

Student Counselling Policy



Al Salam Community School
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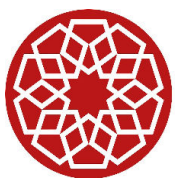
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Where every child is special

Policy Highlights

Main points of policy	• All current students have an entitlement to counselling • How students can access the service • How needs of students are assessed • How support is agreed • What can be expected from counselling • What can be expected at a group session • How support is reviewed and monitored • Data protection and confidentiality
List of procedures for implementation	• Accessing the service • Assessment of student need • How support is agreed • Reviewing and monitoring Forms: Counselling Agreement Primary (Appendix 1) Counselling Agreement Secondary (Appendix 2) Parent Consent (Individual) (Appendix 3) Consent form for group counselling (Appendix 4) Consent Form from parents for group Counselling (Appendix 5) Counselling Agreement (Individual) (Appendix 6) Student feedback form (Individual) (Appendix 7) Parent feedback form (Individual) (Appendix 8) Group Counselling Feedback Form (Appendix 9) Parent feedback form (Group) (Appendix 10) Individual Behaviour Checklist (Appendix 11)
Related policies and documents	• SEND Policy • Anti Bullying Policy • Child Protection Policy • Transition policy for Nursery and FS • Well being policy • BYOD Policy



Equality and diversity statement

*It is the policy of **Al Salam Private School** to recognise and encourage the valuable and enriching contribution from all who work and learn here and the rights of all individuals who come into contact with the School, such as prospective students and staff.*

We believe that people from a range of backgrounds and experiences can enhance the life and development of the institution and that all individuals should be treated on the basis of individual merit and without prejudice. The School will, therefore, aim to provide an education service that actively promotes equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination on grounds of age, cultural background, economic status, disability, ethnicity, gender, religion/belief, in education. We will strive vigorously to remove conditions that place students at a disadvantage and will actively combat bigotry and discrimination. The School expects all staff, students, and associated partner organisations to adopt this policy.

1. Background to the policy

Al Salam Community School recognises that it's stakeholders may face a variety of difficulties and challenges whilst at school, which has an impact on the chances of success and personal progress.

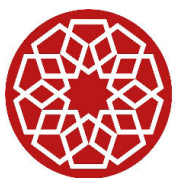
The School is committed to provide a counselling service that meet the needs of all its clientele and work towards the wellbeing of all stakeholders concerned.

At ASCS, students have the right to expect informed, impartial, supportive and timely guidance and counselling organised by the School, around any personal difficulties that affect a student's emotional health and academics

2. Definitions

Counselling- Counselling addresses the emotional, social, work, school and physical health concerns individuals may have at different stages in their lives, focusing on typical life stresses and more severe issues with which people may struggle as individuals and as a part of families, groups and organisations.

Counselling intends to help individuals with physical, emotional and mental health issues, improve their sense of well-being, alleviate feelings of distress and resolve crises.



3. Scope of the policy

The counselling service, with a preventive as well as a curative approach will include personal, social, emotional and academic support for all stakeholders within ***Al Salam Community School***.

Where difficulties are beyond the capacity or remit of the counselling team, external referrals will be made.

Entitlement to counselling

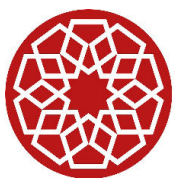
This service is available to all stakeholders and aims to promote and contribute to the well being and progress of all concerned.

4. Policy statement

Al Salam Community School is committed to providing a safe, professional, accessible and confidential counselling service which supports its stakeholders to overcome issues which may be affecting their personal development and interfering with their day to day functioning.

To ensure this aim is met, we commit to:

- Encouraging equality of access and promoting a sense of welcome and privacy for all. The service is offered to everyone regardless of age, disability, gender, race and religion/belief.
- Offering a one-to-one counselling service for all enrolled students, free of charge.
- Delivering the service through professionals who have a commitment to ongoing training, personal development and study.
- Counselling sessions are provided for parents on request.
- Contributing to School staff development through training and support in relevant areas and parent support through workshops and specific support groups.
- Networking and keeping abreast of support services in the community.
- Career counselling services with the support of external universities/agencies.



Procedures associated with policy

Preventive Measures :

- Relationship building
- Guidance Curriculum
- Moral Education
- Community Service
- Empathy Initiatives
- Workshops and Trainings
- Well-being activities

Referral Procedure:

- A student referral form is used by the teacher to make referrals
- Direct contact with the counsellor for one-off support sessions.
- Self-Referral is encouraged for students, parents and staff members.
- Observations are made by the counsellor and/or the LSA as applicable.

Intervention

- Assessment to understand areas of challenges faced by the client
- In-class strategies are implemented and related teachers are equipped with effective strategies.

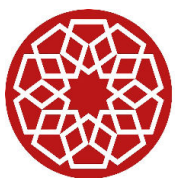
Accessing the service

The counselling service is promoted through the school website, student portal (primary and secondary) and class visits. Counselling services may be accessed through the following mechanisms:

- Referral by a teacher, HOD or other member of staff.
- Referral by General practitioners or other healthcare professionals.
- Request for an appointment/ Self-referral
- Direct contact with a member of the team by phone, email or in person.

How is support agreed?

The counsellor will talk through the agreement with the student in the first session that outlines expectations of both the counsellor and the student. The agreement also covers confidentiality and safeguarding. Students are



encouraged to use the sessions in whatever manner is most helpful. (please see Appendix 5).

If a student feels that they have been placed with a counsellor who does not suit them, the team will attempt to offer sessions with the help of an alternate counsellor.

How long does counselling last 6 sessions-review and extension for a limited time after which referral to an external source will be made

Data protection and confidentiality

All sessions with a counsellor are confidential. Information will only be shared with explicit and informed consent from the student. The only time the counsellor will share information without consent is if it is felt that a student is at risk of self-harm or causing harm to others. In these circumstances, the procedures within the Child Protection Policy will be followed. The service will usually (but not always) discuss with a student what will be shared and will seek to obtain the student's consent where possible.

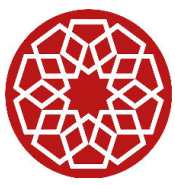
All information about students, both paper-based and electronic, is held securely. Electronic information is held on a secure database.

A record is kept of the following information:

- Referral and assessment forms, including student name and contact details.
- Counselling agreement.
- Session notes.

This information allows the service to maintain contact with the student and work within ethical and professional guidelines. Session notes ensure that counsellors are able to develop their sessions to meet the needs of the individual student.

Counselling is confidential, unless safeguarding concerns are raised. The Team Supervisor will be aware of the names of students accessing the service but will not have access to any detail of presenting difficulties or session content. The Team Supervisor will only get detailed information during weekly debrief sessions to discuss issues of concern.



Parents/carers, tutors, teachers or support staff do not have access to detailed information of students receiving counselling and will not be informed that students are accessing the service if the session is student initiated.

All information is stored until the student leaves or graduates. If a student wishes for their information to be destroyed before this deadline, they should speak to their counsellor.

5. Reviewing and monitoring

- A review discussion will take place at least every six weeks between the student and the counsellor to ascertain how beneficial the sessions are. This is to ensure that the student's needs are being met.
- If a student accesses the service for longer than twelve weeks, a review will take place between the counsellor and the team supervisor to ensure that the needs of the student are being met. No confidential information will be shared at this meeting.
- At the end of each term, and at the last session, students will be asked to complete a feedback form. These forms are collated and are used to improve the service.
- Students are encouraged to give informal feedback on all aspects of the service. Students are also encouraged to input directly into deciding the topics for workshops and group sessions.
- If students have concerns about the service they are receiving, they are strongly encouraged to speak to their counsellor.
- Information on who is accessing the service is analysed confidentially in order to measure the impact of the service and identify areas for improvement.
- This policy and the effectiveness of the service is monitored through student feedback.

What can be expected of one-to-one counselling?

- The service currently offers an 'open-ended' provision. However, there may be occasions when the demand for the service is so great that a limit needs to be imposed. If this is the case, existing students would be given 8 sessions notice of the change and the subsequent sessions would run consecutively.
- The service will be delivered in a private, comfortable and welcoming environment.



- Each session may extend up to forty minutes, although students may wish to shorten the session if they choose.
- When the student comes to a session through referral by a parent or teacher, the counsellor will take the lead in the conversation.
- The service is student-led and the counsellors will not be directive with regard to topics for discussion in the event that the student initiates the service. Students will have the opportunity to express themselves through their preferred media. This is usually talking but art, music or any other method is welcomed.
- An important aspect of the counsellor's work is to recognise the onset of serious physical and psychological disturbances and refer appropriately. This may be to a GP or psychiatrist or other medical consultant for expert opinion. The referral will usually take place in consultation and consent from the parents and student. Sessions can continue with the counsellor if agreed by the referral agency.

What can be expected at a workshop or group session?

- Workshops and group sessions are usually limited to 30 minutes
- They will usually take place at recess time to ensure as many students as possible can access the session.
- Specific sessions can be arranged for individual cohorts of students, e.g. exam stress.
- The counsellor will outline the rules around confidentiality at the beginning of each session.
- Any breach of confidentiality (e.g. a student discussing personal information about another student outside the session) may be treated as a disciplinary issue.
- Students need only discuss what they feel comfortable disclosing in the session and will not be asked to go beyond those boundaries by the counsellor.
- Students will be asked to give feedback to the team on the session or at the end of a series of sessions, in order to ensure continuous improvement.

Workshops - A seminar, discussion group or something similar that emphasises exchange of ideas and the demonstration and application of techniques or skills. Workshops can be open to all and students do not have to be receiving counselling, to access the workshops.



Group Sessions – Group session is a form of psychosocial support where a small group of students meet regularly to talk, interact and discuss problems with each other and the group leader.

Guidance Curriculum- The program is a comprehensive scheme that covers all areas of Personal, Social and Health Education for children. Its goal is to equip children with the knowledge, understanding, attitudes and practical skills to live healthily, safely, productively and responsibly. The social and emotional aspects which help in improving behaviour are also explored to help children understand themselves in a holistic manner.