

# SCHOOL COUNSELLING SERVICES AND PLAN

## Introduction:

Gulf International School is committed to empowering its students to be confident, self-reliant, and resilient. It aims to ensure that students have positive mental well-being. The counseling service provides a confidential, safe, nurturing, and personalized approach for students to explore difficulties they may encounter, complementing the support within the wider school community.

## Objective/Purpose of Counseling:

Counseling provides an opportunity for individuals to talk, in confidence, about things that are worrying them or affecting their day-to-day life. The Guidance Counseling Service is an interactive learning process between the counselor and student, whether individual or group, which approaches personal, educational, and/or vocational issues in a holistic way. Moreover, the availability of a counseling service can support individual students inside and outside the classroom context and the disciplinary structures in the school. Some of the problems that can be addressed with the support of counseling include competitiveness, bullying, social exclusion, family issues, low academic achievement and, peer pressure.

## Methods and Procedures of Counseling:

Referral procedures to the counselor: A referral form will be completed by teachers and submitted to the counselor. Any member of staff may approach their Vice Principal or Academic Director to request a referral form for a student. In some cases, students may self-refer, and the School Principal or parents may also refer students directly to the school counselor.

**Parent meetings with the school counselor:** Parents can request an appointment to meet with the School Counselor if they have concerns regarding their child.

**Counseling Committee:** A Counseling Committee is assigned each year by the School Principal, including the Academic Directors, the School Counselor, the Vice-Principals, and some active teachers or supervisors, to discuss any serious issues or cases among students.

**School Counselors:** Counselors are trained to listen without judgment and to help individuals resolve their thoughts and feelings, gaining a greater understanding of themselves and their situation. The Counselor has many years of experience working with young people and is approachable, has good listening skills, and creates a climate for safe and trusting relationships. Common issues addressed in counseling sessions for students include bullying, parental separation, stress, friendships, change, bereavement, distressing traumatic events, and anger. The counselors particularly deal with students who have educational, physical, social, behavioral, or family problems.

**Confidentiality:** A key feature of the service is that information discussed in counseling sessions is treated confidentially with respect for the student's privacy and autonomy. Counseling is a time when the individual needs to feel secure to talk about their concerns without the fear of the conversation being shared. This promotes a trusting therapeutic relationship between the counselor and the student/parent/staff members.

**Record keeping and Assessment:** The counselor will keep a formal record of students who access the service and a brief description of the presenting issue. Where the student is referred, a referral form will be kept on file. All student records and reports will be stored in a locked cabinet in the counselor's office. The file will contain the number of sessions attended and a note of any follow-up action required or agreed upon by the counselor, school management, or parents. Statistical data will be collated on an annual basis, and no student will be identified within the collected data.

## **Types of Counseling in GIS:**

**Individual Counseling:** This is an interactive process that includes counseling, assessment, information, and advice to discuss any behavioral, emotional, or family problems or issues, along with any educational, personal, and social development issues affecting the student. The number of sessions offered will be based on the needs of each student.

**Group Counseling:** This is a broad term covering types of counseling for more than two persons. In group counseling, members listen to, support, and challenge each other, thus learning to be open, constructive, and assertive and experiencing how others see them.

**Peer Counseling:** This occurs on limited and well-prepared occasions where students help and support each other on educational and vocational topics, but not necessarily on personal issues.

**Classroom Counseling:** The guidance counseling is designed to reflect the needs of students at all stages of their school life and to identify the needs of each specific year group. A program will be designed to meet those needs.

### **Main Aspects for School Counselors:**

- Academic performance difficulties
- Behavioral and bullying issues
- Personal and family problems
- Physical and health issues
- Emotional and psychological problems
- Social, adaptive, and interacting problems

### **Student Leadership Policy:**

At Gulf International School, we recognize the importance of leadership in student learning. We believe that every student has the potential to demonstrate leadership. Our aim is to help students understand the principles of ethical and effective leadership, assess and develop their own abilities, and become more confident in assuming leadership roles when necessary. Student leaders have a positive impact on the quality of student life by enhancing the school environment and contributing to the community.

GIS has two student leadership programs.

- School Council
- School Prefects

## Policy Statement:

Gulf International School provides opportunities for students to develop leadership skills and gain experience in various contexts. Student Council Representatives actively participate in meetings and discussions with the student counselors to address current issues. The Student Prefect Body plays an active role in maintaining discipline during break times, school events, and celebrations.

## Student Council:

- The Student Council consists of student representatives from grades 7 to 12.
- Each class elects one student to serve as their representative, forming the Student Council.
  - Elections are held at the beginning of each year.
- Once the council is established, a school-wide election takes place to select three students who will lead the Student Council committee. These leaders hold the positions of President, Vice President, and Secretary.

## Criteria for Student Council Administration Candidates:

- Candidates should demonstrate leadership ability.
- Candidates should be comfortable speaking in front of groups and others.
- Candidates must be willing and capable of fulfilling responsibilities.
- Candidates are required to deliver a nominating speech in front of their student body prior to the election.

(Candidates are not permitted to bring campaign treats such as candy, cookies, stickers, pens, etc., to school on Election Day. Students should be elected based on their qualifications and not because of material incentives.)

## Student Council Representative Responsibilities:

- Represent their respective class of students.
- Assist in resolving problems within the classroom.
- Refer to the counselor in case of any issues.

## **Role of the President:**

A student council president should possess the ability to handle various situations, demonstrate maturity, be organized, exhibit sound judgment, and collaborate effectively with diverse individuals.

## **Responsibilities of the President:**

- Lead student council meetings.
- Coordinate the council's work through other officers and committees.
- Facilitate group discussions by summarizing and clarifying points.
- Have a basic understanding of meeting procedures to ensure smooth operations.
- Maintain regular communication with faculty and administrators as required.
- Collaborate closely with the student council advisor in all planning activities.
- Keep the school's principals informed about student council activities.
- Participate in student council-sponsored events and initiatives.

## **Role of the Vice President:**

The vice president serves as a backup for the president in case of their absence.

## **Responsibilities of the Vice President:**

- Work closely with the president.
- Assume the president's duties when they are unavailable.
- Coordinate the committee's work.
- Assist the president in preparing meeting agendas.

## **Role of the Secretary:**

The secretary is responsible for attending all meetings and taking notes during the proceedings. If necessary, they can arrange for another committee member or an approved substitute to fulfill this duty.

## **Responsibilities of the Secretary:**

- Prepare and distribute meeting agendas.
- Take attendance at meetings.
- Record minutes of all student council meetings.

- Document all main motions and amendments proposed during meetings in the minutes.
- Prepare the meeting minutes in a timely manner and share them with the school administration.
- Maintain original copies of agendas and minutes.
- Keep contact information of individuals with whom the student council regularly interacts.

### **Student Prefect Body Selection Procedure:**

Each year, the school appoints a Captain, Vice-Captain, Sports Captain, and Sport Vice-Captain. Teachers nominate selected students based on qualities such as leadership, behavior, academic achievement, interest in sportsmanship, effective communication, and a desire to serve the school. The selection process includes an individual interview with a panel consisting of the Academic Directors, School Counselor, and senior teachers. The chosen leaders take an oath and are sworn in as office bearers of the Student Leadership Prefect Body during the Investiture Ceremony, where they receive badges of honor from the student counselor.

### **Responsibilities of the Captain/Vice Captain:**

Captains are expected to be responsible role models, adhere to school rules, take pride in wearing the badge, and be punctual. Their responsibilities include:

- Coordinating with teachers to organize school events.
- Assisting students in forming proper lines during assembly or dispersal.
- Supporting teachers during break times.

### **Duties of the Captain/Vice Captain include, but are not limited to:**

- Representing the school in public forums such as assemblies.
- Acting as ambassadors for the school community and representing the student body.
- Communicating and meeting regularly with the school counselor and/or Academic Directors as required.

### **Duties of the Sports Captain/Vice Captains include:**

- Collaborating with the Physical Education (P.E.) teacher to communicate a vision for the Sports Department.
- Actively engaging in personal sporting pursuits and demonstrating exemplary sportsmanship.
- Taking a leadership role in planning and organizing school sports events.
- Motivating students to actively participate in sports and maintain good sportsmanship.

### **Monitoring Student Leader Performance:**

The School Counselors are responsible for regularly meeting with the student council representatives.

### **The School Prefects:**

- **Boy's Section:**
  - Deputy Academic Director and floor monitor.
- **Girl's Section:**
  - Vice-Principal and floor monitor.

### **Child Protection Policy:**

Protecting children is a crucial responsibility of our international educational institution. Child abuse and neglect are violations of a child's human rights and hinder their education, as well as their physical, emotional, and spiritual development. Any form of abuse, including physical, psychological, or exploitation, as well as the threat of such acts, committed by an individual against another individual, is considered child abuse.

### **Child Protection Procedures:**

- All staff members at GULF INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL are required to promptly report any suspected cases of abuse, neglect, or self-harm involving students to the School Principal.

- GIS will annually communicate this policy to parents, applicants, and students through Teams. Additionally, GIS will make every effort to implement hiring practices that prioritize the safety of all children. All staff members will be informed about child protection and safety regulations, including receiving annual safeguarding training or refresher courses.

## **Child Abuse:**

Child abuse occurs when an adult or another child harms a child, and the harm can take various forms, including physical, emotional, neglect, or other types of harm (Day et al., 2008). Abuse can also be indirect if someone is aware that a child is being abused and fails to intervene (Allnock and Miller, 2013).

## **Definition of Abuse:**

According to the World Health Organization, child abuse encompasses "all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, neglect or negligent treatment, or other forms of exploitation resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development, or dignity within the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power."

## **Identifying, Reporting, and Documenting Suspected Abuse:**

**Identifying when to report:** If an employee has "reasonable cause" or "reasonable suspicion" based on their knowledge of the student or personal experience with children.

**Reporting cases of suspected child abuse or neglect:** It is mandatory for all GIS faculty/staff to report incidents of suspected abuse, neglect, or self-harm to a School Principal.

## **Child Protection Team:**

The Child Protection Team is responsible for responding to and investigating all suspected and/or reported cases of child abuse. The team consists of the following individuals:

### **Girls Section:**

- The School Principals
- The Academic Directors
- The Vice-Principals



- The School Counselors
- The Floor Monitors

#### **Boys Section:**

- The School Principals
- The Academic Directors
- The School Counselors
- The Vice-Principals
- The Floor Monitors

#### **Investigation:**

An investigation is initiated and conducted by the School Administration to look into the allegations. Throughout the investigation, all aspects, including verbal conversations and subsequent actions, must be documented in writing. The School Counselor will maintain confidential documentation in a secure location. Once the investigation is concluded, the appropriate authorities will be notified.

#### **Social Media Policy**

Gulf International School acknowledges the impact of social media in the lives of its stakeholders and is mindful of the minimum age restrictions set by some platforms.

GIS utilizes social media to share the following types of news and events with our followers:

- Exciting events taking place within our school
- News and upcoming events
- Emergency information

#### **Privacy:**

- The school places great importance on privacy and adheres to the following procedures:
- Parents confirm their consent by marking the addendum letter, and the information should be entered in Odo before being uploaded to any of the school's social media platforms.

- If a stakeholder wishes to have an image removed from any social media platform associated with the school, please contact the school's activity coordinator.
- The school may occasionally capture images or videos of students for promotional purposes. Consent will be obtained in accordance with the aforementioned consent forms.

## Career Guidance:

Career guidance within the school is provided by the following individuals:

- The School Counsellor
- The Academic Director
- Principals
- The Vice-Principal for High School
- Senior Teachers for Grades 9-12

## Career and University Guidance:

The school assists students with the following:

### Records:

- Saudi/Noor link
- High School diploma, which includes report cards from grades 9 to 12. Starting from the 2023-2024 academic year, the option to include grade 9 reports was permitted under MOE rules.

## Letters of Recommendation:

Students may request letters of recommendation from their class teacher, subject teacher, or the Academic Director. It is advised for students to make the request in advance and use the school email address for communication.

## Cognia Stamp:

The high school diploma is issued through the Noor system and is valid for university applications in Saudi Arabia. For students who intend to apply to international universities,

they may choose to have their high school diploma verified by Cognia. The Deputy Academic Director provides guidance on the necessary procedures.

### **International University Entry Requirements:**

GIS takes pride in its diverse student body representing different nationalities. Students are encouraged to research the entry requirements of the country/university they plan to attend. The school counselors share events and information on TEAMs for international students. For students who wish to remain in Saudi Arabia, the school principals and vice-principal can offer informal advice.

