

In dealing with a student, the school counsellor will provide recognized interventions. These may include cognitive, behavioural, family, narrative, and solution-focused approaches. In many cases the given intervention will be a blend of approaches, which focus on supportive, short-term, problem-centred outcomes.

Duration/Frequency of Consultation:

- Unless specifically requested by a student, consultation with the counsellor will generally be during class time. Hence, the likely duration of each consultation will be for the duration of 30min. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that appointments do not clash with scheduled assessment tasks.
- The frequency of the consultations will be dependent on the nature of the issues as determined by the Counsellor. For each student involved it is recommended that a maximum of 4 sessions per issue would occur. After this the student would be recommended to obtain additional, outside the school, counseling.
- If occasion arises to conversation of a spiritual nature more time may be necessary.

Joint Interventions

Where appropriate, joint interventions may be provided. Such situations may include one or more RCC Staff member including Chaplains or the Student Welfare Officer jointly seeing a student and members of his family. It may also include the involvement of other appropriate staff. On occasions groups of students may be seen by the counsellor and other appropriate staff.

4. Confidentiality

Students

Students will be informed that discussions with the school counsellor are in confidence, except where in the reasonable opinion of the Counsellor:

- There is a concern that the student will cause themselves harm
- There is a concern that the student will cause harm to another person
- The student discloses that another person is at risk of significant harm
- The student discloses criminal activity such that it may impact on the welfare of the student or others or the reputation of the School
- The student discloses that they have suffered harm or the counsellor reasonably suspects that the student has suffered harm, sexual abuse or neglect
- It is otherwise required by law (e.g. in evidence in court) Further, it will be explained to students that the above exceptions are required by law, or for the School to discharge its duty of care to students, or for the proper administration of the School (as referred to in paragraph headed "Administrative Accountability" below). It will further be explained that the school counsellor will regularly provide to

the Principal a list of those students who have been seen by the school counsellor.

Parents

In regard to primary students, permission will generally be sought from parents or carers for continued counselling, except where it is in the best interests of the child not to do so.

In regard to High School students permission from parents or carers is not necessary, however, advice that the child is partaking in counselling is encouraged.

5. Accountability

The Counsellor has both professional and administrative accountabilities.

Professional Accountabilities

It is imperative that appropriate records be maintained. As a minimum, these must record the student's name, the date of each consultation, those present at the consultation, and a brief account of the main issues discussed. Similar records should also be kept in regard to meetings and/or telephone conversations with parents, staff, and external service providers regarding the student.

Administrative Accountabilities

To ensure appropriate communication and accountability within the school, the School Counsellor will use the booking system provided by the school, to make appointments and the School Pro program for reporting each interaction. The school counsellor will also report to the Principal regularly to provide feedback generally on the provision of counselling within the school and specifically (as necessary and appropriate) on individual matters. The Student Counsellor will also provide on a monthly basis a list of those students who have been counselled.

6. Records/Access

The records of the School Counsellor are at all times the property of the School, will remain with the School and will be securely and confidentially archived. The counsellor reserves the right to retain a copy of these records for legal purposes. Access to the files is restricted in accordance with the purpose of collection and generally, the Principal (or his 2IC) may request information relevant to a concern rather than general access to the file. The exemption would be if there was a serious and imminent threat to the life or health of an identifiable individual. Access to the files must meet appropriate legal and privacy legislation requirements.