



BRISBANE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

COUNSELLING POLICY PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

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1. Underlying Philosophy

Counselling at Brisbane Grammar School 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 Student Welfare Team, and consequently work within a team-based framework. Staff may also access counselling where no conflict exists with the counsellors' primary duty to the students and to the School.

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 behavioural issues.

- **Referrals for Internal Counselling**

Referrals may be made in one of three ways:

- By Headmaster/Deputy Headmaster(s)/Head of Middle School/Director of Student Services/Director of Boarding/the Head of Year or teachers (normally after consultation with the Head of Year);
- Self-referral by the student; or
- By a Parent (normally after consultation with the Head of Year, Head of Middle School, Director of Student Services, Deputy Headmaster(s) or Headmaster).

- **Referrals to External Providers**

Where the School in its discretion determines it is appropriate, a student (through his parents), may be requested to attend 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 his parent/s and the rationale explained;
- the student and his parents 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; and
- the School Counsellor may 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.

The parents and the student will be expected to accede to a request by the School for outside counselling unless reasons are produced which establish, to the School's reasonable satisfaction, why such a course is inappropriate.

Parents

It may be deemed appropriate by the Headmaster, Deputy Headmaster – Students or Head of Middle School for counsellors to see a parent (s) in relation to issues affecting their son.

Staff

Staff may consult the School Counsellor; however, in seeing staff, the primary role of the Counsellor is to provide short term intervention only and, where appropriate, will refer the staff member to an outside care provider. Staff should be aware that if they consult the School Counsellor then details of the consultation will be included in the counselling records.

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.

Interventions may also include the provision of psychometric assessments (e.g. I.Q., memory). However, given the significant amount of time required for the administration, interpretation, and reporting of such assessments, parents will generally be advised that they should be carried out by private psychologists. The School Counsellor may provide the names of suitable practitioners to parents, if requested. In such cases, the assessments will be at the parent's expense. In certain situations, and at the School's discretion [after consultation with and in agreement by the Deputy Headmaster - Students, Head of Middle School and Director of Student Services], these assessments may be carried out by the School Counsellor.

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 a lesson (maximum). It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that appointments do not clash with scheduled assessment tasks.
- The frequency of a consultation will be dependent on the nature of the issues as determined by the Counsellor. Where it is necessary for a student to be seen at least weekly over an extended period, consideration will be given, at the School's discretion, to requesting the student (through the student's parents) to consult an external service provider at the parent's cost and in accordance with the guidelines in 1.1.2 above.

Joint Interventions

Where it is appropriate, joint interventions may be provided. Such situations may include one or more counsellors 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 one or more counsellors 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 himself 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 he has suffered harm or the counsellor reasonably suspects that the student has suffered harm, sexual abuse or neglect; and/or
- it is otherwise required by law (e.g. in evidence in court).

Further, where necessary 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).

Parents

Where necessary, the student will be informed that to facilitate good communication between school and home, and to enhance the effectiveness of the School Counsellor’s role, it may be in the best interests of the student that the student’s parents be informed that the student is seeing the Counsellor. In such circumstances, it is the responsibility of either the referrer or the School Counsellor to inform the parent/s. In situations where the student specifically requests that parents not be informed, the student may be seen without the knowledge of his parents only if the School Counsellor and the Headmaster or his designate (Deputy Headmaster – Students or Head of Middle School) are satisfied that it is not in the best interests of the student that the parents be informed. If appropriate, the student will be encouraged to reconsider his position by providing the appropriate rationale for parental involvement.

Psychometric assessment

When psychometric assessment is undertaken by the School, this will only be performed with parental consent and agreement by the student with the clear intent of sharing the results with parents and relevant staff.

5. Accountability

The School 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 reports to the Director of Student Services and is a member of the Student Welfare Team. The School Counsellors will meet with the Director of Student Services on a fortnightly basis (unless otherwise agreed and advised to by the Headmaster) to provide feedback generally on the provision of counselling within the School and specifically (as necessary and appropriate) on individual matters. A formal supervision meeting will be held each term with the School Counsellors, Director of Student Services, Deputy Headmaster - Students, and/or Head of Middle School to discuss ongoing student issues.

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 under the guidance of the Deputy Headmaster - Students. Access to counselling records will be provided where appropriate legal and privacy legislation requirements are met.

7. Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding this policy please contact Deputy Headmaster - Students.

8. Policy Management

Document management	Dean of Administration & Curriculum	
Approved by	Board of Trustees Brisbane Grammar School	
Date approved	Version 1.0 <i>Mark Tyszkiewicz, Kerryn Hurd, & Anthony Micallef</i>	September 2005
Updated	Version 1.1 <i>Mark Tyszkiewicz & Kerryn Hurd</i>	February 2010
Updated	Version 1.2 <i>Dale Nicholas, Mark Tyszkiewicz & Kerryn Hurd</i>	February 2012
Updated		