



ATLANTIC HALL

**GUIDANCE AND
COUNSELLING POLICY
PRACTICES AND
PROCEDURES**

CONTENTS

1. Underlying philosophy

2. Counselling Services

- 2.1 Personal Counselling
- 2.2 Career Counselling
- 2.3 Academic Counselling

3. Referrals

- 3.1 Referrals to school counsellor
- 3.2 Referrals to external health providers

4. Therapies and interventions

- 4.1 Types of therapies and interventions
- 4.2 Duration/frequency of consultation
- 4.3 Joint interventions

5. Confidentiality

- 5.1 Students
- 5.2 Parent/s

6. Accountability

- 6.1 Professional accountabilities

7. Records/Access

8. Safe guarding and Child protection

9. Policy updates

1. Underlying philosophy

Counselling at Atlantic Hall School is offered to assist students to develop appropriate skills and resolve problems in relation to personal, career and/or academic issues. Counselling is provided within the framework of the School community, staff and parents as required. The focus is on the promotion and maintenance of effective learning, positive mental health, good physical health, and social wellbeing of the school within the school care.

School counsellors are geographically centrally located within the administrative block of the school.

2. Counselling services

Students counselling is provided in respect of three broad areas:

- Personal Issues;
- Career Issues; and
- Academic issues

2.1 Personal Counselling

Personal Counselling services vary according to need, but may be concerned with:

- Developmental and mental health issues;
- Interpretation of educational and psychological reports;
- Addressing and resolving specific problems
- Making decisions
- Stress Management
- Coping crisis
- Developing personal insights and knowledge; and
- Improving relationships with others

2.2. Career Counselling

Career services and education is a vital component of students exploring their options and managing their future planning.

The school aims to ensure that every student has access to individual careers counselling to discuss tertiary aspirations and future goals.

The school utilizes the internet and various print materials to provide information about tertiary options to students via group gatherings or on individual basis. Students and parents are encouraged to attend a series of events such as the destinations fair (held at the school every year), alumni fairs, and college/university fairs where they can get up to date information on post-secondary school options. Students are also taken to events outside the school to visit tertiary institution.

2.3. Academic Counselling

Academic counselling is provided to students who may be experiencing difficulties with their studies. Discussion with a School Counsellor can help students identify their areas of difficulty and develop strategies to facilitate improvement in their academic performance.

Discussion with a School counsellor may lead to referral to Remedial Classes that offer structured learning opportunities for students who may require additional assistance. The counselling department works closely with the Year tutors and the Director of Studies in the area of managing student learning. The academic department utilizes tools such as CAT4, PASS and student continuous performance assessments when assessing student's abilities and attitude to work when planning for remedial classes.

3 Referrals

The student will generally attend counselling on a voluntary basis. However, situations may arise where the school will request or require a student to attend counselling, for example, where there are concerns about a student wellbeing.

3.1 Referrals to School counsellor

Referrals may be made in one of the following ways:

- Heads of year,
- Heads of boarding,
- The principal, Vice Principal (VPA), Vice Principal Students Affairs (VPSA), Coordinator of Exams, The Head(s) of Year, or Teachers (normally after consultation with the relevant Head of Year);
- Self-referral by the student; or
- By a parent

3.2. Referrals to external health providers

Where the School in its absolute discretion determines it is necessary or appropriate, a student (through his/her parents) may be requested to attend counselling or other treatment by external health providers. This may occur for a number of reasons, for example where the nature, frequency and/or duration of the required intervention means it is not appropriate for the School counsellors to provide the service.

Where the School makes a request for a student to attend treatment by an external health provider, the following guidelines will be followed:

- The request will be discussed with the student and/or his parent/s and the rationale for the request explained;
- The student and his parents/will be provided with the name(s) of one or more suitable health providers, but may choose to consult with whichever health provider they wish to;
- The student's parents will be responsible for payment of the external health provider's fees;
- The School counsellor will facilitate the referral if requested to do so, and with consent of the student (through his/her parents), will be entitled to provide such reports kept by the school to the external health provider as are, in the school's opinion, reasonably necessary; and
- The School counsellor may be entitled to receive reports from the external health provider, as are reasonably necessary, to satisfy the School counsellor that the issues requiring the student's attendance on the external health provider have been satisfactorily resolved, or are being managed to the School's satisfaction.

The parents and the student will be expected to agree to a request by the School for counselling or other treatment by an external health provider unless, in the School's reasonable opinion, there are reasons why such counselling or other treatment is unnecessary or inappropriate.

4 Therapies and interventions

4.1 Types of the therapies and interventions

When counselling a student, a School counsellor will provide only recognized therapies and interventions. These may include cognitive, behavioral, family, and solution-focused approaches. In many cases, the given therapy/intervention will be a blend of approaches which focus on supportive, short-term, problem-centered outcomes.

In some cases, a need may be identified for a student to undergo psychometric assessments (e.g. I.Q, memory cognitive/aptitude, personality/behavioral tests). Given the significant amount of resources and time required for the administration, interpretation, and reporting assessments, parents will generally be advised that they should be carried out by external private psychologists. A School counsellor may provide the names of suitable practitioners if requested. In such cases, the assessments will be at the parent's expense.

4.2. Duration/frequency of consultation

Consultation with a School counsellor will generally take place during class time, unless otherwise agreed with the counsellor. The duration will generally be for no longer than one lesson (maximum). It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that consultations do not clash with scheduled tests or exams.

4.3. Joint interventions

Where it is considered appropriate, at the school's absolute discretion, joint interventions may be provided. This may involve one or more School counsellors jointly consulting with a student and members of his/her family. A joint intervention may also include the involvement of other appropriate staff.

5 Confidentiality

5.1. Students

Discussions (including records of discussions) with a school counsellor are confidential, except where in the reasonable opinion of the School counsellor:

- There is a concern that the student will cause himself/herself 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 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;
- It is necessary to seek advice from the child protection officer on issues concerning suspected child abuse. The counsellor is required to be familiar with the School's Child Protection Policy.

Where necessary, it will be explained to students and/or parents that the above exceptions are required by law, to comply with School policies, for the School to discharge its duty of care to students.

5.2. Parents

Where necessary, students will be informed that to facilitate good communication between the School and home, and to enhance the effectiveness of the School counsellor's role, it may be in the best interest of the student that his/her parents be informed that he/she is seeing a school counsellor. It is the responsibility of either the School counsellor to inform the student's parent/s.

Student counsellors, in the course of their work, may liaise with the student's parent/s in managing the student. Additionally, it may be necessary for a School counsellor to meet with parent/s to discuss issues affecting the student.

If a student specifically requests that his parent/s not be informed that he is seeing the counsellor, the Student may consult with the School counsellor without his parent/s knowledge only if the School counsellor and the VPSA are satisfied that it is in the best interest of the student that he/she receive counselling and that his parents not be informed. The School counsellor and the VPSA may reassess and change their decision about this at any time. Where appropriate, the student may be encouraged to reconsider his/her position by the School Counsellor explaining the rationale for parental involvement.

Despite a student requesting his/her parents not be informed, where the School in its absolute discretion determines it is necessary or appropriate, a student's parent/s may be informed of the student's request for counselling and/or any counselling provided to the student.

6 Accountabilities

The School counsellor has both the professional and administrative responsibility to;

- Maintain appropriate counselling records of students
- The records must contain the student name, date of each consultation, people 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 health providers regarding the student.
- Ensure appropriate communication and accountability within the school
- The school counsellors meet with the VPSA on a fortnightly basis (unless otherwise agreed and advised by the principal) to provide feedback generally on the provision of counselling within the school and specifically (as necessary or appropriate) on individual matters.

7 Records/Access

All counselling records must be stored at the back of the student's file under counselling issues. This record will be accessed only by the relevant school counsellor, the VPSA and the principal.

The school counsellor can keep a separate record which could be accessed by the relevant counsellor, the VPSA and the principal.

The records of the School counsellor are at all times the property of the School. If a School Counsellor leaves the school, his or her records will remain with the school and will be securely and confidentially archived under the guidance of the VPSA. These records may only be accessed by the Vice Principals, the Principal and the other remaining School counsellors.

Access to a student’s counselling records by the particular student, his parent/s, or third parties will only be granted where legal and privacy obligations are met.

8. Safe Guarding and Child Protection

School counsellors play a key role in implementing the School’s policy on child protection, including the identification and reporting of harm and inappropriate behavior, and providing support to students and parents.

9. Policy updates

This policy will be revised every two years by the Core Management Team of the school

Policy reviewed: October 2023

Next review: October 2025