

COUNSELLING POLICY

Introduction

Epsom College in Malaysia (“ECiM”) believes that the social and emotional well-being of pupils is very important and therefore provides a counselling service to support pupils, whilst offering guidance to parents/staff, where required, on how to support the needs of individual pupils. Whilst the College has a qualified counsellor, teachers also have a role to play in offering pastoral care to their students. This policy gives clarity to the role of the College Counsellor including how they support staff in their pastoral roles. The purpose of our Counselling Policy is to support our students socially and emotionally by:

- 1) explaining what counselling is;
- 2) identifying key issues faced by our pupils and ensuring they are supported accordingly; and
- 3) supporting staff and all members of the College community in matters of social and emotional well-being.

Aims / Objectives:

We aim to ensure that all pupils within our community are happy and in the best frame of mind to succeed. Therefore the College will aim to:

- establish and maintain an environment where pupils feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to;
- ensure pupils know that there are adults in the College who they can approach if they are upset or require social and emotional support;
- include opportunities throughout the curriculum, including PSHE, for pupils to develop the skills they need to recognise social and emotional needs;
- utilise support services;
- raise awareness of social and emotional issues and equip pupils with the skills needed to keep themselves happy; and
- develop and then implement procedures for identifying and referring pupils who may require additional support.

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff will:

- take responsibility for protecting the pupils at ECiM with reference to this policy;
- deal with matters of counselling in accordance with the appropriate counselling flow chart; and
- if in doubt refer pupils directly to the pupil's Housemaster/mistress ("HMM"), Deputy Head (Pastoral) or Head of Prep School, who will liaise with the College Counsellor.

Role of Tutor/Class Teacher:

- deal with matters of counselling in accordance with the appropriate counselling flow chart;
- play an active role in the pastoral and emotional support of pupils in their direct care, seeking guidance/support from the pupil's HMM or Head of Prep School as required.

Role of Housemaster/mistress ("HMM")/Head of Prep School:

- in their role as key providers of pastoral care in the Boarding House/Prep School, offer support and advice as needed to enable the Counsellor to fulfill their role;
- to liaise with the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and teaching staff, where necessary, to ensure the continued well-being of pupils in their care; and
- to liaise with parents, where necessary, to help facilitate effective communication links between the College and home.

Role of College Counsellor:

- deal with counselling matters in accordance with the Child Protection Flow Chart;
- offer support and guidance to staff when dealing with counselling issues;
- offer counselling support to pupils, when needed and according to the flow chart;
- remain up to date with best practice in school counselling matters;
- liaise with the College's Deputy Head (Pastoral) on counselling matters;
- liaise with the College's Designated Safeguarding Lead on safeguarding matters;
- liaise with the College Healthcare Coordinator on pupil medication and welfare;
- attend a termly Medical Meeting with the Headmaster, Deputy Head (Pastoral), Head of Prep, Head of Boarding and College Healthcare Coordinator; and
- work alongside the HMM/Head of Prep School and Medical Centre to be a proactive figure in the College, supporting individuals and groups by raising the profile of counselling.

Role of Medical Centre:

- meet regularly, or as required, with the College Counsellor to review the safeguarding provision for individual pupils.

Role of Designated Safeguarding Lead ("DSL") *(in the event this is not the DHP)*

- meet regularly, or as required, with the College Counsellor to review the safeguarding provision for individual pupils; and
- keep the College Counsellor informed of safeguarding concerns and seek advice their advice where necessary.

Role of Deputy Head (Pastoral):

- hold weekly meetings with the College Counsellor to ascertain pastoral care requirements of pupils within the College;
- liaise with HMMs/Head of Prep School over concerns regarding individual or groups of pupils and the provision of support;
- support the Counsellor in creating links with external support agencies;
- inform new staff of the procedure for Counselling at the College and ensure all staff are updated with any changes to this;
- ensure the Headmaster is made aware of any matters relating to pupil safeguarding that may put a pupil at risk whilst at College (e.g. self-harm/suicide threat); and
- liaise with parents, where necessary, to help facilitate ongoing support of a pupil. This is particularly likely to be the case in the event the Counsellor requires parental consent for external agency support (e.g. a psychiatric assessment). HMMs may also be involved in such communication with parents.

The Senior Leadership Team will:

- become involved as appropriate/required at the request of the Headmaster and/or Deputy Head (Pastoral); and
- support the College Counsellor's efforts to create strong links with external support agencies.

Guidance and areas of need

The College Counsellor can offer support in areas such as:

- Anxiety
- Appropriate Behaviours
- Depression
- Eating Disorders
- Friendship
- Loneliness
- Motivation
- Panic Disorder
- Personal Goals
- Personality
- School Refusal
- Self Harm
- Self-esteem / Confidence
- Social Skills
- Suicide

Informing Parents/Consent

- 1:1 counselling sessions for Prep School pupils requires parental consent; for Senior School pupils it is decided on a case by case basis.
- Parents of Prep School pupils taking part in social skills group will be contacted by the College Counsellor in advance via email.

Additional Information

- Please refer to the flowchart (below) included in the Appendices section.

- Some Senior School pupils will make direct contact with the Counsellor; in such cases the flowchart (below) will not be needed. They may send an e-mail to the Counsellor to set up an appointment and the HMM will be informed by the Counsellor of the pupil's visit. Pupils will be informed by the Counsellor that their visit has been notified to their HMM but not the contents of their discussion.

- It is up to the pupil whether they wish to discuss the matter with their HMM and HMMs should not question the pupil for the reason for their visit nor inform other staff that the pupil is seeing the Counsellor without their permission (unless the Counsellor has otherwise indicated there is a need for teaching/house staff to be aware).

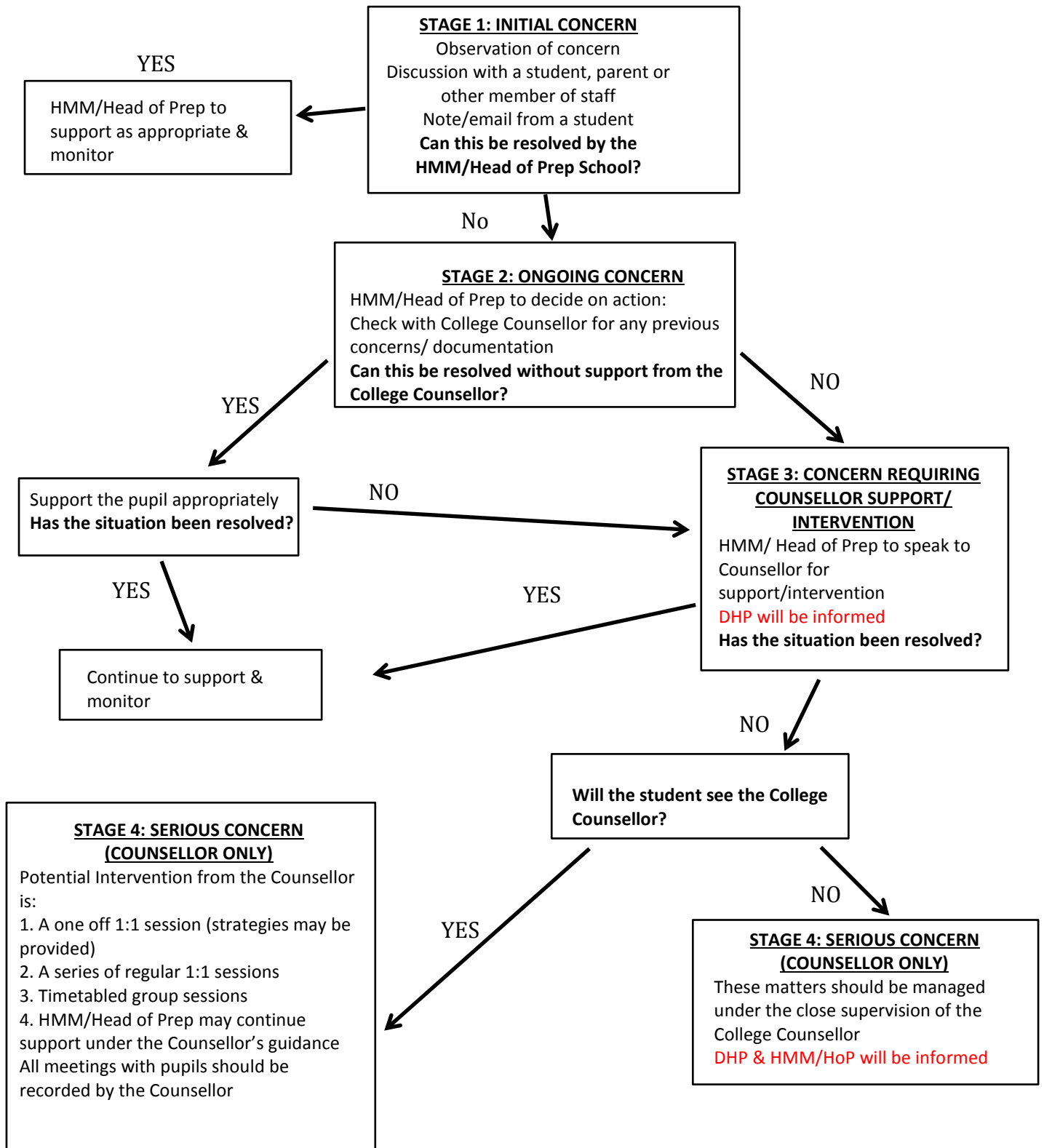
- The DSL will also be provided with a list of names of those pupils visiting the Counsellor, so that in the event of a safeguarding incident occurring whilst the Counsellor is not in College, they are aware the pupil is currently gaining support and may contact the Counsellor for further advice.

Appendices:

- 1. Flow chart of procedures**
- 2. Parental Consent**
- 3. Useful Links**

Appendix 1: Flow chart of procedures

COUNSELLING FLOW CHART



Appendix 2: Parental Consent

Example of e-mail communication with parents:

Dear Mr. & Mrs. _____,

My name is Pajan and I am the College Counsellor at Epsom College in Malaysia. I am contacting you because, as you are already aware, your child has been identified as one who would benefit from some 1:1 sessions with me.

Counselling is something which we provide at Epsom College in Malaysia for pupils from time to time if they need additional emotional or social support. It may be on an informal basis and the pupil may call in and see me when they feel that they need to. It may also be provided on a more regular basis, in weekly 1:1 sessions.

The relationship between pupil and Counsellor is based on trust with confidential records kept of discussions. If appropriate, feedback will be given to you from time to time; it may also be given to a pupil's Housemaster/mistress or Head of Prep School if we feel that it will be beneficial to your child.

In the case of our Prep School pupils, our policy is to seek permission from parents first. I would therefore be grateful if you would please reply to this email stating that you give permission for your child to attend the sessions with me? You may revoke this permission at any time.

Please feel free to contact me with any further questions or at any other time and I will be happy to speak to you.

Many Thanks,

Pajan Kaur
College Counsellor
Epsom College in Malaysia

Appendix 3: Useful Links

Malaysian Links

Befrienders KL

<https://www.befrienders.org.my/>

(24 Hours Everyday)

95 Jalan Templer

46000, Petaling Jaya

Tel: 03-795 68144 or 03-795 68145 (*able to communicate in English*)

Talian Nur Counselling Service KL

(9am - 6pm on Weekdays)

Tel: 03-2612 4000 (*able to communicate in English but prefer Bahasa*)

UK Website Links

<https://www.childline.org.uk>

<http://www.cwmt.org.uk/>

Papayrus Charity

<https://www.papyrus-uk.org/repository/documents/editorfiles/toolkitfinal.pdf>