

## **COUNSELLING POLICY**

### **1.0 Objectives**

The objective of this document is to describe the safe, supportive environment accessible to whole school community where individuals or groups can explore personal problems without judgment to aid self-awareness and reflection.

### **2.0 Scope**

This process applies to GIIS Dubai.

### **3.0 Policies**

#### **GIIS Counselling program aims**

- To prepare culturally competent students through the design and implementation of a comprehensive school counselling program that is preventive in design and developmental in nature.
- To ensure positive mental health and well-being to all students, thereby supporting the academic and social-emotional development of all students.

#### **Guiding Principles for GIIS Counselling Program**

##### **Principle of self-determination**

- Self-determination refers to a person's ability to make choices, informed decisions and manage their own life.
- Being self-determined impacts motivation—that people feel more motivated to take action when they think that what they do will have an effect on the outcome and to be in greater control of their lives.
- Self-determination will guide students to develop self-regulation through intrinsic motivation.

##### **Principle of confidentiality**

- All the students are entitled to confidentiality and information discussed will not be shared with anyone unless agreed by the client.
- The counsellor will, however, state that they may need to break confidentiality should they deem the student is at significant risk of harm to themselves or others. At this point, information may be shared with appropriate persons namely, parents, concerned teachers, Principal or SLT taking into consideration the safety of the student.

##### **Principle of non-judgmental attitude**

The attitudes involved in non-judgmental listening are acceptance, genuineness and empathy. By using these core conditions we aim to create a safe and comfortable environment in which the clients will talk more openly.

## **Referral process in GIIS**

- Referrals can be from teachers, parents, students, self or peer. Referral form is available for teachers. Parents and students can contact Counsellor by school portal.
- During the referral process, the student counsellor may consult and collaborate with teachers, parents, administrators, other school staff, and/or outside agencies on behalf of the student.
- Parental consent
- Counselling is voluntary and parents reserve the right to consent to or decline counselling services for their child.
- Parents of students will be notified if the counsellor is to provide group counselling for their child.
- Parents/guardians of students will be notified immediately if there is any concern regarding the safety of their child or other students
- Parents will not be granted access to counselling records, which are considered the property of the counsellor/school.

## **Reasons for counselling referrals**

The following should be considered emergency referrals and referred immediately

- Suspected evidence of child abuse, physical or mental.
- A child who cries or gets sick daily.
- Any behaviour change in a child that is sudden or unusual.
- A child undergoing a traumatic family experience.
- Physical, Emotional or Mental Harm to Self or others.
- Indications of mounting hostility between a child and a teacher or his or her peer group.

## **A Staff member or Parent may refer**

- Students with learning challenges
- Students demonstrating observable changes in behaviour that cannot be accounted for by the teacher.
- Students who are constantly late for school or with their work or frequent absenteeism.
- Students with frequent complaints of hurts and aches, nervous or showing symptoms of anxiety.
- Students unable to follow class rules.

## **A Staff member or Parents should refer**

- Students facing a death in the family or of a close friend.
- Students experiencing a divorce or separation in the family.
- Students moving to a new community or class
- Students who exhibit excessive aggressive behaviour.
- A group of students who are unable to resolve a conflict.

- Students living in a broken home or migratory families.
- Students feeling uneasy in their interactions with the teacher.
- Students who seem to be involved in bullying situations.
- Students who might be unable to handle their emotions and find them interfering in their daily lives.
- Students who feel overwhelmed with academic / social pressures.

### **Partners in School Counselling Program**

- **Administrators** (the Principal, Supervisor, SENCO, non-teaching staff like Health and Safety officer, nannies) support and contribute to the counselling program in numerous ways by implementing policies and procedures.
- **Teachers** are a valuable resource as they spend the most time with students and are able to provide key information and feedback, which informs the counselling process. Teachers work closely with counsellor to assess and monitor students' progress and well-being.
- **Parents/guardians** work in partnership with school counsellors to help their wards to be successful in school. Parents are given the appropriate support by the counsellor to help their ward with his/her developmental, emotional and social needs, where needed or requested. In this two-way partnership, we also welcome suggestions and recommendations from parents to be implemented in the school environment.
- **Community members** such as psychologists, psychiatrists, other medical and university/educational professional partner with the school by providing workshops, assessments and consultations that contribute to students' development.

### **GIIS Methods of Counselling**

#### **Individual Sessions**

Individual counselling to students is always done with parental consent. A maximum of 6 sessions of individual counselling is provided to a student. Continuous feedback will be provided to parents during the counselling process.

#### 4 steps of counselling in GIIS

1. Relationship building/Initial disclosure
2. Assess problem or situation
3. Goal setting
4. Evaluation and termination

Students may be referred by teachers, students or other staff members for any behavioral concern in the classroom or school environment. In such circumstances Parents will be informed by the Counsellor.

- **Group Counselling**

Group sessions are held with multiple students experiencing similar problems or issues, it can be helpful for them to be in a counselling group together. Group counselling helps students build relationships and feel that they are not alone in their experiences.

- **Awareness programs for students**

The school counselling program addresses key issues faced by students of various age groups by awareness talks that provide students with key skills and techniques to navigate the world around them.

- **Staff training**

Training is provided to teachers and administrators to expand their scope of practice to include counselling. Staff are made aware of counselling policies and practices, how to identify indicators for student concern and how best to serve the counselling needs of students.

- **Record Keeping**

Individual and confidential student records are maintained by the Counsellor digitally. The Principal, SENCO and Counsellor are the persons who have access to these records.

Individual Behavioural Plan (IBP) provided by the Counsellor will be shared with parents, teachers and sometimes with students where applicable.

- **Evaluation of the Counselling program**

The Principal, SLT and Counsellor will meet annually to review the counselling services and address any issues arising. Statistical data will be collated on an annual basis and data obtained is used to highlight areas of concern, to influence policies within the school and to gain support in developing the counselling service.

### **Links to other policies**

Safeguarding & child protection policy

Health and Safety policy

Inclusion policy

Wellbeing Policy

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