



مدرسة الوحدة العربية  
ARAB UNITY SCHOOL

## School Counselling Policy

**AY 2025-2026**



**CAMBRIDGE**  
International Education

Cambridge International School

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<b>Reviewed by</b>	<b>Ms. Susan Rubin Varghese</b>
<b>Approved by</b>	<b>Mr. Nigel McQuoid</b>

## 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

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

## School Counselling Policy

The counselling program at Arab Unity School aligns with the Dubai KHDA guidelines for school counselling, aiming to support students' holistic development encompassing academic achievement, emotional well-being, and social-personal growth.

### Aims of the School Counselling Policy

- *Promote student well-being:* Prioritize students' physical, mental, and emotional well-being by equipping them with informed decision-making skills, as emphasized by KHDA.
- *Cultivate healthy living:* Encourage healthy living practices and activities that foster a foundation for lifelong well-being – a key focus area in KHDA's guidelines.
- *Create a nurturing environment:* Nurture a compassionate and inclusive environment that empowers students with the tools to succeed, reflecting KHDA's commitment to inclusive education.

### Guidelines for the Department

The School Counsellor:

- Adheres to the KHDA School Counselling Guidelines, the UAE Ministry of Education's ethical standards, and maintains ongoing professional development as recommended by KHDA.
- Provides students with clear information about the counselling process, goals, and confidentiality at the outset, adhering to KHDA's student rights and ethical considerations.
- Ensures student confidentiality at all times, including record-keeping and safeguarding personal information, as mandated by KHDA.

### General Guide for Ethical Practices

The School Counsellor upholds the following ethical principles, aligned with KHDA guidelines:

- *Student-Centric Approach:* Treats all students with dignity and respect, recognizing their unique needs and individuality.
- *Cultural Sensitivity:* Respects students' and families' values, beliefs, and backgrounds, avoiding personal bias.
- *Maintaining Appropriate Boundaries:* Understands the importance of professional boundaries and avoids any romantic or sexual relationships with students.
- *Transparency Regarding Confidentiality:* Informs students about the limitations of confidentiality and the rationale for disclosure in specific situations, complying with KHDA's guidelines.
- *Informed Consent:* Obtains informed consent from students (and assent when appropriate) before sharing confidential information.

- *Duty to Protect:* Prioritizes student well-being and makes decisions that promote their safety, even if consent is not obtained in certain circumstances, as outlined in KHDA's child protection protocols.
- *Confidentiality with Limits:* Maintains confidentiality but discloses information when legally mandated or to prevent serious harm to the student, following KHDA's child protection guidelines.
- *Collaboration with Stakeholders:* Works collaboratively with school administration, teachers, and other professionals to optimize student support and achieve school improvement goals, as encouraged by KHDA.
- *Comprehensive Counselling Program:* Provides a well-rounded school counselling program that addresses the social-emotional needs of all students, as recommended by KHDA.

### **Leadership and Management:**

Arab Unity School actively supports the Counselling Service by providing a direct reporting line to the Head of Inclusion, facilitating efficient resource allocation and service delivery as per KHDA's recommendations.

The School Counsellor plays a pivotal role in coordinating counselling and support services for students and their families, aligning with KHDA's emphasis on collaboration.

In collaboration with the Governor, overseen by the Deputy Principal and the Head of Inclusion, the School Counsellor monitors, evaluates, and plans for the continuous development of counselling services throughout the school. This ensures every student feels secure and supported to reach their full potential, as envisioned by KHDA.

### **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 Service upholds confidentiality:

- Within the limitations of legal and ethical requirements for student protection, as mandated by KHDA.
- By respecting the students' right to privacy regarding personal information disclosed during counselling sessions.

The policy acknowledges the balance between student confidentiality and parental rights, aiming to collaborate with parents while respecting students' autonomy and capacity for informed decision-making.

## **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.

### **Information for Parents/Carers:**

- Supporting Counselling: Parents can encourage counselling by showing acceptance and interest but should avoid pressuring their child to discuss details.
- Not a Parenting Failure: Counselling is not a reflection of parenting skills. Children may seek outside support for various reasons.
- Referral Process: Referrals can be initiated by parents, child, or school personnel.

### **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. 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 50 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.

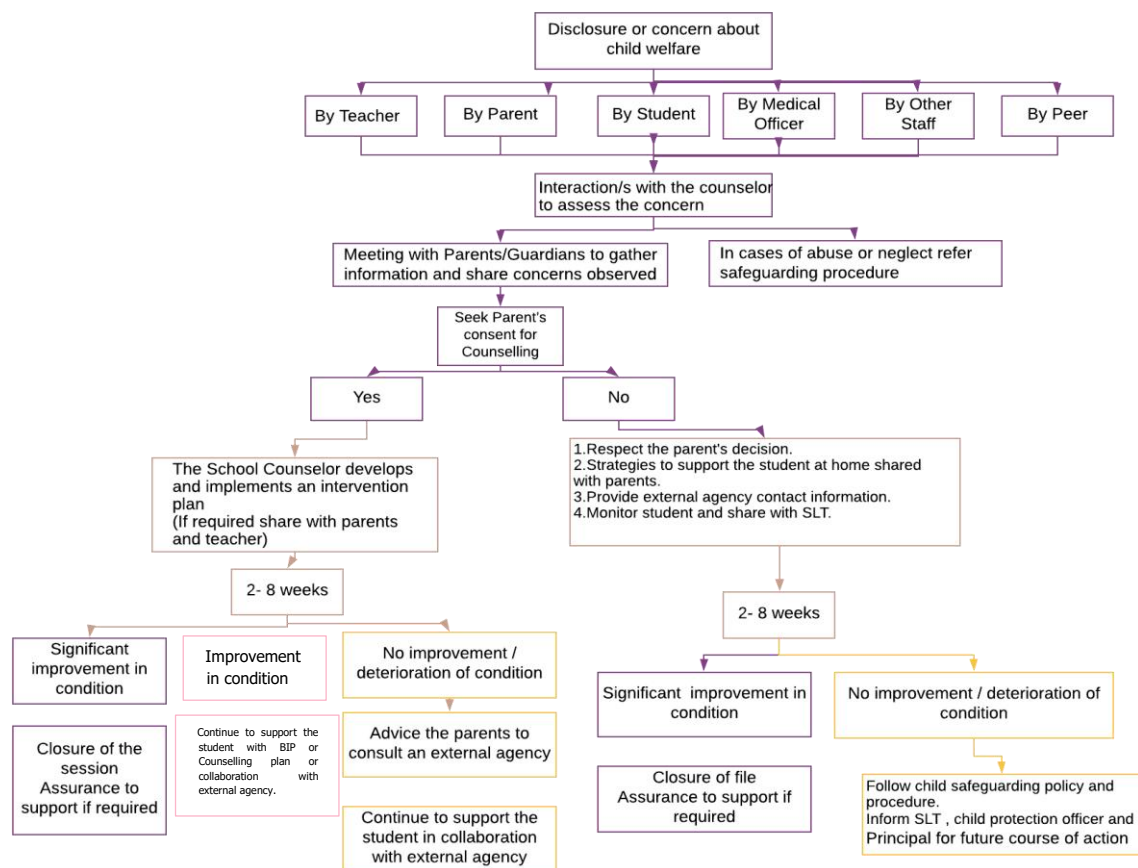
The Counselling Flow Chart may guide all the school staff to be informed about the process of counselling the students.

## 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

Internal Governor for  
Wellbeing

Principal

Head of Inclusion