



St Francis Xavier College

Berwick, Officer and Beaconsfield

College Student Counselling Service Guidelines

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Procedure is to provide guidance on how the Counselling Service that is available to students at the College operates.

SCOPE

Within a college environment, students may experience a wide range of behavioural, emotional, social and psychological issues that, if left untreated, may jeopardise their wellbeing and learning. Examples include low mood, anxiety, friendship difficulties, family difficulties, relationship issues, bullying, traumatic events, alcohol and substance abuse, self-worth and identity issues.

St Francis Xavier College provides professional short-term counselling services to assist students and their families to deal with issues that may hinder their development.

St Francis Xavier College is committed to providing a safe environment and assisting students develop appropriate skills and attitudes to resolve problems in academic, psychological, emotional and social contexts.

It is our intention that:

- Professional counselling services be made available to all students at no additional charge;
- The college counselling services be highly visible to students and the general college community;
- The college counselling services are easy to access and use; and
- The college counselling services are offered as a voluntary service to all students.

PROCEDURES

Referral

There are several avenues of referral for a student to the college counselling service. It is a requirement that all students referred to the college counselling service have indicated their willingness to engage in counselling services (except where the student is deemed at risk).

Where a student is deemed 'at risk' (self-harm at school, expression of suicidal ideation or behaviours, imminent risk of homelessness) the student must be brought to the attention of a member of the counselling team for a risk assessment. This is regardless of whether the student has expressed their willingness to engage with a counsellor.

On occasion, a student's ongoing enrolment at the college will require implementation of a Behaviour Management Plan. A Behaviour Management Plan may specify that the student is required to attend a set number of counselling sessions; and by accepting the conditions of the Behaviour Management Plan the student accepts that they will engage in the counselling services offered by the college.



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Except in the case of 'at risk' concerns (as defined above), all students must be referred to the college counselling service following correct processes:

- Staff
 - Staff should discuss their recommendation of a counselling referral with the student
 - Once a student has consented to engaging with the college counselling service, the staff member will complete the correct referral form available on the school network (TEAMS)
- Students
 - Students can refer themselves to the college counselling service by:
 - emailing makeappointment@sfx.vic.edu.au
 - asking their Head of House or Care Group Teacher to complete a referral
- Parents
 - Parents can refer their child to the college counselling service by contacting the school and requesting to speak to:
 - A member of the counselling team
 - Their child's Head of House or Care Group Teacher.
 - A referral can only be accepted from a parent with the understanding that the child will be informed of the referral from their parent.

Confidentiality

Discussions held between the student and the counsellor are confidential to the extent that information will only be made accessible by the counsellor to other college staff, external agencies and/or parents/carers as required to meet their legal duty of care.

If a counsellor deems a student at risk of harm to self, to others, or from others, the counsellor will be required to break confidentiality (with or without the student's consent) and inform relevant staff and/or agencies and/or parents/carers. The need to break confidentiality will be communicated with the student as soon as practical.

Students attending their first counselling appointment will be provided with a copy of the College Confidentiality Agreement. The counsellor will discuss the content of the agreement, and if the student is agreeable to the terms of the agreement, ask them to sign the agreement. Should a student not agree with the Confidentiality Agreement in full, counselling services cannot be offered through the college counselling service.

Parents/Carers

It is not a requirement of the college counsellors to obtain consent from parents/carers for a student to access support from the college counselling service.

The college counselling service adopts the principles of assessing a student's capacity as a mature minor to ascertain the student's ability to give informed consent about seeking and engaging in the service. Further information can be obtained at

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/matureminor.aspx>



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Parent involvement will be sought on a need's basis with the consent of the student. The counsellor cannot provide information to a parent on whether their child has accessed the counselling service unless the student gives consent. When appropriate, and with the consent of the student, the counsellor can provide information about the content discussed in a counselling session with the student's parents/carers.

Counselling Sessions

Counselling sessions will focus on offering solution-focussed support in a caring and empathic environment.

Counselling sessions are held during class time. On some occasions, counselling sessions may take place during recess or lunchtime; and may occur before or after school at the discretion and availability of the counsellor.

The counsellor will endeavour to ensure that the same subject is not used regularly for counselling sessions.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that appointments do not clash with VCE assessment tasks.

Counselling Records

Appropriate, professional records must be maintained, including date of session, those present at the session and a brief summary of the main issues discussed.

Records must be kept of any interactions completed in the service of the student, such as phone calls to parents, staff members and external agencies; email communication; and meetings with relevant parties.

Involvement of Other College Staff

Where necessary and appropriate, the counsellor may discuss the student's circumstances with the student's teachers, having regard to confidentiality and with the student's permission.

Teachers are encouraged to discuss concerns they may have, regarding individual students in their class who are attending counselling.

The Director of Counselling will report to College leadership on a term basis to provide general feedback on the utilisation of counselling services within the college.

Referrals to External Services

Where appropriate, referrals will be made by the counsellor to external service providers on a need's basis, with the consent of the student. Referrals to external services will be discussed with the student and a rationale provided. Unless contraindicated, parents/carers will be included in these discussions prior to a formal referral being made to an external service.

Counselling Contact Details

The Director of Counselling can be contacted directly at the college via phone or email. The counselling service can be emailed at makeappointment@sfx.vic.edu.au



RESPONSIBILITIES

College Counsellors Responsibilities

In line with other college procedures, all college counsellors are responsible to make themselves familiar with the procedures of the college counselling services; and adhere to the operational guidelines of the College Counselling Team Operational Manual.

Employee's Responsibilities

In line with other college procedures, all employees are responsible to:

- Make themselves familiar with the procedures of the college counselling services;
- Bring to the attention of the counselling team any specific issues of concern in relation to students under their care;
- Encourage students to see the college counsellor where they feel the student would benefit from these services

Discipline for Breach of Procedure

Where a staff member breaches these procedures, St Francis Xavier College may take disciplinary action.

Further Information

Further information can be obtained from:

Assistant Principal - Wellbeing

Review

Every 3 years

Status of Procedure:	
Manager Responsible: Assistant Principal - Wellbeing	Date: October 2019
Approved by: Leadership Team	Date: October 2019