

Counselling Services (Student) Policy

Counselling Services

Within a College environment students may experience a wide range of behavioural, emotional, social and psychological issues that, if left untreated, may jeopardise their wellbeing and learning. Examples include mental illnesses, friendship difficulties, family breakdowns, relationship issues, eating disorders, bullying, traumatic events, alcohol and substance abuse, self esteem and identity difficulties.

Penola Catholic College provides professional counselling services to assist students and their families deal with issues that may hinder their development.

Penola Catholic College's Policy

Penola Catholic College is committed to providing a safe environment and assisting students develop appropriate skills and attitudes to resolve problems in academic, psychological, emotional and social contexts.

It is our policy that:

- Professional counselling services be made available to all students at no additional charge;
- The College's counselling services be highly visible to students and the general College community; and
- The College's counselling services are easy to access.

Counselling Services - Contact Details

Students can be referred by a staff member through the online system; or

Students may also attend student services to speak directly with a counsellor or psychologist.

Visibility of Counselling Services

The availability of the College's counselling services are highly visible to students and to the wider College community. Initiatives to ensure the visibility of the College's counselling services include:

- Training all staff as to the nature and availability of the services;
- Providing contact details for counselling services on the College's public website;
- Providing contact details for counselling services on the College's student/parent portal;
- Providing details of counselling services in the College staff handbook;
- Providing details of counselling services in the College student diary;
- Placing posters strategically around the College;
- Providing students and parents/carers with information regarding counselling services at induction; and
- Providing information regarding counselling services in the College newsletter on an ongoing basis.

Counselling Sessions

Counselling sessions will focus on being supportive and offering problem centred outcomes. If appropriate, the counsellor may take a joint approach and include other staff.

Counselling sessions may be held during class time, in breaks or before or after College. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that appointments do not clash with assessments.

Parents/Carers

Parents/carers will be involved with the student's counselling from the initial stages unless the student has voluntarily approached the counsellor.

Parents/carers may seek advice from the counsellor about their child's progress and education options, including access to special education services and information about assistance from other agencies.

Referrals to External Specialists

Occasionally referrals will be made by the counsellor to external professionals such as paediatricians, psychiatrists or speech pathologists. This may be the case depending on the nature of the required intervention or the degree of involvement required.

Referrals to specialists outside the College will be discussed with the student and their parents/carers, and the rationale for this will be explained.

A list of suitable practitioners will be given to the student or parent/carer. Counsellors will facilitate referrals upon request and will be entitled to receive reports from the external practitioner.

Confidentiality

Discussions held between the student, their parents/carers and the counsellor are confidential to the extent that information will only be made accessible to other College staff on an as needed basis.

Confidentiality practices will be explained to students prior to counselling.

Involvement of Other College Staff

Where necessary and appropriate, the counsellor may discuss the student's circumstances with the student's teachers, having regard to confidentiality.

Teachers are encouraged to discuss concerns they may have, regarding individual students in their class who are attending counselling.

Counsellors will report to the Deputy Principal - Ernie Pisani regularly to provide general feedback on counselling services within the College and specifically on individual matters on an as needed basis.

Records

Appropriate records must be maintained including details of the student's name, the date of each session, those present at the session and a brief summary of the main issues discussed.

Similarly, meetings and/or telephone conversations regarding the student with parents, staff and external specialists must also be recorded.

All records written by the counsellor remain the property of the College. Access to counselling records will only be provided where appropriate legal requirements are met.

Workers' Responsibility

All workers are responsible to:

- Make themselves familiar with the College's counselling services;
- Bring to the attention of the counsellor any specific issues of concern relating to students under their care;
- Encourage students to see the College counsellor where they feel the student would benefit from these services; and
- Follow the guidelines as set out in this policy.

Implementation

This policy is implemented through a combination of:

- Staff training in identifying vulnerable students and effective referral processes;
- Student and parent/carer education and information;
- Development of a culture of awareness where students look out for other students and encourage each other to seek help;
- Effective referral management within and outside the College community;
- Effective communication and incident notification procedures;
- Effective record keeping procedures; and
- Initiation of corrective actions where necessary.

Discipline for Breach of Policy

Where a staff member breaches this policy Penola Catholic College may take disciplinary action.

Related Policies

- Alcohol (Student Use of) Policy
- Assault (Student against Student) Policy
- Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy
- Code of Behaviour (Students)
- Child Protection Policy
- Child Protection - Mandatory Reporting
- Critical Incident (Traumatic Events) Policy
- Discipline (Student) Policy
- Drugs - Illicit (Student Use of) Policy
- Eating Disorders Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy

Self Harming Behaviours Policy

From Complispace – current as at July 2020

