

School Counselling Policy

Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to outline the function of Student Counselling at IBSB and the procedures to be followed to support students and staff across a range of identified needs.

Overview

According to Public Health England, in an average class of 30 15-year-old pupils:

- three could have a mental disorder
- ten are likely to have witnessed their parents separate
- one could have experienced the death of a parent
- seven are likely to have been bullied
- six may be self-harming

Thus, it becomes a duty for schools to promote the wellbeing of students.

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles stated in the following publications:

- Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions, 2018
- Romanian Psychologists Code of Ethics, 2018
- Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools, 2018
- Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing, 2015
- School Counselling for All, 2015

Counselling at IBSB is offered to assist students to develop appropriate skills and attitudes and to resolve problems in academic, psychological, emotional, and/or social contexts.

Counselling is carried out within the framework of the whole school community, involving staff and parents as required. Counsellors are members of the School's Pastoral Care Department and fall within the area of student support.

Staff may access counselling support regarding class management strategies, recommendations for individual students concerning learning, emotional and behaviour difficulties a student may have, however the primary duty is to the students.

Counselling is also offered to parents regarding student concerns through individual and/or group sessions.

Definition of Counselling

Counselling takes place when a counsellor sees a student in a private and confidential setting to explore a difficulty a student is having, distress they may be experiencing, or perhaps their dissatisfaction with life, or loss of a sense of direction and purpose. Counselling may take



place at the request of students themselves or staff, with parent permission, or parents. Parents will be informed every time a student asks for counselling provision, and for students under 16 years of age, parents should give a written consent.

The Role of a Student Counsellor

IBSB employs a student counsellor to help address the emotional needs that young people can have in response to experiences such as family breakdown, bereavement, loss, family and peer relationship difficulties, anxiety and bullying.

Counselling can be an effective source of support for students, enabling them to function better both in and outside school, enhancing their resilience and giving them resources to manage any future difficulties.

Counselling at IBSB is part of the Student Support Services within the school and is an onsite response for those students needing the additional expertise that counselling brings to the overall pastoral support system.

Open Door Policy

At any given time, in normal circumstances, there are two full-time student counsellors on campus: one is located in the Primary School building, and the other is located in the Secondary School building on the main campus: Monday-Thursday 08:30 -16:15; Friday 08:30 -15:00.

At any time, during normal office hours, a student from either the Primary School or Secondary School is welcome to visit the student counsellor. If this is during a lesson, the student must have a note from the teacher confirming their knowledge and agreement.

If the student counsellor is busy speaking with another student or member of staff, students should politely knock on the door and wait for the student counsellor to speak with them, confirming the nature of the visit and the level of urgency, and, if possible, a time when they will be available or if appropriate the means by which to make an appointment via the student support email: studentsupport@ibsb.ro. For safeguarding related issues, students and parents can write to cs@ibsb.ro (CS= Child Safeguarding).

Referrals

Students

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

- Referrals for Internal Counselling

Referrals may be made in one of three ways:

- By member of the teaching staff
- By the student
- By a Parent



- Referrals for Outside Counselling

Where the school in its discretion determines it is appropriate, a student (through parents) 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 school 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 the parent/s and the rationale explained
- the student and his parents will be provided with the name(s) of one or more suitable practitioners, but they may consult whoever they wish
- the school 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 School's opinion reasonably necessary
- the school counsellor will be entitled to receive reports from the external care provider as are reasonably necessary to satisfy the school counsellor that the issues that required the attendance at the external care provider have been satisfactorily resolved or are being managed to the School's satisfaction.

Counselling provision

In dealing with a student, the school counsellor will provide evidence based brief psychological interventions. These may include cognitive, behavioural, dialectical behaviour, narrative, and solution-focused approaches. In many cases the given intervention will be eclectic which focus on supportive, short-term, problem-centred outcomes.

The counsellor's services also include the provision of psychometric assessments (e.g. I.Q., memory). In some cases, external assessment can be requested. The school counsellor may provide the names of suitable practitioners to parents, if needed. In such cases, the assessments will be at the parent's expense. However, in certain situations, and at the school's discretion, extra assessments may be carried out by the school counsellor.

Duration/Frequency of Consultation

- Unless specifically requested by a student, consultation with the counsellor will generally be during school time. 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, with content from the missed class recovered at home if necessary and asks for information regarding possible homework. Consultations should also be with the prior agreement of the class/subject teacher.
- 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 weekly over an extended period, consideration will be given, at the School's discretion, to requesting the student (through the student's parents) to consult an external service provider at the cost of the parents.



Joint Interventions

Where appropriate, joint interventions may be provided. Such situations may include one or more counsellors jointly seeing a student and members of his family. It may also include the involvement of other appropriate staff.

On occasions groups of students may also be seen by one or more counsellors and other appropriate staff.

Professional and Ethical Boundaries

All mental health professionals working for IBSB for a temporary or an indefinite period abide by the BACP Ethical Framework and the Code of Ethics issued by the Romanian College of Psychologists striving to integrate these principles into their work.

Confidentiality

Students

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

- there is a concern that the student will self-harm
- there is a concern that the student will cause harm to another person
- the student discloses that another person is at risk of significant harm
- the student discloses criminal activity such that it may impact on the welfare of the student or others or the reputation of the School
- the student discloses that he has suffered harm or the counsellor reasonably suspects that the student has suffered harm, sexual abuse or neglect
- it is otherwise required by law (e.g. in evidence in court)

Further, it will be explained to students that the above exceptions are required by law, or for the School to discharge its duty of care to students, or for the proper administration of the School (as referred to in paragraph headed “Administrative Accountability” below). It will further be explained that the school counsellor will regularly provide the SLT a list of those students who have been seen by the school counsellors. All those who have knowledge of students’ names and any other information regarding the student or her family, have a duty of confidentiality.

Parents

The student will be informed that to facilitate good communication between school and home, and to enhance the effectiveness of the school counsellor’s role, it is 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 the School Counsellor to inform the parent/s before counselling begins to seek parent permission. In situations where a student is taken directly to a counsellor for timeout- parents will be informed as close as possible to the event. The student will be informed of this practice.



Parents giving their consent for counselling does not imply their access complete to the details of what the students says in the meeting or the counsellor's notes. A child older than 10 years of age has the right confidentiality. Exception make the following situations:

- persistent suicidal ideas and plans.
- Self-harming behaviour that poses a serious threat for the student's health or bodily integrity.
- plans to harm others.

In situations where the student specifically requests that parents not be informed, the student may be seen without the knowledge of his parents only if the school counsellor and the Head 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 his position by providing the appropriate rationale for parental involvement.

Counsellor

Counsellors under supervision must share critical information about their clients with their supervisor.

Counsellors at any level of qualification may seek supervision for those cases that pose significant professional, ethical or moral difficulty.

All counsellors under prolonged or short supervision, or if they need to discuss the problems of a particular client with a colleague with the sole intention of receiving feedback for their work or recommendations, must take all necessary measures to protect the client's identity, not sharing information that could reveal it to these third parties.

Psychometric assessment

When psychometric assessment is undertaken by the School, this will only be performed with parental consent and agreement by the Student with the clear intent of sharing the results with parents and staff who have a relevant interest from the student's perspective.

Accountability

The student counsellor has both professional and administrative accountabilities.

Professional Accountabilities

For each session, meeting and/ or conversation with parents, external service providers the school counsellor will fill out a short summary on the CPOMS platform, thus keeping record of all students that receive counselling services, the sessions and type of interventions used. All meetings with parents or other professionals must be documented and all minutes shall be uploaded on the platform as well.

Physical records will be kept for all physical materials and documents that concern a student.



Administrative Accountabilities

To ensure appropriate communication and accountability within the school, the Student Counsellor reports to the relevant Head of School. The Student Counsellor will meet with the Head of Primary/ Secondary on a regular basis (unless otherwise agreed and advised to the Head of School) to provide feedback generally on the provision of counselling within the school and specifically (as necessary and appropriate) on individual matters. The Student Counsellor will also provide on a weekly basis a list of those students who have been counselled and the focus on the counselling session.

Health and Safety

In times of a pandemic, students and student counsellors will take the necessary social distancing precautions during student counselling sessions.

Records/Access

The records of the School Counsellor are at all times the property of the School, will remain with the School and will be securely and confidentially archived under the guidance of the SLT. Access to counselling records will be provided where appropriate legal and privacy legislation requirements are met.

Related Policies

- PS/SS Behaviour for Learning Policy
- PS/SS SRE Policy
- WS Anti-Bullying Policy
- Whole School Attendance Policy
- WS Child Safeguarding Policy
- WS Drug and Alcohol Policy
- WS Esafety Policy
- WS Equal Opportunities Policy
- WS Health and Safety Policy
- WS Positive Handling Policy
- WS Prevent Duty Policy