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|  | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>PARADE COLLEGE</b></p>       |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>POLICY</b></p>                                  | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>COUNSELLING SERVICES</b></p> |

**PREAMBLE**

Parade College is a large educational community of over 2000 staff and students. Boys in transition from early adolescence through to early adulthood will experience some health and wellbeing issues that are unique to this period of growth and development and so, from time to time, need additional support. Parade College, as a caring Catholic community, in the Edmund Rice tradition, provides this support through the Counselling Team.

**PRINCIPLES**

The Counselling Service at Parade College is committed to enhancing the wellbeing and optimum mental health of all Parade students, including their personal, social and educational outcomes and, along with other departments in the College, can assist in addressing the barriers to learning. The Counselling Service provides a range of direct and indirect services.

Firstly, the service provides individual counselling and group work services to students who require particular assistance and support during their social, emotional, behavioural, and academic development and learning. In some instances brief family work may be provided as well as referrals for appropriate assistance in the community.

The Counselling Service also supports students indirectly. This occurs through the provision of secondary consultation and training services to teaching staff, workshops for parents, skill development for class groups, informal contact with students, advocacy and research

**1. THE SERVICES**

**A. COUNSELLING**

**POLICY**

The aims of counselling are: to develop optimal mental health, build resilience, facilitate insight into individual difficulties, assist in the development of problem-solving and decision-making skills, develop conflict resolution skills, assist in the development and practice of positive coping strategies and choice-making, support social, emotional and behavioural development, assist in the establishment of support networks within the College for students, and, if appropriate, to refer students and their families to professionals and organisations outside of the College who can provide additional support. Parent(s)/guardian(s) and College staff are to be involved in this referral process.

Issues dealt with in counselling include: frustration, anger and conflict situations; anxiety, depression; suicide ideation; self-harm; self-esteem; school refusal; traumatic events; relationship/friendship issues; parental separation/divorce; grief and loss; abuse; drug-related issues; crisis issues, behaviour problems and learning difficulties. Assistance may also include support with study organisation, motivation, and time management skills.

In supporting students through counselling, counsellors communicate with the student’s House Leader, other relevant College staff where appropriate and family, whilst at the same time being sensitive to the wishes and age of the student and his situation. The general practice of the Counsellors is to engage the parent(s)/guardian(s) in the counselling process as much as possible. Counselling may be offered through individual or group format.

## **GUIDELINES**

### **Counselling Staff**

Counselling staff are qualified and experienced social workers and/or psychologists. Each of the counselling staff members adhere to their respective profession's Code of Ethics, Practice Guidelines and requirements for continuing education. Each discipline brings his/her own perspective to the work and add value to the work in the school. Psychologists are registered with the Psychologists Registration Board of Victoria (PRBV). They are members of the Australian Psychological Society (APS) and are therefore guided by the Code of Ethics set down for psychological practice (APS)

### **Counselling and Confidentiality**

It is important for the appropriate conduct of the Counselling Service at Parade College that all who attend counselling sessions are assured that what is shared remains confidential. Counselling is therefore undertaken in accordance with relevant professional and ethical guidelines as well as school policy. Private counselling rooms are available for students and all sessions.

There are circumstances that may limit the extent of confidentiality. For example, if during a risk assessment, in the professional judgment of the Counsellor, a student is considered to be seriously at risk to himself or to others, then there is an overriding duty of care to notify parents and other relevant persons. The limitations to confidentiality are clarified with the student during their first counselling session. Students who participate in counselling groups with others are also bound by rules of confidentiality.

### **Risk Assessment**

The Counselling Service has a Suicide Risk Assessment Management Plan which is followed in response to any students considered 'at risk'. Through risk assessment questioning, a High, Medium, or Low level of risk is established by the Counsellor. An action plan is then followed to ensure the student's health and wellbeing needs are addressed. This plan includes notification to the Principal via the Assistant Principal (Student Welfare) of students considered 'at risk'.

### **Referral to the Counselling Service**

House Leaders, members of the College Leadership Team, and Student Support Service Staff as well as parents/carers can refer a student to the Counselling Service.

Students can also self-refer and can make first contact with counselling staff via an email link on the Student Counselling Webpage on the college portal, or they can make an appointment through their Tutor Teacher or House Leader. Parents are encouraged to contact Counsellors directly. All Counsellors are available during or after school time at the convenience of families.

New referrals are discussed by the Counselling Team with regard to reasons for the referral, the presenting concerns and their overall appropriateness. Pre-referral screening between a counsellor and a referring staff member may also occur. Accepted referrals are then allocated to a counsellor based on expertise in relation to particular issues and current caseload. These accepted referrals will be triaged for urgency and may be seen immediately, within 24 hours or within a week depending on urgency.

### **Student Programs**

Often students present to the Counselling Team with issues that indicate further understanding and skill development would greatly assist in their learning to manage and cope with problems. When and where appropriate, the Counselling Team will offer programs to help students continue to develop this understanding and skills, or refer them to programs offered by agencies outside the College.

### **Information Seminars**

At various times throughout the school year the Counselling Team may be called on to offer Information Seminars to parent(s)/guardian(s), and College staff. These may be developed and delivered by the Counselling Team, or delivered in collaboration members of the College staff. Topics may include, (but are not limited to): specific learning difficulties, ADHD, Aspergers Syndrome, anxiety, depression, trauma, school refusal, grief and loss, blended families, self-harm, and parental separation/divorce. Topics may also be delivered upon request. The sessions generally include an introduction to the topic, consideration of the impact on a student, implications for significant others in the student's life, appropriate support strategies inside and outside the classroom, and provision of resources that can be utilised.

## **B. CONSULTATION**

### **POLICY**

When requested, counsellors will provide consultation services. The overarching problems for which consultation is sought is conceptually defined as *obstacles to school success*. Consultation is defined as an indirect form of practice that assists others to become more effective in dealing with their complex work-related problems. The role of a consultant is that of an expert or technical advisor who introduces new information, perspectives, skills and values in a collaborative approach with a teacher or member of the school staff. The overarching goal for all consultations is the educational progress and school success for all students.

There are five types of consultation that counsellors can provide on request from the College:

1. **Program Consultation** – examines whether policies or procedures to meet the special needs of various school populations are successful or whether there are more effective approaches.
2. **Education and Training Consultation** – The provision of information and referrals, team coordination and stakeholder collaboration and professional workshops to support the development of more advanced approaches to school problems.
3. **Mental Health Consultation** – the dissemination of mental health principles and processes that support well-being
4. **Behavioural Consultation** – to increase desired behaviours and decrease undesired behaviours throughout the school, within the classroom and by individual students
5. **Clinical Consultation** – to formulate a proper assessment and treatment plan to prevent, remediate or treat problems that interfere with student performance

### **GUIDELINES**

The counsellor/consultant engages in a needs assessment, problem formulation and goal setting process. This should determine the most appropriate type or model of consultation required. The following goals call for selecting a single, specific model of consultation:

- Design and Evaluate school programs
- Support teachers problem solving work with students
- Change behaviours on a school-wide, class wide or targeted level
- Supporting continuing professional development, foster teamwork, provide referrals

Provide clinical expertise or address crises and trauma.

## **2. BEST PRACTICE**

### **1. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR COUNSELLING STAFF**

#### **POLICY**

To effectively meet the needs of students,–Counselling Team members participates in professional development activities, fosters internal collaborative networks, and undertakes a number of practice inquiry methods.

#### **GUIDELINES**

The College has a consultancy with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) based at the Austin and Repatriation Medical Centre. Secondary consultation is facilitated by visiting CAMHS specialists on a bi monthly basis at Parade College. This consultation is attended by members of the Parade College Counselling Service and Counsellors from numerous schools within the local network.

Members of the Parade College Counselling Team Service also participate in a monthly network meeting with the Catholic Secondary Schools Welfare group (CSSS). These sessions provide opportunity for professional discussions relating to case studies, effective evidence-based practices, recently attended professional development, and general issues of concern. This is also an opportunity for the exchange of professional resources and information relating to forthcoming professional development events.

On a fortnightly basis, members of the Parade College Counselling Team who are employed directly by the College will attend individual supervision with the Team Leader. Clinical supervision is an invaluable source of ongoing professional development and maintenance of sound school social work or school psychology practice. Supervision is a means of ensuring that the counselling services delivered by Parade College Counsellors is of the highest

quality. Members of the Counselling Team on contract to the College are also expected to undertake individual supervision.

The Counselling Team are also members of the Banyule Nillumbik School Welfare Coordinators Network that meets bimonthly

On a fortnightly basis, a case discussion session will be held, convened by the Counselling Team Leader. This meeting provides opportunity for case management discussion, review of students at risk. On a bi-monthly basis, a team meeting will be convened at which there will be discussion of administration issues, program planning, and review of current practices. These meetings provide invaluable opportunity for close and collaborative monitoring of students requiring additional support.

Throughout the school year, members of the Counselling Service also attend various professional development events. These may be organised by Catholic Education Melbourne Parade College, the Australian Psychological Society, the Australian Association of Social Workers, the Department of Human Services, Universities, SPELD, local community organisations, and schools within the network.

## **2. INTERNAL COLLABORATIVE NETWORKS**

### **POLICY**

Meeting the individual needs of students in a large school is an ongoing challenge. To ensure that this occurs the Counselling Team participates in a number of collaborative networks which aim to facilitate communication of student needs across administration and teaching levels.

### **GUIDELINES**

The Counselling Service will provide House Leaders, the Campus Coordinator Preston, the Assistant Principal (Student Welfare) and the Principal with information about students attending the Counselling Service and where additional support of these students is required in the classroom, and where concerns about the students' well-being have been formed. This may occur at House Leader meetings or in individual conversations with House Leaders and the Campus Coordinator Preston, or in other settings as appropriate and provides an invaluable means of closely monitoring students. It establishes a mutual understanding of existing individual student needs and reduces the response time by College staff for immediate issues of concern in relation to students. Counselling staff will consider their respective professional ethics in the sharing of information and consent may need to be given by students.

These networks also provide a means for College staff and the Counselling Service to develop appropriate support strategies and interventions for students.

## **3. PRACTICE INQUIRY METHODS**

### **POLICY**

The Counselling Service aims to provide a high quality service. Various evaluation methods are undertaken to improve the effectiveness of the Counselling Service.

### **GUIDELINES**

#### **Reports**

A Semester Report is also produced by the Counselling Service. This Report will present an overview of the provision of the activities of the Counselling Team across the semester, including, but not limited to:-

- The number and source of referrals
- The number of open and closed cases
- The types of presenting concerns;
- The number of students accessing the services of the Counselling Team;
- The frequency and number of repeat visits;
- The number of referrals to external agencies;
- A list of the external agencies students have been referred to;
- Other activities the Counselling Team has been involved in during the year – for example, presentations at staff meetings; attendance at network meetings etc.

- The number of 'indirect' services provided by the counselling team, including the number and type of consultations; the number of groups or programs run; professional development delivered and received; liaison activities with other staff; engagement activities, external and other activities.

**Planning and Evaluation**

The Counselling Team will schedule a Planning and Evaluation day at the end of each school year with the aim of reviewing that year's work and setting out priorities and actions to be undertaken *for the following year*. The Semester Reports written by the Team Leader will be used to inform these meetings and a written action plan will be developed and distributed to the Assistant Principal (Welfare) and the College Principal.

Implemented January 2008

Revised August 2011, January 2017

Approved by the College Board January 2008, August 2011, February 2017

## **APPENDIX I**

### **PSYCHO-EDUCATION ASSESSMENT SERVICES**

Psycho-educational assessment services are also offered. These services aim to establish understandings of cognitive styles, identify specific learning difficulties and assist in the development of appropriate interventions by working collaboratively with the student, parent(s)/guardian(s), and College staff. A number of educational programs are also offered to students, delivered during the school term or holidays, as appropriate.

### **POLICY**

Students may present to the Counselling Team following referral from College staff and/or parent(s)/guardian(s), due to concerns relating to academic progress and behavioural issues. Before developing an appropriate intervention, it is necessary to establish an understanding of the student's cognitive style, and to identify any specific learning difficulties which may be related to the behaviours of concern. This can be achieved through the administration of formal and informal assessment procedures which may include:

- a) Interviews;
- b) Cognitive assessments;
- c) Educational assessments;
- d) Social, Emotional, and Behavioural assessments.

During the assessment process the Psychologist will work closely with parent(s)/guardian(s) and teachers to develop contextual understanding of the student's difficulties. Following administration of the appropriate formal assessments, all information and results are collated and a written report, which includes recommendations, is produced. To complete the assessment process, the Psychologist will report the findings to the student, parent(s)/guardian(s), and College staff as appropriate. Based on the recommendations derived from the results, an individual learning and behavioural plan can then be formulated, ideally in collaboration with the student, parent(s)/guardians, and College staff.

### **CONSULTATION**

College staff and parent(s)/guardian(s) are often seeking greater understanding of psycho-educational issues and more information in regard to how they can provide greater support to students who are experiencing difficulties. To meet this need, the Counselling Team offers consultative services to College staff and to parent(s)/guardian(s). This can involve individual consultation, group consultation, and screening and referral to appropriate services outside of the College if appropriate.