



## COUNSELING POLICY

### **Aim:**

The Lawrence School, Lovedale is committed to provide effective and enjoyable learning, living and teaching environments, where children and young people thrive.

The aim of our counseling service is to provide the students, faculty and other stakeholders, an opportunity to work on the issues that are troubling them in a safe, caring and a non-judgemental environment.

Counseling is a part of a whole school approach to emotional health, mental well-being and school effectiveness.

It is an extension of the Pastoral Care system of the school. **The service is independent as well as integrated into the school system.** The service will provide help to individuals, pairs or groups of people.

### **Objectives:**

1. To promote students' mental and emotional well-being in a residential environment.
2. To provide timely and confidential support for students facing personal, academic, or social challenges.
3. To enhance students' ability to cope with homesickness, stress, peer pressure, and other residential school-related issues.
4. To foster resilience, self-awareness, and positive mental health through proactive counseling programs and interventions.
5. To facilitate healthy communication between students, parents, and school staff when necessary, while maintaining confidentiality.

### **Responsibilities of the School:**

To promote that Counseling is seen as part of a whole school approach to emotional health, and well-being and school effectiveness.

To ensure that all staff, parents or carers and students are aware that a school based counseling service is being offered.

To provide information about the service and ensure that this is understood by all stakeholders.

Appropriate on-going awareness and education workshops to be held for all stakeholders to de-stigmatise counseling and normalise help seeking behaviours for mental health related issues.

The counseling space provided is accessible, safe and private. There are clear referrals, including self-referral procedures in place.



The Counselor will report to the Headmaster.

Ensure that the Counselor appointed is suitably qualified and working within an ethical framework.

School authorities must satisfy themselves that the Counselor is familiar with relevant legislation, including child protection and child rights.

**Role of the Counselor:**

1. Emotional Support: Help students navigate emotional difficulties such as homesickness, anxiety, or loneliness.
2. Social Adjustment: Assist students in developing healthy relationships with peers and adapting to the environment of the residential school.
3. Academic Support: Guide students in overcoming academic challenges, time management, and exam-related stress.
4. Collaboration: Work closely with the pastoral team, teachers, and parents to ensure a coordinated approach to student well-being.
5. Crisis Management: Handle critical situations with immediate counseling and necessary interventions, including external referrals if required.

**Responsibilities of the Counselor:**

- To be committed to provide regular and responsible service.
- To take reasonable actions to ensure that the counselee does not suffer physical or psychological harm during counseling.
- To take responsibility for setting and keeping boundaries and making these clear to the user.
- To maintain records of sessions conducted in the formats developed.
- To maintain confidentiality and report cases of concern to the Headmaster at regular intervals in the protocols prescribed.
- Counselor must discuss difficult decisions of disclosures with the Headmaster.

**Ethical Issues:**

Counseling is a non-exploitative service. The Counselor should work with integrity, respect and with minimum bias.

All reasonable steps need to be taken to assure users a safe, private and welcoming space during counseling.

**Confidentiality Issues:**

Confidentiality is a means of providing the counselee with safety and privacy.

Ensuring confidentiality between the student and the Counselor is crucial to the success of the relationship and the outcomes of counseling. For this reason any



compromise is likely to diminish the usefulness of counseling besides being a breach of ethical values.

A frequent concern raised by children is that others will be informed about what has been discussed in sessions. The Counselor should explain confidentiality and its limitations at the start of the counseling relationship and, if necessary, will need to regularly inform the child of the limits as counseling progresses.

Any breaking of confidentiality should be minimised restricting the information to what is necessary to the immediate situation and to persons who can provide the help needed by the child.

The Counselor should report to the Headmaster where there is an assessment that someone is at risk of harm to themselves or to others.

Confidentiality is the most essential requirement of the counseling process. However there is no such thing as absolute confidentiality when working with children and young people. Child protection issues and the welfare of children will need to take precedence over confidentiality.

School must ensure that parents and school staff understand the principles and limits of confidentiality.

#### **Counseling Services Provided:**

- Individual Counseling: One-on-one sessions where students can discuss personal, emotional, or academic concerns.
- Group Counseling: Sessions designed to address common issues faced by groups of students, such as homesickness, peer conflicts, or exam stress.
- Crisis Intervention and external referrals: Immediate support for students in distress or those experiencing an emergency situation, such as severe emotional breakdowns or trauma. Students with severe emotional or behavioural concerns will be referred to external professionals for specialized support, and parents will be advised by the Counselor to facilitate these appointments.
- Preventive Programs: Workshops and seminars on topics like mental health awareness, stress management, resilience building, assertiveness training, and life skills.

#### **Access and referrals to Counseling:**

1. Students may self-refer to counseling services by contacting the School Counselor directly.
2. Peers can also refer each other for counseling.
3. Teachers, pastoral team, or staff may refer students they believe would benefit from counseling.
4. Parents/guardians may request counseling support for their child by contacting the School Counselor or School Administration.

#### **Peer Counseling Programs:**

Selected senior students will attend the CBSE Peer Educator Training Program, where they will be trained as peer educators. They will work alongside the School Counselor to offer first-line emotional support to their fellow students and conduct activities



pertaining to mental health. This initiative aims to foster a supportive network within the residential community, enhancing overall well-being.

**Mental Health Awareness Campaigns:**

The school will conduct regular workshops, seminars and programs on mental health awareness, anti-bullying, stress management and relevant topics.

**Crisis Management and External Referrals:**

In cases of severe mental health concerns or crises, the School Counselor may refer the student to external mental health professionals for specialized care.

**Awareness and capacity building sessions:**

The School Counselor will conduct regular workshops and seminars for staff members focused on emotional well-being, identifying and supporting students in distress, and addressing concerns such as ADHD, ASD, learning disabilities, and other behavioural and emotional issues. Additionally, the Counselor will lead POCSO (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences) awareness sessions for both students and staff to ensure a safe and informed school environment. Workshops and seminars for students will also include topics like mental health awareness, stress management, resilience building, assertiveness training, and life skills. The School Counselor will conduct awareness sessions for parents on various topics related to students' emotional well-being, mental health, learning disabilities and other relevant topics.

**Record-Keeping:**

All counseling records electronic and physical will be maintained securely, ensuring confidentiality.

**Counseling Process - Referral and Reporting**

**1. Referral Sources:**

- Self
- Parents
- School Management
- MICs
- HSMs
- AHSMs
- Teachers
- Peers
- Junior or Senior Students
- Matrons

**2. Process Flow:**

- Referral Sources (above) → Counselor
- Counselor → Headmaster for Reporting

Students may be referred to the School Counselor as needed. If parents or guardians prefer that their child does not participate in counseling services, or if they wish to discontinue these services, they may notify the Counselor by sending an email to [counselor@thelawrenceschool.org](mailto:counselor@thelawrenceschool.org)



**Limitations of School Counseling Services:**

1. **Medical Diagnosis and Treatment:** Diagnosing or treating medical conditions, including mental health disorders, is outside the School Counselor's role. Such cases require referrals to licensed medical or mental health professionals.
2. **Long-Term Therapy:** School counseling is generally short-term and solution-focused, providing initial support and guidance. Long-term therapeutic intervention is best managed by external mental health specialists.
3. **Psychiatric Services:** Prescribing medication or providing psychiatric evaluations fall outside school counseling services, requiring a psychiatrist's involvement.
4. **Family or Marital Counseling:** While the School Counselor can offer support to students, issues specific to family dynamics or marital concerns are better addressed by external family therapists.
5. **Comprehensive Learning Evaluations:** Detailed assessments for learning disabilities, ADHD, or other developmental or neurological conditions should be conducted by specialists outside the school setting.
6. **Crisis Management Beyond Initial Support:** In severe crises or trauma cases, while the Counselor may provide immediate support, ongoing or intensive trauma therapy is outside the school counseling scope and should involve external professionals.
7. **Direct Intervention in Disciplinary Matters:** The School Counselor may support students facing disciplinary action but is not directly involved in the enforcement or resolution of disciplinary measures.

**Review and Monitoring:**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Counselor and the Headmaster to ensure it remains relevant and effective in meeting students' needs.

Effective Date:

10/11/24

Approved By: HEADMASTER

[Signature]  
10/11/24