



Richmond
CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

School Counselling Policy

Version 3.3

Prepared by	Sil Nossiter
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Version History

Version	Date	Notes
1.0	Feb 2011	Draft Document
2.0	Feb 2015	Amended and adopted
3.0	May 2017	Amendments made based on recommendations from Richard Talyor, Manager Legal and Compliance Services at Christian Schools Staff Relation Services
3.1	July 2017	Change to basis of provision & payment clauses
3.2	October 2017	Amended 1. Background (association membership) & 5 Accountability re professional supervision
3.3	Feb 2019	Minor amendments to position description and update to current staff roles & MEA

Contents

1. Background

2. Referrals

3. Therapies/Interventions

4. Confidentiality

5. Accountability

6. Records/Access

7. Payment

8. Termination of arrangement and notice

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 counsellor is accountable to the Principal (including implementation of applicable policies and procedures) and required to work within a team-based framework with relevant paraprofessionals, teachers and parents where necessary. The appointed school counsellor must hold the following qualifications:

- Three-year training in Counselling with a minimum Graduate Certificate or higher.
- Registration with accredited counselling or social work association
- Eligible to work in child related employment (not a prohibited person under the Act).
- Hold a current Working With Children Check Clearance

Position Description:

The School Counsellor is employed by Richmond Christian College on a part time basis in accordance with Richmond Christian College's Counselling Policy to provide Christian counselling services to its students. The school counsellor will be required to:

- Assist in the 'triage' process for students with mental health issues and provide short term, on-site counselling services and referral to professional agencies
- Students can be self-referred or referred by the Principal or Head of Secondary/Primary
- Liaise with the school executive, and parents and teachers as necessary, to provide care for students with a focus on prevention, intervention and student learning.
- Develop a panel of practitioners to provide ongoing counselling and consulting services for students (with personal, social, emotional, vocational and educational needs) in consultation with Principal/Head of Secondary/Primary
- Develop and communicate strategies for proactive mental health and student well-being to the RCC community
- Educate teachers and students on current critical mental health and well-being issues including presentations at assemblies and staff meetings and articles in the school newsletter
- Compliance with the School Counselling Policy and other relevant school Policies (eg Student Welfare, Child Protection)
- Principal to sight record of counselling hours and supervision and records of counselling biannually.

Any student requiring long term counselling will be referred for counselling outside of the school.

2. Referrals

Students

Student counselling is undertaken 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 procedure:

- By staff through the Head of Secondary or Primary and the Principal to the school counsellor
- By the student straight to the counsellor
- By parents and carers through the Principal.

Referrals for Outside Counselling

Where the School determines it is important, a student may be required to attend counselling/treatment with external care providers. The rationale for such a 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 including 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 may consult a professional practitioner of their choice
- The school counsellor will facilitate the referral if requested and, with consent, will be entitled to provide 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 is reasonably necessary to satisfy the school counsellor that the issues that required attention 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. Services to be provided

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.

Basis of provision – Number of days per week

The counsellor will be employed on a part time basis during school term time. The actual days/times for the working of these hours is negotiable with the appointed counsellor. The school counsellor, where possible will also assist in the additional roles as outlined in the job description.

Fees and Expenses

There will be no fees and charges for services provided to students during the employed hours.

Duration/Frequency of Consultation:

- Unless specifically requested by a student, consultation with the counsellor will generally be during class time. The average duration of each consultation will be approximately 30 minutes depending on the needs of the student. 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 it is recommended that the number of visits per issue not exceed 4 before external care is recommended. However, there is discretion for the Principal to increase the number in some cases.

Joint Interventions

Where appropriate, joint interventions may be necessary, including: other students, appropriate members of staff, family members and members from the professional community.

4. Confidentiality

Students

Students will be informed that discussions with the school counsellor are in strict

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 that must be reported to the police or may impact the welfare of the student, 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 and brief overview 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, where possible parents/carers will be advised that their child is partaking in counselling.

5. Accountability

The Counsellor has both professional and administrative accountabilities.

Professional Accountabilities / Exchange of Information

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 and a brief description of the type of therapy or intervention involved. Similar records must also be kept in regard to meetings and/or telephone conversations with parents, staff, and external service providers regarding the student.

As part of Professional Accountability it is necessary for the Counsellor to actively participate in professional supervision for a minimum of 60 minutes per month.

Mandatory Reporting

As per requirements of the counselling profession, the school counsellor is responsible for mandatory reporting of all necessary cases in communication with the Principal.

Administrative Accountabilities / Exchange of Information

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 School Counsellor will also provide monthly 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 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.

7. Payment

The School counsellor will be paid according to the NSW Christian Schools General Staff Multi-Enterprise Agreement (No 2) 2017-2019 Wellbeing services grade 2B

8. Termination of arrangement and notice

A minimum of 4 weeks notice must be given by either Richmond Christian College or the appointed counsellor for the cessation of service.