



Connells Point Public School



Procedures for counsellor access and therapy on the school grounds

School counselling service

The school employs a School Counsellor, who is both a registered psychologist and experienced teacher, who works directly with students to help them with issues relating to learning, peer and family relationships, and managing emotions such as depression, anxiety, worry or isolation. The school's counsellor also works with teachers, families, school executive, and other professionals to create safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments that strengthen connections between home, school, and the community.

The School Counselling Service provides:

- counselling to students individually or in groups
- assessment of students with specific needs
- collaboration with teachers and specialist staff
- help to families in understanding and managing their child's learning and mental health needs
- liaising with external agencies and other mental health professionals to provide coordinated, wrap around support for individual students

If you wish for your child to access the school counsellor, please contact the school office or speak with your child's teacher. Information regarding your concerns or reasons for seeking counsellor support will then be communicated to the school counsellor through the referral process. This is managed by the school's Diverse Learning Team. Once a referral is processed. The counsellor will make contact with the family to discuss a support plan moving forward. Parents are not able to communicate directly with the school counsellor if their child is not already on the counsellor caseload.

On occasions, counsellor intervention for a student may be recommended by school staff. Where this is the case, the following will occur:

- families will be notified before any interventions take place
- school staff will provide details on the reason for the recommended intervention and what strategies/actions have been undertaken to that point in time to support identified student needs
- parents will be asked to complete a permission form for their child to gain counsellor access prior to any support commencing
- the school counsellor will contact the family when they are able to commence their support

How long will it take for my child to access the counsellor?

The school strives to provide the necessary support to students as quickly as possible. The school's counsellor allocation is for only 2 days each week. Therefore, students may need to wait for an available space before commencing their support. The school's Diverse Learning Team closely monitors need across the school and when significant matters arise, priority access will always be given to students and families where required. Students are placed on a waiting list for counsellor access. The school counsellor will contact families on the list to ensure they have some indication on when their child will access the counsellor.

How long can my child access the counsellor for?

This depends entirely on the need of the student, their age and any previous or current interventions external to the school. A plan will be communicated between the counsellor and the family once a child is ready to commence counsellor support.

Will the counsellor see my child without my permission?

The counsellor will not engage in any official support sessions with a child without parental consent. On occasions, the counsellor may come into the classroom (or be on the playground) to observe a student or discuss a student with the teacher to support with the development and implementation of support strategies. These strategies are then implemented by the teacher at class level. If further support is required following the implementation of these strategies, the family may then be contacted to commence the process of a child engaging with the counsellor.

Is the school counsellor a substitute for external support?

The counsellor is not a substitute for external support. For students where significant or ongoing counsellor intervention is required, families are strongly encouraged to engage with external counselling services. The school's counselling allocation, as well as the need to support as many students and families as possible, does not allow for the depth of counselling support that can be offered through external providers. The school will always work in partnership with external providers to ensure continuity of support.

Will the school counsellor communicate with external counsellors or other agencies?

The school counsellor will communicate with other external partners who are working with the child or family. This is always done with the highest level of professionalism and confidentiality. Having all counsellors and therapists working in partnership ensures a consistent approach to support and the best outcomes for the student. Families will always be aware of the communication between the school and external providers and will always be central to any plans that are established to support their child.

What is the role of the school's Wellbeing Officer?

The Wellbeing Officer is employed 2 days each week to support the work of the counsellor. She provides ongoing support in the social and emotional domains. This may include checking in with students throughout the day, leading social group activities on the playground at recess or lunch or meeting with students (individually or in small groups) to support with grievance, worry, isolation or anxiety. The purpose of the Wellbeing Officer is

to lead many of the 'practical' support initiatives within the school, allowing the counsellor to focus on assessments and more complex support cases.

External therapists on the school grounds

The school does allow external providers to complete observations and therapy sessions on the school grounds. The accommodation of external providers is at the discretion of the school and is permitted on the following grounds:

- the therapy being provided directly supports the student in the school environment
- the strategies implemented during the sessions are valuable for the class teacher
- a student is unable to access support outside of school hours for legitimate reasons and therapy during school hours is vital to the success of the child at school
- the child is currently enrolled in one of the school's support classes

On some occasions, the school is not able to accommodate therapy sessions on the school grounds. This may be for one of the following reasons:

- the therapy does not directly support the child's participation at school
- the therapy requested has an impact on the teacher, teaching environment or other students in the classroom
- the therapist is seeking a day or time to conduct sessions that the school is unable to accommodate
- the family are able to manage the therapy sessions outside of school hours

Can I change the day or time that my child receives external support on the school grounds?

Decisions regarding external providers working on the school grounds are made by the school. Attempts will always be made to accommodate reasonable requests or adjustments to a child's support schedule. The following applies for when a family (or therapist) is seeking to change the day or time that their child receives support on the school grounds:

- the school requires 72 hours notice for any changes. This gives the teachers managing the timetable adequate time to respond to requests and plan for the changes
- any request for a change is exactly that until the school confirms that the change is approved
- any 'last minute' changes (within 72 hours) of support will not be accommodated unless on the rare occasion that there is an available therapy space at the newly requested time

What if my child changes therapists?

It is a requirement of the family to contact the school where a new therapist is working with their child. The school will not facilitate meetings, phone calls or visits from external providers where they are not on the school's records as working with that child.

Most recent review: July 2025

Next review date: July 2026