



ROCHAMBEAU
THE FRENCH INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

SCHOOL COUNSELING HANDBOOK



MISSION AND VISION

Rochambeau, the French International School Mission

Rochambeau fosters excellence through rigorous, accredited French and International curricula. The school provides a safe and caring environment that welcomes students of all backgrounds and nationalities, nurturing them to become plurilingual, confident, and open-minded critical thinkers.

Rochambeau School Counseling Department Mission

The mission of Rochambeau's School Counseling department is to support the well-being of all students by offering an equitable, developmentally-appropriate, comprehensive, preventative, and interventive school counseling program. This data-driven program abides by national ethical standards to enable students to achieve their full potential. The school counseling program emphasizes the importance of cultivating self-care, appreciating personal differences, caring and advocating for others, and becoming global citizens. This program aims to guide students toward becoming confident, adaptable, and open-minded critical thinkers who will embrace multiculturalism and thrive in a diverse and changing world.

Rochambeau, the French International School Vision

Rochambeau, the French International School, empowers students to thrive in an evolving world, positively impact their communities, and value diversity and multiculturalism.

The school's core values are:

- Pursuit of Excellence, expect and help everyone to do their best
- Intellectual rigor and integrity, strong emphasis on work ethic and quality
- Adaptability to a changing world
- Respect for diversity, the individual, ideas, cultures, and the environment
- Support and cooperation between and among our students, our staff, and our community
- Openness and transparency in our decision-making process and communication



Rochambeau School Counseling Department Vision

After completing the school counseling program at Rochambeau, students are inclusive critical thinkers who value diversity. Rochambeau students embrace differences as a strength, building meaningful connections and respecting others. They know the power of kindness and compassion to care for themselves and those around them. Students know how to recognize personal values and develop their strengths as a way to self-advocate and promote social justice. They set challenging goals, viewing struggle as an opportunity for growth. Rochambeau students are open-minded global citizens that are empowered to use their skills to navigate and improve the complex world around them.

OBJECTIVES & BELIEFS

Rochambeau strives to provide its students with the necessary support they need to achieve academic success and reach their full potential. This rationale is supported by the following aims and principles, **within the limits of the school's resources, means, and capabilities:**

Counseling Department Objectives

- Build confidence and self-esteem to enable all students to work toward meeting their full potential within the requirements of the school curriculum;
- Work in collaboration with students, parents/guardians, and staff to identify without delay students who need support and to continuously assess and monitor both social and emotional progress and difficulties;
- Support students in response to crises;
- Ensure all students have the social and emotional skills necessary for a smooth transition between grade levels;
- Establish a collaboration with parents/guardians and teachers about students that need support with regard to social and emotional difficulties, strategies, and progress while respecting the need for confidentiality;
- Involve students and parents/guardians in the development and review of their support plan (PAP/PAI);
- Liaise with outside agencies and/or specialists when deemed appropriate; and
- Advise staff in building appropriate schoolwide strategies to support students.



Equity, Inclusion, Advocacy, and Social Justice

In accordance with the school board's previous statements¹, the school counselors at Rochambeau are actively working to help "create a school that is better, stronger and more inclusive at all levels" through their daily work. The school counseling department contributes to the school's goal to "ensure that every student and every member of our community, regardless of nationality, color, race, gender, sexual orientation or religion, feels safe and welcome at Rochambeau" through a commitment to equity, inclusion, advocacy, and social justice.

Within Rochambeau, the school counselors implement these beliefs and promote social justice by advocating for equitable policies and educating staff and students. As cultural competency is an ongoing process, the school counselors participate in professional development and take a lifelong learning approach to the topic of equity. Similarly, they support staff members in their process of developing cultural competency. Within the classroom, the school counselors cover various relevant age-appropriate social justice topics, providing students the space to develop the skills and tools necessary to advocate for themselves and others.

COUNSELING DOMAINS AND SERVICES

The School Counselor supports students with emotional, social, or behavioral difficulties at Rochambeau. The counselor's main missions include but are not limited to:

Personal/Social Development

School counselors at Rochambeau focus on improving student's socio-emotional well-being and academic development while the University Counseling Center offers services related to career and university preparation. Professional counselors at Rochambeau hold a Master's Degree in School Counseling or Counseling-related field and therefore can offer:

¹ The Board of Trustees' full statement can be read in their message: [Community Action to Improve Racial Equity and Equality](#), which can be found on the [school website](#) under "Board of Trustees Messages"



- **Responsive Services:** Responding to a student in crisis or at risk of hurting themselves or another individual, school counselors will intervene and address the immediate needs. Examples of this might include but are not limited to self-injury, suicidal ideation, violent behaviors, threats, or an extreme emotional or behavioral change that may indicate cause for concern
- **Individual Counseling:** Meeting with students one-on-one to provide short-term support with a problem or concern through the use of counseling techniques. Students requiring more consistent and long-term counseling will be appropriately referred to an external professional.
- **Peer Mediation / Conflict Resolution:** Working with two or more students in conflict to develop a solution that benefits all parties
- **Small Group Counseling:** Working with a group of students on a given topic. Participating in a group does not indicate that the topic is necessarily a problem for the child, but rather the group is an opportunity for students to learn from each other.
- **Classroom Socio/Emotional Lessons:** Preparing and facilitating classroom sessions on social-emotional topics including themes like emotion regulation, kindness, and healthy friendships and relationships. At the primary level, the time for these lessons are established with the teacher. At the secondary level, they take place during the Heures de Vie de Classe in collaboration with the homeroom teacher (professeur principal(e)). These lessons are research-informed and utilize ASCA's [Mindsets and Behaviors](#) to ensure that they reflect the counseling program's mission and goals.
- **Parent/Team Conferences:** Meeting with parents/guardians and other members of the educational team (special education, teachers, directors etc.) to collaborate on ways to best support a student. This includes PAP/PAI meetings and general meetings initiated by the parent/guardian or the school.
- **Resources for Families:** Providing resources to families to support their students at home. School counselors work *with* families and are not able to provide counseling *to* families. School counselors can provide families and students with outside referrals to help in responding to unmet needs.
- **Teacher Consultation:** Exchanging ideas and solutions with teachers to support students



- **Observation:** Taking note of how students behave in the classroom to conceptualize a concern and generate ideas of how to support their success.
- **School-Wide or Campus-Wide Initiatives:** Working with other staff across the school or campus for an intervention to support students. Examples may include developing mentorship, peer-mediation programs, or special events like National School Counseling Week.
- **Community Wellness Newsletters:** Providing resources to the community based on relevant topics and sharing updates and developments in the school counseling program. The school counselors use these newsletters to communicate with the community about upcoming events, recent interventions, and resources in response to current student needs
- **Liaison With External Professionals:** Ensuring the best services to students through close collaboration with community professionals. School counselors will share community resources to help parents/guardians and students receive the most appropriate support. When given permission by the family, school counselors collect and share information about students' specific needs and progress so that appropriate intervention can be implemented in or out of the school.

Academic Development

Within their missions school counselors also contribute to student's academic success and play a key role in the inclusive philosophy of Rochambeau in collaboration with the Student Learning Support team (SLS). The SLS provides individualized support to students with special needs. Please refer to the SLS Handbook to know more about the team and the different types of services available to students. The school counselors can assist in identifying and supporting special needs that are socio-affective or behavioral in nature. The school counselors can also:

- Consult with teachers to assist them in identifying the reasons why a student is experiencing behavioral, emotional, and/or social difficulties in school;
- Perform class visits and observations as deemed necessary by the educational team or the family;
- Assist teachers in finding strategies to address and best support students' emotional and social well-being;



- Work with other staff including learning support specialists in drawing plans to support students with specific needs (PPRE, PAP, or PAI);
- Recommend referrals to professionals outside of the school (e.g. Montgomery County, Department of Special Education Services, Crisis Center, etc.) to parents/guardians;
- Provide recommendations regarding student retention (being held back) or acceleration (skipping a grade);
- Communicate with families and students regarding challenges and progress.

COUNSELING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Communication with the School Counselors

We believe in the science and the benefits of counseling students from all backgrounds and all ages. For this reason, all students at Rochambeau can have access to meet privately with the school counselor on campus during school hours.

A parent/guardian or student can reach out to the school counselors and request an appointment via

- email to discuss their concerns.
 - The school counselors will respond within 48 hours, unless there is a student emergency, and will collaborate with the parents/guardians and or student to develop a plan that best benefits the student.
- phone at 301-530-8260. The extension for
 - a) Primary school is 105
 - b) Secondary school is 253

Teachers and staff members may also refer students to the school counselor. All staff referring students to the school counselors must notify the students' parents/guardians first. However, if there is an emergency counseling intervention needed during school hours, families may be notified after the counselor has seen the student. Additionally, a counselor may determine from observations and interactions that a student may be in need of counseling. In this case, the counselor may request a student to attend a meeting at school with the student directly.



Students are welcome to schedule an appointment with their counselor by writing a note (Maplewood) or via email (Forest Road). The school counselors have an open-door policy and can also be contacted by students visiting their offices when they are on that campus. Students younger than CE1/2nd grade can obtain counseling services via their teacher or parent/guardian.

Attending counseling is voluntary. If a need for services is identified in a student, and the student does not wish to benefit from counseling at the school, parents/guardians will be notified automatically and appropriate referrals will be recommended.

The school counselors will be available to respond to emails and schedule phone calls on weekdays between 8:30 AM and 4:30 PM. In case of an immediate emergency, families should contact their local crisis center or 911.

Use of Data

Because a strong school counseling program is data-driven, the school counselors will periodically utilize student data available through the school portal, as well as collect data via other means such as surveys (for students, parents/guardians, and teachers), pre- and post-tests during classroom lessons, and feedback regarding interventions. This data will not be used to grade students. Responses are kept secure and are used solely to improve the counseling program and future interventions available for students. Students' names will be removed from any analysis, results, or information shared beyond the counseling department.

Limit of Services and Community Referrals

School counselors are trained in different areas of counseling, however within their missions at the school they are not able to provide therapy, psychological diagnoses, or medical diagnoses. School counseling is brief in nature (6 - 8 sessions) and is *not* intended to replace long term therapy. If the school counselor determines that the child would be best served by another form of intervention, the counselor will make appropriate recommendations for outside referral. School counselors can provide guidance to students and families in identifying specific needs and finding the most appropriate community resources to assess these needs.



School counselors' primary duty is to the students. Staff wellbeing is important and school counselors contribute to that by providing support, guidance, and referral resources. **School counselors do not provide counseling to other staff members.** If a staff member presents a mental health concern, the school counselors have a duty to address these concerns with the administration in order to safeguard the staff member's health and safety. School counselors will also provide resources for external referral.

Role of the School Counselor in the Enforcement of School Rules

The school counselor's role is to form a trusting relationship with students not to discipline. If a student is sent to the school counselor after breaking a rule or other incident, they will discuss the feelings that came up, the choices the student made, the consequences of that choice, possibilities for restorative action, and what better choices could be made in future situations. The student may still receive sanctions from another staff member or member of the administration, but the school counselor's primary role is to promote positive choices for the future through a strengths-based perspective and maintain a safe and trusting relationship with the students. While school counselors are not disciplinarians, they do participate in forming discipline procedures that support the best interests of all students. More information about the school counselor's role in discipline can be found on the American School Counselor Association's [position statement](#) on discipline.

It is neither the role of Rochambeau nor of its school counselors to enforce family court orders or resolve family law disputes. The primary consideration for schools in family law matters that impact a child's education should be the educational and welfare needs of the child. *Therefore, families are asked to refrain from requesting school counselor involvement in legal proceedings.*

Confidentiality

Confidentiality of Sessions

In order to build trust and to have effective counseling with a student, the school counselor will keep information confidential. The school counselor will not repeat what is shared in counseling with other students. However, in some significant cases, the counselor will have a duty to share information with the student's parents/guardians, teachers, and/or the administration.



In certain instances, the school counselor is required by law to share information with parents/guardians or other adult authorities:

1. Reporting child and/or elder abuse;
2. Expressed threats to oneself or of violence toward an ascertainable victim; and
3. Where the student's mental or emotional state becomes an issue in a legal proceeding.

While valuing confidentiality, school counselors also balance the student's need for privacy with parents/guardians' need to know what is happening in their child's life. The school counselors prioritize collaboration with families to support students. If something significant happens involving a student, the school counselors will be sure to inform their parents/guardians given that it is in the student's best interest. Families who have concerns that the school counselors can help with should likewise not hesitate to contact them using the contact information listed in this document.

In specific situations (crises, important cases, etc.) and in order to ensure student well-being, the counselors may also need to report and collaborate with other relevant staff including school administration, teachers, nurses, or Vie Scolaire. This will be done on a need-to-know basis and in the best interest of the student.

In some cases, counselors may share anonymized information from student cases with an outside supervisor in order to improve their practice and support better student outcomes. In these cases, privacy is key and students' identities or identifying information will not be disclosed. These supervision sessions help counselors stay abreast with the most up-to-date research and practices. They also help counselors to improve the decision-making process and ensure that they are aligning with Maryland law and national ethical standards to provide the best services possible to students.

The counselors will always make students aware of these limits of confidentiality and will inform the child when shared with others.



Confidentiality of sensitive information

Sensitive information or health information relative to the student's particular needs may be shared with the school administration and teachers, at the discretion of the family and student. Parents/guardians who wish to do so will be asked to fill out the Release of Information form. This document allows families to choose which information provided from a third party (therapists, psychologist, psychiatrist, pediatrician etc.) they would like to share about the student with the school. This document also allows the families to choose which personnel within the school this information will be communicated to. These confidential documents are stored on a secure Google Drive and/or in a locked cabinet in the counselors' offices.

Parents/guardians have a right to access student health/educational information and copies of health/educational records. If parents/guardians would like to access a document mentioned above, the counselors will provide a paper copy version on appointment.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

Foreseeable Harm and Imminent Danger

In general, school counselors will keep information confidential. Confidentiality **DOES NOT** apply in cases of foreseeable harm or imminent danger, as described below:

If:

- A. The school counselor determines a student to be in imminent danger;
- B. The student has disclosed to be in imminent danger; or
- C. Another person at the school or outside of the school and/or any relevant information suggests that a student registered at Rochambeau might be at risk of harm or imminent danger

If any of these above determinations are made, the counselor may contact 911 or the local crisis center. If a student presents an immediate threat to the safety or wellbeing of themselves or others, staff or administration may call 911 for assistance.



Whether the authorities are called or not, the parent/guardian and administration will be contacted immediately. School staff will endeavor to monitor the student in danger until removed from campus. A parent/guardian will be asked to pick up the student and 1) the school will make recommendations for immediate contact with a mental health professional (e.g. Physician, Licensed Psychologist, Psychiatrist), 2) a re-entry meeting will be offered with the campus director and school counselor to discuss and put in place any recommendations made by the mental health professional to best support the student's mental health and transition back to school. The school will aim to implement any recommendations that are within the school's means and capabilities.

If the parent/guardian is unavailable or unable to be reached, the Montgomery County Mobile Crisis Center will be contacted at 240-777-4000. If the parent/guardian is unwilling to respond to the needs of the student at risk, Child Protective Services will be contacted.

ATTENTION: If a parent/guardian believes that their child or family are in danger, they should call the local crisis center (Montgomery County Crisis Center: **240-777-4000**) or **911** immediately. If this concern arises during school hours and the child could be a threat to himself/herself or others, the family should also contact the school campus director.

Child Abuse & Neglect

According to Maryland law regarding Abuse and Neglect: "*All Maryland citizens should report suspected abuse or neglect to the local department of social services or to a local law enforcement agency. Ensuring the safety of Maryland's children is an obligation shared by all citizens and organizations.*" ([Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect - Maryland Department of Human Services](#))

All Rochambeau staff members have the responsibility to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all students at the school. Educators have an additional obligation as Mandated Reporters and are *legally required* to report any suspicion of child abuse. For this reason, in the event of any suspicions of child abuse or neglect, staff *must* report to the campus director and the school counselor, and proper measures shall be taken to ensure the welfare of the student by contacting



appropriate authorities. School officials have a right to report to these authorities anonymously and families may not be notified if a report is made.

The different types and signs of abuse and neglect can be found at ([Signs of Neglect or Abuse - Maryland Department of Human Services](#)).

Staff members may not investigate the alleged abuse or neglect, interrogate the child nor communicate with the family during the report or investigation as this can directly influence the investigation process as well as the student's safety and confidentiality.

Crisis and Critical Incident

In the case of a crisis or critical incident within the school, the school counselors will be available to provide students a space to help students cope with the event. The school counselors will work in collaboration with the teachers, staff, and families to ensure students have appropriate information and a time to share questions and concerns. Depending on the crisis, the school counselors may collaborate with outside professionals or provide referrals to ensure that students receive the necessary psychological services relevant to the given crisis.