



GRANGE SCHOOL
A Culture of Continuous Improvement

Counselling Policy

Compiled by: Signature: Date:	Approved by Governing Body () Signature: Print name: Date:
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Counselling Policy

The Counsellors Mr Onyesoh, Mrs Soetan and Mrs |Bakare are part of a school team, focusing primarily on the personal and social, educational and vocational development of the pupils. The aim is to professionally answer the guidance and counselling needs of the pupil (our central figure in the learning process) in the context of the overall school mission and our commitment to philosophy that every child matters.

Guidance and Counselling includes:

COUNSELLING

Counselling is an interactive learning process between counsellor and pupil, whether individual or group, which approaches, in a holistic way, personal, educational and/or vocational issues. Moreover, the availability of a counselling service can support individual pupils inside/outside the classroom context, the pastoral and the disciplinary structures in the school. Competitiveness, bullying, social exclusion, family crisis, scholastic under-achievement, abuse, peer pressure, and racism are some of the problems which can be assisted with the support of counselling.

- Individual Counselling - is an interactive process, which facilitates meaningful understanding of the self and environment and/or clarification of goals and values for future behaviour.
- Group Counselling - is a broad term covering types of counselling for more than two people. In group counselling members listen to, support and challenge each other and thus, learn to be open, constructive, and assertive and to experience how others see them.
- Peer Counselling - occurs on limited and well prepared occasions where pupils help and support each other on topics educational and vocational but not necessarily on personal issues.

Counselling in Grange School should cover areas such as self awareness, self confidence, relationship and communication.

Guidance and Counselling for first year students should be put in place for both primary and secondary phases.

Counselling Aims

- To make each individual student aware of the role and availability of the Guidance Counsellor in school
- To help students to develop realistic, personal, social, educational and vocational skills.

It is essential that a counselling service within the school operates in collaboration with processes within the school, which promotes the wellbeing of the school, particularly the pastoral team.

In educational development the programmes would include subject motivation and learning and study skills/exam techniques.

Sex Education Aims/Values

- Respect for self
- Respect for others
- Responsibility for their own actions
- Responsibility for their family and friends
- School and wider community

The sex Education Programme will provide information which is easy to understand and relevant to the age and maturity of pupils.

CO-ORDINATION

Sex Education will be coordinated by PSHE coordinator and the Pastoral Heads in their role as coordinators of Every Child Matters.

DELIVERY

- As topics: through planned aspects of Science
- Pastoral Care: addressed when appropriate in Assembly and PHSCE lessons

CONFIDENTIALITY

All pupils have a right to confidentiality in their dealings with the Counsellor. The right is not universal, however, and there are some cases in which - for the pupil's best interest - confidentiality cannot be guaranteed e.g. in the case of abuse, bullying, and risk to another pupil's life. In counselling the pupil, the counsellor should make the pupil aware that confidentiality could not be guaranteed in any of the above cases and that information of this nature would have to be referred on. In short, pupils who meet with the Counsellor will be informed of the following:

1. All things discussed are confidential between the pupil and the Counsellor except when the pupil himself or another person is at risk
2. Any information which highlights that the pupil or another person is in danger.
3. If the pupil is in danger of doing grievous harm to himself.

ETHICAL REQUIREMENTS

Ethical awareness is a prerequisite for the Counsellor. He is obliged to operate, in policy, process and practice in an ethical manner. The primary focus is the welfare of the pupil and he is ethically bound to act in the best interest of the pupil. The Counsellor is expected to be competent in and mindful of the legal and ethical responsibilities of his/her work. Furthermore, the Counsellor is ethically obliged to seek out new developments in the personal, educational and vocational fields with a view to improving the overall counselling service to the pupil.

INFORMATION

Information is an essential component of the Counsellor's portfolio. The Counsellor must be involved with

- Information gathering
- Information organisation
- Information dissemination.

The main function of the above is to provide as much information as possible on the widest range of options open to the pupil. The Counsellor needs to be familiar with:

1. The requirements of pupils parents, pastoral structures and school administration e.g. a familiarity with the whole school body and its extensions into the community
2. The sources of useful information locally and nationally e.g. relevant I.T. programmes, newspapers, essential addresses etc.
3. Methods of processing and using information for the pupil in an integrated way e.g. making it clear, understandable and pupil friendly.
4. The goal of the information service is to help the pupil in decision making processes, problem solving and with skills enhancement directed towards the ever-changing circumstances of their own development.

PREPARATION

The Counsellor is involved in preparation of transitions with the pupils at different stages of the pupil's education.

1. The incoming first year (whichever one that may be) might find the move to a different school very off-putting, not to say, intimidating. Help with adjustment to his new educational environment would be part of the Counsellor's brief.
2. Pupils leaving school after the Y6 Checkpoints etc.
3. The junior cycle pupil, moving into transition – Y6 and Y7 will need preparation regarding subject levels, work experience and the importance of decision-making now for his future.
4. Preparation for the actual leaving of school must now intensify. Information is the key factor in the pupil leaving Grange School altogether.
5. The Counsellor alone will not be able to deal with the totality of preparation necessary. However, preparation for transitions can be successfully undertaken as a member of a team, which includes parents and pastoral colleagues.

TEAM

The Counsellor is a member of an overall educational team which includes subject teachers, class tutors, Key Stage Coordinators, Directors, Deputy Directors, Vice Principals, Principal, specialist teachers P.E., Special Needs, Child Protection Officer, PSHE and non academic staff. Furthermore, the Counsellor, will be central to and supportive of pastoral teams and policies which attempt comprehensively to deal with in-school issues e.g. anti-bullying, substance abuse, crisis response, bereavement, child protection etc.

REFERRAL

Referral is, in essence, a two way process. The Counsellor may refer and he in turn may be the recipient of referrals. Referrals may come to the Counsellor from parents, staff, and school leadership team members. Pupils who are referred to the Counsellor cannot be forced to attend and their choice must be respected. If, however, a pupil is referred and comes to the Counsellor their presence will be acknowledged and welcomed. The Counsellor, in consultation with the relevant parties - parents, Principal, relevant staff -, may also refer a pupil to an external, appropriately qualified professional.

A legitimate referral (one made with the received permission of the necessary people e.g. parents) may occur after the Counsellor has made an informed decision that the pupil's situation requires assistance beyond the Counsellor's professional training. Assistance for pupils may be sought for problems such as learning difficulties, bereavement and personal crisis from other staff/agencies.

RECORD KEEPING

Records of counselling sessions should be kept to a minimum. It is also advisable for the Counsellor to use one's own personal notation if records are to be kept.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND EVALUATION

The Counsellor is mindful of his obligations to the Leadership team, staff and pupils alike and recognises that he is responsible for the school guidance throughout the school. The counsellor discusses with and informs both staff and pupils of information that is relevant and pertinent to their situations.

MULTICULTURAL GUIDANCE COUNSELLING

Multi culture and internationalism are facets of modern school life here at Grange School. The Counsellor will encounter multi culture on a daily basis and must be aware of that. The Counsellor operates from his own cultural background and recognises that each pupil he encounters is operating from and in his own cultural network. The Counsellor best serves his pupils if he recognises that multi culture is not a narrow ethnic or racial band. Multi culture, rather, is finely woven through society in strands e.g. gender, age, physical and mental disability, religious belief or socio-economic grouping. For the Counsellor awareness of, acceptance of and a willingness to learn more about different cultures informs his counselling.

INFORMATION FOR PUPILS

With regard to the school guidance service, each class should be visited at the beginning of the school year to inform them or remind them of the school guidance service. Particular attention should be paid by the Counsellor in introducing the elements of the service to the first year classes. It is important that the availability of the service is made known to them, as it will be a new educational resource to incoming first years.

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

It is important that parents are made to feel free and welcome to come and visit the guidance counsellor. An appointment system is the best operational mode in this way. Alternatively, a phone call from parents over a concern can be accommodated quickly. Also, as part of overall school information dissemination e.g. school notices, parent-teacher meetings, open nights, enrolment days etc. information regarding guidance and counselling is made available as required.

INFORMATION FOR STAFF MEMBERS

Transparency is the key word for the Counsellor in dealing with colleagues. Particularly with regard to pupils who have educational, physical, social, behavioural problems.

Bearing in mind the Counsellor's obligation to confidentiality he should consciously and freely make available all relevant information about pupils to his colleagues. Information and new developments in guidance are to be shared with and made available to staff members. Enquiries are to be encouraged and a sense of inclusivity fostered.