



## INTRODUCTION

### What is counselling?

Counselling takes place when a counsellor sees a client in a private and confidential setting to explore a difficulty the client is having, distress they may be experiencing or perhaps their dissatisfaction with life, or loss of a sense of direction and purpose. It is always at the request of the client and no one can be “sent” for counselling.

At Emirates Future International Academy, the counselling service extends to all the individuals who are a part of the school environment to provide a safe and nurturing approach to all students to explore their barriers and challenges and develop skills needed to overcome them. We value the individuality of each student and nurture his/her educational, academic, career, personal and social needs.

## OBJECTIVES

- Provide safe and nurturing environment.
- Identify students at risk of social, academic, emotional and psychological concerns.
- Provide short-term counselling or crisis intervention.
- Support students through individual intervention program in dealing with bullying, family crisis, change, peer pressure, friendships, anger, academic expectations, and issues surrounding their mental health.

## THE ROLE OF A SCHOOL COUNSELLOR

The school counsellor is a part of the student welfare and learning support team. The role of the school counsellor is not only limited to providing direct services to students, but to consider a holistic approach which involves all who are involved in the well-being of our students. This means that the counsellor will be working in collaboration with the student, his/her family, teachers, other relevant staff members and the general community to ensure the well-being of the students.

## CODES OF PRACTICE

- Each student is seen as a valuable member of his/her community and is treated with dignity and respect
- Every opportunity is granted for students to be empowered, and encouraged to grow in an environment of compassion and equality
- All students' ethnic and cultural diversity are considered in the design and delivery of school counselling services
- Counselling policies and procedures will be followed to serve the students best interests
- Confidentiality is key to the process of counselling and as such will be respected and maintained by all students and staff





## SERVICES PROVIDED

### Individual counselling

One-on-one counselling is provided to the students on a regular basis. It takes place in the section counsellor's office whenever the need arises. In individual sessions, students may draw, write, sing, play, or just talk. Sometimes we work on learning a specific skill such as deep breathing for anxiety. Other times we work on role-playing situations, such as a problem with a friend or having a difficult conversation.

### Group counselling

Group sessions are conducted to inculcate values and ethics for life and to address common problems of growing up life skill issues.

### Workshops/ Training

Designing and implementing workshops that provide students with key skills and techniques to navigate the world around them. Conducting sessions to teachers and administrators to make them aware of counselling policies and practices, how to identify indicators for student concern and how best to serve the counselling needs of our students.

### Career Guidance

EFIA provides a range of services to ensure that our students take the next step in their education and future careers with confidence. Our school organizes regular career guidance interface and career fairs. Campus career fair is attended by students in grade 9 and above.

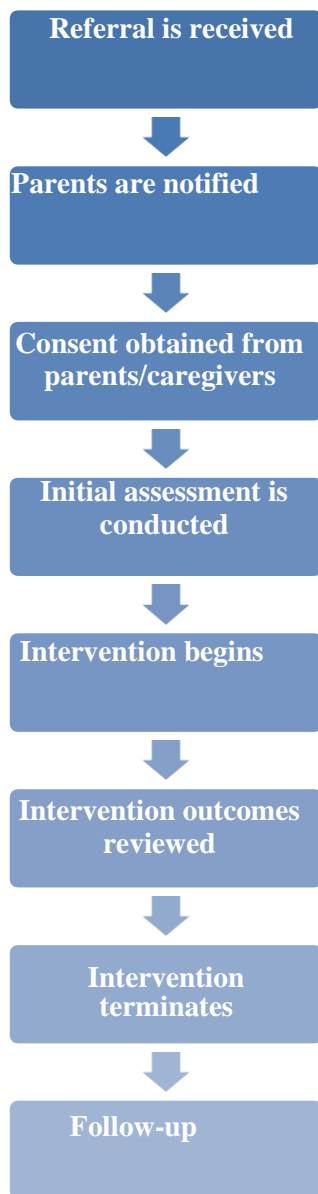
Our Career guidance includes:

- Assisting students for course selection and other documentation work such as preparing recommendation letter and transcripts
- Providing individual and Group Counselling for students
- Organizing career fairs and meeting with college/University representatives.
- Generating and administering course selection information
- Helping the higher-grade students to complete the application process in different Universities

## COUNSELLING PROCESS

Each student deserves the best possible care that can be provided by EFIA. The school counsellor has an essential role in ascertaining whether a student may need intervention within the school or in an out of school setting. Below is a list of procedures the counsellor should take in order to supply the same standardized process for all who access the service:





## 1.1 Referral

Students may be referred to the counselor by parents, teachers, administration, self-referral, or by request of a counselor. When teachers or Administrators refer, they complete a Counseling Referral Form.

## 1.2 Consent

A consent letter is posted out to the parent/carer of the child upon receipt of the referral. Once this has been returned, an initial assessment appointment will be made between the School Counsellor and the student. Parents and carers or outside agencies who feel a child would benefit from counselling should discuss this with their school counsellor.





### **1.3 Initial Assessment**

Once the school counsellor receives the referral from the teacher/staff member or parent a comprehensive initial assessment must take place. This can be in the form of teacher/staff interviews, student observations, parent interviews, classroom/playground observations, educational assessments and student interviews.

### **1.4 Intervention**

Once the assessment process is complete, the School Counsellor will develop an action plan for the student outlining the intervention methods necessary and who will take responsibility for these interventions. This may include teacher and in-class recommendations and parent recommendations.

The School Counsellor's intervention is multi-faceted and may include the following: Individual Counselling, Group Counselling, Whole-Class Interventions

### **1.5 Follow Up**

Referrals which have been terminated for at least 3 months will be followed up with the teacher and parent. The school counsellor will check whether relapse has occurred, or any further concerns have arisen. The counsellor may use the follow-up questionnaire at this stage with the teacher. If further intervention is required, the student's counselling file will be re-opened, and intervention will either be provided by the school counsellor directly or a referral will be made to an external agency.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Confidentiality is the key to counselling as it:

- encourages students to approach the Counsellor
- helps establish a rapport and to build a trusting relationship
- encourages the students to speak freely about their feelings without fear of judgment

The contents of each Counselling session are confidential between the counsellor and the student unless the student's welfare or safety, or that of another, is considered to be at risk of significant harm.

**Exception to confidentiality:** If there is evidence of clear and imminent danger of harm to self-and/or others, the counsellor is legally required to report this information to the concerned school authority and parents.

### **Counselling folder/paperwork**

All counselling related records are kept in a secure and private location. Access is granted to the Principal and Counsellor. Each case referred to the counsellor is recorded and treated with confidentiality. Counselling records are kept separately from school records unless noted otherwise by school policy. **Parental consent/ access to counselling records**

Counselling is voluntary and parents/guardians reserve the right to consent to or decline counselling services for their child. Parents will not be granted access to counselling records, which are





REF: EFIA/PLCY -013/2022-24

Issue Date: 05/04/2023

considered property of the counsellor/school. Parents/guardians of all students will be notified immediately if there is any concern regarding the safety of their child.

## PROVIDING VIRTUAL/DISTANCE SCHOOL COUNSELLING

- Students and families can reach the school counselor through school phone, email or online school platforms.
- Following school policies and guidelines for online services/activities accessing student information's and records through online platforms.
- Encourage students and families to use appropriate online resources. – Ways to participate in the relationship through virtual/distance school counselling.
- Be assessable to students through emails, phone or online platforms for advising following the communication plan developed with school administration.

## EFFECTIVENESS AND REVISION DATES

This policy was in effect from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2017 as Counselling Policy. The policy will be reviewed every two years to ensure the implementation of best practices and to consider the changing needs of our students. The policy will be amended to include current research and practice. It will be renewed in March 2024.

