



مدرسة جيمس متروبول
GEMS Metropole School
MOTOR CITY

SCHOOL COUNSELLING



Reviewed by	Mr. Naveed Iqbal	Reviewed Date	October 2025
Next Review	August 2026		

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Rationale

At Gems Metropole School, an in-school counselling service is available to all students. Recognising the vital importance of student well-being, the school offers support when pastoral issues impact learning and mental health. This service helps students develop strategies, skills, and attitudes to address academic, social, or emotional difficulties. By fostering a supportive environment for counselling, Gems Metropole School aims to tackle current and potential future behavioural, social, or academic concerns for its students.

Aim and Objectives

The school Counselling department aims to provide students with the access to appropriate support when faced with problems and challenges. A safe space where students are treated with respect and dignity.

The counselling department intends to:

- Establish a calm and comfortable environment where students can express themselves
- Ensure that each students' dignity and individuality are respected
- Help to develop strategies for managing emotions
- Train and equip teachers with strategies for dealing with challenging behaviour
- Provide students with social, emotional, and academic support based on a 'person-centred' approach with multi-agency involvement

Potentially Vulnerable Groups

There are several identified vulnerable groups of students which this policy will be aiming to support:

- Students with social, emotional, and mental health challenges
- Students who are known to the Designated Safeguarding Leads
- Students with poor attendance and/or punctuality
- Students of Determination (SEND)
- Students whose first language is not English (EAL)
- Students who are considered Most Able, Gifted and Talented (MAGT)
- Students whose family are in crisis or under great stress
- Students who are at risk of being excluded

Student Support

The primary function of the school's counselling department is to assist students facing academic, social, or emotional challenges. This support may be delivered through individual sessions or group counselling, tailored to the student's needs. In certain cases, the school counsellor may find it more suitable to provide intervention strategies to parents and teachers rather than conducting direct counselling.

In individual sessions, students may draw, write, sing, play, or talk. Sometimes work may be done on learning a specific skill such as deep breathing for anxiety. Other times work may be role-playing situations, such as a problem with a friend or having a difficult conversation.

For group counselling, sessions are held with multiple students experiencing similar problems or issues, it can be helpful for them to be in a counselling group together. Group counselling helps students build relationships and feel that they are not alone in their experiences.

The school counselling policy operates on a triage system to ensure students receive timely and appropriate support based on their level of need.

The process begins with teacher and Head of Year input, where classroom staff implement initial support strategies such as increased monitoring, behaviour management techniques, or teaching self-regulation skills. Teachers may also conduct informal check-ins or refer students to whole-school wellbeing initiatives.

If further support is required, the concern may progress to the Mental Health First Aiders, who provide immediate emotional support, assess the situation, and determine whether additional intervention is necessary. They act as a bridge between classroom-based support and formal counselling, ensuring that students' needs are accurately identified and prioritised.

Where challenges are more significant or persistent, students are referred to the school counselling team for personalised and targeted therapeutic intervention. Counsellors work collaboratively with staff, families, and, where appropriate, external professionals to provide ongoing, specialist support.

This triage system promotes early identification and intervention, ensuring that every student has access to the right level of care at the right time, while fostering a culture of wellbeing and shared responsibility across the school community.

Parent Support/Guardian Support

Gems Metropole School recognises the significance of supporting parents/guardians through its counselling policy. The school counsellor may offer intervention techniques to parents/guardians instead of conducting direct counselling. Upon referral of a primary school student, parental consent will be sought. Subsequently, parents/guardians will be informed about the referral and the proposed intervention. To maximize the effectiveness of the intervention, the counsellor will encourage the implementation of new strategies at home and may provide advice to parents accordingly.

Teacher Staff/Support

The school counsellor is available to assist teachers and staff regarding any student-related concerns. In instances where a teacher encounters an immediate need arising from a recent or new trauma affecting a student, they are encouraged to request support from the school counsellor.

Staff members also have the option to discuss their own issues or concerns with the counsellor at the end of the school day. Alternatively, if deemed suitable, counsellors may signpost staff to an external agency to address the matter effectively. This approach aims to facilitate open communication and appropriate interventions while respecting the time and responsibilities of staff during the school day.

Whole School Prevention

As part of our commitment to fostering positive mental health and well-being across the entire school community, the school counsellor is tasked with providing important mental health information. This includes conducting at least one personal development session per term focused on social-emotional learning to all staff. For primary school teachers, this session may centre on concepts such as the Zones of Regulation, while secondary school session may explore topics such as Growth Mindset.

Additionally, the school counsellor may utilise Children's' Mental Health Week to strengthen whole-school prevention efforts. The counsellor must remain vigilant of students deemed 'at risk', with the aim of addressing their needs proactively.

Confidentiality

According to the BACP ethical framework, confidentiality plays a crucial role in fostering trust within therapeutic relationships.

Every young person is entitled to have a private life and have their autonomy respected; these are fundamental rights established under Article 8 of the Human Rights Act 1998. Further, Article 379 of the UAE Penal Code states that 'Anyone entrusted with a secret by the virtue of his profession, trade, position or art and who discloses it in cases other than those lawfully permitted has committed a crime'.

However, there are situations where maintaining complete confidentiality may not be feasible or beneficial for a child, particularly when their safety is at risk. In such cases, counsellors are obligated to follow child protection procedures, prioritising the well-being of the child over confidentiality rights, as stipulated in UAE Federal Law No. 3 of 2016, the Child Rights Law. While confidentiality is maintained in most counselling sessions, there may be instances where information is shared among parents and staff, but only with the student's awareness and agreement.

Consent

Parents may contact the school to request that a counselling appointment be arranged for their child. Parental consent is required for all counselling support offered through the school. A consent form must be completed before sessions begin. This can be done via a signed paper form or through the online consent form available to parents.

In certain cases, particularly within the secondary phase, students may independently approach the school counsellor for guidance or wellbeing support. In such instances, the counsellor will exercise professional judgement in accordance with safeguarding and confidentiality guidelines.

While the school ideally aims for parents to be informed and involved in their child's wellbeing journey, there may be occasions where a student requests an initial confidential discussion.

If, following this initial interaction, the counsellor or wellbeing team believes that ongoing sessions would be beneficial, the student will be informed that parental consent will be required before further counselling can take place. The exception to this would be if the concern falls under safeguarding and meets the school's confidentiality and child protection guidelines.

The school remains committed to ensuring that all counselling interactions prioritise the safety, dignity, and emotional welfare of every student while maintaining appropriate transparency and partnership with families.

It is recommended and encouraged that students who self-refer for counselling inform their parents of their involvement in the counselling process.

Referral Process

The school offers a multi-step counselling process:

The counselling service asks all teachers and staff to identify a counselling need before referring to the school counsellor (see Appendix A).

If the counselling need is due to a recent trauma or the child has had a new change to their circumstances, then they should refer using referral form (Appendix B).

Parents wishing to request a referral should follow the outlined parent referral process detailed in Appendix C.

Before referring a student, teachers must discuss the matter with the student's head of year to ensure all appropriate Wave 1 interventions and support strategies have been implemented.

Session Allocation

Counselling appointments are arranged based on availability and urgency. Typically, primary school students will have sessions lasting up to 30 minutes, while secondary school students will have sessions lasting up to 45 minutes. These sessions are usually scheduled weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly, depending on the student's needs, with a maximum of 12 sessions. Extensions beyond this limit will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. External referrals should be considered after the completion of 12 sessions, if further assistance is deemed necessary.

Appointments must be scheduled during non-core subjects and coordinated with the class teacher, considering important learning deadlines.

Tiered Support System

Once student have been referred to the counselling team they then adopt a tiered approach to support students based on their individual needs:

Level 1

At Level 1, students identified as requiring minimal support are no longer actively seen by the counsellor but remain on the register for four weeks as a precautionary measure. If no concerns arise during this period, they are removed from the register.

Level 2

Moving to Level 2, students are progressing well therefore seen fortnightly, allowing for consistent monitoring of their development and the provision.

Level 3

Finally, at Level 3, students who require ongoing counselling are provided with regular sessions to address their specific needs.

By implementing this tiered system, our counselling policy aims to provide proactive and targeted interventions, fostering a supportive environment where students can thrive academically, emotionally, and socially.

Where Counselling will take place

Counselling sessions will be conducted within the designated counselling offices. Based on the student's age and specific counselling requirements, the counsellor might deem it more suitable to hold sessions outside of the office environment or utilise outdoor spaces. This adaptability ensures that the counselling experience is conducive to the student's comfort and needs.

In certain situations, the counsellor holds the authority to override any registration recorded on Go4Schools or absences marked by teachers for the student. This is implemented to accommodate the counselling process and maintain the confidentiality and integrity of the sessions.

Drop-in Sessions

Gems Metropole School understands that during the school day students may experience a range of different emotions and may need someone to speak to. The 'Drop-in' service allows secondary students to discuss anything from issues at school to social and emotional issues.

Check-in sessions

There may be certain situations where staff members request the counsellor to offer urgent support to a student. This will take the form of a 'check-in' and be available for all students. The counsellor will see if there is a counselling need and whether further counselling sessions are needed. Members of staff may request urgent support in situations such as bereavement, parental separation/divorce, behavioural problems, or emotional difficulties.

External Referrals

Situations may occur where the counsellor may find it more appropriate for the student to receive external mental health support. It is important that parents and the Head of Year is made aware before any referral is made. The school has a list of external mental health centres which the parents can choose from depending on the need and the associated costs (see Appendix F).

If a student begins receiving support from an external therapist, school-based counselling will be temporarily placed on hold, apart from periodic check-ins. This approach ensures consistency of care and prevents any overlap or conflicting guidance between the external and school-based support

Assessments

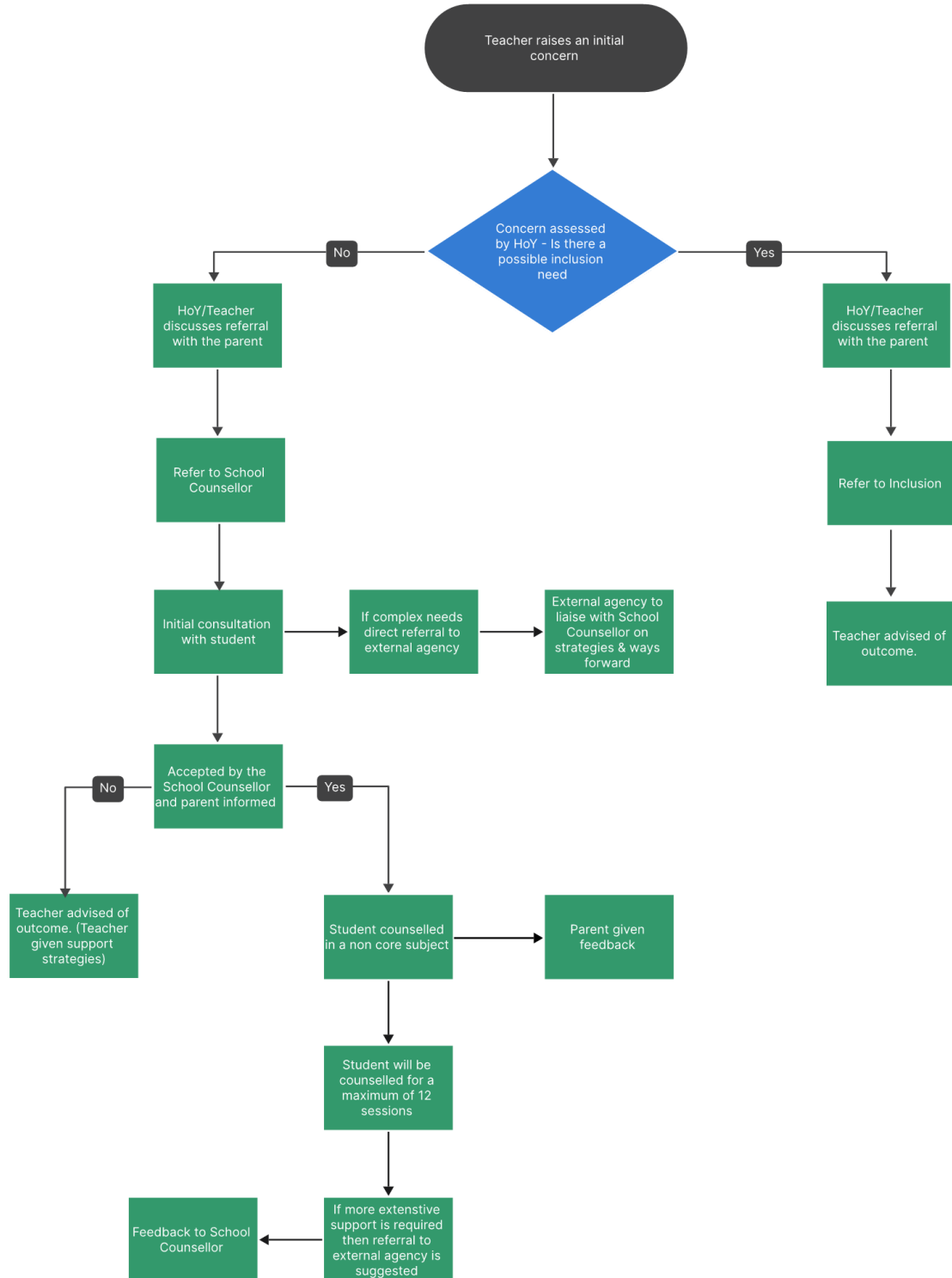
The school counsellor may find it appropriate to carry out an assessment after receiving the referral. This can be in the form of teacher/staff interview, student observation, classroom/playground observation, or educational assessment.

Record Keeping

Written records of counselling sessions are securely stored within a protected digital system, ensuring confidentiality and compliance with data protection requirements.

Signed: Principal/CEO	Date: Policy review date: October 2025
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Appendix A – Teacher Referral Process



Appendix B – Counsellor Referral Form

School Counsellor Referral Form		
Please email the referral form to mts_counsellor@gemsedu.com <i>Please title the email subject and document with the student's initials only.</i>		
Student Name:	Form/Class Teacher:	Date of Birth:
Referred by:	Date:	SEN Reg – Yes/No
Reason for referral. This could include but is not limited to; disclosure from the student that they are anxious, down or worried. Changes in the mood, manner or behaviour of the student that appear to be ongoing. Information passed on by family or peers. Recent bereavement or significant changes in the home life of the student. <i>Consideration should also be given as to whether a referral to Inclusion or safeguarding lead should be made.</i>		
What support have you offered with outcomes? Please summarise what support you have personally provided so far.		

Existing information Summarise all available and relevant information about the student. If known, please include what existing support the student receives within the school and externally.

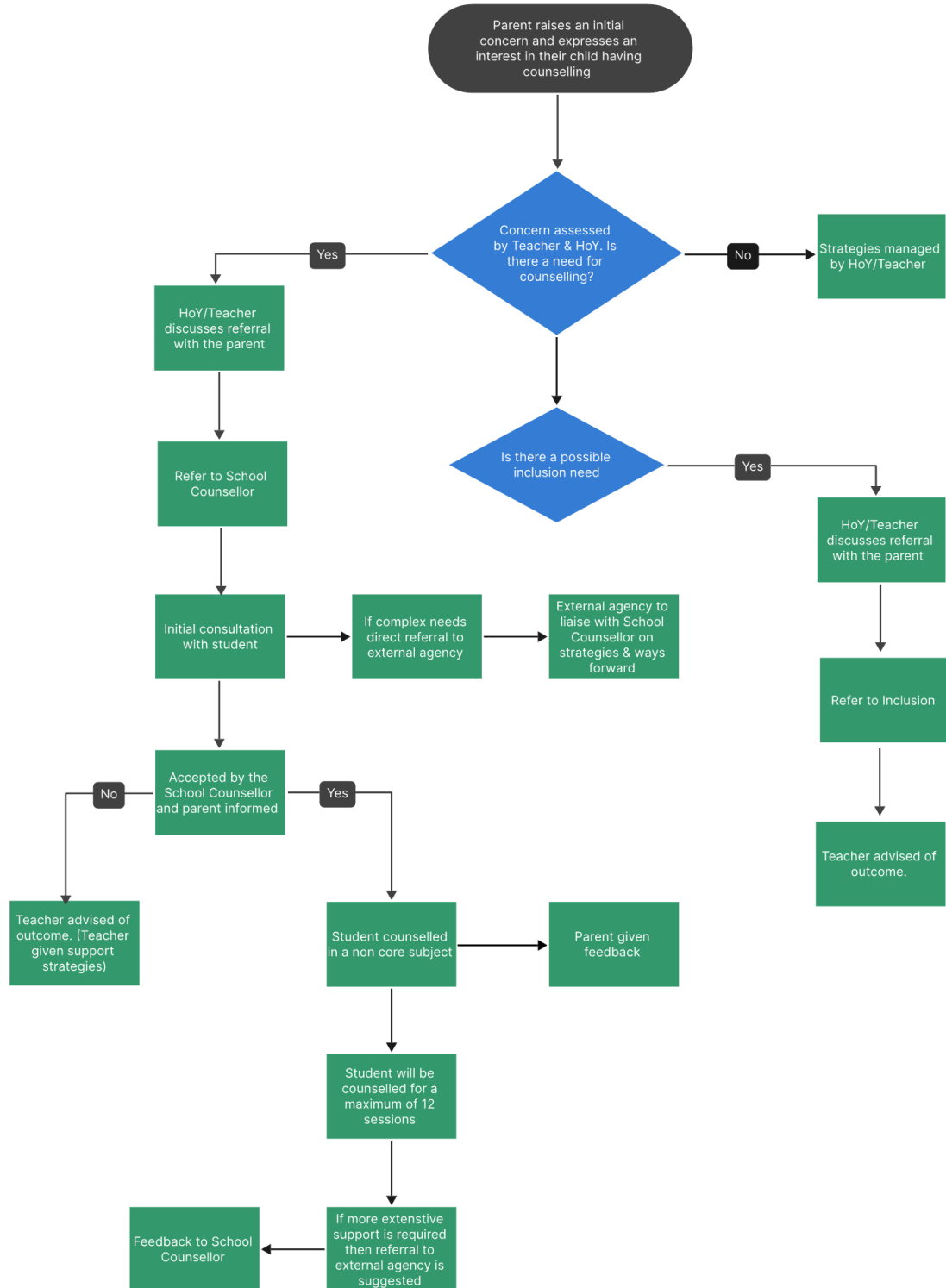
Consent Information

Is the student aware that you are making this referral? Yes/No

Have concerns been discussed with parents/carers? Yes/No.

Summarise any additional information from these discussions.

Appendix C – Parent Referral Process



Appendix D – Mental Health Centres

Clinic:	Number:
Reverse Psychology	052 138 7681
Camali clinic	04 276 6064
Psychiatry and Therapy Center	04 422 1606
The LightHouse Arabia	04 380 2088
Clear minds	058 557 6220
Neuropedia	04 343 1113