

مدرسة الوحدة العربية

ARAB UNITY SCHOOL



School Counselling Policy

AY 2023-2024



Cambridge Assessment
International Education

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VISION STATEMENT

Our vision is that Arab Unity School aims to provide a stimulating, inclusive learning environment that challenges our students to discover their potential and develop into respectful, reliable, resilient and purposeful leaders of the global community.

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to provide an affordable education with a solid foundation of knowledge, technology and life skills enabling our students to be socially conscious and responsible individuals.

CORE VALUES

Character Building Morally accountable Diligent Trustworthy Self-regulator Caring	Progressive Thinking Technologically competent Collaborative Adaptable Enquiring Creative
Global Commitment Environmentally conscious Persevering Tolerant Effective Participant	Leadership Skills Inspiring Motivating Decisive Consistent Team player Reflective Learner

School Counselling Policy

The counselling program at Arab Unity School is designed to assist the child in making the most of his or her educational experience. This includes his/her emotional well-being, academic progress, and personal and social development.

Aims of the School Counselling Policy

- Enhance their physical, mental, and emotional well-being through informed decision
- Become familiar with the positive aspects of healthy living and activity
- Foster a pattern of health and wellbeing that will extend into adulthood, helping to promote the health and well-being of future generations of students
- Grow in an environment of compassion and equality, and be empowered with the tools to achieve

Guidelines for the Department

The School Counsellor:

- Practices within the scope of one's professional competence
- Complies with the ethical standards of the profession and relevant laws enacted by the UAE government and regulatory bodies (KHDA).
- Maintains competence through education, consultations, and training to enhance awareness, knowledge, skills, and effectiveness
- Provide students with information about the purpose, process, and goals of counselling at or before the start of the counselling relationship
- Ensures the confidentiality of the students at all times, including keeping records and protecting personal information

General Guide for Ethical Practices

School Counsellor shall:

1. Have a primary obligation to the students, who are to be treated with dignity and respect as unique individuals.
2. Respect students' and families' values, beliefs, sexual orientation, gender identification/expression and cultural background and exercise great care to avoid imposing personal beliefs or values rooted in one's religion, culture or ethnicity.
3. Maintain appropriate boundaries and are aware that any sexual or romantic relationship with students is considered a grievous breach of ethics and is prohibited regardless of a student's age. This prohibition applies to both in-person and electronic interactions and relationships.
4. Promote awareness of school counsellors' ethical standards and legal mandates regarding confidentiality and the appropriate rationale and procedures for disclosure of student data and information to school staff.
5. Inform students of the purposes, goals, techniques and rules of procedure under which they may receive counselling. Disclosure includes informed consent and

clarification of the limits of confidentiality. If the student is able to give assent/consent before school counsellors share confidential information, school counsellors attempt to gain the student's assent/consent.

6. Be aware that even though attempts are made to obtain informed consent, it is not always possible. When needed, school counsellors make counselling decisions on students' behalf that promote students' welfare.
7. Keep information confidential unless legal requirements demand that confidential information be revealed or a breach is required to prevent serious and foreseeable harm to the student. Serious and foreseeable harm is different for each minor in schools and is determined by students' developmental and chronological age, the setting, parental rights and the nature of the harm.
8. Collaborate with administration, teachers, staff and decision-makers around school improvement goals.
9. Provide students with a comprehensive school counselling program that ensures social/emotional development opportunities for all students.
10. Cooperate with all relevant stakeholders, including students, educators and parents/guardians when student assistance is needed, including the identification of early warning signs of student distress.
11. Do not release a student who is a danger to self or others until the student has proper and necessary support. If parents will not provide proper support, the school counsellor takes necessary steps to underscore to parents/guardians the necessity to seek help and at times may include a report to child protective services.
12. Report to parents/guardians and/or appropriate authorities when students disclose a perpetrated or a perceived threat to their physical or mental well-being. This threat may include, but is not limited to, physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, violence, bullying or sexual harassment.
13. To ensure safety, document audio or video footage in cases where a student poses a risk to themselves or others while on school premises.
14. Collaborate with the Inclusion support team in identifying and planning for Students of Determination.

Leadership and Management:

To accomplish these objectives, Arab Unity School actively supports the Counseling Service in identifying and addressing the diverse needs of our students. This support is facilitated through a direct reporting line to the Head of Inclusion. The School Counselor plays a pivotal role in coordinating counseling support and service delivery, particularly for students and their families.

In collaboration with the guidance of the Governor, overseen by the Deputy Principal and the Head of Inclusion, the School Counselor monitors, advises, evaluates, and plans for the development of counseling services throughout the school. The successful implementation of inclusive practices should result in every student feeling secure, confident, and content at school, making optimal progress toward realizing their potential—whether in lessons, during play or lunchtimes, or when participating in school excursions and extracurricular activities.

Potentially vulnerable groups

There are a number of identified groups of students and families for whom this policy is particularly pertinent:

- Students with Special Educational Needs (SEN)
- Students whose home language is not English (EAL)
- Students who are Gifted and Talented (G&T)
- Students with physical or sensory impairments
- Students who might be subject to abuse or harassment, for whatever reason
- Students who are young carers
- Students whose family are in crisis or under great stress
- Students at risk of significant harm or neglect
- Students with poor attendance and/or punctuality
- Students who are at risk of disaffection and exclusion from school
- Students who have a temporary high-level need

Confidentiality

The School Counselling is confidential:

- Within the limits of legal and ethical requirements for the protection of students.
- Committed to respecting the right of a student, all information disclosed by student which he/she deemed to be private related to his/her personal life, mental health, issues and comments against other people, will all be treated confidentially.
- Recognize that primary ethical obligation for confidentiality is to the students but equilibrium must be maintained that obligation with an understanding of parents'/guardians legal and inherent rights to be the guiding voice in their children's lives.
- School Counsellor understands the need to balance students' ethical rights to make choices and their capacity to give consent to make decisions on their child's behalf.

Privacy and Confidentiality

A student's right to privacy and confidentiality is the basis for an effective counselling relationship. They are fundamental requirements for keeping trust and respecting the young person's autonomy and is legally established in the Human Rights Act 1998 article 8.

Good practice dictates the use of a clear contract to explain to student the boundaries of confidentiality a school counselling service can offer. The aims of this explanation are:

- To enable the student to develop a trusting relationship with the Counsellor.
- To allow the student to open up and share feelings without blame or reprisal.
- To allow the student to speak freely about issues concerning them.
- To encourage others to come forward for counselling.

Breaching Confidentiality

At the initial session, the Counsellor will make it clear to the student that they may need to breach confidentiality in terms of telling others and seeking help. This may happen when the student, or any other person (adult or child) is at risk of significant harm. In the case of threats of suicide or serious self-harm, there is a general acceptance of a need for intervention and of breaking confidentiality.

The Counsellor will discuss the possibilities of breach again if the need arises during the counselling relationship. Where possible, the Counsellor will keep the student informed and involved in the process of gaining assistance from others.

The Counsellor is NOT required to pass on information about a student breaking a school rule or committing an offense.

Child Protection policy

The Counselling service will be familiar with the Arab Unity School Child Protection policy and procedures in this regard. There may be a need to breach confidentiality in the interests of child safety if a student confides about abuse (physical, emotional, verbal, sexual or other abuse) or neglect, to self or another juvenile or minor (less than 18 years). For further step case will be refer to Child protection committee.

Parent Consent

Parents and guardians of the student will be notified if the counsellor provides individual/group counselling for their child. Counselling is voluntary and parents/guardians reserve the right to agree or refuse counselling services for your child. Parents are not entitled to counselling records, which are considered counsellor/school property.

Parents/guardians of all students are notified immediately if there is a concern about their child's safety and a feedback report at the end of the school year.

Session Allocation

Appointments are made subject to availability and to urgency. Sessions will generally be weekly, fortnightly, or monthly, depending on the need, for a maximum of 12 sessions. Any extension to this will be considered on a case by case basis depending on the needs of the individual student.

After the 6th consecutive counselling session, a review session with the student will be conducted by the Counsellor to track progress and revise counselling goals. Sessions will be for a maximum of 60 minutes for secondary students. Primary school counselling sessions are generally for 40 minutes.

Appointments are to be timetabled in class time, using free periods or Supervised study periods (SPS) where possible, in consultation with the student regarding important learning deadlines. Release from lesson times is to be spread across the individual timetable to minimize disruption from subject learning. Communication regarding appointment times will be made via the student's parents/class teachers in Primary School, and Form tutors/subject teachers/students in Secondary School. The Counsellor will not advise the reason for consultation to Form Tutors/teachers without parent and/or student consent.

Sharing Information with Other Stakeholders

The Counselling Service will work in a multi-disciplinary way and communicate with school staff, other agencies and specialized services, whilst maintaining an appropriate level of confidentiality. This should only happen with the students or parents' permission.

It will be common for the Key Stage/Year Group Leaders and Head of Inclusion to be informed of students accessing counselling services, however not necessarily the reasons or contents of sessions. This can only be shared subject to parental/student consent. A general update regarding progression is considered sufficient, unless conducive to student wellbeing and academic success.

When the need arises, liaison with outside agencies to support a student's mental health issues is necessary and written consent to provide/seek additional information to a Third-party from parents and/or students will be obtained in every case.

Other Professionals

At times, it may be necessary to refer students or staff to outside agencies for specialist therapeutic intervention. Serious, ongoing mental health issues and family-based problems are referred to appropriate outside professionals/agencies for full assessment and support. Arab Unity School will not accept responsibility for individual referrals to practitioners. The school can recommend preferred providers, however, the selection of outside agencies and practitioners will remain the sole discretion of the parents seeking assistance.

Services Provided

The counselling services target 3 essential areas of development: educational, Emotional & Social, and career development.

Academic Development:

- Apply skills needed for educational achievement
- Apply skills of transitioning between educational levels
- Understanding the relationship of academics to the world of work and to life at home and in the community

Emotional/Social Development:

- Understand self as an individual and as a member of diverse local & global communities
- Interact with others in ways that respect individual & group differences
- Apply personal safety skills & coping strategies

Career Development:

- Apply career exploration & planning skills in the achievement of life career goals
- Know where & how to obtain information about the world of work & post-secondary training/education

Graduated system of support**LEVEL 1 – Monitoring & Check-ins**

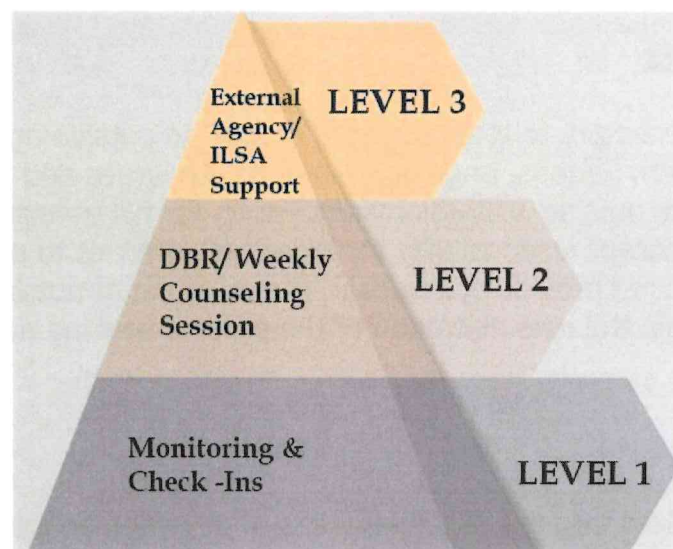
- It is expected that the large majority of students will be sufficiently supported through this level of support.

LEVEL 2 - TARGETED SUPPORT SERVICE

- Specific and time-limited intervention that is provided to students who are falling behind age-expected levels of performance. It is expected that a minority of students will require access to level 2 support services. Long-term (Depending on the need of student) and short-term sessions (2- 8 weeks)

LEVEL 3 - INDIVIDUALISED SUPPORT SERVICE

- Individualized and specialized provision, which is different from that provided to most other students of determination. This may include full-time support. It is expected that only few students will require access to level 3 support services.

**Before making a referral**

- a) Before making a referral to a specialized service the school consults with parents or carers.
- b) An exception to this practice occurs when the school has information that indicates that a student may be at risk of harm (see Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy). In these circumstances, the school then takes instruction from the Child Protection Officer on how to proceed.

Referral Process

The purpose of the referral process is to provide timely and effective support to initiate an appropriate plan of action for students at various levels of need. Individual referrals are accepted wherever there are concerns regarding the issues related to social and emotional adjustment at school of the students.

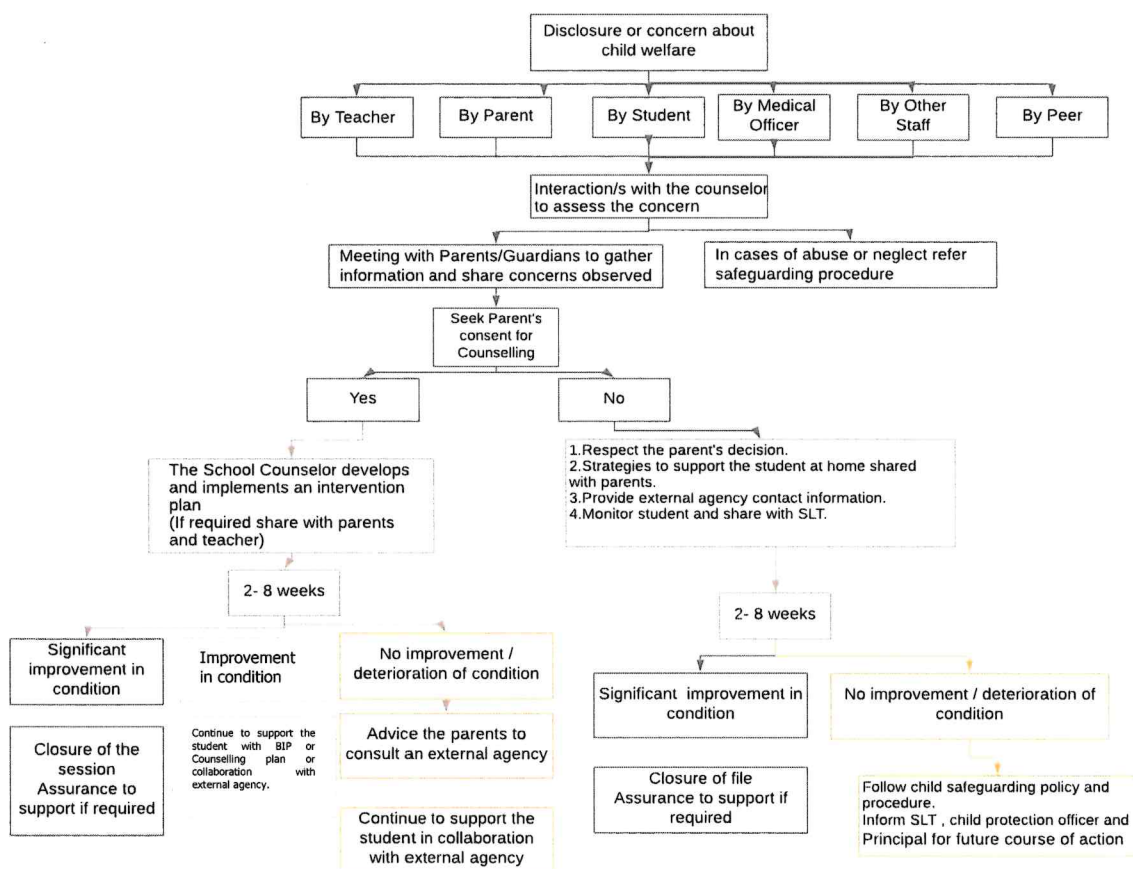
The Counselling Flow Chart may guide all the school staff to be informed about the process of counselling the students.

Links with other policies

Student Counselling Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Wellbeing Policy

Counselling Referral Procedure Flowchart



Governor for Inclusion
Wellbeing & Safeguarding

Principal

Internal Governor for
Wellbeing

Head of Inclusion