

Theodor Herzl High School offers counselling for the High School pupils of our school in the form of a School Guidance Counsellor.

Section 21 of the South African Council for Educators Act, 2000 requires that:

1. every educator contemplated by the Act must register with the Council before appointment to a teaching post, and
2. no person may be employed as an educator by an employer unless that person is registered with the Council.

According to the Mental Health Act of 1974 and the Education Act, our School Guidance Counsellor is registered with SACE as both a counsellor and Life Orientation teacher as well as with the ASCHP (The Association for Supportive Counsellors and Holistic Practitioners). These memberships are kept up to date and the Guidance Counsellor operates within the professional and ethical requirements of these professional bodies.

PURPOSE

The purpose of having a School Guidance Counsellor is to make sure that the pupils of our school have access **to basic counselling services as a point of referral to other health care professionals** in order to maintain their good mental health and the general improvement of pupil wellbeing in personal, school or relational settings.

Within the school context, help is offered to pupils to help with relationships, personal trouble, providing trauma counselling and general recovery strategies **in the short term**.

NB: It is important to note that Theodor Herzl High School offers only basic, **non-psychological counselling** to pupils. Any issue that requires psychological assistance is referred out to other health care professionals.

SCOPE OF WORK:

The School Guidance Counsellor is bound to a specific scope of practice which is comprehensive but **excludes psychotherapy, social work, medical health work and occupational therapy, psychometric testing or academic, scholastic diagnosis and treatments**.

The generic scope of a life skills practice is that of wellness which **includes**/but is not limited to:

Providing support in interpersonal social relationships

Spiritual growth

Health related issues such as stress management

Victim empowerment in the case of bullying/violence

Domestic violence

Trauma debriefing

HIV/AIDS, counselling

Risk taking such as substance abuse – support and referral

Study methods

Management of anxiety and depression

Support of vulnerable people

Support to people with disabilities – including support for those with learning disabilities

And any other general problem that people encounter in day to day living

The School Guidance counsellor should be able and willing to work closely with other mental health professionals for the care of their clients.

School Guidance Counsellors work on a primary health care level, and are as such obliged to terminate counselling and refer clients to a professional (doctor, psychologist, social worker or psychiatrist) where their counselling, with reference to possible pathology or dysfunction, falls outside the scope of this practice.

PRACTICE:

Generally two full sessions/or the equivalent of two full sessions are made available to the pupils with regard to a single issue (break-times are shorter therefore perhaps one or two more break-times are necessary). Beyond this, any issue needing more sessions than this to resolve the issue or bring closure, will need to be referred to a professional.

The two sessions will be booked at a time during the school day when the pupil is available and the School Guidance Counsellor is available. Follow up sessions are generally a week apart to make space for all of the pupils that need help.

The Theodor Herzl High School School Guidance Counsellor will have either 4 or 5 available counselling sessions in a day. Before school, both break-times and one short session after school. Outside of these sessions, she is not available for counselling and is not available via cellphone or email. The sessions will be put on a timetable outside the counselling office – along with booking forms.

From time to time, video sessions will be made available that deal with common issues which pupils and parents of school pupils may be dealing with. Where possible, our Guidance Counsellor will refer pupils to these recordings for help with issues such as anxiety and disappointment, dealing with exam stress, study skills and more.

Forms for booking of an appointment or requesting a session will be made available to all of our pupils at school. ALL BOOKINGS ARE TO BE MADE using this format for formal record keeping.

ALL content of counselling sessions is confidential until such time as the counsellor feels it is necessary to inform other stakeholders. This will always be done with the agreement/knowledge of the pupil/s involved. The confidentiality will be in line with the best practice as dictated by the professional body (ASCHP).

Although confidential, all sessions are video recorded to the School Counsellor's laptop – this is for safety and security of the pupils and the counsellor and the content shall not be shared with third parties unless it is in line with the protection of the pupil or the counsellor.

The cameras are primarily installed to combat or prevent any form of undesirable or undisciplined conduct as far as possible, as no form of threat against any person, persons or property will be allowed on the premises under any circumstances.

The use of CCTV in the counselling office further aims to

- a) prevent any form of harassment against any person (or persons), or investigate such harassment in a meaningful way with a view to prompt and sensible action against any transgressor(s);
- b) prevent any form of undesirable and/or public misconduct, or investigate such misconduct in a meaningful way with a view to action against any transgressor(s);
- c) enable the principal or vice-principal or any duly authorised or delegated person to act or assist as swiftly as possible upon observing any form of undisciplined and/or undesirable and/or harassing conduct, or any other potential emergencies.

Collected footage will be made available only to persons or institutions whose interests or rights are or may be directly affected by it. No person or institution other than those mentioned above will receive access to or permission to inspect the footage.