



STUDENT COUNSELLING IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Scope: This policy applies to all Catholic schools and colleges conducted by Catholic Education - Diocese of Rockhampton (referred to as CEDR in the document).

1. POLICY STATEMENT

CEDR will provide access to quality professional counselling services founded on Gospel values and Church teachings, appropriate to the needs of the Catholic school community and supportive of its mission.

2. DEFINITION

Counsellors are vital members of Catholic schools. The changing needs of students, parents and staff require counsellors who are skilled in current evidence-based practice. They work in collaboration and consultation with others in the school community and external agencies. In conjunction with broader pastoral care services counsellors work to promote mental health and wellbeing in our schools. They will pursue early identification of mental health difficulties and provide counselling intervention or referral when appropriate. They will work towards reducing the effects of systemic and institutional barriers to students becoming happy, confident and faith-filled learners who will use their knowledge and gifts for the good of all. This policy takes into account the professional Code of Ethics counsellors must adhere to.

3. DESCRIPTION

The Catholic school gives witness to Christ by its bonds of concern and its services to all in the school community. It displays a consonance between the Christian values it espouses and its actual practice. This ideal is challenged by the growing complexity of family, school, society and the effects these have on the lives of people.

4. IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

1. All Catholic schools will provide a counselling service.
2. The school counsellor will be supportive of the ethos of the Catholic school and be conversant with Catholic Church teachings and be supportive of Gospel values.
3. Catholic schools will, with the approval of the Diocesan Director Catholic Education, and in consultation with the Counselling Services Co-ordinator and the relevant Assistant Director: Schools, utilise an approved method for accessing counselling services.
4. The primary and secondary staffing guidelines will reflect the need for counselling and be indicative of the counselling staffing levels required for schools of various student populations.
5. Schools will provide counselling services with suitable office facilities, resourcing, professional development and professional supervision.
6. The approval of the Diocesan Director Catholic Education (or the designated representative) is required before any school can appoint a counsellor or enter into an agreement with a service provider for the provision of school counselling. The Counselling Services Coordinator/Counselling Support Officer will be included in the recruitment process.
7. The approval of the Diocesan Director Catholic Education (or the designated representative) is required before schools can make changes to existing arrangements for the provision of school counselling.
8. School staff will recognise the need for counsellors to work within their respective discipline's Code of Ethics and Practice Standards and will ensure that operational protocols are congruent with Catholic Education's policies and procedures.
9. CEDR will ensure that a clearly defined set of operating principles and procedures in relation to counselling is developed and maintained and communicated to all stakeholders.
10. The school counsellor is required to participate in:
 - (a) clinical supervision by an accredited supervisor, in accordance with industry standard practices; and
 - (b) relevant professional development.

(Note: Clinical supervision is a process that involves the counsellor speaking with a trained supervisor who can observe and monitor the mental wellbeing and practices of the counsellor. Relevant professional bodies often have policies about supervision of members and accreditation processes to recognise suitable supervisors).
11. The school counsellor will be promoted as an identifiable member of the school community and will participate in all facets of school life (e.g. staff meetings, school liturgies, professional development days, staff learning development days). The role of the school counsellor will be clearly communicated to students, parents/carers/guardians and staff in terms of their contribution to student and staff wellbeing. The school counsellor will be accessible to students, staff and families regarding student wellbeing.
12. CEDR will develop and manage procedures regarding case notes and data retention methods.

5. REFLECTION MATERIAL

CATHOLIC EDUCATION POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

- [Staff Code of Conduct](#) v6 2024
- [Student Protection](#) 2025/04
- [Student Protection Processes and Student Protection Guidelines](#) v12 2023
- [Kindergarten Policy and Procedures](#) 2019
- [Outside School Hours Care Services Policy and Procedures](#) 2019
- [Integrity in Relationships](#) 2019 (Brochure)
- [Student Protection](#) 2019 (Brochure)
- [Student Anti-Bullying](#) 2023/09
- [Critical Incidents](#) 2025/02
- [Pastoral Care](#) 2020/05
- Role Description Counsellors

LEGISLATION

- [Child Protection Legislation 1999 \(Qld\) \(s.13E\) \(s.13H\) \(s.159C\) \(s.159M\) \(s.13D\) \(s. 197A\)](#)
- [Family Law Act \(1975\)](#)
- [Legislation Explained: Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act \(2012\)](#)
- [Education \(General Provisions\) Act 2006 \(ss. 364-366B\)](#)
- [Education \(General Provisions\) Regulation 2017](#)
- [Education Amendment Regulation \(no 1\) 2014](#)
- [Privacy Act 1988](#)

PROFESSIONAL CODE OF ETHICS AND PRACTICE STANDARDS

- Australian Association of Social Workers
[Code of Ethics](#)
[Practice Standards](#)
- Australian Psychological Society
Code of Ethics
General Principles
Practice Guidelines
- Australian Community Workers [Code of Ethics](#)
- Australian Guidance Counsellor Association (AGCA) *Code of Ethics*
- Queensland College of Teachers (QCT) [Code of Ethics](#)