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COUNSELLING HANDBOOK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION **3**
OUR PHILOSOPHY 3
COUNSELLING SERVICES OFFERED 3
CONFIDENTIALITY 3
STRUCTURE OF LEARNER COUNSELLING 4
How to Access Counselling Services 4
OUR COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION **4**
Working Together for Success 4
Role of School Counsellors 5
Role of Parents 5
CONTACT INFORMATION **5**
USEFUL RESOURCES IN SINGAPORE **6**
IMPORTANT NOTICE ON SCHOOL COUNSELLING SERVICES **6**

INTRODUCTION

At Nexus International School (Singapore), our counselling services are an integral part of the wider support system that enables students to function effectively at school. As such we are dedicated to assisting families in fostering the mental health of their children. We strive to provide a nurturing and safe environment where every learner can thrive emotionally, socially, and psychologically. This guide has been created to help you understand the services and support available through our school counselling service.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

At Nexus, we believe that every learner is unique and capable of flourishing. Our counselling program is designed to foster the holistic development of learners by addressing their individual needs and promoting a positive school experience. We are committed to helping each learner feel supported, valued, and understood.

COUNSELLING SERVICES OFFERED

Our school counselling program offers a wide range of services to support the well-being of our learners:

- **Individual Counselling:** Learners can receive one-on-one support to explore personal challenges, develop coping strategies, and set goals for personal growth.
- **Group Counselling:** Small group sessions are available for learners to connect with peers who may be experiencing similar challenges. These sessions focus on building social skills, managing emotions, and fostering a sense of community.
- **Crisis Intervention:** Immediate support is available for learners who are experiencing urgent emotional or psychological distress. Our counsellors are trained to provide a safe space and necessary interventions during times of crisis.
- **Parent Consultations:** We believe that collaboration with parents is key to supporting our learners effectively. Our counsellors are available to meet with parents to discuss concerns, provide insights, and develop strategies that benefit the learner's overall wellbeing.
- **Learner Referral Meetings:** A collaborative approach involving pastoral teams and other school support systems to address the holistic needs and development of learners.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality is a fundamental aspect of our counselling service. Learners should feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and feelings with their counsellor, knowing that counsellors are ethically obligated to maintain confidentiality. Information disclosed during counselling sessions will be kept private.

However, there are specific circumstances where confidentiality cannot be upheld. If there is a credible risk of harm to the learner or others, counsellors are required to take appropriate actions to ensure safety. In such cases, the incident will be immediately addressed, reported to the school Principal, and parents or guardians will be contacted.

For primary school learners, families will typically be informed and involved in the counselling process. Secondary school learners are encouraged to inform their families independently. However, if a safety risk is identified, the school will take the necessary steps to notify parents or guardians.

STRUCTURE OF LEARNER COUNSELLING

Counselling sessions will last between 20 and 40 minutes each. Some learners will benefit from weekly sessions, while others may transition to sessions every 2, 3, or 4 weeks. Many learners will receive counselling in blocks, such as 4 weeks, followed by 'catch-up' sessions on a half-term basis. Our school counsellors typically see learners for a maximum of 6 sessions per counselling goal. This structured approach ensures that the support provided is focused and goal-oriented. If additional support is needed, we will collaborate with families to explore external resources and help both the learner and family access the appropriate care.

How to Access Counselling Services

Learners and parents can request counselling services in the following ways:

- **Self-Referral:** Learners are encouraged to reach out to their counsellor directly if they feel they need support.
- **Parent Referral:** Parents who feel their child requires support for school-related concerns are encouraged to reach out to the school counselling office.
- **Teacher Referral:** Teachers may refer learners to the counselling office if they observe that a learner may benefit from additional support.

OUR COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Our counselling service is dedicated to creating an inclusive environment where all learners feel respected and supported. We recognise the diverse backgrounds, cultures, and identities of our school community. Our counsellors are professionally trained to approach every learner with cultural sensitivity and an understanding of their unique experiences.

Working Together for Success

A collaborative effort between the school counsellors, the school, and parents is essential to support the holistic development of every learner. Each party plays a crucial role in ensuring the well-being and success of our learners.

Role of School Counsellors

Our school counsellors are dedicated professionals who:

- **Provide Emotional and Social Support:** Counsellors assist learners in navigating emotional challenges, building resilience, and developing healthy relationships. They offer a non-judgmental listening ear and personalised guidance. Beyond supporting learners directly, our counsellors actively collaborate with parents, providing them with the tools and understanding needed to support their children effectively. By working closely with parents, the school aims to create a cohesive support system that equips families to better address their child's mental and emotional wellbeing.
- **Advocate for Learners:** They ensure that learners' voices are heard and their needs are addressed, creating a supportive environment where every learner feels valued.
- **Coordinate with Other Professionals:** Counsellors work with teachers, administrators, and external professionals to provide comprehensive support, including referrals to outside services if needed.
- **Promote Well-being and Mental Health:** Counsellors actively promote mental health awareness and well-being throughout the school community through workshops, resources, and activities.

Role of Parents

Parents play a vital role in their child's development and well-being:

- **Communicate and Collaborate with the School:** Maintain open lines of communication with the school and counsellors. Share relevant information about your child's experiences and collaborate with us to ensure effective support.
- **Provide Stability and Support:** Create a nurturing and consistent home environment. Your stability and understanding are crucial for your child's emotional and psychological growth.
- **Model Healthy Coping Strategies:** Demonstrate constructive ways to manage stress and emotions. Your approach to handling challenges sets an example for your child and aids in their development of coping skills.
- **Encourage Independence and Responsibility:** Support your child in taking responsibility for their own well-being. Encouraging independence helps build resilience and prepares them for future challenges.
- **Access Resources:** The school offers resources to help manage the mental and emotional wellness of your child. Please feel free to request these resources from the school counsellors.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions or would like to learn more about our school counselling services, please do not hesitate to contact us at: counsellors@nexus.edu.sg

USEFUL RESOURCES IN SINGAPORE

If you are seeking additional resources to support your own wellbeing or that of your family, our school counsellors are available to guide you. Please do not hesitate to reach out to our counsellors for recommendations on where to go and what services are available in Singapore to enhance your mental and emotional health.

IMPORTANT NOTICE ON SCHOOL COUNSELLING SERVICES

Please be aware that Nexus International School (Singapore) does not offer 24-hour counselling services. Our school counsellors do not continuously monitor their inboxes.

If you are experiencing an urgent mental health concern, we strongly recommend contacting one of the following 24-hour emergency helplines:

- National (Singapore) Mental Health Helpline: **6389 2222**
- Samaritans of Singapore (SOS) hotline: **1767**

For immediate danger or emergencies, please dial **995** or visit your nearest hospital's A&E department.