



Mental Health Policy

The counseling support provided is in line with Professional School Counseling Best Practices for Working in the Schools, Third Edition Year 2012 "Counseling in Schools: A blueprint for the future, departmental advice for school leaders and Counselors,"

Appendix

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Introduction

At Summit International School, we recognize the importance of mental health and well-being as a fundamental aspect of our students' educational experience. This policy aims to create a supportive environment that promotes mental wellness, aligns with ADEK guidelines, and fosters a culture of understanding and respect.

Aims and Objectives

Aims:

1. **Promote Mental Wellness:** Foster a school environment that prioritizes mental well-being for all students.
2. **Increase Awareness:** Enhance understanding of mental health issues within the school community, including students, staff, and parents.
3. **Provide Support:** Ensure that effective mental health support services are accessible to all students.

Objectives:

- 1) **Training and Education:**
 - Implement regular training programs for staff on mental health awareness and intervention strategies.
 - Organize information sessions and workshops for students and parents to educate them on mental health topics.
- 2) **Access to Support Services:**
 - Establish a comprehensive mental health support system, including counseling services and resources.
 - Create partnerships with external mental health organizations to enhance support options.
- 3) **Safe and Inclusive Environment:**
 - Develop initiatives that promote inclusivity, resilience, and emotional well-being, such as peer support programs and mental health awareness campaigns.
 - Enforce anti-bullying policies to create a safe environment for all students.
- 4) **Crisis Management:**
 - Formulate a clear crisis intervention plan to address acute mental health issues promptly and effectively.
 - Ensure all staff are trained in crisis management protocols.
- 5) **Monitoring and Evaluation:**
 - Conduct regular assessments of mental health initiatives through surveys and feedback mechanisms to measure effectiveness.
 - Use evaluation results to continuously inform and improve mental health programs.
- 6) **Community Engagement:**
 - Encourage parental involvement in mental health initiatives and promote open communication regarding mental health concerns.
 - Engage with the wider community to raise awareness and reduce the stigma surrounding mental health.

Lead Employees

School Counselor
SENCO
Medical Professionals

Any member of staff who has a concern about a student's social, emotional, or behavioral well-being should consult the School Counselor. Child protection procedures should be followed immediately if there are any concerns about the student's safety. The medical professional should be notified in the event of a medical emergency.

Warning Signs

Typical warning signs that staff should be aware of when considering a referral:

- Repeated disruptive outbursts
- Poor social skills
- Low self-esteem or lack of confidence
- Stress & depression
- Overly emotional
- Overly worried - begins to impact daily functioning
- Sudden change in family circumstances
- Bereavement
- Unstable home life
- Exposure to distressing/ traumatic events
- Changes in eating and sleeping patterns
- Isolation from family and friends- becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Lowering academic achievement
- Talks about self-harm or suicide
- Abuse of drugs or alcohol
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness, or loss of hope
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no physical cause

These are the most common and obvious signs that meet the criteria for a counselor referral. However, any behavior that impacts a child's daily functioning should result in notification to the Counselor.

Raising awareness of our student's well-being

Social and emotional well-being is delivered within the Moral Education and My Identity curriculum. Student well-being awareness is also addressed during the academic year through assemblies and support groups and by promoting self-care and resilience.

The Counseling Service Aims to provide:

- **A confidential service**

To promote a trusting, therapeutic relationship between the Counselor and the student/parent. The information discussed in the counseling session is treated with the utmost confidentiality.

****Where a safeguarding concern about a student's welfare arises, the School Counselor will also follow the safeguarding procedures. The Counselor will, of course, endeavor to seek the student's views and, ideally, their consent.***

- **A safe and nurturing space**

Where students have an opportunity to talk in confidence about things that are worrying them or affecting their day-to-day lives, it is a nonjudgmental space where students are offered the opportunity to resolve their thoughts and feelings to gain a greater understanding of themselves and their situations.

- **A personalized approach**

To cater to all needs and include various techniques, such as Talking Therapies, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Play Therapy, Behavior Therapy, and Mindfulness practices.

- **A service that works alongside the Pastoral Support system and within the wider school community**

- **Support to all students across all grade levels**

- **Parents have the opportunity to discuss any concerns regarding their child.**

If a parent becomes upset or distressed, the Counselor will use sensitivity and discretion to help the parent come to terms with the situation. Information about external agencies may be provided, and support will be offered where appropriate. This may include a follow-up meeting, email, or phone call.

****The Counseling service is also available to parents if requested***

Referral and Assessment

The referral process can be found in Appendix 1 (staff) and 2.

- Students in Grade 7 or above can self-refer.
- Students in Grade 6 or below are referred by any member of staff.
- An online Referral Form must be completed.
- Parental consent must be sought where appropriate.
- Parents may also refer to their son or daughter.

Informed Consent

- Grades - KG 1 to Grade 6: Parental permission must be obtained before any sessions commencing (refer to Appendix 2) unless warranted by exceptional circumstances.
- Grade 7 and above (refer to Appendix 4)

*In accordance with the “**Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law Online Vol, 3,**” it is legal and acceptable for a young person to ask for confident counseling without parental consent, provided they are of sufficient understanding and intelligence. If deemed concerning by the Counselor, the Counselor has the right to inform students that their parents will be informed.*

Gillick's competence will be assessed by the Counselor. With the assistance of a teacher deemed competent, the student will be able to give consent. The following will be taken into account.

- Age
- Maturity
- Understanding the consequences of their own actions
- Understanding the agreement proposed by the Counselor

Most Grade 7 or above students are deemed sufficiently competent to understand the counseling process. If this is not the case, parental permission will be sought.

Assessment and Record Keeping

The Counselor will create a file for each child receiving counseling sessions - this process will not identify students. The Counselor will keep a record of:

- Referral form,
- Parent consent,
- SDQ assessment scores
- Any observation forms.

Sessions

Counseling sessions are often 35 to 55 minutes long and take place in the Counselor's room.

A session review will occur at least once a term where appropriate.

The sessions are scheduled at a convenient time in agreement with the teacher/tutor and the student to ensure that the lessons missed do not impact core learning.

Supporting Documents

- ADEK Private Schools Policy Manual 2024
- DFE Statutory guidance "Counseling in schools: a blueprint for the future; Departmental advice for school leaders and counselors," March 2015
- ADEK guidelines on mental health policies and practices.
- Relevant UAE legislation regarding health and education.

School Counselor's services include:

- **Counseling** - Individual and group counseling (eclectic/integrative in nature) of students regarding issues that might impact their school adjustment.
- **Psych education** - Work with staff to teach pro-social skills and promote resilience and personal development of the students.
- **Professional Development**—Presents timely topics and trends concerning school and children that will benefit students, school staff, or parents.
- **Guidance Lessons**—Conducts Guidance Lessons to help children learn social and emotional skills, which are fundamental to their development and growth.
- **Admission Assistance** - Assistance with the entry process during Admission Assessments along with the Head of Inclusion.
- **Evaluation** - Holistic assessment of children's learning and academic process.
- **Staff Support** - Emotional support and guidance to the staff who are in need.
- **Head of**
- **Inclusion Partnership**: Work hand in hand with the Head of Inclusion to promote the child's emotional and academic progress.
- **Parent Consult** - Meeting with the parent/s to cater to children's counseling needs.
- **Outside Referral** - Liaise with external agencies, service providers, and other schools to ensure provision of maximum support to meet children's well-being.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Staff Referral Form

SCHOOL COUNSELLING REFERRAL FORM

Dear Climbers,

As educators, we do not only teach content within the four walls of our classrooms. We play bigger roles in the lives of our students. Their well-being is our priority, thus it is important to identify their concerns and see how we can help them best.

Your proactiveness and genuine concern are needed to make Summit a comforting, safe, and happy environment for our young climbers. Refer them to us, and we will do our best to lend a helping hand

Below are the ways to access the Counselling Referral Form:

1. Scan the QR code below



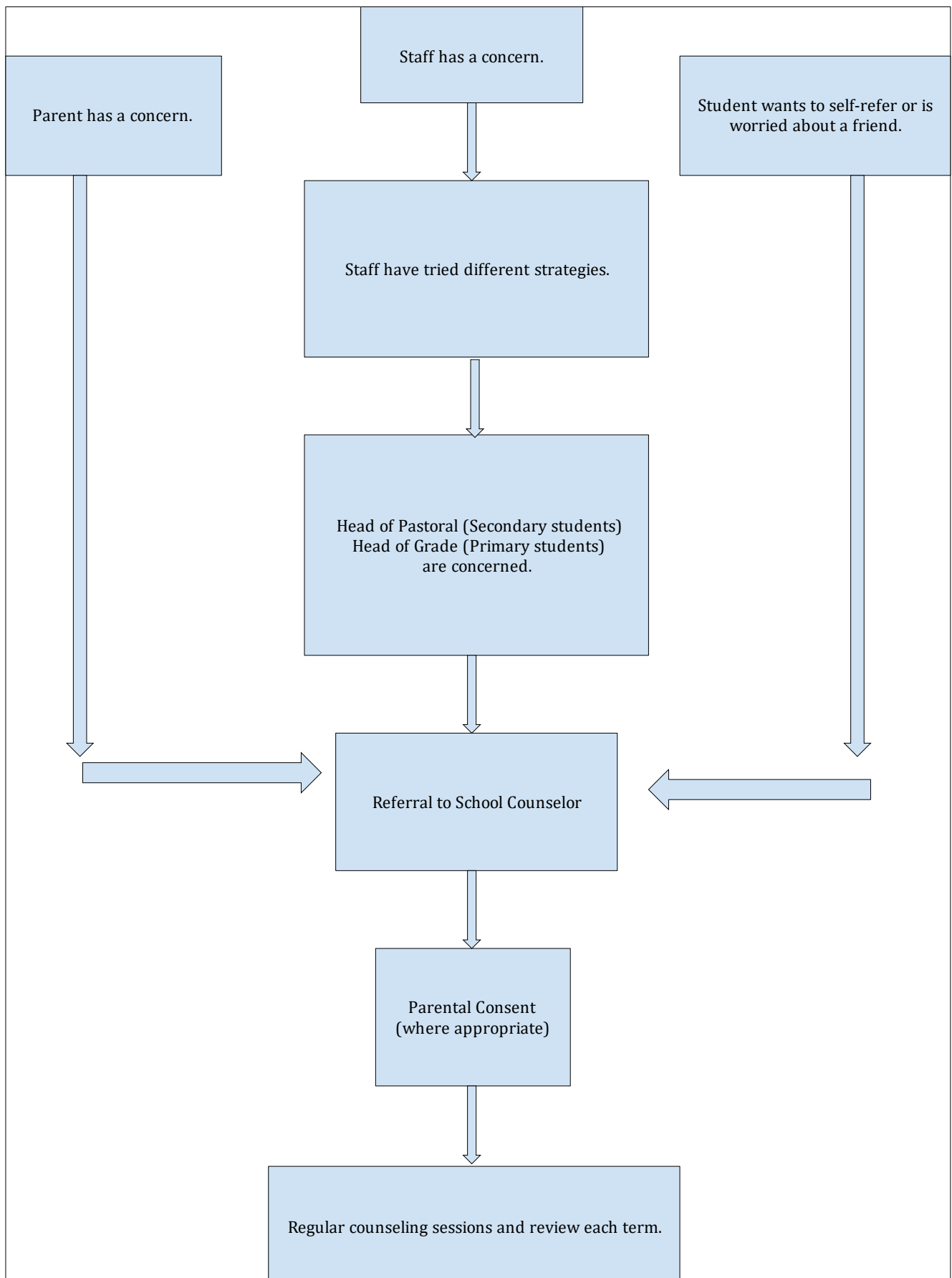
2. Click the [School Counselling Referral Form](#) link

Together, we can work towards our common vision for the future of our valued students.

Regards,

Nancy Hee Chung
Counselor and Career Advisor

Appendix 2 - Referral Process



Appendix 3 - Parental Consent Form

CONSENT FORM - COUNSELING SERVICES

Counseling services are available to assist students in their adjustment at school and to help them with social, emotional, and /or personal problems.

The counseling service is provided by: School Counselor.

All records and information regarding student counseling are kept **confidential** and shared only with the concerned authorities: the Principal, Vice Principal, and Class Teacher.

*I agree to allow (student's name) _____
to receive counseling services at Summit International School.*

Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian

Date

Appendix 4 - Student Informed Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I _____ Grade _____
understand what counseling is, and the explanation about confidentiality is clear to me.

I consent to receive a series of counseling sessions with the Counselor of Summit
International School

Student signature _____

Date _____



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