



School Wellbeing Services Policy

Version 1.1

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Date Prepared	April 2024
Monitored by	Principal
Review by	Principal
Date for review	2026
Status	Final
Policy Pertains to:	Board; Principal; Staff; Parents & Students

Version History

Version	Date	Notes
1.0	March 2022	New Policy
1.1	April 2024	Renamed School Wellbeing Services Policy from School Psychological Services Policy. Updated Table of Responsibilities, added Role Descriptions, updated procedures and guidelines.

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Important related documents:

Student Welfare Policy

Privacy Policy

Reference documents:

Managing Student Confidentiality in the School Setting: Guidance for Principals and School Psychologists, November, 2014.



VISION STATEMENT

A Christ centred learning community exploring and impacting on God's world

MISSION STATEMENT

To assist parents in the nurture of their children, by providing a Christ-centred, biblically grounded, academically rigorous and culturally relevant education that instils a sense of identity, purpose and hope in students that equips them to live for God's glory.

1 INTRODUCTION

Richmond Christian College acknowledges the importance of managing communication and confidentiality between the Principal, School Counsellor, School Chaplain, other professionals and teaching staff at the College.

2 PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Student Welfare policy for Richmond Christian College and the RCC Welfare Framework.

The policy sets out the responsibilities and obligations of those who work in roles concerning the provision of wellbeing services to the RCC community, predominantly the students. In particular, it clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the Counsellor, Chaplain and the School regarding access to, and the sharing of, information that is collected and recorded in the course of providing wellbeing services to a child. The protocol has been prepared with consideration of relevant privacy, education and health records laws, the APS Code of Ethics (adopted by the Psychology Board of Australia), and essential school communication protocols.

It is essential that student support processes, professional relationships and the referral and communication systems involved in the provision of wellbeing services are well understood by staff and students, and communicated clearly to all members of the College community.

3 TABLE OF RESPONSIBILITIES

<i>Responsibilities</i>	<i>Evidence of Compliance</i>
Principal	
Mentor School Counsellor and Chaplain	Meeting calendar, meeting notes
Oversight of wellbeing services	
School Counsellor	
Obtain informed consent from parents as per policy	Signed consent
Maintain confidential professional records	Secure hard copy or electronic files
Manage access to records	Files secured by lock or password
Inform students of the limits of confidentiality	Signed acknowledgement
Regular communication with the College Executive, and school staff	SWAT minutes, Staff meeting minutes, email.
Provide wellbeing services as outlined in the role description	Timetable, Reports to School Executive
School Chaplain	
Obtain informed consent from parents as per policy	Signed consent
Maintain confidential professional records	Secure hard copy or electronic files
Manage access to records	Files secured by lock or password
Inform students of the limits of confidentiality	Signed acknowledgement
Regular communication with the College Executive, and school staff	Staff meeting minutes

Provide wellbeing services as outlined in the role description	Timetable, Reports to School Executive
Deputy Principal	
Oversee SWAT and referral process	Minutes
Oversee Appointment timetables	Calendar
HoS/Welfare Coordinator	
Manage referral process	Minutes
Provide input into appointment timetables	Calendar
Teaching and LS Staff	
Provide Tier 1 Support	Programs

4 SCHOOL COUNSELLOR AND SCHOOL CHAPLAIN ROLE DESCRIPTIONS

4.1 School Counsellor Role Description

- Assist in the 'triage' process for students with mental health issues and provide short term, on-site counselling services and referral to professional agencies.
- Manage the process of student referral. Students can self-refer or be referred by the Principal, Deputy Principal, Heads of School or Welfare Coordinator.
- Liaise with the School Executive, parents and teachers as necessary, to provide care for students with a focus on prevention, intervention and student learning.
- Work to ensure ongoing collaboration between all stakeholders in the management of students including liaising with external practitioners to provide ongoing counselling, assessment and consulting services for students (with personal, social, emotional, vocational and educational needs) in consultation with the School Executive.
- Develop and communicate strategies for proactive mental health and student well-being to the RCC community.
- Assist with the education of the RCC community on current critical mental health and well-being issues including presentations at assemblies and staff meetings and articles in the school newsletter.

4.2 School Chaplain Role Description

- Provide individualised support to new students to the school.
- Provide individualised support to making significant spiritual decisions.
- Work with the School Executive and School Counsellor to develop and promote preventative and proactive student welfare programmes.
- Work with the School Executive to develop and deliver the PK-12 Bible Curriculum, including coordinating and leading creative and dynamic chapels.
- Assist with the development of Christian service and mission opportunities for students in the school and wider community.
- Organise and facilitate different clubs that foster and promote student well-being and spirituality such as breakfast clubs, book clubs, Bible study groups and prayer gatherings for students across PK to 12.

5 ACCESS TO WELLBEING SERVICES

See also: *Stepped Welfare Model for Provision of Wellbeing for RCC Students and Process of Welfare Communication* in RCC Welfare Framework.

5.1 Access to Chaplain Support:

Referrals procedure:

- By the students straight to the Chaplain
- Via new student orientation procedure.
- By parents/carers through report of concern (verbal report or via referral form) to classroom/subject/Connect teacher and/or Deputy/HoS.
- By staff through referral form to Deputy/HoS
- By School Counsellor/Principal via Deputy/HoS

5.2 Access to School Counsellor Support:

Referrals procedure:

- By the students straight to the School Counsellor
- Via new student orientation procedure.
- By parents/carers through report of concern (verbal report or via referral form) to classroom/subject/Connect teacher and/or Deputy/HoS.
- By staff through referral form to Deputy/HoS
- By Principal via Deputy/HoS

5.3 Consent

Consent is not required for a well-being check of any enrolled students by any RCC staff member.

For enrolled students in PK - Year 8 the Chaplain/School Counsellor must have the informed consent of the parent or guardian before assessing or providing wellbeing support services to a child except where it is in the best interests of the child not to do so.

Whilst it is preferred that students in Years 9 - 12, who receive formal counselling from the Chaplain or Counsellor will do so with the written permission of their parents /guardians /carers, it is not mandatory and depending upon the circumstances will remain the Senior School student's choice.

It remains the responsibility of the School Counsellor/Chaplain to determine whether or not a young person is capable of understanding their rights regarding psychological services. The School Counsellor/Chaplain also has an obligation to determine whether a young person has the maturity and ability to give informed consent for self-referral.

Consent for psychological intervention lasts only for the duration of the issue for which the young person was referred.

5.4 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.

6 CONFIDENTIALITY & COMMUNICATION

These obligations to communicate are designed to protect and promote the following key elements of the school's service to its community:

- The wellbeing of the student community.
- The maintenance and use of relevant information for school staff to support children in an education setting and in compliance with obligations under relevant Federal and State education legislation.

6.1 Students:

Students will be informed that discussions with the School Counsellor / School Chaplain 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.

The School Counsellor / School Chaplain will also articulate that they will regularly provide to the Principal a list and brief overview of those students they have seen.

6.2 Parents:

- The limits to confidentiality as conveyed to the students are conveyed to the parent or guardian, in writing, as part of gaining informed consent for wellbeing services provided at RCC.
- This form also informs parents of the legal restrictions regarding age and confidentiality in the student-counsellor relationship.

6.3 Staff:

The School Counsellor/Chaplain is obliged to regularly communicate with the Principal, Deputy, HoS, and each other about matters crucial to the management of the student's and school community's wellbeing.

The School Counsellor/Chaplain is obliged to consider the duty of care relevant to supporting the child in an educational setting.

Regular communication includes:

- Fortnightly reporting with the Principal
- Fortnightly reporting to Deputy/HoS
- Reporting to SWAT meetings.

The content of such discussions should not, unless necessary for the provision of interventions necessary for safe and supportive educational environments, include confidential matters but should include wellbeing issues, social and/or behaviour concerns, the educational and developmental needs of the child, school policies and any other relevant information that the Counsellor/Chaplain is able to bring to such discussions.

Necessary interventions or adjustments impacting the student's education or classroom environment will be communicated to staff via the Deputy/HoS.

7. RECORD KEEPING

The School Counsellor/Chaplain is required to maintain appropriate records on SEQTA restricted to Principal/DP/HoS as necessary. The records must include:

- The student's name.
- The date of each consultation.
- Those present at the consultation.
- A brief account of the main issues discussed.
- 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.

The School Counsellor and School Chaplain must also keep a shared timetable (with Principal, Deputy Principal and relevant HoS) of appointments and services provided. This is to be updated with immediate/interrupting student/parent cases that are responded to and show the reallocation of students who may have missed sessions.

The records of the School Counsellor/Chaplain are at all times the property of the School, will remain with the School and will be securely and confidentially archived. The Counsellor/Chaplain 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. Access to the files must meet appropriate legal and privacy legislation requirements. Any written School Counsellor/Chaplain student files must be secured in locked filing cabinets and electronic files and always accessible to the School Counsellor/Chaplain, Principal and Deputy Principal. The exemption would be if there was a serious and imminent threat to the life or health of an identifiable individual.

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. The files are to be kept in the College's dedicated Mandatory Reporting file.

Administrative Accountabilities / Exchange of Information

To ensure appropriate communication and accountability within the school, the School Counsellor/Chaplain will use the booking system provided by the school.

8. SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED

See also: *Overarching Model for Matching Support Required with Student Wellbeing* in RCC Welfare Framework.

8.1 SWAT – Student Welfare and Assistance Team

This team is dedicated to the collaborative management of students with additional needs, welfare or academic. Each meeting is chaired by the Deputy Principal and includes standing agenda items such as but not limited to:

- School Counsellor / School Chaplain welfare report that includes a brief verbal overview based of students seen for the week and interventions (where appropriate), emerging concerns, and assigned students still to be seen.
- HoS report that includes reflections, emerging cases, closed cases, and new referrals for both welfare and academia.
- Assigning of students to LS team, School Counsellor or School Chaplain.

8.2 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.

The School Chaplain will provide general wellbeing support and intervention. Where necessary and with the mentoring/supervision of the School Counsellor or Principal the School Chaplain may provide more recognised intervention.

8.3 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 with the Counsellor 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.

8.4 Joint Interventions

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

9 APPENDIX 1 – CONSENT & REFERRAL FORM
RCC WELLBEING REFERRAL FORM

For completion by **PARENT / CAREGIVER / TEACHER**

Student's Name: _____

Date of Birth: ____/____/____

Year Level: _____

Date of Referral: ____/____/____

Reason for Referral:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family circumstances | <input type="checkbox"/> School Attendance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Behaviour | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental/Emotional Health |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Peer Relations | <input type="checkbox"/> Academic Performance |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other..... |

What concerns do you have?

Previous assessments: e.g. by Dr, Psychologist, Speech Therapist (please attach copies of reports)

What are your child's/young person's strengths?

What do you hope will happen as a result of this referral?

<p>What is the child or young person doing? (eg not following instruction at home or school, getting into conflict with others)</p>	
<p>What is/might the child or young person be feeling? (eg sad, angry, anxious)</p>	
<p>What is/might the child or young person be thinking? (eg I'm missing my family, or nobody understands me)</p>	
<p>What learning areas are being affected? (eg difficulty concentrating)</p>	
<p>What behaviours are being affected? (eg withdrawing from friends)</p>	
<p>What social areas are being affected? (eg avoids group situations)</p>	
<p>When and where do these concerns/events occur? (one setting or multiple settings)</p>	

Privacy and confidentiality

This information is being obtained to assist the School in providing support for your child.

Your privacy and the information provided in counselling sessions are protected at all times. The School Counsellor is registered with the Australian Counselling Association (ACC) and it is a requirement that all counsellors follow strict guidelines for professional conduct in line with the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) and the ACA Code of Ethics and Practice.

Counselling information is retained to document what happens during sessions and enables the counsellor to provide a relevant and informed service.

Limits to confidentiality

All personal and counselling information gathered by the school counsellor/chaplain during the provision of the service will remain confidential except when:

- 1) It is subpoenaed by a court; or
- 2) Failure to disclose the information would, in the reasonable belief of Richmond Christian College, place you or another person at serious risk to life, health, or safety; or
- 3) Your prior approval has been obtained to:
 - a) provide a written report to another professional or agency. e.g. GP, school or a lawyer; or
 - b) discuss the material with another person, e.g. a parent, teacher or health provider; or
 - c) disclose the information in another way; or
- 4) You would reasonably expect your personal information to be disclosed to another professional or agency (e.g. your GP) and disclosure of your personal information to that third party is for a purpose which is directly related to the primary purpose for which your personal information was collected; or
- 5) Disclosure is otherwise required or authorised by law; or
- 6) When consulting with colleagues for advice, or in the course of professional supervision, where necessary for the provision of support.

I have read the Privacy and Confidentiality Notice and give permission for the School Counsellor/School Chaplain to carry out assessment and counselling as required and to contact and exchange information with external support agencies as necessary.

Parent name: _____ **Mobile:** _____

Parent/caregiver's signature: _____ **Date:** ___/___/_____

Deputy Principal/Head of School comments and recommendations:

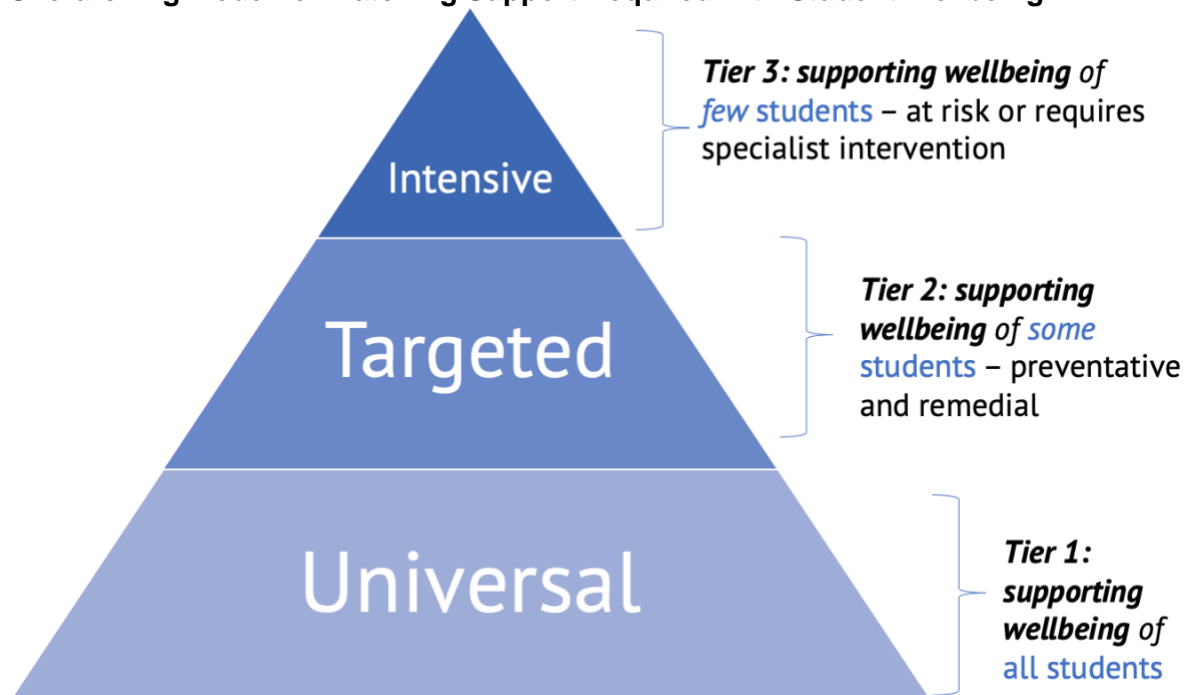
Authorised Staff Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

10 APPENDIX 2 – RCC WELLBEING SERVICES SNAPSHOT

Richmond Christian College Wellbeing services reflect the deep hope for the welfare practices at RCC to provide inclusive, safe, and supportive opportunities and environments that enable students' positive wellbeing to learn well, participate in all areas of the school curriculum, and improve outcomes.

Our policies and frameworks are grounded in the biblical principles of wellbeing and welfare: **Restoration** (John 10:10), **Reconciliation** (Matthew 11:28), and **Growing in the image of God** (Luke 9:23; Psalm 139:13-14).

Overarching Model for Matching Support Required with Student Wellbeing:



Tier 1: Universal

Focuses on staying well. Throughout RCC's whole curriculum (including the co-curricular) students receive proactive and preventative education for wellbeing and welfare delivered by Executive and Teaching staff, Learning Support staff, the School Chaplain and the School Counsellor.

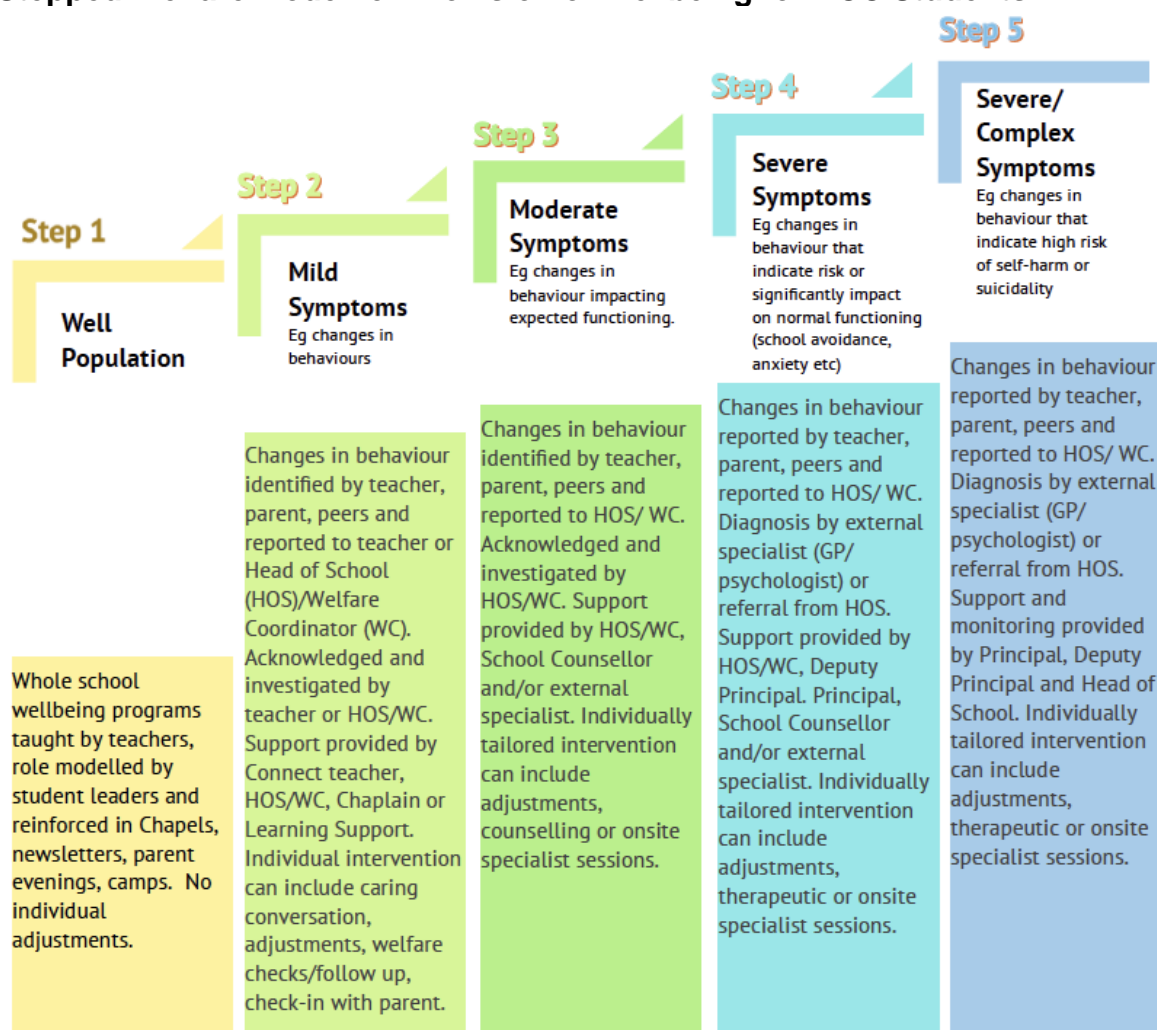
Tier 2: Targeted

Focuses on minor to moderate interventions that help students to stay well. Identified individuals or groups receive targeted intervention via relationships (Connect teacher, Head of School, Welfare Coordinator, School Chaplain, School Counsellor, etc) and programs (Learning Support, behavioural interventions, resilience programs, etc) to educate and support student wellbeing.

Tier 3: Intensive

Focuses on providing intensive, specialist support (psychologist, counsellor, OT, etc) to educate, equip and reestablish student wellbeing for those students who are displaying signs that they can no longer stay well on their own.

Stepped Welfare Model for Provision of Wellbeing for RCC Students:



RCC Consent:

It is RCC's policy that all students from PK - 8 who receive formalised support from the Chaplain or Counsellor will do so only with the written permission of their parents/caregivers. Whilst it is preferred that students in Years 9 - 12, who receive formal support from the Chaplain or Counsellor will do so with the written permission of their parents/caregivers, it is not mandatory and depending upon the circumstances will remain the Senior School student's choice.

Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact your child's classroom teacher, Connect teacher or Head of School: admin@richmond.nsw.edu.au

Helpful Links

[RCC Wellbeing Referral Form](#)

[Website Policies](#) (includes Anti-Bullying, Behaviour Management, School Wellbeing Services & Student Welfare)