



BRISBANE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Counselling Policy

(Version 3.1 1911)

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1. Purpose and Application

Counselling at Brisbane Grammar School (School) is offered to support students to develop appropriate skills and attitudes and resolve problems in relation to personal, career and/or academic issues. Counselling is provided within the framework of the School community, involving staff and parents, as required.

The School Counsellors are members of the School's Student Wellbeing Team, and consequently work within a team-based framework. "Student wellbeing" refers to the promotion and maintenance of effective learning, positive mental health, good physical health, and the social wellbeing of students within the School's care. School Counsellors are geographically located within the School in a purpose-built facility to ensure transparency.

Staff may also access counselling through an independent, professional and confidential employee assistance program funded by the School.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Outline the counselling services available to students and staff of the School, and how those services are delivered;
- Complement the School's strategies for ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of its students and staff; and
- Ensure that the School meets its obligations under applicable legislation, including those related to work health and safety and child protection.

2. Counselling Services

Student counselling is provided in respect of three broad areas:

- Personal issues;
- Career issues; and
- Academic issues.

2.1. Personal Counselling

Personal counselling services vary according to need, but may be concerned with:

- Developmental and mental health issues;
- Interpretation of educational and psychological reports;
- Addressing and resolving specific problems;
- Making decisions;
- Stress management;
- Coping with crisis;
- Developing personal insights and knowledge;
- Improving relationships with others; and
- Child protection issues.

2.2. Career Counselling

Careers services and education is a vital component of students exploring their options and planning for their future.

The School aims to ensure that every student has access to individual careers counselling to discuss tertiary aspirations and future goals. The Careers Room in



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The Lilley Centre houses comprehensive print resources for senior students, and support and guidance are provided for students to access online resources.

The School utilises social networking to provide information about tertiary options via closed groups on Facebook and Twitter. Students and parents are encouraged to attend a series of events and information evenings which provide up to date information on post-school options.

2.3. Academic Counselling / Academic Services

Academic counselling is provided to students who may be experiencing difficulties with their studies. Discussion with a School Counsellor can help students identify areas of difficulty and develop strategies to facilitate improvement in their academic performance.

Discussion with a School Counsellor may lead to a referral to Academic Services to offer structured learning opportunities for students who may require additional assistance. The name "Academic Services" reflects the cooperation between the Studies Directorate and Student Wellbeing areas of the School in the management of student learning. Academic Services incorporates areas such as:

- Students at risk;
- Academic disadvantage;
- Provisions for elite performers;
- Policies for dealing with unsatisfactory progress and access arrangements; and
- Reasonable adjustments (AARA).

Students who are referred to Academic Services are required to supply documentation supporting their access, as requested by Academic Services.

Students who require AARA in assessment must apply using the AARA form (available from Academic Services). This will then be assessed by Student Services and recommendations will be made to the Studies Directorate.

3. Attending Counselling

Students may make an appointment to see a School Counsellor by contacting a member of the Student Wellbeing Team or visiting The Lilley Centre. In some cases, the School may request or require a student to attend counselling, for example, where there are concerns about a student's progress, behaviour or wellbeing.

3.1. Referrals to School Counsellor

A student may be referred to counselling in one of three ways:

- By the Headmaster, Deputy Headmaster(s), Head of Middle School, Director of Student Services, Director of Boarding, the Head(s) of Year, or teachers (normally after consultation with the relevant Head of Year);
- Self-referral by the student; or
- By a parent (normally after consultation with the relevant Head of Year, Head of Middle School, Director of Student Services, Deputy Headmaster(s) or Headmaster).



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3.2. Referrals to External Health Providers

Where the School in its sole and absolute discretion determines it is necessary or appropriate, a student (through their parent/s) may be requested to receive counselling or related treatment/s from an external health provider. This may occur for several reasons, for example where the nature, frequency and/or duration of the required intervention means it is not appropriate for the School Counsellors to provide or continue to provide the service.

Where the School makes a request for a student to receive treatment from an external health provider, the following guidelines will be followed:

- The request will be discussed with the student and/or their parent/s and the rationale for the request explained;
- The student and their parent/s will be provided with the name(s) of one or more suitable health providers, but may choose to consult with whichever health provider they prefer;
- The student's parent/s will be responsible for payment of the external health provider's fees;
- The School Counsellor will facilitate the referral if requested to do so, and with consent of the student (through their parent/s), will provide such reports kept by the School to the external health provider as are, in the School's opinion, reasonably necessary for the treatment, or continued treatment, of the student;
- The School Counsellor may be entitled to receive reports from the external health provider, as are reasonably necessary, to satisfy the School Counsellor that the issues requiring the student to receive treatment from the external health provider have been satisfactorily resolved, or are being managed to the School's reasonable satisfaction; and
- If a student is at risk of harm, a return to school medical clearance may be required by the School.

The parent/s and the student will be expected to agree to a request by the School for a student to receive counselling or related treatment/s from an external health provider unless, in the School's reasonable opinion, there are satisfactory reasons why such counselling or treatment/s are unnecessary or inappropriate.

4. Therapies and Interventions

4.1. Types of Therapies and Interventions

When counselling a student, a School Counsellor will provide only recognised therapies and interventions in accordance with best practice. These may include cognitive, behavioural, family, narrative, and solution focused approaches. In many cases, the therapy/intervention that is provided will be a blend of approaches which focus on supportive, short-term, problem centred outcomes.

In some cases, a need may be identified for a student to undergo psychometric assessments (e.g. I.Q., memory cognitive/aptitude, personality/behavioural tests). Given the significant resources and time required for the administration, interpretation, and reporting of such assessments, parent/s will generally be advised that these assessments should be carried out by an external psychologist. A School Counsellor may provide the names of suitable practitioners to parent/s if requested. External assessments will be at the parent/s' expense.



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However, in certain situations, and at the School's sole and absolute discretion (after consultation with and agreement of the Deputy Headmaster - Students or Head of Middle School, and Director of Student Services), some assessments may be carried out by a School Counsellor. Such assessments will be performed only with parental consent and agreement by the student, and the results will be shared with parent/s and relevant School staff.

4.2. Duration / Frequency of Consultation

Consultation with a School Counsellor will generally take place during class time, unless otherwise agreed with the School Counsellor. The duration of each consultation will usually be for no longer than one lesson (maximum). It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that consultations do not clash with scheduled assessment tasks.

The School operates a non-therapy model. As such, interventions requiring ongoing consultation will be notified to the Director of Student Services and/or Deputy Headmaster – Students or Head of Middle School, and appropriate referrals will be made to external health providers (see 3.2 above).

4.3. Joint Interventions

Where it is considered appropriate, at the School's sole and absolute discretion, joint interventions may be provided. This may involve one or more School Counsellors jointly consulting with a student and / or member of their family. A joint intervention may also include the involvement of other appropriate staff. On occasion, groups of students may be required to consult with one or more School Counsellors and other appropriate staff.

5. Confidentiality

5.1. Students

Discussions (including records of discussions) with a School Counsellor are confidential, except where in the reasonable opinion of the School 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 that another person is at risk of harm;
- The student discloses criminal activity that may impact on the welfare of the student, or others, or the reputation of the School;
- The student discloses that they have suffered harm, or the Counsellor reasonably suspects that the student has suffered harm;
- It is necessary or appropriate to consult and/or seek advice from other School Counsellors, the Headmaster, Deputy Headmaster (Students), Head of Middle School or Director of Student Services, or to seek external legal advice, about issues involving the student (for example the need for reporting under the School's Child Protection Policy and Child Risk Management Strategy, or for referral to another School Counsellor or an external health provider); or
- Disclosure of the discussions is otherwise required by law (for example, responding to a subpoena or giving in evidence in court).

Where necessary, it will be explained to students and/or parent/s that the above exceptions are required by law, to comply with School policies, for the School to discharge its duty of care to students, or for the proper performance of a School



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Counsellor's responsibilities and administration of the School, as the case may be (as referred to in section 6 – "Accountabilities" below).

5.2. Parent/s

Where necessary, students will be informed that to facilitate good communication between the School and home, and to enhance the effectiveness of the School Counsellor's role, it may be in the best interests of the student that their parent/s be informed that they are seeing a School Counsellor and/or of the nature of the counselling provided to the student. It is the responsibility of either the referrer or the School Counsellor to inform the student's parent/s.

Student Counsellors, during their work, may liaise with the student's parent/s in supporting the student. Additionally, it may also be considered necessary or appropriate by the Headmaster, Deputy Headmaster - Students or Head of Middle School, for a School Counsellor to meet with a student's parent/s to discuss issues affecting the student.

If a student specifically requests that their parent/s not be informed that they are seeing a School Counsellor, the student may consult with the School Counsellor without their parent/s' knowledge only if the School Counsellor and Director of Student Services (or if the School Counsellor is the Director of Student Services, then the Headmaster, Deputy Headmaster – Students or Head of Middle School) are satisfied that it is in the best interests of the student that they receive counselling and that their parent/s not be informed. The School Counsellor and the Director of Student Services or Senior Staff may reassess and change their decision about this at any time. Where appropriate, the student may be encouraged to reconsider their position by a School Counsellor explaining the rationale for parental involvement.

Despite a student requesting that their parent/s not be informed, where the School in its sole and absolute discretion determines it is necessary or appropriate, a student's parent/s may be informed of the student's request for counselling and/or the nature of the counselling provided to the student.

6. Accountabilities

The School Counsellors have both professional and administrative accountabilities. School Counsellors are required to maintain registration with appropriate professional bodies and ensure that they engage in regular supervision and professional development.

6.1. Professional Accountabilities

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

Each School Counsellor must record all counselling appointments in an electronic calendar, and those appointments must be visible to the other School Counsellors. The School Counsellors will meet regularly with each other to discuss the number of students who have consulted with them and, where necessary or appropriate, to



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discuss any issues about particular students, such as the need to refer students either to another School Counsellor, or externally.

All School Counsellors are required to engage in professional peer supervision as required by their relevant professional bodies.

6.2. Administrative Accountabilities

To ensure appropriate communication and accountability within the School, the School Counsellors are members of the Student Wellbeing Team and report to the Director of Student Services. The School Counsellors will meet with the Director of Student Services at least fortnightly (unless otherwise agreed and advised to the Headmaster) to provide feedback generally on the provision of counselling within the School and specifically (as necessary or appropriate) on individual matters.

A meeting will also be held at least once a term with the School Counsellors, the Director of Student Services, the Deputy Headmaster – Students, and/or the Head of Middle School to report on the provision of counselling within the School and specifically (as necessary or appropriate) on individual matters.

7. Records / Access

All counselling records must be stored electronically within the School's network, but accessible only by the relevant School Counsellor and the Headmaster. Other than in exceptional circumstances, a School Counsellor's records will only be accessed by the Headmaster in consultation with the relevant School Counsellor.

The records of the School Counsellor are always the property of the School. If a School Counsellor leaves the School, their records will remain with the School and will be securely and confidentially archived under the guidance of the Deputy Headmaster - Students. Their counselling records may only be accessed by the Headmaster and the other remaining School Counsellor/s.

Access to a student's counselling records by the student, their parent/s, or third parties will only be granted where legal including privacy obligations are met. For more information, refer to section 5 – "**Confidentiality**" above and the School's Privacy Policy.

8. Child Protection

As is required of all staff members of the School, School Counsellors are required to be familiar and comply with the School's policies for child protection, including the *Child Protection Policy* and *Child Risk Management Strategy* and *Code of Conduct (Staff)*.

School Counsellors play a key role in implementing the School's child risk management strategies, including the identification and reporting of harm and inappropriate behaviour, and providing support to students and parents.



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9. Staff Counselling

The School is committed to caring for its staff and ensuring it provides a safe, healthy and supportive workplace. As part of that commitment, the School provides a professional and confidential counselling service for all employees and their immediate family. The service is free of charge to employees, subject to a limit on the number of counselling sessions.

This service is provided by an independent external provider currently Assure Programs. Assure Programs counsellors are all qualified, experienced professionals who have extensive training in counselling and workplace consulting. Assure Programs counsellors can assist with a wide range of personal or work-related issues.

The service operates on a self-referral basis. This means staff can contact the service directly without needing to inform anyone at the School. The service is completely confidential unless disclosure is required by law (for example, responding to a subpoena or giving in evidence in court).

Staff may contact Assure Programs directly on 1800 808 374 or via the website www.assureprograms.com.au

10. Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding this document, please contact:

- Deputy Headmaster – Students on dhm.students@brisbanegrammar.com or 07 3834 5200

11. Related Documents

- Child Protection Policy and Child Risk Management Strategy
- Code of Expectations and Behaviour (Students)
- Code of Conduct (Staff)
- Privacy Policy and Standard Information Collection Notice
- Work Health and Safety Policy



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12. Policy Management

The School may, from time to time, review and update this document to take account of new laws and technology, changes to the School's operations and practices and to make sure it remains appropriate to the changing school environment.

Document Title	Counselling Policy
Author	Deputy Headmaster – Students
Version	V3.1 1911
Date	13 Nov 2019

Document Control

Version	Description	Date
V1.0	Mark Tyszkiewicz, Kerry Hurd & Anthony Micallef	9 February 2010
V1.1	Mark Tyszkiewicz & Kerry Hurd	February 2010
V1.2	Reviewed: Dale Nicholas, Mark Tyszkiewicz & Kerry Hurd	February 2012
V2.0	Reviewed: David Carroll, Dale Nicholas & Corrs Chambers Westgarth	August 2016
V3.0	Reviewed: David Carroll, Dale Nicholas & Corrs Chambers 3466-9152-6413v2	September 2019
V3.0	Reviewed by SLT	5 Nov 2019
V3.1	Amended: Contact details amended in #9, L Dunstan	7 Dec 2020

Distribution

Version	Recipient	Date
V3.0	BGS (MyGrammar) BGS Staff Announcement	13 Nov 2019