



Ras Al Khaimah American Academy				
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Counseling Support Policy

Overview

RAK American Academy (RAKAA) ensures that all students are provided with support regardless of their academic status, gender and/or nationality. It operates in accordance with the school's code of conduct and considered Diversity, Access, Equity, and Inclusion are essential to build a respectful, resilient, and dignified culture of the student's community.

This policy applies to all students and even staff at RAKAA. It includes services such as academic and career counselling, referrals, behavioral, emotional, and social guidance, and support to ensure that the psychological and wellbeing needs of the students and staff are addressed appropriately.

Policy Aims and Principles

Counseling service in the school has the following aims and principles:

- RAKAA is committed to cultivate a respectful and dignified community that considers equal and equitable treatment of all students in the school. It ensures that students' and staff's rights are taken in thoughtful consideration.
- It provides interventions and proper education to students so that they feel safe and comfortable while learning in school.
- It ensures that the counselling service is accessible to all students and can be provided without extra fee and with or without referral process. Students and staff are encouraged to avail of the service voluntarily.
- It helps the school to create a reasonable adjustment to reduce the barriers that can impede the learning process of the students as well as the teaching process of the teachers. It promotes all opportunities for the students to gain academic progress.
- It aims to identify students who may be experiencing difficulties related to academic progress and wellbeing.
- It will implement strategies and activities that will raise the students' awareness about safety risks and issues and help them develop coping skills when faced with personal crisis.

Guidelines for Counselling

❖ Confidentiality and Record Keeping

Students Right for Confidentiality. When attending a counselling session, the student is assured of the confidentiality by the Counsellor, however, situations such as bullying, abuse case or risk of life, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. It should be noted that recording or note taking of the counselling session is important for further refence but should be short and information about the problem should not be written in details.

In the case when the counsellor feels that his/her professional training is not sufficient to address the problems of the counselee, he/she may refer to other professionals after an informed decision was communicated to the counselee. Parents are informed with referral details, and they are given the option to decide to proceed for an appointment with the specialist.

❖ **Preventive Measures**

Every class is provided with an opportunity for the discussion of prominent issues such as equality, friendship, freedom, justice, rights, and responsibilities.

Students' school diary explains the school rules explicitly and further discussed by the Homeroom teachers regularly to ensure that those students have clear understanding of all the rules in the school. To further inculcate to the students the essential meaning of the schools' regulations and policies, it is displayed in the notice board and being referred to during assemblies throughout the year.

Serious behavior problems such as bullying, name calling, aggression and/or disruptive behavior will be dealt with in accordance with the [Student Behavior Policy](#) and [MOE Discipline Policy](#).

Parents are asked to contact the school if they have a concern. They can meet the counsellor during the PTC (parent -teacher conference). These are held three times a year or more if needed. The counsellor is also available for appointment if the parents would like to raise some concerns.

❖ **Child Protection**

The department also functions in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy which is in place to ensure that the child feels safe and secure in the school environment.

Our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy operates with the following elements:

- **Prevention** which can be done by creating a positive atmosphere where students 'conflict or problems can be resolved through pastoral support
- **Protection** by strictly adhering to the policy and ensuring that all staff are aware and knows how to respond appropriately to child protection concerns
- **Support** (to students and school staff and to children who may have been abused)
- **Collaboration** (with staff, students & parents) to promote safeguarding and wellbeing of all our students.

This policy applies to all staff of the school. All staff are responsible in implementing the Child Protection policy within the school. (Refer to [Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy](#))

❖ Services Provided:


The services provided by the Student Support department can be categorized into counselling, career guidance, training, and psychological assessment.

- **Counseling.** This service is provided to assist students in discovering their potential for self-understanding, academic pursuit, career planning, decision making and resolving their own conflicts. Identification of student need can come from the teacher, parent, concerned adult in the student's life or the student himself. The counselling sessions are held in strict confidentiality. Counselling session can be done individually or by group.
- **Individual Counseling** – is an interaction between the Counsellor and the counselee which aims to provide insight to the counselee on how he/she can resolve his/her problem, better self- understanding, gives clarity of goals and values and learns how to cope up with the personal challenges and academic demands.
- **Group Counseling** - counselling for more than two people. This would take place when there are classroom situations that require outside intervention. Students in the session are encouraged to listen, support, and share their feelings and ideas with each other. They are allowed to give their constructive feedback, be assertive and show empathy with the group. This normally takes place in the class period.
- **Online counselling.** The school also made available online counselling with the students especially during the COVID 19 pandemic as well as Parent Clinic sessions with the parents to support their mental and emotional wellbeing.
- **Career Guidance/Information Service.** The service functions as a guide to students in planning academic for years 5-12, exploring career interest and opportunities and guiding through the university admissions and selection process. Career fairs are conducted yearly in the school participated in by G9-12 students. Students are informed of any career fairs taking place in the UAE and the G12 students are encouraged to visit various universities. Students must fill-out their ICAP (Individual Career and Academic Plan) with the guidance of their parents which will serve as their guide for their career path and will be reviewed annually for incorporating any individual updates. External assessments such as MAP, CAT4, PISA, SAT, EmSAT, IBT and internal assessments as well as other diagnostic and personality tests will be carefully analyzed to assist the students in preparing for their career path. The school ensures that our graduates will take the wise choice of their career.

The counselor should be familiar with

- ✓ The requirements of pastoral care for students, parents, and school administration
- ✓ The local and international sources of information
- ✓ Systems for storing and disseminating information for students such as career library and parental access to useful information
- ✓ Methods and strategies of processing useful information for the students which should be conveyed clearly, and understandably

The goal of the information service is to help the student in decision making processes and problem solving.


 **Training:** This service aims provide relevant information that can assist the students to show progress academically, emotionally, behaviourally, and socially through lectures, workshops, seminars, and symposium.

Likewise, teachers are given training session on identifying and helping students who might be struggling with personal and emotional issues such as self-f esteem, self-confidence, and acceptance.

Behavior Management in the Classroom

Consequently, after a session with students, the teachers are informed, and they are expected to apply the below strategies to create good classroom environment that would assist these students in achieving an excellent learning environment

- Reduce seating distractions. Lessen distractions. As much as possible, keep the child near the teacher for close monitoring.
- Break down assignments. Make the instruction clear and brief for easy understanding.
- Give positive reinforcement. Always be on the lookout for positive behaviors. Praise and reward should be given appropriately to reinforce good behavior.
- Teach good study skills such as note taking, chunking, underlining, reading aloud for easy retention of information.
- Supervise and ensure that the student comes to the school with complete and correct books and materials.
- Buddy system
- Be sensitive to self-esteem issues and do not ask a child to perform a task in front of the class that might be difficult for him. Reward appropriate behavior.
- Provide opportunities for responsibility by allowing the student to be a leader taking attendance or distributing books and always praise for even small success that he/she achieves.

 **Psychological Assessment:** Assessments is provided by Cambridge Center- (our partner institution) to our students who were referred for further evaluation of their abilities, emotional, behavioural, and social concerns. This academic year 2021-22, one of the School Board members, Dr. Stefane who is also a Clinical Psychologist extended his service in establishing the psychological profile of our students of determination (SEN). A report is then made available to the parents and the school. The teachers and parents are

informed about the recommendations provided and follow-up and monitoring will be done. Tests may include Personality tests, Aptitude tests, Interest Inventories, Problem checklist, General ability tests, Performance tests, Achievement tests School exam results and External exam results such as MAP and CAT 4, PSAT, SAT, PISA, IBT and EmSAT.

Roles and Responsibilities

All adult/staff have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This includes a responsibility to be alert to abuse and to record and report concerns to the Student Support department.

The counsellor/social worker is responsible for doing pastoral care with the students, conducting meeting with the parents for any academic or behavior issues, providing counselling session, career support and arranging proper training for staff regarding psychological issues.

Information Distribution

Students, parents and teaching and non-teaching staff are informed of the services of the Student Support Department.

Information for Students. Students are informed of the counselling service at the beginning of the school year. Counselling session is done during their breaktime, or they can get a permission slip if the student feels that counselling is desperately needed.

Information for Parents. Parents can also make an appointment to visit the guidance counsellor/social worker. Phone calls, chat messages through Teams and emails are also accommodated. All relevant career and guidance information can be disseminated through newsletter, parent teacher meetings and/or parent orientation meeting.

Information for Staff Member. List of students who are under the Student Support Department are disseminated to all staff. These are students who have educational, physical, social, emotional, and behavioural problems. However, students who seek counselling sessions are confidential. Teachers who referred students for counselling are the one who have little background about the problem of the student referred. The counsellor/social worker can provide tips on how to manage students with psychological problems.

Ethical Requirements

The counsellor/social worker is expected to practice a high level of ethical standards when performing her function. The counselor/ social worker's primary focus is the welfare of the student, and she is ethically bound to act in the best interest of the student. The counsellor follows the expected ethical standards and guidelines as specified by her profession. He/she can discuss relevant information for both staff and students that can enlighten their current predicament.

Success Criteria

The policy will be successful, if:

- There is an increased awareness and understanding of the importance of listening to student concerns.
- Students feel that there are people who have time to listen to them and to steer them toward those who can help them further.
- Students with concerns are dealt with sensitively and in confidence if appropriate.

Policy Review

The counselling policy will be reviewed every 2 years.

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