

# 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 Catholic Education in the document).

## 1. POLICY STATEMENT

All Catholic schools and colleges (hereafter referred to as Catholic schools) in the Diocese will provide access to quality professional counselling founded on Gospel values and Church teachings. The provision of counselling services should be 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 will have the ability to work in collaboration and consultation with others in the school community and external agencies within the community. They will work towards the promotion of mental health and wellbeing. 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 environmental 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 Assistant Directors: 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 will be included in the recruitment process where possible.
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 respect the counsellor's Code of Ethics and will ensure that operational protocols are congruent with Catholic Education's policies and procedures.
9. Catholic Education 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 made accessible to students, staff and families regarding students' wellbeing.
12. Catholic Education will develop and manage procedures regarding case notes and data retention methods.

## 5. REFLECTION MATERIAL

### CATHOLIC EDUCATION POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

- [Code of Conduct](#) 2018
- [Student Protection](#) 2015/01
- [Student Protection Processes and Student Protection Guidelines](#) 2018
- [Early Years Child Protection Procedures](#) 2017
- [Student Protection Procedures \(Outside School Hours Care Services\)](#) 2017
- [Integrity in Relationships](#) 2013 (Brochure)
- [Student Protection](#) 2013 (Brochure)
- [Anti-Bullying](#) 2013/07
- [Critical Incidents in Catholic Schools and Colleges of the Diocese of Rockhampton](#) 2015/10
- [Pastoral Care in Catholic Schools](#) 2015-09
- 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 2006](#)
- [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](#)