



Counselling Policy

Reviewed in May 2024

JSSPS Vision Statement on Wellbeing

At JSS Private School (JSSPS) we promote, develop, equip and prepare healthy learners for life. We are committed to making it our mission to promote resilience, positive wellbeing and mental health for all our pupils and staff. We understand wellbeing to be a state of being comfortable, healthy and happy. We aim to drive this message forward, and to ensure that mental health and well-being is “**everyone’s business**” across the whole school community. We strive to create an environment that has a whole school approach, in providing excellent mental health support, understanding and intervention. We put Wellbeing at the heart of our school to ensure successful learning, and commit to our policies reflecting this practice.

JSSPS Vision Statement on Inclusion

At JSSPS, we adopted a legislative frame work for inclusive education based on UAE Federal Law No.(29), 2006 & Law No.(2) 2014. The implementation and impact of the standards included within Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework (2017) are monitored and regulated by the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA).

We understand that a diversity and inclusion plan will be effective only when founded on a ***true belief in and understanding of the value of diversity and inclusion***. Therefore, we aspire to create a school culture that reflects appreciation for diversity and inclusion at all levels. We know that our mission of driving personal and economic growth through learning and our vision of becoming the best community will only be achieved by hiring and retaining the best people possible while creating a school community that is reflective of the diverse audiences we serve.

JSSPS recognizes that the vibrancy of our community is enhanced by **diversity**, which we define as the range of human differences. We believe a culture of **inclusion** puts diversity into action by creating an environment of involvement, respect and engagement – where a multiplicity of beliefs, interests, experiences, and viewpoints are harnessed to accomplish our goals.

We work to achieve diversity and inclusion by:

- Delivering services in a culturally sensitive manner.
- Fostering an environment in which students and staff embrace and promote inclusion and understanding of the value of diversity as demonstrated through interactions with one another.
- Integrating diversity into strategies, decisions, and teaching-learning processes.
- Aligning diversity and inclusion efforts with strategic imperatives.
- Increasing effectiveness and accountability of efforts by developing measureable goals.



JSS Private School, Dubai

Inclusion and Pastoral Care Department

Introduction

The goal of the School Counseling Program at JSSPS is to ensure that all students are encouraged and motivated to reach their full potential by providing a comprehensive school counselling program that values the individuality of each student and nurtures his/her educational, academic, career, personal/emotional and social needs. The emphasis is for all students to realize their academic, personal, social, emotional success. The Inclusion and Pastoral Care Department's aim is to support students emotionally and socially in all aspects of the school environment. By fostering healthy self-esteem and self-awareness, as well as a sense of responsibility to self and others, JSSPS students will learn the meaning of being a lifelong learner and respectful global citizens of the world. Guidance and counseling policy is geared to assisting the students to acquire the necessary skills and disposition needed for them to undergo a healthy transition into being matured and responsible individuals with upholding the values.

Mission:

Our mission is to provide the students who represent a multicultural and diverse society, with the appropriate academic preparation, inclusive experiences, and personal growth opportunities. We believe in the uniqueness of each student and in supporting them in achieving their dreams. Preventative education is delivered through various means such as individual and group sessions, classroom instruction and life skill sessions. Our school counseling program is designed to meet the needs of our students at each stage of their growth and development. We ensure that all students are encouraged and motivated to reach their full potential by providing the comprehensive counseling program that values the individuality of each student and nurtures his/her educational, academic, career, personal and social needs.

Goal:

- ❖ School aims to integrate a comprehensive school-counseling program into all aspects of school policy; with a strong emphasis on collaboration with students, staff and parents.
- ❖ Promote the psychological and emotional wellbeing of students.
- ❖ Enhance students' academic and personal functioning.
- ❖ Ensure students' welfare and safety with its prioritization.
- ❖ Maintain a positive environment of trust and reassurance where students are encouraged to reach out for support.

Guidelines for the Department:

At present, there are four school counselors with an H.O.D on staff: two at Elementary/Primary School Counselor serving students from Pre-KG to Grade 5, and one Middle School Counselor serving students in grades 6-8 and one High School Counselor serving students in Grades 9-12.

- ❖ Practices within the boundaries of individual professional competence
- ❖ Adheres to ethical standards of the profession and relevant statutes established by the UAE government and regulatory organizations (KHDA)
- ❖ Maintains professional competence through educational, consultation and training experiences to improve awareness, knowledge, skills and effectiveness
- ❖ Informs students, teachers and parents of the purposes, processes and goals of counselling at or before the time when the counselling relationship is entered
- ❖ Maintains confidentiality of the students, staff and parents at all times- including the protection of personal information and record keeping
- ❖ Will develop and maintain consistent and clear lines of communication with parents/guardians
- ❖ Partners

Potentially Vulnerable Groups:

There are a number of identified groups of students and families for whom this policy is particularly pertinent:

- ❖ Students of Determination (SD)
- ❖ Students whose home language is not English (EAL)
- ❖ Students who are Gifted and Talented (G&T)
- ❖ Students who might be subject to abuse or harassment, for whatever reason
- ❖ Students who are young with care takers
- ❖ Students whose family are in crisis or under great stress
- ❖ Students at risk of significant harm or neglect
- ❖ Students with poor attendance and/or punctuality
- ❖ Students with under performance in academics

- ❖ Students who are at risk of disaffection and exclusion from school
- ❖ Students who have a temporary high-level need
- ❖ Students at transitional period

THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL COUNSELOR

The overall aim is to effectively implement a counseling service that meets the goals to provide all students the opportunity to achieve their best. The School Counselor will support the developmental, emotional, social and academic needs of the student body to promote wellbeing and success. JSS Private School has a school counseling service available to all staff, students and their families.

The major responsibilities are:

- ❖ 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 counseling to deal with issues such as self- image and self-esteem, personal adjustment, family issues, loss and grief, interpersonal concerns, academic development, social-emotional distresses and behavior.
- ❖ 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 Student Support Services Department to assist students with needs for Special Education, Language Support, Gifted and Talented, and for students with physical or sensory impairments.
- ❖ Supports a safe learning environment.
- ❖ Helps to create a welcoming school climate.
- ❖ Proactively serves as an advocate for students.
- ❖ Participates in maximizing student's achievement as well as career development.
- ❖ Collaborates with other key stakeholders to promote student's achievement and development.
- ❖ Addresses the needs of students through the implementation of student support activities, career workshops and counseling sessions.
- ❖ Engages in relevant professional development.

What do JSSPS School Counselors do?

Academic Development:

- ❖ The school counselor understands the learning process and academic environment, and develops programs and interventions that promote the achievement of all students.
- ❖ Consult with teachers, administrators, and parents concerning the academic needs of students.
- ❖ Consult with Student Support Services to ensure that all students are provided with the best opportunities to succeed academically in school, as well as ensuring that student's instructional needs are being supported appropriately.
- ❖ Provide support to all students to allow for academic success.
- ❖ Issues pertaining to academic progress may result in a team meeting involving the educational professionals involved with the student. Across the Elementary, Middle School and High School levels, this is referred to as a Student Support Team (SST) meeting. The SST collaborates and consults with parents, teachers and other school personnel on the development, implementation and monitoring of strategies and accommodations for the purpose of improving academic achievement.

Career Development:

The school counselor is knowledgeable about the world of work, career theories, and related life processes, and develops programs and interventions to promote the career development of all students. Career development currently at JSSPS is introduced upon our students' transition to high school. Career development lessons are carefully planned by the high school counselor, and are delivered to students during their specified slot by the experts in different fields. Career Interest forms help to understand individual interests of students and that help the counselor to cater individual career needs. Also counselor plans and support students to complete internships based on internship plans at JSSPS.

- ❖ Administer career, interest, and personality assessments
- ❖ Facilitate the exploration of careers and university majors/courses that support careers
- ❖ Advise on appropriate post-secondary placement for desired career training
- ❖ Advise on the college application processes of specific institutions, and/or countries
- ❖ Support with applications and recommendations
- ❖ Support with individual career counseling
- ❖ University/institution visits are arranged
- ❖ Specific attention given to each student's field of interest
- ❖ Career fairs are arranged – annually, international and specific fields' fair

Personal/Social Development:

- ❖ The school counselor understands the developmental needs of the school-aged population and develops programs and interventions that promote optimum personal and social development.
- ❖ Personal and Social Development is an integral component of the Elementary School Counseling Program. The Elementary School Counselor provides classroom guidance, instructional delivery for students in grades KG to 5 on topics such as self-awareness, self-management, interpersonal skills, skills for building relationships and expectations of behavior.
- ❖ Middle and High School levels, the Personal, Social, and Career Counseling Program is delivered through a planned advisory system that is facilitated by student advisors, as well as the school counselor.

Individual Student Planning:

- ❖ The school counselor understands and uses a variety of strategies to encourage students' development of academic, personal/social, and career competencies.
- ❖ Counsellors are available for individual meetings with students and parents to address developmental, academic, social, behavioral, emotional, and academic needs, as well as create and monitor a plan of action to ensure the success of each student.
- ❖ The school counselor understands various consultation models and maintains collaborative relationships within and outside the school community.
- ❖ Regularly consult with administration and teachers to ensure that students' needs are being met
- ❖ Consult with parents regularly
- ❖ Consult with community professionals as necessary
- ❖ Consult with university admissions representatives as necessary

Crisis Intervention:

The school counselor understands and implements an appropriate response to a crisis and utilizes a variety of intervention strategies for students, families, and the community when facing emergency situations.

- ❖ Counselors are available to assist with any crisis (personal or school wide) in accordance with the crisis response.
- ❖ They have a list of appropriate community resources for referral when the need arise.

ETHICAL STANDARDS & CONFIDENTIALITY PRINCIPLES

A student's right to privacy and confidentiality is the basis for an effective counseling relationship. They are fundamental requirements for keeping trust and respecting the young person's autonomy and is legally established in the Human Rights Act 1998 (article 8). This states that everyone has the right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence, and that there will be "no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right".

- ❖ Respects students' right to privacy. Once private information is shared, rules of confidentiality apply. May disclose confidential information only if the student authorizes it.
- ❖ Does not discuss confidential information in public or semi-public areas such as hallways, restrooms, waiting rooms and elevators.
- ❖ Ensures that all students' written, and electronic records are stored in a secure location and that are not available to those who don't have authorized access.
- ❖ Counselor has the primary obligation to treat students with dignity and respect.
- ❖ Counseling must be concerned with students 'academic, career and socio-emotional' needs and encourages each student's maximum development.
- ❖ Respects all students' and parents' values and beliefs and exercises great care to avoid imposing personal beliefs.
- ❖ Parental consent and access to counseling records: Parents/guardians of students of grades 1-7 will be notified if the counselor provides individual/group counseling for their child. Counseling is voluntary and parents/guardians reserve the right to consent to or decline counseling services for their child.
- ❖ Awareness about school counseling program and each student is a part it will be acknowledged as the parental consent to abide to school counseling policy. Separate consent will be taken from parents wherever necessary and will be notified about their ward's counseling needs. Counseling is voluntary and will give more importance to personal rights of each student especially in high school.
- ❖ Parents will not be granted access to counseling records, which are considered property of the counselor/school. Parents/guardians of all students (K-12) will be notified immediately when there is any concern regarding the safety of their child.

REFERRALS

If students require additional support outside the resources available at the school, they are referred to external resources such as psychologists, psychiatrists, doctors etc. following the consent of parents. The school counselor assists in the process of transition to ensure the student undergoes minimal interruption of services.

Referrals to access the counselling service can be made at any time by teachers, parents, outside agencies, peers, or students who self-refer. Children and young people 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 recognize that pupils can only benefit if they want to be involved in the counselling process.

Referrals to consult a School Counsellor be made by approaching the Counsellors directly in person, via telephone, or via email. It is the Counsellors' responsibility to ensure a Referral Form is completed for every referral.

Referral may also be made from staff following identification of early warning signs indicated at Departmental meetings. Meetings are held monthly, representing a coordinated approach from Key Stage Leaders, School Clinic, Student Support Services, Physical Education Department, and Counselling Service, whose key aim is to identify and monitor students who may require additional support from a medical/physical/SEND/emotional and social wellbeing perspective.

Staff may also seek assistance from Counselling service for classroom or group intervention to provide psychosocial education or support to address generic or specific needs. This may take the form of classroom lessons, observations, workshops, presentations or programs. Consultation with Student Support Services and Counsellors is required to ascertain how best to proceed.

CONSENT

Parental consent for counseling the students is sought upon receipt of referral, wherever appropriate.

In primary school, there is an understanding that while the majority of counseling is kept confidential, there may be some sharing of information and liaison with parents and staff, with the child's knowledge and consent. It is our protocol at JSSPS to work in partnership with parents wherever possible and to seek parental consent for children to attend counseling, except in circumstances involving Child Protection concerns. For a young person to be eligible to receive counseling s/he must understand the nature of counseling and be able to make a valid verbal counseling contract, including the ability to understand the principle of confidentiality and the need for this to be overridden where there is a risk of harm.

For secondary students, consent to attend counseling may be given by the student without the parent/guardian's involvement, if that student is deemed Gillick Competent. "As a general principle it is legal and acceptable for a young person to ask for confidential counseling without parental consent providing they are of sufficient understanding and intelligence." As guidance for Gillick Competency, the Counseling Service at JSSPS will take the following into consideration:

- ❖ The young person has explicitly requested that their parents/guardians have no knowledge about them receiving counseling.
- ❖ The Counselor has done everything s/he can to persuade the young person to involve their parent/guardian.
- ❖ Documentation clearly states why the young person does not want their parent/guardian to be informed.
- ❖ The young person understands the advice/information they have been given and have sufficient maturity to understand what is involved and what the implications are. They can comprehend and process information relating to counseling.
- ❖ The young person can communicate their decisions and reasons for it.
- ❖ This is a rational decision based on their own value system or religious belief.
- ❖ The young person is making the decision for themselves and not being coerced or influenced by another person.
- ❖ The Counselor must be confident in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the young person.
- ❖ Without counseling, would the young person's physical or emotional health be likely to suffer?

In cases where the child is NOT Gillick competent and parental consent is NOT forthcoming, JSSPS will continue efforts to engage the parents via invitation to meet the Counselor or discuss the issue with a relevant member of Student Support Services.

COUNSELING SERVICES- HOURS OF OPERATION

- ❖ Appointments are made subject to availability and to urgency. Sessions will generally be weekly, fortnightly, or monthly, depending on the need, for a maximum of 12 sessions. Any extension to this will be considered on a case by case basis depending on the needs of the individual student.
- ❖ After the 6th consecutive counseling session, a review session with the student will be conducted by the Counselor to track progress and revise counseling goals.
- ❖ Sessions are generally for 40 minutes which can turn to a maximum of 60 minutes based on the needs. Appointments are to be timetabled in class time, using free periods or supervised study periods where possible, in consultation with the student regarding important learning deadlines. Release from lesson times is to be spread across the individual timetable to minimize disruption from subject learning.
- ❖ Communication regarding appointment times will be made via the student's class teachers/subject teachers.
- ❖ Generally, counseling services is open during the school hours from Sunday to Thursday throughout the academic year. Students can also walk-in without prior appointments.

CODES OF PRACTICE

- ❖ Each student is seen as a valuable member of his/her community and is treated with dignity and respect.
- ❖ Every opportunity is granted for students to be empowered, and encouraged to grow in an environment of compassion and equality.
- ❖ All students' ethnic and cultural diversity are considered in the design and delivery of school counseling services.
- ❖ Counseling policies and procedures will be followed in order to serve the students' best interests.
- ❖ Confidentiality is the key to the process of counseling and as such will be respected and maintained by all students and staff.
- ❖ Enable the young person to develop a trusting relationship with the Counselor.
- ❖ Allow the young person to open up and share feelings without blame or reprisal.
- ❖ Allow the young person to speak freely about issues concerning them.
- ❖ Encourage others to come forward for counseling.

SERVICES PROVIDED

Individual counseling: School counselors use many different mediums to work with students in individual sessions. In individual sessions, students may draw, write, sing, play, or just talk. Sometimes we work on learning a specific skill such as deep breathing or relaxation techniques. Other times we work on role-playing situations, such as a problem with a friend or having a difficult conversation.

Group counseling: When there are multiple students experiencing similar problem or issue, it can be helpful for them to be in a counseling group together. Topics addressed include exam anxiety, stress management, health and safety, bullying etc. Group counseling helps students build relationships and feel that they are not alone in their experiences.

Focus areas for Student Academic, Career and Personal/ Social Development:

Grade 1- 4 Focus on Classroom Behavior, Good Manners, Awareness about Bullying and Moral Values, Understanding Emotions etc.

Grade 5-8 Focus on Establishing Effective Relationships, Stress Management- How to overcome Exam Stress, How to deal with past unhappy memories, How to face strange situations (safety), Cleanliness, and Awareness about Bullying etc.

Grade 9- 12 Focus on Career Exploration and Guidance, Establishing Effective Relationships, Stress Management- How to overcome Exam Stress, How to deal with past miserable memories, Developing life skills, Socio-emotional adjustments, Adaptation to life events, Meeting transition period etc.

BLENDING LEARNING AND COUNSELING

JSSPS counselors provide support and counseling sessions over distance learning as well. Counselors continue with regular counseling sessions and are available at any time during these periods of e-learning. Counselors try to arrange sessions by looking into the fact that students never miss their online classes. Students who would like to meet the counselor for the first time can also reach out at any point of time through different means of online. Continuous supports are given to students to meet their needs (personal/social/emotional/academic/cyber safety/psychological etc.) through online individual sessions, newsletters, counselor's notes to parents, through teachers, group sessions, awareness sessions, parental sessions, experts talk etc.

School Counselors: Manage the counseling program and ensure effective strategies are employed to meet stated student success and achievement. The counselor provides proactive leadership which engages all stakeholders in the delivery of activities and services to help students achieve success in school. They also provide direct service to every student.

Teachers: Work in partnership with counselors to develop and infuse guidance activities into the curriculum and instructional program. By collaborating with teachers, counselors can implement guidance curriculum and opportunities through the classroom and other school related activities. It is also possible that teachers already address some of the content standards in their curriculum. Partnership with teachers will elicit this information, as well as enhance access to students. Teachers are vital partners in the implementation of any school counseling program.

Administrators: Are vital in providing support for the organization, development and implementation of the school counseling program. They encourage counselors and teachers to work collaboratively, provide time, facilities and necessary resources to facilitate that process. The administrator can identify important persons to support and implement the school counseling program. The guidance curriculum is not expected to be delivered solely by the school counselor; rather collaboration with other academic teachers in a school is expected.

Students: are active participants in the school counseling program and assume responsibility for their success in school.

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

In general, the counselor should follow the same procedures when providing counselling services online as he or she would when providing them in person. In particular:

❖ **Established guidelines**

The counselor should of course follow the laws and other established guidelines (such as those of [professional organizations](#)) that apply to him or her.

❖ **Informed Consent**

The student should be informed before he or she consents to receive online mental health services. In particular, the client should be informed about the process.

❖ **Possible Misunderstandings**

The student should be aware that misunderstandings are possible with text-based modalities such as email (since nonverbal cues are relatively lacking) and even with videoconferencing (since bandwidth is always limited).

❖ **Turnaround Time**

One issue specific to the provision of mental health services using asynchronous (not in “real time”) communication is that of turnaround time. The student should be informed of how soon after sending an email, for example, he or she may expect a response.

❖ **Privacy of the Counselor**

Privacy is more of an issue online than in person. The counselor has a right to his or her privacy and may wish to restrict the use of any copies or recordings the student makes of their communications.

❖ **Confidentiality of the Client**

The confidentiality of the student should be protected. Information about the client should be released only with his or her permission. The student should be informed of any exceptions to this general rule.

❖ **Potential Risks**

The student should be informed of the potential risks of receiving mental health services online. For example, the potential risks of email may include (1) messages not being received and (2) confidentiality being breached. Emails could fail to be received if they are sent to the wrong address (which might also breach of confidentiality) or if they just are not noticed by the counselor. Confidentiality could be breached in transit by hackers or Internet service providers or at either end by others with access to the email account or the computer. Extra safeguards should be considered when the computer is shared by family members, students, library patrons, etc.

❖ **Proxies**

Some students are not in a position to consent themselves to receive mental health services. In those cases, consent should be obtained from a parent, legal guardian, or other authorized party — and the identity of that party should be verified.

❖ **Records**

The counselor should maintain records of the online mental health services. If those records include copies or recordings of communications with the client, the client should be informed.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF ONLINE COUNSELLING

Advantages:

Accessibility

Web counselling is easily accessible to all those who wish to use it. Online therapy overcomes barriers that may preclude others from seeking therapy. Those that are physically disabled or unable to leave their home can also easily access such services with little inconvenience. Web counselling has also shown to be effective in encouraging children and teenagers to receive therapy as they seem to be more comfortable with using the internet.

Convenience

Online therapy is convenient. Both the counselor and the student have the convenience of corresponding with each other at a range of variant times. This style of therapy can take away the hassle of scheduling and setting appointments more common in traditional settings.

For those individuals who are ambivalent about therapy or who may be uncomfortable with traditional models of therapy, may find online counselling more suitable whereby it has been found that online therapy is preferred by those who are uncomfortable with talking face to face with someone about their problems or who are suffering from social phobias, agoraphobia or anxiety disorders.

Social Stigma

Online counselling may also be effective in eliminating social stigma associated with receiving therapy. For those who are uncomfortable with receiving therapy, online counselling allows access to such services in private without having to visit the counselling center. Counselling can take on a whole different image when executed by the students in their own home through the computer.

Because of this, online counselling clearly does offer the client a degree of anonymity that may reduce such social stigma and therefore prompt them to seek assistance when they might otherwise have hesitated.

Anonymity

The absence of face to face contact can also prompt students to communicate more openly without concerns for bias of race, gender, age, size or physical appearance.

This may lead to an increased level of honesty and therefore higher validity in the case of self-disclosure. The internet clearly offers a level of anonymity that is perceived by many users as non-threatening through allowing an 'invisibility' that can be disinhibiting.

Variant ways to communicate

Most communication through the internet is in written form. Online counselling, in which the mode of communication is often through writing via emails or a chat room, allows both the student and the counselor to pay close attention to their communication and reflect on their thoughts and feelings prior to it being expressed. This may be a particularly suitable way of communication for those students who experience difficulty expressing themselves in words.

Writing during times of distress is particularly useful for students as it is considered to provide a vital avenue for emotional healing. Given that online counselling is an interactive form of therapeutic writing, interventions delivered in this environment may be quite effective in encouraging students to express themselves in more thoughtful, self-reflective and insightful ways. Having a written record also allows the students to have a reference point in future discussion, review and in the assessment of change and progress.

Disadvantages:

While on one hand, the benefits of online counselling have been considered, online counselling has also been criticized in terms of its absence of verbal and nonverbal cues, difficulties in maintaining confidentiality and security, overall effectiveness, technological difficulties and in its limits of being able to guarantee the therapists credibility.

Absence of verbal and nonverbal cues

While some advantages were presented previously in the absence of verbal and non-verbal cues through online counselling, there are also disadvantages in not having such cues when counselling.

Verbal and nonverbal interactions are considered essential for gauging what the student is feeling and for identifying the discrepancies or incongruences between verbal and nonverbal behaviors. Online counselling has been criticized for lacking such important elements of the micro skills of counselling.

Confidentiality and security

Mental health practitioners have an ethical responsibility to protect and maintain the confidentiality of their students. With online therapy the security of the client's records and information could be

jeopardized and confidentiality is at greater risk of being inappropriately breached given the written nature of the medium.

Effectiveness

The lack of face-to-face interaction could increase the risk of misdiagnosis by the counselor. Because of this, online therapy is currently deemed inappropriate for diagnosis of clinical issues such as chronic depression and psychotic.

Technological difficulties

It is not unusual for computers to fail and internet connections to falter, there is always the possibility of servers crashing and network connections faltering. The ability to benefit from online therapy is also partly determined by the student computer skills and knowledge, especially if the communication setting involves installing and learning new software and/or hardware. This may disrupt the session and can potentially be distressing for the student.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND COUNSELLING

The Counseling service will be familiar with the JSSPS Child Protection policy and procedures in this regard. There may be a need to breach confidentiality in the interests of child safety if a student confides about abuse (physical, emotional, verbal, sexual or other abuse) or neglect, to self or another juvenile or minor (less than 18 years).

A Record of Incident needs to be completed as a first step, and Child Protection Officers are also advised on the same.

Assessment needs to be conducted as to whether the child is “in need” or “at risk of significant harm”. This enables the necessary early intervention of family support to be implemented as a preventative strategy before the situation deteriorates.

The need to safeguard children will always take precedence over the child’s right to autonomy and to confidentiality and this is upheld in terms of UAE Federal law No 3 of 2016 Child Rights Law.

BREACHING CONFIDENTIALITY-COURT OR OTHER LEGAL PROCEEDINGS

At the initial session, the counselor will make it clear to the student 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. In the case of threats of suicide or serious self-harm, there is a general acceptance of a need for intervention and of breaking confidentiality.

The counselor will discuss the possibilities of breach again if the need arises during the counseling relationship. Wherever possible, the counselor will keep the young person informed and involved in the process of gaining assistance from others.

The counselor is NOT required to pass on information about a young person breaking a school rule or committing an offense, unless it could be deemed that by withholding information the counselor was aiding and abetting a crime.

Confidentiality may be breached by law, if counseling staff at JSS Private School are subpoenaed to attend a hearing or other court proceeding. The counseling service cannot guarantee that student information can be kept confidential, however every attempt will be made to reveal as little as possible in a legal setting.

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)

School Counselors are encouraged to pursue ongoing professional development, utilizing local conferences in order to improve knowledge and skills. The effectiveness of such professional development will be monitored and evaluated by the SLT and information provided during the annual evaluation of the school's overall counselling provision.

SUMMARY

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following supporting policies and documents:

- ❖ Discipline and Behaviour Policy
- ❖ Anti-Bullying Policy
- ❖ Cyber Safety Policy
- ❖ Health and Safety Policy
- ❖ KHDA Parent School Contract
- ❖ Service Level Agreement

- ❖ JSSPS Inclusion Policy
- ❖ Child Protection Policy
- ❖ School Counselor Job Description

In JSS Private School we value each child as a unique individual. We will always continue to strive to meet the needs of all our children and seek to ensure that we meet all statutory requirements related to matters of counselling.

Agreed at the governing body meeting on

Date.....

CEO: S/d.....

Principal: S/d.....

Vice Principal: S/d.....

Approved by the Governing Body: _____ S/d _____

Chair of Governors

Review of Policy

The Counselling Policy is monitored by SLT and reviewed on an annual basis.

Policy Details	
Version date	May 2023
Last review	May 2024
Next review	May 2025
Responsible SLT	Vice Principal