

NEWTON INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY SMASH



School Counsellor POLICY

POLICY REVIEWED

July 2025

POLICY TO BE REVIEWED

July 2026





Newton International Academy - Smash

أكاديمية نيوتن العالمية

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NIA Smash School Counselling Policy

Reviewed July 2025

Next Review July 2026

Introduction

At NIA we have a primary responsibility to attend to the welfare and safety of the students at the school, and this duty is carried out through pastoral care guidelines, which aim to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment. We have a well-defined Counselling department to cater to the social, emotional, psychological and behavioural needs of our students.

Aim

The aim of the Counselling Policy is to make explicit the roles and responsibilities of the counsellor in providing pastoral support and care to all NIA students and to follow principles and procedures when referring and counselling students.

- To be able to work within a school context and promote emotional and psychological health amongst students.
- To effectively implement a counselling service that meets NIA's vision to create opportunities for the pupils to strive for excellence and celebrate success
- To be able to provide self-help resources to students, parents and teachers.
- To be able to support teachers, parents in successfully directing students towards social, emotional, behavioural and academic success.
- To be able to work within a community and use therapeutic interventions.
- To cater to the well-being of staff, students and parents.

Definition of terms

- **Counselling & Psychotherapy:** British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) defines counselling and psychotherapy as 'umbrella terms that cover a range of talking therapies'. It offers children the opportunity to express and explore how they feel and what they're thinking with someone who is professionally trained, in order to bring about effective change and/or enhance their wellbeing.

- **Counselling interventions:** unique interrelationship between a client and a counsellor, which aims to create a change and a growth in three main areas: Personal development, social adjustment, and professional development by using a range of techniques. Interventions can range from therapy styles such as Cognitive Behavioural therapy, Behavioural therapy, Person centred therapy or more expressive forms of therapy such as Play & Art therapy, Narrative & Storytelling Therapy.
- **Psych education:** is defined as an intervention with systematic, structured, and didactic knowledge transfer for an illness and its treatment, integrating emotional and motivational aspects to enable patients to cope with the illness and to improve its treatment adherence and efficacy.

Role of the School Counsellor

The school counsellor at NIA works closely with the Pastoral team and teachers to support the needs of students pertaining to academic success, behaviour, building character and supporting student well-being across the school. The role of the School Counsellor is but not limited to the following:

- Implement effective student and staff support and guidance. This includes understanding self and others, coping strategies, peer relationships and social skills, communication, problem solving, decision-making, conflict resolution, and study skills.
- Provide individual and small group counselling to deal with issues such as self-image and self-esteem, personal adjustment, family issues, loss and grief, interpersonal concerns, academic development, and behaviour.
- Assist parents and the school community with information regarding mental health issues and challenges.
- Work proactively with the school community to promote and foster student wellbeing.
- Work collaboratively with the Additional Educational Special Needs (AESN) department to assist students with needs for Special Educational.

Counselling Interventions at NIA

- **Individual counselling:** 1:1 support provided to students on a regular and weekly schedule. Issues that require external support will be directed to external agencies. Each session is properly documented to suit the counselling guidelines and work within the BACP framework.
- **Small group counselling sessions:** support provided to address issues such as Self-esteem, Friendships, Conflict Resolution, Anger management, Online safety, Bullying, Peer pressure etc.
- **Individualised Plans:** student specific plans are developed to suit the needs of students referred for counselling. Emotional Social Plan (ESW Plan), Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP) and Pupil Support Program (PSP) are a few that are used across the school.
- **Parent collaboration:** the counsellor will collaborate with parents to support student progress and welfare.
- **External Referrals:** sometimes referrals are made to utilise the facilities and resources available at external agencies. The counsellor will communicate the requirements with parents should, this be the case for any student.

Referral Process and Procedures

Referral to:

The concerned teacher/parent/ staff member can fill in the Counselling form and refer the child to the counsellor.

Initial:

The counsellor will take time to assess the case referred by communicating with the concerned referrer, observing the student in class or social situations, and finally meeting with the student to understand the child perspective. A meeting with the parent is also scheduled to share the concerns raised.

Support plan:

The counsellor will develop a plan to suit the needs and requirements of the student: ESW Plan, IBP or PSP. The plans will be shared, discussed and explained to parents and relevant staff. The plans will run on a termly basis

Implementation of plan:

The developed plans will be implemented at home, in class and during sessions. Sessions with the counsellor, if applicable, will last for 30 mins weekly 1 or 2 times.

Review of Support Plans

The plans will be reviewed termly to identify whether set targets have been achieved. Accordingly the plan will either be continued with revised targets or the plan will be closed.

Steps taken by counsellor:

1. The Counselor conducts a meeting with the child.
2. Notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Head of Schools.
3. Contact the parents and communicate the child's statements.
4. Arrange a meeting with the parents if additional concerns arise.
5. In the event of continued concerns, inform the CEO and engage external agencies as necessary.

Confidentiality & Sharing Information

Respecting the child's privacy and confidentiality are fundamental requirements for keeping trust and respecting the child's autonomy. The professional management of confidentiality concerns the protection of personally identifiable and sensitive information from unauthorised disclosure. Any disclosures of a child's confidences should be undertaken in ways that best protect the child's trust and respect their autonomy.

At the initial session, the Counsellor will make it clear to the pupil that they may need to breach confidentiality in terms of telling others and seeking help. This may happen when the young person, or any other person (adult or child) is at risk of significant harm.

During a counselling session, children have the right to refuse or discontinue counselling at any time, and it is the counsellor's responsibility to ensure that the student's rights to autonomy are respected. It is important to recognise that pupils can only benefit if they want to be involved in the counselling process. At NIA we work in partnership with parents wherever possible except in Child Protection concerns.

Counsellors may find it necessary to liaise with, share information or refer the child to another agency for further help. This should only happen with the parent's permission. An exception to this practice occurs when the school has information that indicates that a student may be at risk of harm, in these circumstances the school then takes instruction from the Child Protection Policy on how to proceed. To contact external agencies

providing or to provide extra support a *Sharing Information Consent letter* will be requested to be signed by parents.

Child Protection

The school counsellor is part of the Child Protection team leadership along with the Pastoral Leader, following the Child Protection Policy currently implemented.

If a counsellor has potential child protection concerns, this could lead to a breach of confidentiality in the interests of the child's safety

Record Keeping

The Counselling Department maintains records for each student referred to the department. All documents are printed and placed in the student file, protected well within the department.

External agencies

1. Sidra Medicine
2. Hamad Medical Corporation
3. Mind Institute / Hope Family Centre

Associated Policies and Documents

1. Child Protection Policy
2. Primary School Behaviour and Discipline Policy