



School Counseling Department-Informed Consent Form

This consent form summarizes the procedures that the *School Counseling Department* follows in terms of ethical standards, the counselor's role, referral process and interventions/techniques used. It details the bounds of confidentiality as per the American School Counselor Association's ethical standards and clarifies the benefits and/or risks associated with counseling on the child's overall mental health.

A. Introduction

The Greenwood International School (GIS) governing board, administration, teaching and supportive staff recognize the importance of ensuring that all students at the school have access to adequate support; be it professional counseling, academic and emotional assistance and/or guidance which aligns with the school's philosophy and ethos.

At the present, there is a well-developed Support Team at the school, composed of a *School Counseling Department* (dealing with behavioral, emotional, social, personal and abuse cases), an *Inclusion department* (dealing with Students of Determination with special educational needs and/or disability) and an *ELL department* that caters to the needs of English Language Learners. The **three departments** of the GIS Support Team work in coordination with each other to target the specific needs of students.

B. School Counseling Department

The *School Counseling Department* follows the ethical standards provided by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) that are in turn adopted by the Michigan School Counselor Association as part of the school's adherence to the Michigan State Standards. The School Counselor adopts various techniques, interventions and methods tailored to the educational school setting with roots extending from a diverse range of counseling approaches, techniques and psychotherapies.

C. Background

The *School Counseling Department* at the Greenwood International School (GIS) is headed by Ms. Sarwat Majzoub, the School Counselor (K-12). Ms. Sarwat holds a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from the American University of Beirut (Lebanon) and a Masters of Science degree in Psychology of Education from the University College London (United Kingdom) which is accredited by the British Psychological Society. Ms. Sarwat has experience in teaching at the elementary level and has been employed at GIS as of September 2018.

D. Ethical Standards for the School Counselor

- A detailed account of the school counselor's responsibilities towards the students which is known by all.
- Confidentiality and cases where breach of confidentiality is required (need-to-know basis and potential harm to self or others).
- When referrals should be made to the *Inclusion department* or *ELL department* or outsourcing to local agencies and associations.
- Appropriate measures taken by the school to ensure an effective way to store student records.

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E. The School Counselor's Role

- Offers support and guidance to students from K-12 based on personal observations or self, parental and staff referrals.
- Provides one-to-one and group counseling sessions to students to address developmental, academic, social, behavioral and emotional needs.
- Conducts classroom observations and break supervision to monitor and ensure the well-being of all students and addresses issues that arise in a timely fashion.
- Collaborates with parents, teaching and supportive staff to promote the academic and personal development of all students.
- Organizes workshops and lectures for teaching and supportive staff on issues pertaining to the emotional and psychological well-being of students.
- Supports teachers in designing and implementing interventions to address behavioral or social issues etc.
- Abides by the ASCA framework and ethical standards.

F. Referral Process

In order to counsel students, a *Confidential Referral form* should be completed by the referring party. Once the referral form is submitted to the school counselor, actions will be taken according to the urgency of the problem. Urgent referrals will be dealt with within 2 working days while non-urgent referrals will be dealt with within 5 working days.

The school counselor will determine the most suitable plan of action and share it with the referring party, that includes but not limited to; *Individual/Group Counseling Sessions, Formal and Informal Classroom or Break Observations, Monitoring Sheets, Progress Reports, Behavioral and Crisis Interventions and Anxiety, Depression and Anger Management Programs, Lectures/Workshops and trainings on various psychoeducational topics to students or staff etc.*

Who can refer?

Students may be referred to the school counselor by teachers, supervisors, heads of sections, parents, administrators, other departments of the GIS Support Team. Self-referrals are only applicable to students in grades 5-12.

G. Provisions of Services Provided

I. Individual/Group Counseling

The school counselor conducts one-to-one individual or group counseling sessions with students to discuss issues that arise with them at school or outside of school. The topics range in variation from self-esteem cases to bullying and test anxiety etc. The counselor employs several techniques and interventions within the confines of ethical practice of the ASCA framework and a respect and appreciation to the multi-cultural nature of the United Arab Emirates.

NB: Up to **two individual or group counseling sessions per term** can be provided to a GIS student without requiring parental consent.



II. Formal and Informal Classroom Observations

The school counselor conducts formal and informal classroom observations of students to monitor their academic or behavioral progress. Formal and informal observations entail note-taking and occasionally immediate interaction between the school counselor and the child that is being observed.

NB: *Up to two informal classroom observations per term can be administered to a GIS student without requiring parental consent where only notes are taken and shared but no official report is written. Up to two formal classroom observations per term can be administered to a GIS student without requiring parental consent where a report is written and shared with teaching staff, parents or student.*

III. Formal and Informal Break Observations

The school counselor conducts formal and informal break observations of students to monitor their behavior and socializing skills. Formal and informal break observations entail note-taking and occasionally immediate interaction between the school counselor and the child that is being observed.

NB: *Up to two informal break observations per term can be administered to a GIS student without requiring parental consent where only notes are taken and shared but no official report is written. Up to two formal break observations per term can be administered to a GIS student without requiring parental consent where a report is written and shared with teaching staff, parents or student.*

IV. Monitoring Sheets

The school counselor will occasionally require teachers to write behavioral and academic feedback about your child in order to manage certain behavioral or academic concerns that might surround him/her. Monitoring sheets can be provided to teachers **on a weekly, biweekly or monthly basis** according to the needs of the child and urgency of the area of concern.

NB: *Monitoring sheets will be shared with parents if the plan of action requires the attention and support of the home environment or if additional formal observations are conducted. In cases where the area of concern is addressed internally (such as a modification of the child's seating arrangement to minimize disruptive behavior), parents would not be informed of the feedback.*

V. Progress Reports

The school counselor will occasionally require teachers to write a progress report for specific targeted subjects where the child seems to struggle academically. These reports contain a "To Do List" for the student to complete and a "Plan of Action" for the teacher to follow. The reports are communicated to the parents in the presence of the child. The student, teacher and parent are held liable to the progress and follow-up of both the student's "To Do List" and the teacher's "Plan of Action".

NB: *Progress reports are normally provided by teachers on a monthly basis based on the request of the school counselor.*

VI. Behavioral and Crisis Interventions

The school counselor will provide behavioral and crises interventions and support to teachers and parents. The school counselor will write a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) after observing the referred student. The findings and strategies of the BIP will be communicated with the teachers and the parents and will remain as part of the child's portfolio.



VII. Anxiety, Depression and Anger Management Programs

The school counselor will deliver school-based anxiety, depression and anger management programs if my child suffers from anxiety (be it generalized anxiety, test anxiety or separation anxiety etc.) and/or mild depression and/or poor anger management. The programs can be delivered in a one-to-one setting or group setting with students that are experiencing similar troubles and difficulties. The programs include worksheets, games, videos, drawings, mini-lessons on anxiety, depression or anger management etc. they use techniques from a multitude of psychotherapeutic approaches that are designed for the school-setting and targeted to the age group of the student.

***NB:** These programs will only be administered with informed parental consent and the parent will be given a synopsis of what the sessions will entail (normally up to 10 sessions). Details of the sessions be it written or spoken information, drawings etc. will not be shared with the parents without the student's knowledge and request.*

VIII. Lectures/Workshops and trainings on psychoeducational topics

The school counselor will deliver lectures, workshops and trainings on various psychoeducational topics such as: bullying, anger management, children's rights, studying tips etc. to students and staff alike.

***NB:** These lectures, workshops and trainings are provided on a large scope and do not require parental consent except for in cases where sensitive topics may be addressed such as sexual or physical abuse.*

H. Benefits/Risks

I understand that the school counseling department services that my child might receive are for the overall benefit of my child which can ultimately help my child understand himself/herself better, determine his/her goals while trying to achieve them in accordance with his/her values. I understand that counseling allows my child to cope better with stress and anxiety. I understand that counseling makes my child better able to manage his/her feelings and create strong and healthy relationships with friends and family. I understand that counseling might bring to the surface some unpleasant or unanticipated feelings that can impact my child's progress or interactions with others.

I. Confidentiality

- I understand that the school counselor's sessions with my child are confidential and that the content of counseling sessions cannot be disclosed to me or any other staff member at school unless my child expresses his/her wishes for the sharing of information to take place.
- I understand that I have the right to ask about the progress of my child and that the school counselor may only disclose some of the content of the counseling sessions to me in cases where my child expresses or exhibits behaviors that indicate an intent or an admission of self-harm or harm to others.
- I understand that my child is made aware of the confines of confidentiality and will be informed when sharing of information takes place.
- I understand that for the school counselor to share information about my child with a third-party individual or organization, such as a grandparent, psychiatrist or pediatrician, I will need to sign an additional form: **The Release of Information Form**.
- I understand that the school counselor reserves the right to alert the authorities should my child express a serious intent or admission to cause harm to himself/herself or others.



- I understand that the school counselor is mandated by the UAE Law to alert authorities should the child express or exhibit any signs of abuse or neglect without consulting with me first.

J. Signature

Please check one:

- I give permission for my child to receive individual and/or group counseling services while attending the Greenwood International School.

(If your child is invited to join a recurring group, you will receive additional information at that time.)

I understand that I may withdraw my consent at any time by signing and dating a written note requesting termination of counseling services.

- I choose to decline school counseling services for my child at this time. I understand that I may request counseling services at a later date if needed.

Child's Name _____.

I, _____, am the legal parent/guardian of _____.
I have read, understand, and agree to the terms of the School Counseling Informed Consent.

Custodial Parent/Guardian Signature

Date __/__/____

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