



American International School  
المدرسة الأمريكية الدولية

# STUDENT COUNSELLING POLICY

DATE: August 2025  
LAST REVIEWED ON: August 2025  
NEXT REVIEW DUE BY: August 2026

**Principal: Dr. Layne B. Hunt**

# School Counselling Policy

2024-25

American International School's counselling program is designed to assist students in making the most of their educational experience. This comprehensive program refers to a sequential, development program designed to benefit all the students in the preparation of their futures. Such a program includes a curriculum organized around three areas essential for a students' growth and development from the Foundation Stage up to Sixth Form in three key areas: Academic Development, Emotional-Social Development and Career Development.

In the school counselling program, students are motivated, supported, and given the tools to not only succeed at school but to go on to contribute to the local and international communities. This policy works towards building stronger students than repairing adults. A protective model that believes in being proactive, ensuring that students are learning key skills and techniques to thrive as individuals. Preventative education is delivered through various means such as individual and group sessions and classroom instruction. This program is designed to meet the needs of our students at each stage of their growth and development.

## Aims of the counselling Policy

The aim of AIS 's school counselling policy is to provide a framework of procedures and well-being of the students. It will ensure that the students have access to appropriate support and are treated with respect and dignity. Learning in a positive environment enables students to:

- Make informed decisions to improve their emotional, social and physical wellbeing
- Experience challenge & enjoyment
- Experience the positive aspects of healthy living and activity for themselves
- Establish a pattern of health and wellbeing which will be sustained into adult life and which will help promote the Health and Wellbeing of the next generation of students.

## The school Counsellor

- Adheres to ethical standards of the profession and relevant statutes established by the UAE government and regulatory organizations (KHDA)
- Maintains professional competence through educational, consultation and training experiences to improve awareness, knowledge, skills and effectiveness
- Informs students, teachers and parents of the purposes, processes and goals of counselling at or before the time when the counselling relationship is entered

- Maintains confidentiality of the students, staff and parents at all times- including the protection of emotional information and record-keeping
- Develop and maintain consistent and clear lines of communication with parents/guardian.

### Confidentiality

All the students are entitled to confidentiality. This means that the information they bring to the session will be held in confidence between themselves and the counsellor. Information will not be shared unless the young person has agreed to it. The counsellor will, however, state that they may need to break confidentiality should they deem the young person at significant risk of harm to themselves or others. At this point, information may need to be shared with concerned person either within the school e.g. Safeguarding Officer, Parents or with an appropriate referral to an outside agency. Counsellors are aware of the Child Protection procedures and adhere to those at all times.

### Services provided

The counselling program targets three main areas of development:

Academic, Emotional & Social, and Career Development.

**Academic Development:** • Apply skills needed for educational achievement • Apply skills of transitioning between educational levels • Understanding the relationship of academics to the world of work and to life at home and in the community

**Emotional/Social Development:** • Understand self as an individual and as a member of diverse local & global communities • Interact with others in ways that respect individual & group differences • Apply personal safety skills & coping strategies

**Career Development:** • Apply career exploration & planning skills in the achievement of life career goals • Know where & how to obtain information about the world of work & post-secondary training/education • Acquire skills to investigate the world of work in relation to knowledge of self as it relates to culture and family values, and make informed career decisions • Employ strategies to achieve future career goals and satisfaction • Foster an understanding of the relationship between emotional qualities, education, training and the world of work.

The above areas of development are enhanced and developed using the following approach:

**Individual Sessions:** The school counsellor(s) use many different mediums to work with students during sessions. In individual sessions, students may draw, write, sing, play, or just talk. Sometimes we work on learning a specific skill such as deep breathing for anxiety. Other times we work on role-playing situations, such as a problem with a friend or having a difficult conversation.

**Group counselling:** Such 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.

**Workshops :** The school counselling program addresses key issues faced by students of various age groups by designing and implementing workshops that provide students with key skills and techniques to navigate the world around them.

**Training:** The counselling program offers teachers and administrators various opportunities to expand their scope of practice to include counselling. Staff are aware of counselling policies and practices, how to identify indicators for student concern and how best to serve the counselling needs of our students.

### **Referral Process:**

The purpose of the referral process is to provide timely and effective support to initiate an appropriate plan of action for students at various levels of need.

A referral is made to the school counsellor(s) when a concern for a student arises.

Possible sources of referrals may include

- self-referral by student experiencing a problem, concerned peers, parent(s)/ guardian(s), teachers, administrators, and/or other school personnel .
- Emergency interventions are required in those situations that need immediate attention (i.e. peer concern about the emotional safety of another student, death of a pet or family member and abuse).

The student counsellor may determine that other resources would be appropriate, including referral to other individuals throughout the referral process, the student counsellor consults and collaborates with teachers, parents, administrators, other school staff, and/or outside agencies on behalf of the student.

### **Criteria for students to access the school counselling services:**

The counselling services help to increase the students' learning potential inside the classroom. Teachers and parents are the key people in the recognition of counselling services for each child. Only through this combined team effort can the school's teaching goals be pursued.

The following should be considered emergency referrals and referred immediately:

- Suspected evidence of child abuse, physical or mental.
- A child who cries or gets sick daily
- A child who becomes unable to function in a normal way.
- Any behaviour change in a child that is sudden or unusual.
- A child undergoing a traumatic family experience.
- Indications of mounting hostility between a child and a teacher or his or her peer group.

### **A Staff member or Parent may refer:**

- Any child who requests to see a counsellor.

- Students who need individual help beyond the time permitted in the classroom.
- Students with learning difficulties.
- Students having difficulty with special relationships.
- Students demonstrating observable changes in behaviour that cannot be accounted for by the teacher.
- Students whose parents request counselling.

Students who are constantly late for school or with their work.

- Students with frequent complaints of hurts or aches. • Students who are fearful or nervous.
  - Students who seem to seek only negative attention.
  - Students unable to follow rules. • The “class clown.”
  - Students who are often absent from school.
  - Students who have experienced a death in the family or of a close friend.
  - Students experiencing a divorce or separation in the family.
  - Students moving to a new community.
  - Students entering a new class.
    - Students who exhibit excessive aggressive behaviour
    - A group of students who are unable to resolve a conflict.
  - Students of migratory families.
  - Students who seem to be involved in bullying situation.
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