



INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF CAPE TOWN

COUNSELLING POLICY (STUDENTS)

Maintenance

Policy owner	Kascha Reed
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Version Control

Version Number	Date
Version # 2	October 2024 - SMT approved

All policies and procedures are version controlled and the most up to date versions are all available on the Shared Drive under ISCT Policies Folder. This policy will also be shared with the school community on the website. If you have any queries, please contact k.reed@isct.co.za



1. Introduction

The aim of school counsellors is to provide social-emotional support for students at the International School of Cape Town (ISCT) and to act as Designated Safeguarding Leads.

2. Legislative Framework

This policy has been designed using the schedule of rules set out in:

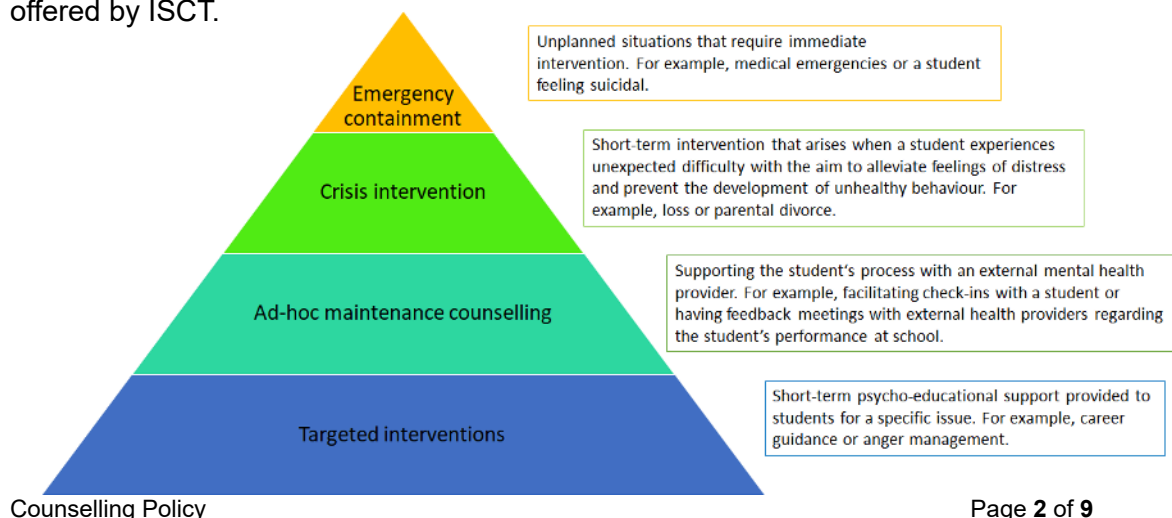
- The Bill of Rights as enshrined in The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996)
- The Children's Act 38 of 2005
- The Health Professions Act 56 of 1974, including Annexure 12
 - Ethical Rules Of Conduct For Practitioners Registered Under The Health Professions Act
 - Regulations Defining The Scope Of The Profession Of Psychology No 993
- Children's Act Guide for Health Professionals 2013
- [Scope of Practice - Form 258](#) outlines the framework for education, training and registration for the scope of practice for registered counsellors.
- [Abuse No More Policy](#) - Outlines the specifics conditions and reporting procedures to outside services in the Western Cape for any person in the school context.
- [Safe Schools Programme](#) - Provides reporting avenues for individuals with concerns.

All of these documents clearly stipulate the necessity of always acting in the best interests of the child as well as practitioners not having multiple relationships with a client.

**The term 'client' refers to the student/child receiving support.*

3. School Counselling Services

ISCT's School Counselling Department provides limited counselling services to ISCT students with a key focus on providing emergency containment, crisis intervention, ad-hoc maintenance counselling, and targeted interventions for individuals and groups. Counselling services are provided onsite, within school opening hours, and form part of the services offered by ISCT.





4. Defining the Role of the School Counsellor at ISCT

At ISCT we have adopted the Health Professions Council of South Africa's (HPCSA) definition of school counselling as entry-level professional psychological services that offer low-intensity psychological interventions and assessment to individuals and groups to prevent and alleviate psychological challenges and /or enhance psychological functioning and wellbeing.

5. The Aim of School Counselling Pertaining to Students at ISCT

School Counsellors at ISCT aim to work with students in the school setting to help them reach their full potential by providing care, support and a safe space to discuss sensitive issues.

Counselling services at ISCT thus take a holistic approach, encompassing the students' emotional well-being, personal and social development, as well as academic progress.

6. School Counsellors at ISCT

- Adhere to the ethical standards and Scope of Practice as outlined by the professional body/regulatory organisation with which they are registered,
- Adhere to the relevant statutes established by the South African Government;
- Maintain professional competence through attending educational and training experiences in order to maintain and enhance knowledge and skills, as well as obtaining Continuous Professional Development (CPD) points as required by their professional body/regulatory organisation;
- Engage in regular clinical supervision in order to comply with their ethical code;
- Informs students and parents/guardians of the purpose, processes and goals of counselling and when the therapeutic relationship is entered; and
- Will develop and maintain clear lines of communication with students, teaching staff and parent(s)/guardian(s).
- Feedback of counselling sessions will be provided based on the age of the student as well as the nature of the reason for referral.

7. Informed Consent

According to the HPCSA General Ethical Guidelines for the Healthcare Professions (2008), Informed Consent refers to:

“Successful relationships between healthcare practitioners and patients depend upon mutual trust. To establish that trust practitioners must respect patients' autonomy – their right to



decide whether to undergo any medical intervention, even where a refusal may result in harm to themselves or in their own death. Patients must be given sufficient information in a way that they can understand, to enable them to exercise their right to make informed decisions about their care.”

According to the Children’s Act (No 38 2005, informed consent for minors follows these guidelines:

A child who is 12 years of age is legally competent to consent to medical treatment (intervention) if the child is of sufficient maturity and has the mental capacity to understand the benefits, risks, social and other implications of the treatment (Children’s Act, 2005 (Act No. 38 of 2005) section 129(2)).

Where a child is under 12 years of age and according to the professional opinion of the school counsellor is not of sufficient maturity and does not have the necessary mental capacity, his or her parent, guardian or care-giver may give consent to intervention (Children’s Act, 2005 section 129(4)).

Upon referral (for referral processes, see Appendix: Referral process), the School Counsellor will:

- In the case of a school referral, liaise with the student’s parent(s)/legal guardian(s) if the child is 12 years old or younger. In this case, a letter of consent to the therapeutic intervention will need to be signed by the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) – should the parents be divorced, parental consent must be obtained from both parents. The parent(s)/legal guardian(s) will be required to attend an intake interview with the School Counsellor. Informed Consent will need to be obtained if the nature of the therapeutic intervention changes at any point in time. In addition, assent is required from the student if they are under the legal age of consent, which is 12 years of age.
- Counselling is voluntary and for students under the age of 12 years, parent(s)/legal guardian(s) reserve the right to consent to, or decline, therapeutic services for their child. Children over 12 years of age reserve the right to consent to, or decline, therapeutic services.

In the case of a student approaching the School Counsellor directly, if the student is over 12 years of age, they can consent to counselling without their parent(s)/legal guardian(s) consent or knowledge. However, as it is important to have the support of parent(s)/legal guardian(s), the School Counsellor will try to motivate the student to disclose the counselling to his or her parent(s)/legal guardian(s), depending on the reason the student gives for requiring counselling and if it is in their best interest.



- If the student is under the age of 12, parent(s)/legal guardian(s) written, informed consent is required for counselling.

Should the reason for referral not fall within the scope of practice of the School Counsellor or require more than a maximum of six consecutive consultations within one school term. The School Counsellor will inform parents and refer the client to an appropriate external service provider(s). Services provided by an external service provider will be for the expense of the parent(s)/legal guardian(s). Should a situation arise in which additional support would benefit the child, the number of sessions can be increased only after consultation with the School Principal.

8. Confidentiality

Confidentiality applies to students, parent(s)/guardian(s) of the students and all staff employed by ISCT. Confidentiality is a fundamental requirement for maintaining trust and respecting a person's autonomy.

In order for any information to be disclosed to a 3rd party, informed consent must be received from the student if the child is over the age of 12 and their parent(s)/guardian(s) and from parent(s)/guardian(s) if the child is under the age of 12 and the child must be informed that the information is going to be shared. In cases involving child protection or safeguarding concerns, confidentiality and reporting guidelines from the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy must be followed.

At the outset of working with students, parent(s)/legal guardian(s) or ISCT staff members, the School Counsellor will clarify the limitations on confidentiality. The limitations on confidentiality are at the instruction of a court of law or when the student, or another person (adult or child), is at risk of harm or at the request of the student.

The School Counsellor is not required to disclose:

- Information regarding a student breaking a school rule or committing an offence, unless it may be deemed that by withholding information, the School Counsellor was placing the student or another person at the risk of significant harm.
- Any confidential information/ reports regarding a student where permission has not been granted to do so by the student and/ or parents/ guardians.
- Any medical diagnosis/ treatment process, which does not pose an imminent threat to the health and wellbeing of the person or others if the child is of the age of 12 and above. This judgement call will be made after consultation with the School Counsellor's clinical supervisor.

There is no expectation on behalf of ISCT that the School Counsellor will disclose the reasons for counselling if a student approaches the School Counsellor directly. A record of students receiving counselling will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the School Counsellor's office.

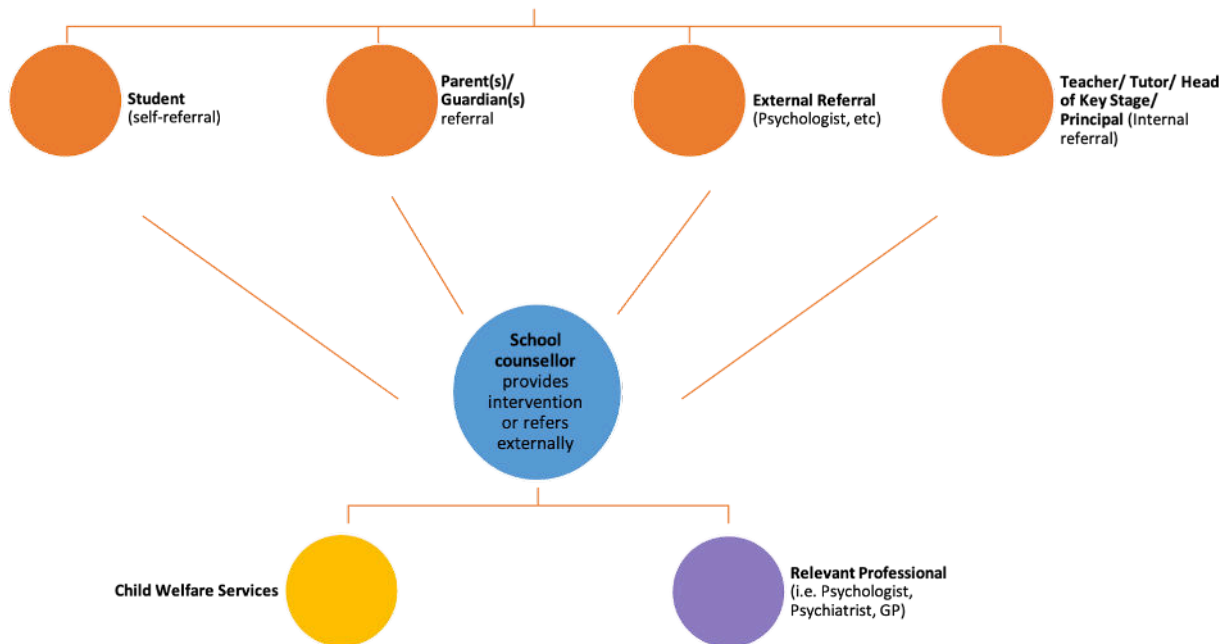


9. Logistics

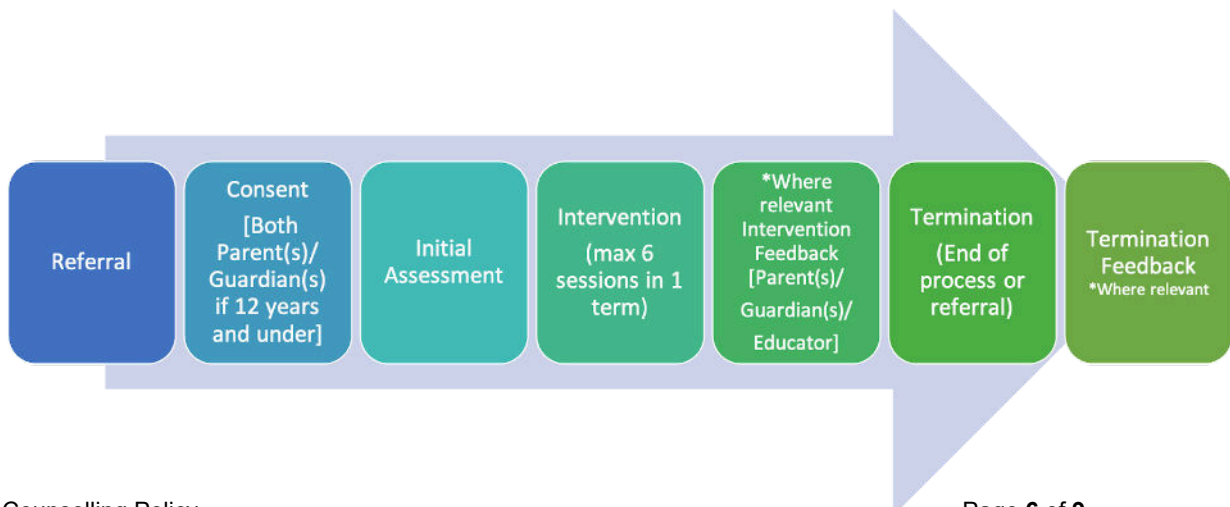
Students will be accommodated during school opening hours.

- Emergency sessions will be dealt with as required.
- Year 10 - 13 students will be accommodated during their private study periods, where possible.
- Year 7 – 9 students may only be taken out of the following subjects: Drama, Art, Design, Music, PSHE, or PE or unless there is an emergency that requires immediate containment.
- KS2 students will be accommodated at times arranged between the School Counsellor and the Class Teacher.

Appendix A: Overview of Referral Process for Primary and High School



Appendix C: The Counselling Process at ISCT





Appendix D: Consent form for children aged 12 and below

Dear Parent /Legal Guardian (s),

Date:

I would like to formally introduce myself and the counselling process at the International School of Cape Town. My name is Name of Counsellor, I am a Registered Counsellor under the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA). My registration number is (HPCSA registration number). The primary goal of counselling within a school environment is to improve well-being and increase the resilience of learners.

Children often need professional support to face and overcome challenges in society. At the International School of Cape Town there is a FREE professional counselling service available to the learners. We hereby request that both parents/legal guardians, where possible, sign this letter to give permission for your child (under the age of 12 years) to receive individual counselling. You also agree that the school counsellor may obtain additional information from other sources if necessary, such as the educators or external professionals related to the care and treatment of the learner.

We/I, _____ (parent name), hereby authorise that our/my child, _____ (child's name), may make use of the counselling services offered at the International School of Cape Town. We hereby agree that the school counsellor may provide or obtain information from / to teachers regarding the support process with the aim of further intervention, only where it is absolutely necessary to the counselling process. We are also in line with the conditions set out in Appendix A. We acknowledge that we give voluntary, written consent without being influenced by the school counsellor or any other person.

We give consent for counselling:

Yes No

We adhere to the conditions set out in Appendix A

Yes No

Signature (Parent/ Legal Guardian #1)

Signature (Parent/ Legal Guardian #2)

Date: _____

Date : _____

Contact Number : _____

Contact Number: _____



Accompanying Letter: Consent form for children aged 12 and below

In order to give informed consent for the intervention with the school counsellor, the following information is important:

Counselling is about providing a safe non-judgmental space where learners are free to share their thoughts and feelings. Confidentiality plays a role in providing a safe space for learners. Therefore, what is said within the counselling space is confidential. However, you will always be notified when there is something that you need to know as parents, especially in matters relating to harm to self or others. Feedback will be provided only where necessary and with the express permission of the child receiving counselling, to ensure that openness and transparency is maintained between the counsellor and the learner.

If you decide that the intervention with your child with the school counsellor should be ended, it is advised that the school counsellor see your child for an additional session to end the process with your child appropriately and professionally.

To support your child, the school counsellor sometimes has to share pertinent information relating to the counselling process with other mental health professionals in order to ensure that they help your child in the best way possible. This takes place in the form of supervision or case discussions. Your child's identity will not be disclosed.

The school counsellor works within a team which includes the educator and the special education needs coordinator (SENCO). Necessary information may need to be shared amongst the team to support the learner as they progress through the various stages of their schooling at the International School of Cape Town.

It is important for parents to understand that the school counsellor's role and scope of practice is limited to providing the professional service on the school grounds and that parents will not involve the school counsellor or International School of Cape Town in any legal dispute, especially a dispute over the guardianship / custodial care of children or the arrangements regarding this (visitation, etc.). The school counsellor will not be involved in the provision of reports for the purposes of court proceedings.

The school counsellor and the International School of Cape Town will not be held responsible for any negative behaviour displayed by your child during or after the counselling intervention.

If you need more information about the counselling process please contact me at [School Counsellor's email address](#).

Kind Regards,

[Name of School Counsellor](#)



Appendix E: Consent/Assent form for children aged 12 and above

What does Counselling look like in the High School at ISCT?

School counselling at ISCT is a service offered to students at no extra cost, as a space for them to share their thoughts, feelings and experiences in a safe, non-judgmental environment. The purpose of school counselling sessions is to support your growth as you navigate the journey of High School.

Counselling sessions are usually short-term and limited to six sessions within a school term. However, in some cases, there are exceptions to this depending on the situation.

I _____, agree to receive counselling from the High School Counsellor (*Counsellor's Name*) and understand that the information shared in counselling sessions is treated with the utmost care and confidentiality.

However, there are certain limits to the confidentiality between the High School Counsellor and the student in the following circumstances:

1. You are harming yourself in some way.
2. You are thinking of harming someone else.
3. You would like the High School Counsellor to disclose information to a third party when it is deemed beneficial to do so.

Before any information is shared, as far as it is reasonably possible, you will be notified of the nature of the information being shared and who it will be shared with.

I agree that the information shared with me has been done in a language that I understand and I have been given the opportunity to ask questions.

Student's signature

High School Counsellor's signature

Date

Date