



# Faith Lutheran College, Redlands

*Faith in Christ ... prepared for life.*

## *Mission Statement*

*Faith Lutheran College is committed to providing quality learning opportunities while nurturing the development of all students in a Christ-centred community.*

## **COUNSELLING POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

### **UNDERLYING PHILOSOPHY**

Counselling at Faith Lutheran College, Redlands is offered to assist students to develop appropriate skills and attitudes and resolve problems in academic, psychological, emotional, and/or social contexts. Counselling is done within the framework of the whole College community, involving staff and parents as required. The Counsellor works within a team-based framework meeting regularly with Heads of Schools, Senior Staff and Pastoral Care teams.

A flow chart outlining the Counselling procedures and associated record keeping at Faith accompanies this document.

### **1. REFERRALS**

#### *1.1 Students*

Counselling is generally on a voluntary basis. However, situations may arise where the College will request a student to attend counselling, for example, in relation to behavioural issues.

#### *1.1.1 Referrals for Internal Counselling*

Referrals may be made:

- By College staff.
- By self.
- By a parent.
- By community members.

#### *1.1.2 Referrals for Outside Counselling*

Where the College, in its discretion determines it is appropriate, a student (through their parents/caregivers) may be requested to attend for counselling/treatment by external care providers. The rationale for such request may be that the student requires an intervention that is not deemed appropriate for the Counsellor to provide. This may occur for a number of reasons, such as the nature of the required intervention or the degree of involvement required. In making such a request, the following guidelines are to be followed:

- the request will be discussed with the student and their parent/s and the rationale explained
- the student and their parents will be provided with the name(s) of one or more suitable practitioners but they may consult whoever they wish
- the Counsellor will facilitate the referral if requested and, with consent, will be entitled to provide such reports to the external care provider as are in the College's opinion reasonably necessary
- the Counsellor will be entitled to receive reports from the external care provider as are reasonably necessary to satisfy the College team (Counsellor, College Principal, Heads of School) that the issues that required the attendance at the external care provider have been satisfactorily resolved or are being managed to the College's satisfaction.

The parents and the student will be expected to accede to a request by the College for outside counselling unless reasons are produced which establish, to the College's reasonable satisfaction, why such a course is inappropriate.

### *1.2 Parents*

It may be deemed appropriate by the College Principal, Heads of School, other senior staff or Counsellor for the Counsellor to see a parent(s) in relation to issues affecting their child.

### *1.3 Staff*

Staff may consult the Counsellor. However, in seeing staff, the primary role of the Counsellor is to provide short term intervention only and, where appropriate, will refer the staff member to an outside care provider. Staff should be aware that if they consult the Counsellor in a formal counselling situation then their name will be included on the weekly list provided to the Heads of School.

## **2. THERAPIES/INTERVENTIONS**

### *2.1 Types of Therapies/Interventions*

In dealing with a student, the Counsellor will provide recognised interventions. These may include cognitive, behavioural, family, narrative, and solution-focused approaches. In many cases the given intervention will be a blend of approaches which focus on supportive, short-term, problem-centered outcomes.

### *2.2 Duration/Frequency of Consultation*

- Unless specifically requested by a student, consultation with the Counsellor will generally be during class time. Hence, the likely duration of each consultation will be for the duration of a lesson (maximum). It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that appointments do not clash with scheduled assessment tasks.
- frequency of consultation will be dependent on the nature of the issues as determined by the Counsellor. Where it is necessary for a student to be seen at least weekly over an extended period, consideration will be given, at the College's discretion, to requesting the student (through the student's parents) to consult an external service provider at the cost of the parents and in accordance with the guidelines in 1.1.2 above.

### *2.3 Joint Interventions*

Where appropriate, joint interventions may be provided. Such situations may include the involvement of other appropriate staff. On occasions groups of students may be seen by the Counsellor and other appropriate staff.

## **3. CONFIDENTIALITY**

### *3.1 Students*

Students will be informed that discussions with the Counsellor are in confidence, except where in the reasonable opinion of the Counsellor:

- there is a concern that the student will cause themselves harm
- there is a concern that the student will cause harm to another person
- the student discloses criminal activity such that it may impact on the welfare of the student or others or the reputation of the College .
- the student discloses that he/she has suffered harm or the Counsellor reasonably suspects that the student has suffered harm, sexual abuse or neglect
- it is otherwise required by law (eg in evidence in court)

Further, it will be explained to students that the above exceptions are required by law, or for the College to discharge its duty of care to students, or for Senior Administration of the College (as referred to in paragraph 4.2 below). It will further be explained that the Counsellor will regularly provide to the Heads of School a list of those students who have been seen by the Counsellor.

### 3.2 Parents

The student will be informed that to facilitate good communication between the College and home, and to enhance the effectiveness of the Counsellor's role, it is usually in the best interests of the student that the student's parents be informed that the student is seeing the Counsellor. It is the responsibility of either the referrer (eg College Principal, Heads of School) or the Counsellor to seek the involvement of parents /caregivers. The student will be informed of this practice. In situations where the student specifically requests that parents not be informed, the student may be seen without the knowledge of their parents only if the Counsellor and either the College Principal or Heads of School are satisfied that it is not in the best interests of the student that the Parents be informed. If appropriate, the student will be encouraged to reconsider their position by providing the appropriate rationale for parental involvement.

## 4. ACCOUNTABILITY

The student Counsellor has both professional and administrative accountabilities.

### 4.1 Professional Accountabilities

It is imperative that appropriate records be maintained. As a minimum, these must record the student's name, the date of each consultation, those present at the consultation, and a brief account of the main issues discussed. Similar records should also be kept in regard to meetings and/or telephone conversations with parents, staff, and external service providers regarding the student.

### 4.2 Administrative Accountabilities

To ensure appropriate communication and accountability within the College, the Counsellor reports to the Heads of School. The Counsellor will meet with the Heads of School on a fortnightly basis (weekly where possible) to provide feedback generally on the provision of counselling within each School and specifically (as necessary and appropriate) on individual matters. The Counsellor will also provide a list of those students who have been counselled.

The Counsellor will discuss with teachers, where necessary and appropriate, specific student details (refer to confidentiality procedures above in 3.1 Students). Teachers are encouraged to discuss with the Counsellor or Heads of School any concerns or queries they have regarding individual students in their class who are attending counselling however must be mindful that client confidentiality will be maintained. Teachers will need to make a time convenient to both parties.

## 5. RECORDS/ACCESS

The records of the Counsellor are at all times the property of the College. Access to counselling records will be provided where appropriate legal and privacy legislation requirements are met.

### **Associated documents:**

- *FLCR Counselling Flowchart*
- *Student Referral to Counsellor Form*
- *Student Counselling Consent Form – Parent Caregiver*
- *Student Appointment with Counsellor Form*

### Student Counselling Appointment Organisation

The Counsellor will select an appropriate appointment time based on the student's timetable and in consultation with staff/student (if required). The appointment will be written on an appointment card, and given to the student's PCG/class teacher to forward to the student that morning. The student should present this card to the class teacher for a signature prior to the appointment. If this is suitable, the teacher should sign it and record the time the student left the room, and the Counsellor will do the same. If the appointment time is unsuitable, the teacher should retain the student in the class and discuss this with the Counsellor.

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