

WISE INDIAN PRIVATE SCHOOL					
King Faisal Street					
Al Riqqah,					
Umm Al Quwain					
UAE					
POLICY NAME	<u>Counseling Policy</u>		POLICY NO.	WISE/POL/ACA/004	
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VERSION HISTORY					
VERSION	AUTHOR	REVISION DATE	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE	APPROVED By:	Signature of Approving Authority:
001	Sheeba Ibrahim Vice Principal	April 1, 2021	New Policy Draft	Sofiya Singh Principal	
002	Sangeeta Anand Vice Principal	March 1, 2025	Policy Revision	Anjana Iraddi Principal	

INTRODUCTION

Counseling services are an integral part of the educational experience at Wise Indian Private School. The school recognizes the importance of addressing the emotional, psychological, social, and academic challenges faced by students. Through a dedicated counseling department, the school aims to create a supportive and confidential environment that allows students to seek guidance, develop resilience, and make informed decisions about their personal growth and academic success.

The counseling policy reflects the school's commitment to fostering the overall well-being of students, ensuring that they have access to professional mental health services. It emphasizes the importance of student-centered approaches that cater to individual needs, promoting holistic development and emotional well-being. Counseling services are accessible to all students, aiming to support them in facing the complexities of adolescence and academic pressure while nurturing their personal and social growth.

SCHOOL'S VISSION

Every Individual student is unique hence, we are committed to provide a stimulating and nurturing environment that will aspire and empower them to become more responsible, confident and well rounded.

SCHOOL'S MISSION

To empower students to become ethical, intuitive, compassionate and creative members of the society, We strive to support this by building a more comprehensive teaching and learning method that addresses the (approaching or forthcoming) future.

AIM

The primary aim of this counseling policy is to provide a structured and comprehensive framework that empowers students with the emotional, psychological, and social support necessary for their holistic development. The policy is designed to ensure that all students can access professional counseling services, contributing to their emotional well-being and academic achievement.

OBJECTIVES

1. Provide Emotional Support:

The counseling services aim to create a safe and non-judgmental space where students can express their feelings, concerns, and emotions. It encourages open communication and offers emotional support to students, helping them navigate personal and academic challenges.

2. Promote Mental Health Awareness:

The counseling department aims to enhance mental health literacy among students, staff, and parents. By organizing awareness campaigns, workshops, and interactive sessions, the program seeks to destigmatize mental health issues and promote open dialogue around emotional well-being.

3. Encourage Positive Behavior:

Through individual and group counseling sessions, students are guided in developing effective coping mechanisms for stress, anger, and conflict resolution. The program emphasizes self-discipline, resilience, and the cultivation of positive behavioral traits that contribute to a harmonious school environment.

4. Enhance Academic Success:

The counseling services offer guidance to students in managing academic pressures, improving time management, study skills, and motivation. By addressing the connection between emotional well-being and academic performance, the program supports students in achieving their academic goals.

5. Address Specific Issues:

The counseling team plays an active role in intervening in specific cases, including but not limited to

bullying, absenteeism, learning difficulties, peer pressure, and family-related concerns. Personalized intervention plans are developed to meet the needs of students facing such challenges.

6. Support Personal and Social Development:

Counseling services aim to improve students' interpersonal skills, self-awareness, and social interaction. Through workshops and peer-support initiatives, the program encourages a culture of empathy, inclusivity, and mutual respect.

GOALS

1. Promote Overall Well-Being:

The school aims to ensure that every student feels supported and understood, creating an inclusive environment that encourages personal and academic growth. By addressing the emotional and mental health needs of students, the counseling program contributes to a healthy and vibrant school community.

2. Early Identification and Intervention:

The counseling team proactively identifies and addresses psychological, emotional, and social challenges that may affect students. Early intervention is a key strategy, allowing the school to provide timely support before issues escalate.

3. Create a Safe School Environment:

Fostering a culture of safety and respect is central to the counseling policy. The program emphasizes preventive measures, including anti-bullying campaigns, conflict resolution strategies, and peer mediation. The school aims to create an environment where students feel safe and valued.

4. Collaborate with Stakeholders:

The counseling department works closely with teachers, parents, and external professionals to create a holistic support network for each student. The school values collaboration with all stakeholders to ensure that students receive consistent guidance and care across their academic and personal lives.

5. Develop Lifelong Coping Skills:

By equipping students with the necessary skills to manage stress, emotions, and challenges, the counseling program fosters resilience. Students are encouraged to develop healthy coping mechanisms that will serve them throughout their academic journey and into adulthood.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. Counseling – It is a goal-oriented relationship between a professionally trained, competent counselor and an individual seeking help for the purpose of bringing about a meaningful awareness and understanding of the self and environment, improving planning and decision making, and formulating new ways of behaving, feeling, and thinking for problem resolution and/or development growth. (Gibson & Mitchell, 1999; Villar, 2009)

2. School Counselor – School counselors are an important part of the educational leadership team and provide valuable assistance to students regardless of whether they work in an elementary school or middle school, high school or beyond. They are educated and trained in addressing all students' academic, career and social/emotional development needs by designing, implementing, evaluating and enhancing a comprehensive school counseling program that promotes and enhances student success. (American School Counselor Association).

3. Confidentiality – Confidentiality is a professional's promise or contract to respect clients' privacy by not disclosing anything revealed during counseling, except under agreed upon conditions. (Journal of Professional School Counseling, 2002)

GUIDELINES FOR THE DEPARTMENT

The school counselor(s):

- Practices within the boundaries of individual professional competence
- Adheres to ethical standards of the profession and relevant statutes established by the UAE government and regulatory organizations (KHDA)
- Maintains professional competence through educational, consultation and training experiences to improve awareness, knowledge, skills and effectiveness
- Informs students, teachers and parents of the purposes, processes and goals of counseling at or before the time when the counseling relationship is entered
- Maintains confidentiality of the students, staff and parents at all times- including the protection of emotional information and record-keeping
- Develop and maintain consistent and clear lines of communication with parents/guardians

PARTNERS:

Administrators (include the Principal, Vice-Principal and non-teaching staff) support the counseling program in numerous ways, including implementing and upholding policies and procedures. Together with the school counselor(s), they develop partnerships with resources in the community that contribute to the counseling process.

Teachers are a valuable resource as they spend the most time with students and are able to provide key information and feedback, which informs the counseling process. As such, teachers work closely with counselors to assess and monitor students' progress and well-being. Various opportunities are provided through which students can benefit from the school counseling program such as group counseling and workshops, in addition to self-referrals.

Parents/guardians work in partnership with school counselors to help their student be successful in school. The school counseling program ensures that parents are given the tool to help their student with his/her developmental, emotional and social needs. Parent/guardian support is vital to the success of all counseling endeavours.

Community members such as psychologists, psychiatrists, other medical and university/educational professionals' partner with the school in a variety of ways, providing workshops, assessments and consultations that contribute to students' development.

SERVICES PROVIDED

The counseling program targets three main areas of development: Academic, 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

The above areas of development are enhanced and developed using the following approach:

Individual Sessions

The school counselor(s) use many different mediums to work with students during sessions. In individual sessions, students may draw, write, sing, play, or just talk. Sometimes we work on learning a specific skill such as deep breathing for anxiety. Other times we work on role-playing situations, such as a problem with a friend or having a difficult conversation.

Workshops

The school counseling program addresses key issues faced by students of various age groups by designing and implementing workshops that provide students with key skills and techniques to navigate the world around them.

Training

The counseling program offers teachers and administrators various opportunities to expand their scope of practice to include counseling. Staff are aware of counseling policies and practices, how to identify indicators for student concern and how best to serve the counseling needs of our students.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**1. Access to Services:**

Counseling services are available to all students across all grade levels. Students can request sessions, or they may be referred by teachers, parents, or administrators. The counseling team also initiates outreach for students identified as needing additional support.

2. **Confidentiality:**

Ensuring the confidentiality of students' concerns is paramount to building trust between the counselor and the students. All discussions within counseling sessions are kept private, except in situations where the student's safety or the safety of others is at risk.

3. **Counseling Programs:**

A range of individual and group counseling programs are offered, including workshops on stress management, peer relationships, conflict resolution, self-esteem building, and study skills. Special interventions are also available for students dealing with trauma, anxiety, depression, or other mental health concerns.

4. **Crisis Intervention:**

In cases where students face acute emotional or psychological crises, the counseling team provides immediate support and works in collaboration with external mental health professionals if necessary. Crisis intervention ensures that students receive the care and attention they need in critical moments.

5. **Monitoring and Evaluation:**

The counseling department regularly assesses the effectiveness of its services through feedback from students, teachers, and parents. Periodic evaluations allow the school to adapt its counseling services to meet the evolving needs of the student body.

6. **Parental consent/ access to counseling records:**

Parents and guardians of students will be notified if the counselor is to provide individual/group counseling for their child. Counseling is voluntary and parents/guardians reserve the right to consent to or decline counseling services for their child. Parents will not be granted access to counseling records, which are considered the property of the counselor/school.

Parents/guardians of all students will be notified immediately if there is any concern regarding the safety of their child and will receive an end of term feedback report.

COUNSELING PROCESS IN SCHOOL

The counseling process at Wise Indian Private School is structured to provide systematic, confidential, and comprehensive support to students, ensuring that they receive appropriate guidance and intervention. This process includes several stages to identify concerns, develop strategies, and foster personal and academic growth.

1. Referral and Identification

- **Teacher/Parent Referral:** Teachers or parents may refer students to the school counselor when they observe behavioral, emotional, or academic concerns. This may include changes in behavior, poor academic performance, or social isolation.
- **Self-Referral:** Students can also initiate the counseling process themselves by approaching the school counselor directly when they feel the need for guidance or support.
- **Observation:** In some cases, the counselor may observe students during classes or school activities to identify signs of emotional distress or behavioral concerns.

2. Initial Assessment

- **Gathering Information:** The counselor conducts an initial meeting with the student to understand the nature of the problem. This involves active listening, asking questions, and reviewing any available academic or behavioral records.

- **Confidentiality Assurance:** All the students are entitled to confidentiality. This means that the information they bring to the session will be held in confidence between themselves and the counselor. Information will not be shared unless the young person has agreed to it. The counselor will, however, state that they may need to break confidentiality should they deem the young person at significant risk of harm to themselves or others. At this point, information may need to be shared with another party, either within the school e.g. Safeguarding Officer or with an appropriate referral to an outside agency. Counselors are aware of the Child Protection procedures and adhere to those at all times.
- **Collaboration with Teachers/Parents:** If necessary, the counselor may consult teachers or parents to gather additional insights regarding the student's behavior, academic performance, or social interactions.

3. Goal Setting

- **Defining Objectives:** Based on the initial assessment, the counselor and the student work together to set clear, achievable goals for the counseling process. These goals may focus on improving emotional well-being, addressing behavioral challenges, or enhancing academic performance.
- **Action Plan:** A plan is developed outlining the steps the student will take to achieve their goals. This plan may include regular counseling sessions, participation in group activities, or specific behavioral modifications.

4. Intervention and Counseling Sessions

- **Individual Counseling:** The counselor conducts one-on-one sessions with the student to explore feelings, thoughts, and behaviors.
- **Behavioral Contracts/Monitoring:** In cases of severe behavior issues, behavior improvement plans (BIPs) may be implemented to track progress and set clear expectations for the student.
- **Deep Breathing Exercises:** Students are taught deep breathing techniques such as diaphragmatic breathing or the 4-7-8 breathing method. This helps them calm down during moments of anxiety or stress.
- **Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR):** In sessions, the counselor guides the student through tensing and then relaxing each muscle group. This technique reduces physical tension and enhances overall relaxation.
- **Mindfulness and Meditation:** Techniques such as guided imagery or mindfulness exercises help students focus on the present moment, reducing anxiety and helping them cope with stressful situations. Mindfulness activities may also include short meditative sessions focusing on calming the mind.
- **Visualization Techniques:** Students are encouraged to imagine peaceful or positive scenarios (e.g., a serene beach) to help shift their mental state away from anxiety or negative thoughts.

5. Collaboration with Stakeholders

- **Parent Involvement:** Regular updates are provided to parents, keeping them informed about the student's progress and involving them in the implementation of strategies at home.
- **Teacher Collaboration:** Teachers are kept informed of relevant strategies to support the student in the classroom. This ensures consistency in the approaches used both in counseling sessions and during school activities.
- **Referral to External Services:** If the student requires additional support beyond the school's capacity (e.g., psychiatric evaluation, clinical therapy), referrals to external professionals are made with parental consent.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

- **Progress Tracking:** The counselor monitors the student's progress through regular follow-up sessions. Adjustments to the action plan may be made depending on the student's development.
- **Feedback and Adjustments:** Students and teachers provide feedback on the effectiveness of the interventions. Based on this feedback, strategies are fine-tuned for maximum effectiveness.
- **Reporting:** At the end of the intervention, the counselor provides a report outlining the student's progress, key insights, and any further recommendations for continued improvement.

7. Closure and Follow-up

- **Closure of Counseling:** Once the goals have been met, the formal counseling process is concluded. The student is acknowledged for their efforts and is encouraged to continue using the skills learned.
- **Follow-up:** Periodic follow-up sessions are scheduled to ensure that the student is maintaining progress and to address any new concerns that may arise. These follow-ups help reinforce positive changes and provide continued support.

This structured approach ensures that the counseling process is effective, collaborative, and tailored to the unique needs of each student while promoting their overall well-being and success in school.

CONCLUSION

Wise Indian Private School's counseling policy reflects the school's commitment to fostering the overall well-being of students. By providing accessible, professional counseling services, the school ensures that students are supported in their emotional, social, and academic development. The policy aims to create a safe, inclusive, and empathetic learning environment where every student has the opportunity to thrive. Through collaboration with stakeholders and a focus on early intervention, the school's counseling services play a vital role in shaping the future success of its students.