



ICS Policy Document

Whilst all Policies have a minimum date for review as a guideline, policies are under constant review. Changes to policies will occur as required.

Counselling Policy

Approved by: Governing Board	Date: November 2019
Last reviewed on:	Date: N/A
Next review due by: 3 yearly	Date: November 2022

ICS is committed to empowering their students to be confident, self-reliant and resilient. It aims to ensure the students have a positive mental wellbeing. The counselling service provides a confidential, safe, nurturing and personalised approach for students to explore difficulties they may encounter, complementing the pastoral support within the wider School community.

The service is available to any parent within the School community to discuss any concerns they may have regarding their son/daughter and is also available to any member of the School staff.

Aims

- To provide a safe and nurturing environment to support the therapeutic process for all students, appropriate to the needs and life stage of the student.
- To identify, alongside the pastoral teams, students who may be at risk of emotional, psychological and/or social issues as early as possible.
- To provide ethical and professional support for vulnerable students
- To provide group intervention where there is a pattern of behaviour emerging.
- To encourage student, parental and staff involvement in accessing the service.

The counselling support provided is in line with current best practice and professional standards for school based counselling as set out in DFE Statutory Guidance



‘Counselling in schools: a blueprint for the future Departmental advice for school leaders and counsellors’, which was published in March 2015.

This policy also reflects the ADEK Counselling Policy (53) as set out in the ADEK Private School Policy Manual 2014.



Practice and Procedure

What is counselling?

Counselling provides an opportunity for individuals to talk, in confidence, about things that are worrying them or affecting their day to day life. Counsellors are trained to listen, without judging, and to help the person to resolve their thoughts and feelings and gain a greater understanding of themselves and their situation. The counselling sessions are dictated by the individual and common issues for students are bullying, parental separation, stress, friendships, change, bereavement, distressing traumatic events and anger. The counsellor does not generally offer advice.

Confidentiality

A key feature of the service is that information discussed in the counselling session is treated confidentially.

Counselling is a time when the individual needs to feel secure to talk about their concerns without the fear of the conversation being shared. This promotes a trusting therapeutic relationship between the counsellor and student/parent/staff member. Confidentiality will be explained at the beginning of the counselling process and periodically thereafter, where there is a need.

However, in the event that there is a child protection concern about a student's welfare, then this information will need to be shared. The counsellor will endeavour to seek the student's views and consent before sharing the information and will also explain the possible consequences of third party involvement.

Where a student is at risk of significant harm, the counsellor will initiate ICS's Child Protection procedures (please refer to the Child Protection policy).

As an integral part of the pastoral system within ICS, the Principal and Vice Principal are aware of students accessing the service but they are not party to the information discussed within the sessions.

The counsellor may also liaise with, share information or provide referral information to students, parents or staff.

Supervision

In his book 'Staff Supervision in Social Care' Tony Morrison (2003) illustrates supervision to be 'a cooperative and facilitating process, which aims to:

- Develop the worker's effectiveness
- Provide a suitable and appropriate forum for the worker to assure those to whom he or she is accountable that he or she is acting responsibly
- Develop the worker as a professional person.' (ibid, 2003: 30)

All counsellors are required to access regular clinical supervision with a supervisor who has the experience and understanding of children and young people and of the school setting. The counsellor will be supervised by the Advisor to the Managing Director for clinical supervision. In this context, supervision is a process of guided reflection, enabling the counsellor to explore challenges and difficulties, rather than simply a top-down exchange emphasising the organisation's expectations.

All other supervision is provided by the Principal.

Reporting & evaluation

The counsellor reports to the Principal who will regularly review and evaluate the service. Part of the evaluation process will be a yearly appraisal of the counsellor and identification of CPD.

Referral & assessment

- The process for referral is outlined in Appendix 1.
- Any student in Year 7 /Grade 6 or above can self-refer.
- Any student in Years 6 / Grade 5 or below must be referred through either the Team Leader or Vice Principal and the referral must be accompanied by a referral form. Parental consent should be sought.
- The pastoral team may sometimes make the decision to refer a student to the counselling service against their wishes due to their behaviour. The counsellor will offer a one-off involuntary session and the process is then left to the student to agree to another session with the counsellor.
- Parents can refer their son/daughter directly to the counselling service by contacting the counsellor
- A member of staff can self-refer by contacting the counsellor.

Sessions & waiting lists

- Counselling sessions typically last 40 minutes and will take place in the counsellor's office.



- A review of the sessions will take place every six weeks.
- Appointments will be scheduled at a convenient time for the students and to ensure their learning is not impacted upon by lessons being missed.
- The counselling service tries to meet the needs of all students but there may be times when there is a huge demand on the service and this will result in waiting lists.
- Unless warranted by exceptional circumstances, if students miss three individual counselling sessions without notification in advance, then the referral shall be closed.

Informed consent

Years FS1-Year 6 / KG - Grade 5 : Parental permission must be obtained prior to any sessions commencing. (See appendix 2)

Year 7 & above: The Gillick Principle applies

‘As a general principle it is legal and acceptable for a young person to ask for confidential counselling without parental consent providing they are of sufficient understanding and intelligence’ (Gillick V West Norfolk AHA, House of Lords, 1985).

Since this ruling, all young people in the UK are entitled to confidential counselling. This is the principle that ICS applies.

Gillick competence will be assessed by the counsellor in the initial session and if deemed competent, the student will be able to give consent (Appendix 3).

Assessment of competence based on the Gillick principle will take account of the age, maturity, understanding of consequences of their action and understanding what is being proposed by the counsellor. As a rule most students in Year 7 / Grade 6 or above are deemed sufficiently competent to understand the counselling process. Parental permission will be sought if this is not the case.

Assessment and Record Keeping

The counsellor will keep a formal record of students who access the service and a brief description of the presenting issue. Where the student is referred, a referral form will be kept on file as well as parental consent, where needed.



All student records will be stored in a locked cabinet in the counsellor's office. Statistical data will be collated annually but students will not be identified.

Staffing and Resources

ICS will ensure that the counsellor is a suitably trained and experienced member of staff. The counsellor will also be licensed by ADEK to work within a school setting.

Linked Policies:

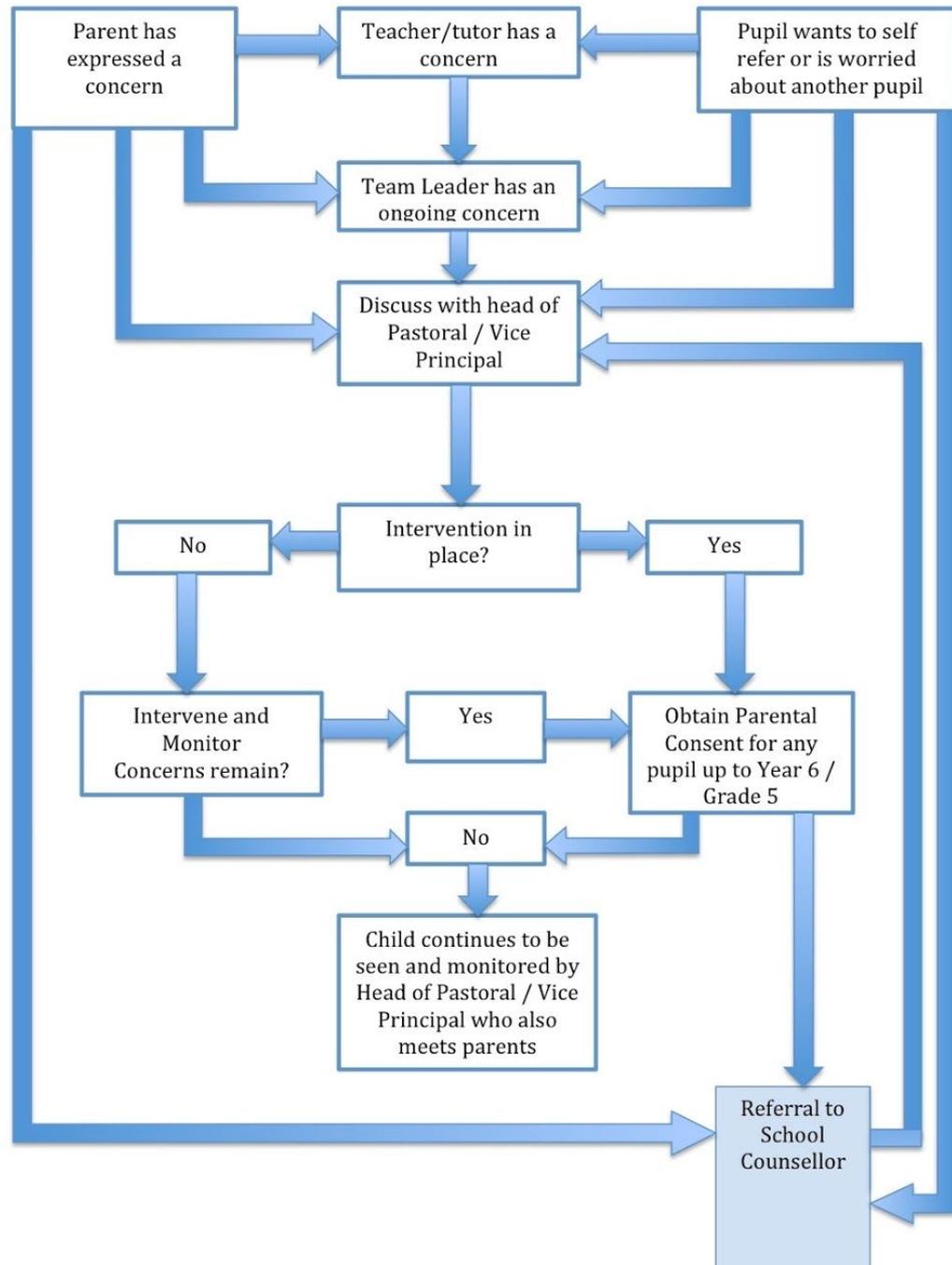
- Child Protection
- Confidentiality
- Freedom of Information

This policy is written in conjunction with the following legislation:

- ADEK Policy and Guidance Manual (2014-2015)
 - Policy 53: Counselling Services: Corresponding to Articles (58) of the Organising Regulations
- DFE Statutory Guidance 'Counselling in schools: a blueprint for the future Departmental advice for school leaders and counsellors'. UK, March 2015.
- The Gillick Principle, Gillick V West Norfolk AHA, House of Lords, 1985

NS – March 2019

Counselling Policy
International Community Schools
Counselling Referral Flowchart





Counselling Policy

Appendix 2: Parent Informed Consent Form

PARENTAL / GUARDIAN PERMISSION FOR COUNSELLING

I hereby give permission for my child to receive a series of counselling sessions with the counsellor at ICS.

Child's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS) _____

Class _____ Date of birth _____

Parent or Guardian Signature _____

Parent or Guardian Name (BLOCK CAPITALS) _____

Relationship to child _____

Date of signing _____

It is important that parents meet with the counsellor initially to provide a background history of the child's medical issues, significant life events (for example: loss of a loved one, moving to a new country, trauma or accidents) and any other relevant information that will assist the counsellor when she is meeting with your child.



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Appendix 3: Student Informed Consent Form

YOUNG PERSON CONSENT FOR COUNSELLING

I understand what counselling is and the explanation about confidentiality is clear to me.

I consent to receive a series of counselling sessions with the counsellor at ICS Abu Dhabi

Name (BLOCK LETTERS)_____.

Form _____

Young person signature_____

Date_____

To be completed by Counsellor

Confidentially explained on (date)_____

Counsellor signature_____ Date_____