



**Vernus
International
School**

COUNSELING POLICY

AY: 2026 - 2027

Date of Policy	August 2021
Date of last review	August 2026
Date of next review	August 2027
Lead Member of Staff	Principal & Head of Wellbeing



Counseling Policy (2026-2027)

1. Purpose & Scope

This Counseling Provision Policy outlines the framework for delivering high-quality, accessible, and inclusive counseling services to elementary school students at VIS. The policy aims to promote student well-being, enhance their social and emotional development, and ensure that all students receive the support they need to succeed academically, socially, and emotionally within a safe and nurturing environment.

This policy applies to all elementary students (KG to Grade 6) enrolled at VIS, their families, teachers, and staff.

3. Objectives

- Provide a comprehensive school counseling program that supports the academic, personal, social, and emotional development of all students.
- Foster a supportive school environment where students feel safe, respected, and valued.
- Identify students' individual needs and provide early intervention to address potential concerns.
- Empower students to develop positive coping strategies and enhance their decisionmaking and problem-solving skills.
- Encourage collaboration between counselors, teachers, parents, and other professionals to ensure the holistic development of students.

4. Counseling Services Offered

The school will provide the following counseling services:

- **Individual Counseling:** One-on-one sessions addressing personal, emotional, or academic challenges.
- **Group Counseling:** Sessions for students with similar concerns, such as social skills, grief, anger management, and friendship issues.
- **Classroom Guidance Lessons:** Age-appropriate, curriculum-based sessions focused on character education, emotional regulation, and conflict resolution.
- **Crisis Intervention:** Immediate support for students experiencing a crisis, ensuring their safety and well-being.
- **Referral Services:** For students requiring more intensive support, the counselor may refer families to external mental health professionals or community resources.

5. Confidentiality

It is the school counselor's responsibility to respect the right to privacy of those with whom they enter a counseling relationship and to provide an environment of trust and confidence. Therefore, the counselor will:



- Explain the meaning and limits of confidentiality to students in developmentally appropriate terms
- Provide appropriate disclosure and informed consent regarding the counseling relationship and confidentiality.

The school Counselor's primary obligation regarding confidentiality is towards the student, but they must balance that obligation with an understanding of the guardian's legal rights to the guiding voice in their children's lives. It is important to remember that:

- Confidentiality is an ethical and legal term ascribed to the information communicated within the counseling relationship, and it is to be maintained unless keeping that information confidential leads to foreseeable harm.
- They must inform students and their families of the limits to confidentiality. Reasons for breaking confidentiality are but are not limited to:
- a student is in danger of harming themselves, or another individual, or if a student is in danger of being harmed by others.

The exception to confidentiality exists, and the students should be informed when situations arise in which school counselors have a responsibility to disclose information obtained in counseling relationships to others to protect students, themselves, or other individuals. These include:

- Where a student is at risk of significant harm, the counselor will initiate the school safeguarding procedures and consult with the SLT (refer to Safeguarding & Child Protection policy)
- HOD and teachers are aware of students accessing the service but will not have information on the session details
- To keep personal notes, separate from educational records and not disclose their contents except when privacy exception exists

6. Parental Involvement

- Parents/guardians will be informed if their child participates in individual counseling sessions unless it is a routine or classroom-based intervention.
- Collaboration between counselors and parents is encouraged to support the student's overall well-being.
- Parents/guardians may request counseling services for their child by contacting the school counselor directly.
- It is important to get appropriate parent consent when undertaking a one-to-one session.
- Parental Permission/Consent must be obtained before any sessions commencing for students.

7. Referral Process

- Teachers, parents, or students may refer themselves or others for counseling services by completing a referral form or speaking directly with the school counselor.



- Counselors will assess the referral and determine the most appropriate support based on the student's needs.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

- **School Counselor:** The counselor will be responsible for implementing the counseling program, conducting individual and group sessions, providing crisis intervention, and maintaining confidentiality.
- **Teachers and Staff:** Teachers will collaborate with counselors by identifying students who may benefit from counseling services and participating in classroom-based guidance lessons.
- **Parents:** Parents are encouraged to communicate with the counselor about any concerns regarding their child's well-being and participate in meetings or interventions as needed.

9. Crisis Management

In the event of a crisis affecting an individual student or the school community, the counselor will work closely with the school administration to implement the school's crisis management plan, ensuring the safety and emotional well-being of all students.

10. Counseling Session

Counseling sessions will last 45 minutes in one of the counseling rooms. Students referred will be eligible for 6 sessions and a review of the sessions will take place after 6 weeks. School counselors will ensure that appointments are scheduled at a convenient time for the students to ensure their learning is not impacted.

Record Keeping

The school counselor will keep a formal record of pupils who access the service with a brief description of the presenting issue. Where a student is referred a referral form and parent consent where needed will be kept in the individual file. It is important to note that:

- Counsellors shall comply with Regulations of information sharing and Confidentiality of Student- Disclosed Information,
- Records of personal/social counseling shall be kept separate from a student's educational records and shall not be disclosed to third parties without prior parental consent, or as otherwise provided by law.
- Statistical data will be annually reported keeping students' identities confidential.

Long Term Intensive Counseling

The school counselor shall refer parents to an appropriate agency or private mental health care provider for long-term intensive counseling. A resource list of those agencies or mental health providers available in the community will be provided to parents/caregivers.



The school counselor shall consult with and/or work collaboratively with outside counselors who are conducting long-term intensive counseling services for students when warranted.

10. Professional Development

Counselors will engage in ongoing professional development to stay informed of best practices and developments in child psychology, counseling strategies, and the socialemotional learning curriculum.

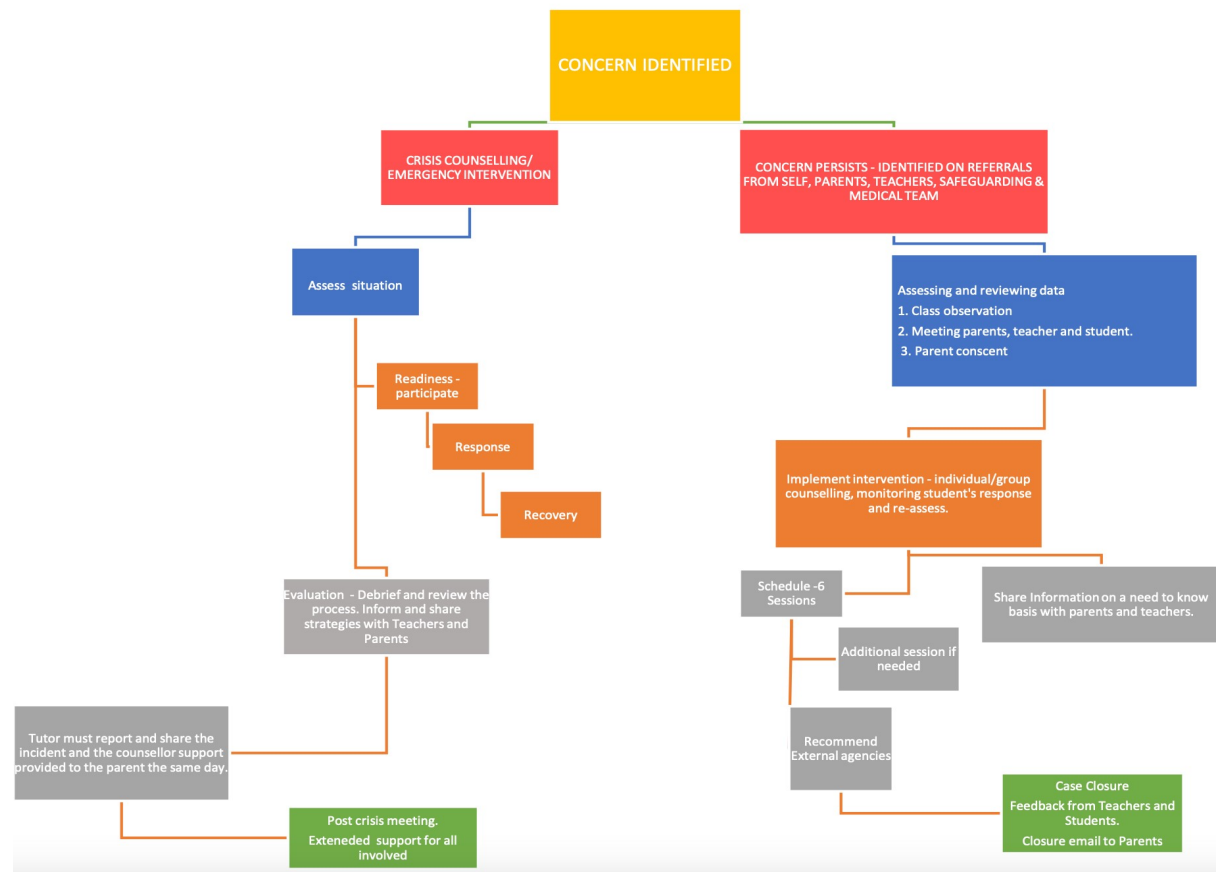
11. Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it meets the needs of the students and aligns with current best practices in school counseling. Feedback from students, parents, staff, and counselors will be considered during the review process.

12. Contact Information

For more information or to request counseling services, please contact the head of wellbeing at fariha@visdubai.com

Referral Process Flow Chart for Counselling



PARENTAL INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

Student Name: _____ **Year:** _____ **Date:** _____

Dear Parents,

Counselor's support to students is available for social, emotional, academic and/or behavioral concerns at school. The counselor is available during regular school hours to meet with parents and caregivers to support and help problem-solve any concerns you might have.

We request to obtain permission for your child to receive brief counseling sessions with the school counselor at VIS. I am currently offering –

- _____ Individual counseling session
- _____ Small group session

It is important that parents meet with the counselor initially to provide a background history of the child's medical issues, significant life events, and any other relevant information that will assist the counselor when meeting with the child.

The Counselor will meet with students on a short-term basis. The counseling sessions will occur during the school hours. The counseling will not occur during important academic instruction or assessment.

All information is confidential and disclosed with permission except when the student is at risk of harming themselves, or others or otherwise required by School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies.

Kind Regards,

Fariha Rasheed

Head of Wellbeing & Inclusion

fariha@visdubai.com

Consent Form

YES, I permit my ward _____ to participate in Individual/Small Group Counselling Sessions.

Parent Email Id: _____ Parent Signature _____

Head of Wellbeing Signature _____ Mobile: _____

Date: _____

