

COUNSELING POLICY

23-24 AY

Vision



Mission

Our mission is to develop caring, lifelong learners and global citizens in a culture of excellence through an international, well-balanced education.

Our Core Values



I am *getting better*



emotionally intelligent

respectful



collaborator



resilient



communicator



global citizen

Definition of Learning

Learning at Hamilton is the purposeful, personalized process we undertake to help us get better to succeed in school and beyond as a lifelong learner.

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Aim

Our aim is to promote the well-being of all students and ensure all individuals are appropriately supported by acting in the following ways:

- To provide a safe and nurturing environment to support all students.
- To identify students with, or at risk of, emotional, psychological, social, and/or academic issues as early as possible through a variety of means and in consultation with appropriate personnel.
- To provide ethical and professional support for vulnerable students.
- To deliver early intervention, well-being programs, and psychosocial support across the school to increase the resilience of our students.
- To encourage parental and student involvement in accessing counseling services and adopting a multidisciplinary approach.
- To review and to promote the best practice within the school.

The counseling service aims to build on the school's pastoral provision by offering additional personal support to students who may benefit from the opportunity of working with a professional counselor. This confidential service helps promote the psychological and emotional well-being of students enabling them to benefit from the opportunities offered for their psychosocial, emotional, and academic development.

The counseling support provided conforms to the current best practices and professional standards for school-based counseling, specifically in respect of counselor qualifications, continual professional development, and safe-working practices. The THIS counselor works within these guidelines and is bound by their Ethical Framework and Professional Conduct Procedure.

THIS – ISP Safeguarding Policy A

A. PURPOSE

The International Schools Partnership (ISP) expects that all staff and volunteers in our schools and any contractors or partner agency staff used by schools, recognize where a student is at risk of, or is actually being harmed and do all they can to reduce further risk or harm.

We recognize that our schools are particularly important in protecting our students; they are in the best position to identify concerns early and provide or identify help for students as well as helping to prevent these concerns from escalating.

ISP adheres to these basic principles:

- A child's welfare is paramount, and each student has the right to be protected from harm and exploitation and to have their welfare safeguarded irrespective of race, religion, ability, gender or culture
- o All students need to be safe and feel safe in school.
- Every student is entitled to a rich and broad curriculum that helps to equip them to keep themselves safe.
- Every adult in school must have a demonstraple commitment to protecting the students with/for whom we work.
- We work in partnership with parents/carers ar d/or other professionals to ensure the protection of students.
- Our guiding principle throughout is 'the best interests of the students'.
- All students have the same equal rights to protection, but we recognize that we need to do more for some because of their special educational needs, disability, gender, religion or sexual orientation.

1. Aims and Objectives

ISP aims to:

- o Provide a safe and happy environment to enable students to thrive and learn.
- Outline the systems and processes we all take to ensure that students remain safe at school.
- Raise awareness to all staff of safeguarding/child protection issues and define their roles and responsibilities in reporting possible cases of abuse.
- o Identify students who are suffering, or likely to suffer harm.
- Ensure effective communication between all staff on child protection/safeguarding issues.
- Set effective procedures for staff/volunteers or third-party individuals who encounter any issues in relation to child protection/safeguarding to follow.
- Be clear with all parties, including students and their parents/carers, regarding our approach to safeguarding and child protection, through the provision of clear and well communicated policies

What is Counseling?

Counseling is a process of collaborative effort between the counselor and the individual and a process of empowering students, parents, and other individuals to work through feelings of inner conflict, gain a greater understanding of themselves and their surroundings, gain a better understanding of their feelings and thought processes, help identify goals, and set potential solutions to problems. Counseling enhances an individual's well-being, provides healthy coping strategies, and helps an individual flourish in their social life, academics, and career through means of talking, active-listening, and/or other activities and strategies.

The counselor does not generally offer advice but offers guidance and support for individuals to reach their fullest potential in life. Students are provided with a safe space to express their feelings and thoughts about what they perceive to be an issue in their life. Bullying, stress,

anxiety, lack of self-esteem, lack of character education, lack of emotional awareness and healthy coping skills, bereavement, loss, family and personal relationships, and peer-pressure are some key issues that may lead to developing behavioral challenges, in addition to a deteriorating mental health and well-being in the absence of proper and professional support.

Role of the Counselor

The role of the counselor at THIS is to advocate for the mental health and well-being of our school community. The counselor will provide support to individual pupils who experience difficulties or challenges that impact their emotional and social well-being and/or academic achievement. The counselor will initiate one-to-one counseling sessions, school-wide and group activities which promote self-awareness, effective communication, conflict resolution in addition to assisting in the development of resiliency and higher-order cognitive functions.

The counselor will provide guidance and support to all staff members to enable them in delivering mental health or psychological first aid. The counselor is an active participant in the school community and as such, builds warm and supportive relationships with all students, as do to all staff members.

Referrals and Assessments

The purpose of referrals and assessments is to provide effective support to set and initiate an appropriate plan of action for students at various levels of need. The counselor recognizes the contribution of all members of the school community including teachers, parents/guardians, and students in the identification of any concern(s).

A referral is made to the school counselor when a concern for a student arises. Hence, sources of referrals may include self-referral by students experiencing a problem, parent(s)/guardian(s), teachers, administrators, and/or other school personnel. Should parent(s)/guardian(s) make a disclosure of their child's self-harm behavior, suicidal ideation or potential mental health risk to a teacher or any school personnel, the parent will be required to meet with the counselor and the Designated Safeguarding Lead to discuss support that is available within the school and appropriate referral services as needed.

The school counselor may determine that other resources would be appropriate, including referral to the Designated Safeguarding Lead Team (DSL) to report suspected cases of abuse or neglect and external agency referral in suspected or confirmed high-risk cases.

Parental consent is required before counseling sessions can commence. The counselor caseload meeting adopts a Team Around the Child (TAC) approach. The counselor caseload team consists of the School Counselor, the Designated Safeguarding Leads for all departments, the Head of Inclusion or Inclusion Coordinator, Assistant Heads, and the pastoral team. Meetings are to be held weekly, with the exception to urgent cases; and are an opportunity for all department-related referrals and cases to be discussed by the multidisciplinary team whilst respecting

confidentiality and limits to confidentiality. During the meetings, each case is assessed individually as to whether it meets the requirements for regular school counseling, or if another intervention would be more appropriate. The school counselor then responds to the referrer with feedback and recommendations.

Confidentiality and Limits to Confidentiality

All students are entitled to confidentiality. This is vital in enabling students to express their distress during counseling. Whilst acknowledging that confidentiality is crucial, it cannot be absolute in any counseling relationship. Limits to confidentiality will be clearly explained to the student at the beginning of the counseling relationship and periodically thereafter, as required. The need to protect students is sensitively weighed against their right to privacy and confidentiality. In the case of a potential child protection concern, events may develop that could lead to the counselor considering that a breach of confidentiality is necessary and crucial in regard to the student's safety. This relates to situations when the student discloses details of abuse, neglect, self-harm, or suicide ideation and/or when the counselor has strong grounds for reasoning that a student may be at risk of significant harm from themselves or others. The counselor will endeavor to seek the student's views and consent in advance of any disclosure of information and explain the possible consequences of involvement with other parties. Where a student is at risk of significant harm the counselor is required to initiate the school's child protection procedure (see THIS Safeguarding policy).

Reporting and Evaluation

The counselor will report to their line manager. At the end of each term, the counselor will conduct a review and evaluation of the service, this information will be forwarded to their line manager and the Senior Leadership Team. Counselors are required to maintain data on the number of students attending, assessment of needs, types of interventions, and psychosocial or well-being activities held. The review and evaluation of the counseling sessions will be reported in narrative form.

School Counseling Protocols

10.1 Services Provided

- One-to-one individual counseling, in a nurturing and safe environment.
- Well-being and psychosocial support activities in small groups, covering a range of areas such as friendships and peer-relationships, stress management, social skills, acceptance, anger management, conflict resolution strategies, coping skills, decision-making...
- Provision of a calendar of well-being programs and psychosocial support activities which will be rolled out throughout the year, based on an evaluation and needs assessment.
- CPD training is provided to THIS staff.
- Support for staff during emergency or crisis situations.

10.2 Topics Brought to Counseling

(But not limited to)

- Anxiety
- Stress
- Anger
- Bullying
- Family/Relationship Issues
- Self-esteem
- Emotional Awareness and Coping Skills
- Depression
- Isolation
- Grief/loss
- Transition
- Character Education
- Peer-pressure

10.3 Resources

The school counselor has access to a range of resources:

- Screening tools for mental health difficulties and disorders
- Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire
- Games, recreational activities material

10.4 Referrals & Assessments

The process is outlined in the school counseling referral chart (See Appendix 1).

10.5 Sessions

Counseling sessions last between 30 to 40 minutes, depending on age and circumstance. Sessions will be held in the designated counseling room unless the counselor chooses another location for a particular intervention. A review of the sessions will take place every six weeks and a plan will be set accordingly.

10.6 Scheduling and Waiting Times

The counseling department tries to meet the needs of all students. As the school year progresses, there will an increasing demand for counseling services and, consequently, waiting lists will rapidly develop. Thus, in contemplation of accommodating a large number of students, the counseling department will need to ensure that every available timeslot is scheduled. Therefore, students need to keep appointments as scheduled. Nevertheless, if students are unable to attend

the session, the counselor should be notified the soonest. Unless warranted by exceptional circumstances, if students miss three (3) individual counseling sessions or two group appointments without prior notification, students may not be admitted for another appointment for the rest of the academic term. However, the counseling department reserves the right to make decisions about services on a case-by-case basis, taking clinical information into account.

There is a grace period of 10 minutes past a scheduled appointment time. After this grace period, students may be asked to reschedule.

10.7 Collaborating with External Agencies or Specialists

The THIS counselor will build a strong network of multidisciplinary referral mapping for emergency or at-risk students. (See Appendix 5)

Informed Consent

When counseling is initiated, and throughout the counseling process as necessary, counselors will inform students of the purposes, goals, techniques, procedures, limitations, potential risks, and benefits of services to be performed, and clearly indicate limitations that may affect the relationship such as information sharing, limitations of confidentiality, as well as any other pertinent information.

Howbeit, if for any reason parental consent is denied or if a student refuses parental consent, the Counselor and the Designated Safeguarding Lead will assess the situation and take necessary actions as required.

11.1 Primary & Secondary School Students

Students, parents, and teachers can refer to the counseling department, however, written parental consent must be obtained prior to any formal counseling sessions commencing (See Appendix 2, 3 & 4). As is the nature of the Primary & Secondary School, students develop relationships of support and guidance with many members of the school community, including the counselor. Students may visit the counselor for a drop-in to ask questions about the service offered and receive reassurance, however parental consent will be required for any subsequent planned sessions.

11.2 Well-Being Programs and Psychosocial Support Activities

These programs do not require parental consent, for example social skills, study skills, and/or ECAs delivered by the counselor. As a member of the school community our counselors will participate in a range of school activities, hence, any potential interaction between student and counselor, parental consent is not required.

Sharing Information

Confidentiality is an ethical concern. The fundamental intent is to protect the student's right to privacy by ensuring that matters disclosed to a counselor will not be relayed to or shared with others without the permission of the student. Limitations to confidentiality includes disclosure of information pertinent to the harm of the concerned student or a student's intent to harm others hence serving the "Duty to Protect" rule.

The counseling department will work in a multidisciplinary approach and communicate with school staff, other agencies, and specialized services whilst maintaining an appropriate level of confidentiality. Counselors may find it necessary to liaise with, share information or provide referral information to students and/or parents for further help upon the student's consent. Pastoral meetings are an opportunity for school leadership to confidentially discuss caseload referrals and assessments on vulnerable students.

Student Advocacy

Student advocacy is the process of supporting and enabling young people to express their views and concerns, in addition to promote their rights and responsibilities. Should there be a multidisciplinary meeting, where the student is in attendance, the counselor will function as the student's advocate. Other members of the school pastoral team will lead any disciplinary matters.

Continual Professional Information

Each counselor has a responsibility to develop professionally and maintain professional body membership. This can be accomplished through internal and external training. The counselor will provide internal peer supervision and training.

Emergency

Should the counselor be available, they may assist teachers in how they might approach a situation, if required and inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead, if necessary.

Record Keeping

Counselors will keep a formal record of students and a student database which includes student's name, referral date, referrer, eligibility for sessions, level of priority, SOAP or DAP notes, brief mention of types of problems discussed and strategies implemented and additional relevant information. An initial referral form will be completed detailing presenting issues (See Appendix 4) and all written parental consent will be kept on file.

Whilst a comprehensive handover will be provided, the counselor's own notes will be destroyed upon leaving The Hamilton International School. Each student's record will be stored in a secured

cabinet in the counselor's office, and all registers or case-trackers and database information will be securely stored on the counselor's work laptop. Statistical data will be collated on an annual basis and no student will be identified within the data collected. When a counselor leaves THIS, they must handover parent-signed consent forms to their line manager for confidential storage and archiving.

End of Service and Handover

When a counselor leaves THIS and it is not possible to handover information to the new incoming counselor, information relating to students of concern who will need follow-up in the new academic year will be passed over to their line manager to be passed on upon the assignment of a new counselor.

To ensure maintenance of documents and consistency of provision for students, a handover will be required upon the counselor's end of service. All parental consent forms need to be handed over, alongside the end of year data information. Any at-ris< students who require continued support or a 'check-in' upon return for the next academic year should be highlighted for the new counselor (if possible) or the counselor's line manager to follow-up with upon returning the next academic year.

Accreditation

The Hamilton International School is part of the International Schools Partnership (ISP), a UK-based company that owns 56 schools, including Park House English School, one of Doha's oldest and most respected schools. ISP schools are located within 16 countries in Europe, The Americas, The Middle East and Southeast Asia.

As part of the International Schools Partnership (ISP), The Hamilton International School leverages the very best and proven education practices from ISP's many successful schools around the world, to ensure all children experience amazing learning.

Appendix

Appendix 1 – A) School Counseling Staff/Parent/Guardian Referral Process B) School Counseling Student Self-Referral Process

1A	A person has a concern about a student	If a staff member has a concern about a
IA	A person has a concern about a student	student a referral form is to be completed and sent to the counseling department. The counseling referral form must be completed in as much detail as possible.
		If a parent/guardian has a concern about their own child, they should first go to the class teacher in the primary school or the class teacher in the secondary school as a first line of enquiry and a referral form is to be completed and sent to the counseling department.
2A	The counseling caseload team School Counselor, the Designated Safeguarding Lead for P/E or S department, the Head of Inclusion or Inclusion Coordinator, Assistant Heads and the pastoral team) reviews referral information	The counselor and the caseload team will review objective and subjective data, assess the situation, and determine the level and type of intervention to be taken.
3A	Recommend counseling, if suitable	There may be cases when counseling is not suitable, in which case the counselor will suggest other options and ways of supporting the student.
4A	Add the student to the counseling database and assign priority or to the waiting-list	Sometimes there can be a waiting-list for students to see the school counselor. In these cases, the school counselor will determine the level of need and priority. If there is not a waiting list, counseling sessions may start immediately.
5A	Obtain written consent	Before counseling sessions begin, the counselor will obtain written consent from the parent and student.

6A	Arrange sessions with the student	The counselor will then approach the student to arrange counseling sessions at a mutually convenient time.
7A	Counseling sessions begin	Most counseling relationships will last for 6 weeks. The counselor will use their professional judgement to determine if the timeframe needs to change.
8A	Closure session with students and inform parent/teacher, where suitable	All counseling relationships will be terminated ethically and professionally at a time where the counselor and student feel they are ready. Where suitable, the parents and teachers will be notified of this.
1B	A student is going through challenging times	A student may complete a self-referral form. Mechanism to be set for each department.
2B	The school counselor reviews self- referral information	The counselor will review the form, assess the situation, and determine the level and type of intervention to be taken, if necessary
3B	Schedule counseling sessions, if suitable	There may be cases when counseling is not suitable, in which case the counselor will suggest other options and ways of supporting the student.
4B	Add the student to the counseling database and assign priority or to the waiting-list	Sometimes there can be a waiting-list for students to see the school counselor. In these cases, the school counselor will determine the level of need and priority. If there is not a waiting list, counseling sessions may start immediately.
5B	Obtain written consent	Before counseling sessions begin, the counselor will obtain written consent from parent and student.
6B	Arrange sessions with the student	The counselor will approach the student to arrange counseling sessions at a mutually convenient time.

7B	Counseling sessions begin	Most counseling relationships will last for 6 weeks. The counselor will use their professional judgement to determine if the timeframe needs to change.
8B	Closure session with students and inform parent/teacher, where suitable	All counseling relationships will be terminated ethically and professionally at a time where the counselor and student feel they are ready. Where suitable, the parents and teachers will be notified of this.

Appendix 2 - Parent Informed Consent Form

Parental/Guardian Consent for School Counseling Services

The school counseling service has been explained including the counseling process, the school counselor's role, confidentiality, and limits to confidentiality. By signing, I hereby give permission for my child to receive a series of counseling sessions with the school counselor at The Hamilton International School.

Child's Name:	
Grade:	Age:
Parent or Guar	rdian Name:
Parent or Guar	rdian Signature:
Relationship to	o Child:
Date:	

Counseling Information for Parents/Guardians

Introduction

All parents/guardians have the responsibility of supporting and helping their children to grow and develop. Youth, at times, require help with their problems and worries, yet at times no matter how well they get along with their parents or guardians, they may find it challenging to communicate with them. Young people often seek help and support by confiding in someone they trust. May it be a friend, a teacher, a relative, or counselor. Often, encountering a problem or a concern can affect a young person's well-being, thoughts, emotions, and behavior. Thus, a counselor is of utmost importance in such conditions.

How can a counselor help?

A counselor will provide support to students experiencing mental and emotional distress. A counselor is a non-judgmental active listener. The counselor will help a student talk about their thoughts, feelings, and concerns freely and expressively. The counselor usually provides short-term counseling sessions, up to six sessions to begin with, at The Hamilton International School. The length of the sessions varies. What is discussed during the sessions is confidential, but also the student is briefed about limits to confidentiality.

Counseling needs to be a voluntary process. When counseling is offered, you will be asked to sign a consent form stating that you permit your child to receive counseling sessions. A counselor is trained for this special type of work and is professionally managed and supervised. The counselor works within a recognized code of ethics and practice.

What issues can a counselor help with?

There can be a lot of pressures on young people growing up, for example friendships, teasing and bullying, anger and stress issues, exams and schoolwork, family relationships, peer-pressure, divorce, transition, as well as illness, loss, or death of someone close, and grief. Young people also must cope with adolescence and the strong feelings and hormonal changes that accompany that stage. Moreover, young children might find that the time and space they get from counseling helps relieve them and helps them cope better at home, in school, and other settings.

How can a parent/guardian support the counseling service?

It will be of utmost importance and support if you accept counseling as a normal and beneficial activity and show interest if they ever approached you with the idea. Counseling is not a quickfix, and it may take a while to observe and feel the benefit and progress.

Appendix 3 - Student Informed Consent Form

Student Consent for School Counseling Services

I understand what counseling is and the information about confidentiality is clear to me. Confidentiality has been explained to me and I understand the circumstances where confidentiality may be breached in order to keep me and others safe and well. I consent to receive a series of counseling sessions with the school counselor at The Hamilton International School.

Name:		
Grade:		
Student Signature:		
Date:		

Counseling Information for Students

Life can sometimes be tough, and people growing up can be under pressure. Having someone you can talk to may be of help - a friend, a teacher, your parents, or a relative. However, at times, everyone feels worried or has problems that may be challenging or difficult to talk about with the people close to you. You may worry about whether they will understand, whether you can trust them, whether they will blame you, or if they will ignore your feelings. That is when you may think about talking to a counselor.

How are counselors helpful?

- A counselor does not blame you or judge you
- A counselor does not tell you what to do
- A counselor is there for you whatever the problem is
- A counselor is good at listening carefully
- A counselor can help you sort things out in a way which suits you
- A counselor can give you the time and space you need
- A counselor has had intensive training and practice

Will the counselor tell anyone about what I say?

A counselor does not usually tell other people about you or your situation without your permission and consent.

BUT, if the counselor believes that you or someone else may be at risk or in danger, the counselor may need to get help from others to keep you or others safe. A counselor will talk with you about this and together the involved specialized team will try to find the best thing to do for you.

What kind of things I can share with the counselor?

Whatever is on your mind, problems, decisions, worries, and changes. It could be a lot of different things - making friends and relationships, parents separating, losing your temper, getting into trouble at home or at school, teasing and bullying, losing someone special, mixed-up feelings, health worries, exams, and schoolwork. All these can affect how you feel and how you behave. Talking about your worries and problems is the start of helping sort them out.

How does it work?

Seeing a counselor might be your idea, your parents, or your teachers might suggest it. You do not have to decide straightaway. You can meet the counselor first, ask questions and find out more. Counseling is voluntary – it is your choice, and whatever you decide is OK. When counseling is involuntary due to unruly and disruptive behaviors, you will be kindly asked to attend counseling sessions with the counselor by the pastoral team. You will be offered appointments for regular sessions for a duration at a room in The Hamilton International School where you will not be disturbed.

Appendix 4 – A) Teacher/Parent Counseling Referral Record B) Student Self-Referral Record

Referrer:
Student's Name:
Grade:
This referral form is to be used by staff members to document concerns regarding students. Please complete and send to Counseling Services.
Reason for referral:

Reason(s) for referral/concerns (please check all that apply):

Level of Activity	Relationship with Teacher	Dolo Company
Too energetic/Active Appropriate Lethargic/Tired	Cooperative Withdrawn Seeks attention Needs Individual Attention/Undivided Attention Refuses to Follow Instructions	Relationship with Peers Works/Plays Alone Participates in Group Activities Interacts Well with Others Distracts Peers Aggression (hits, kicks, punches, spits, bites, inappropriate language) Initiates Social Interaction Waits for Others to Initiate Avoids Peers' Interaction
Attends to Instructions Understands Directions Difficulty Understanding Directions Able to Stay on Task Inattentive/Easily Distracted Able to Work Independently Understands Concepts Difficulty Understanding Concepts	Effort/Motivation Tries Hard Gives Up Easily Careless in Work Eager to Please Hesitant to Start Work Works at a Reasonable Pace Works Slowly	Temperament Happy Depressed/Withdrawn Daydreams Confused Easily upset Impulsive Angry

Well-being/Psychosocial	Child Protection	Other
 Stressed/Anxious/Worry Frequent Mood Changes Changes in Behavior Oppositional/Defiant Lack of Self-Esteem Poor Hygiene Rocking Sadness (pervasive) Tearful Manic Behavior 	 Suspected Abuse/Neglect Self-Harm Suicide Ideation 	 Family Relationship Stealing Frequent Lying Academics Bullying Frequent Absences Grief/Loss Perfectionism Incoherent Speech Pattern Lack/Loss of Coordination Uncontrolled Body Movements/Tics Stimming/Uncontrolled Noises Inappropriate Laughter

Describe the student's strengths and positive qualities.		
-List previous or current interventions actioned		
Λ		
Parent communication and involvement, if any		
Signature of Referral Source	Date	

Kindly note that a student has legal access to this information. Observations should be objective.

Name:	
Grade:	
Date:	
Student Self-Ref	^f erral
I would like to ta	alk to you about:
Myself	School
Family	Something private
Friends	Other
This is:	
An emergency	y/urgent (see you immediately)
Important (se	e you this week)
Can wait (see	you soon)

Appendix 3 - Consent to share with Other Agencies
Date:
Subject: Permission for Release of Information
I hereby give permission for my school counselor to release information shared with him/her to the below party, as deemed appropriate and necessary to support my child.
Student Name:
Grade:
Date of Birth:
Parent Signature:
Date:
Party information to be released to:
I understand that the counselor will be sharing information about me to the aforementioned agency.
Counselor Name:
Date:

	1000		
Name	Position	Signature	Date
Terry Serris	CEO/ Principal	SAN	August 23
IAN KINALDI	HEAD OF PRIMARY	Portraid.	August 23
BREEGEEN DOKKTY	HEAD OF INCLUSION	BDOLG :	August 23
Resucca Gorg	Mead of Swand	on Byon	August 23
Thousage Bour	Head & Quality		August 23
O	Assurable & Compla		0