AISL HARROW NANNING 南宁

MENTAL HEALTH POLICY AND COUNSELLING PROCEDURES (HS22)

APPLIES TO:	All staff
AISL RESPONSIBILITY:	Chief Education Officer
LAST UPDATED:	01 October 2026
READ and NOTED	JD – Head of School, 01 October 2026
REVISIONS: (Reviewer to enter initials and date)	RL, 01 October 2026

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1. PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to establish, promote and maintain the positive mental health and wellbeing of all students and staff.

1.2 The School believes that the mental health and wellbeing of all students, and all staff , are paramount in enabling all community members to thrive and succeed.

2. AIMS & PRINCIPLES

2.1 **Aims**

- To build and maintain a school environment and culture that supports mental health and wellbeing and prevents discrimination (including bullying and harassment).
- To increase staff knowledge and awareness of mental health and wellbeing issues and behaviours.
- To encourage staff as individuals to accept responsibility for their own mental, physical and emotional wellbeing and to encourage the same in students.
- To reduce stigma around depression and anxiety.
- To facilitate active participation in a range of initiatives that support wellbeing.

2.2 **The School will:**

- Ensure this policy is implemented and procedures are in place that recognise and deal with the issue of common mental and physical health problems.
- Give due consideration to the organisation of the school day, workloads and resultant pressures.
- Conduct health risk assessment where appropriate.
- Offer wellbeing training for staff and students and seek to assess levels of wellbeing amongst the student body.
- Actively demonstrate recognition and acceptance of common mental and physical health problems by creating an environment where students and staff feel comfortable in asking for help.
- Provide training on health and wellbeing in schools as appropriate.
- Provide opportunities for staff to participate in free annual health checks, should they so desire.

- Manage pressures which may affect students and staff, including the impact of unreasonable workload pressures, and anticipate likely problems, taking action to reduce the effects of these pressures where possible.
- Conduct surveys with students and staff - as a minimum annually - which include sections on health and wellbeing, and share and act upon findings.
- Enable and support separate student and staff well-being groups.

2.3 **Senior Leaders/Line Managers will:**

- Foster a supportive school environment, operating in a fair and consistent manner.
- Pay attention to any indication of changes in performance or behaviour of students or colleagues and promote sympathetic alertness to students or colleagues who show signs of being under stress.
- Follow agreed procedures when there are concerns or absences due to stress and other mental health problems.
- Attend appropriate training on health and wellbeing in schools.
- Communicate work-life balance practices to all students or colleagues and manage pressures which may affect students or colleagues and anticipate likely problems, taking action to reduce the effects of these pressures where possible.
- Demonstrate commitment to students or colleagues by encouraging a good work/life balance.
- Promote the assessment of student wellbeing
- Facilitate the creation of committees/groups of pupils, staff and/or parents focused on promoting and supporting positive well-being within the school community

2.4 **Staff should:**

- Take reasonable care of their own mental health and wellbeing, including physical health.
- Take care that their actions do not affect the health and safety of other people in the school.
- Seek support or help when they think they are experiencing a problem, if possible, to a clearly identified line manager or named individual.
- Act in a manner that respects the health and safety needs of themselves and others.
- Consider wellbeing support mechanisms suggested, e.g. counselling.
- Attend training on health and wellbeing issues.
- Where possible, be watchful of any indication of changes of behaviour in students or colleagues and promote sympathetic alertness to colleagues who show signs of stress.
- Utilise available data on student wellbeing to best support students.

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3. COUNSELLING SERVICES

3.1 Counselling is available as part of the close personal tutoring that the school community offers to its students.

3.2 The process of counselling has been described as:

> "*giving clients [students] an opportunity to explore, discover and clarify ways of living more resourcefully and towards greater well-being*" [British Association of counselling and Psychotherapy 1991].

3.3 Although a wide range of issues, including difficulties with work commitments, stress, depression, bereavement, and coping with family tensions and change will prompt students to seek counselling (or to do so on request of a teacher/other adult), the overall aim is to support and promote the well-being of the children and young people in the school's care.

3.4 **Withdrawal/Meeting Policy**

The counselling service's withdrawal/meeting policy concerns students whose specific challenges or difficulties require support which cannot be resourced via the mainstream pastoral care system. The initial meetings are used to ascertain the status and needs of a student. Subsequent meetings will endeavour to establish goal setting and provide support and guidance.

3.5 **Authority**

The counselling service has the responsibility to recommend withdrawal/meetings, as appropriate. Counsellors may consult with interested parties, as to the necessity and advantages of meeting with a student but, ultimately, must make the final decision as to withdrawal.

3.6 **Referrals**

Students may be referred to the Counsellor in a variety of ways:

<u>Self-referral by the student</u>

The easiest way for a student to arrange to see the Counsellor is in person, via their tutor or class teacher, or by email or other form of electronic communication. Methods for

contacting the counsellor are clearly and widely promoted across the school campus, and with parents.

Students can also book an appointment to see the Counsellor by speaking with the School Nurse, who provides an entirely confidential referral service — no other member of staff or students will be informed that such an arrangement has been made, unless it falls under a child protection case when the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will be informed.

Primary School students are more likely to be referred to the Counsellor by their parent or by the class teacher.

Counsellor Referral Procedure

The Counselling Service, from time to time, may wish to meet with students who have not been flagged by teachers. If the school believes that a student will benefit from meeting with a counsellor, then an appointment may be arranged directly with the student concerned.

The Counselling Service reserves the right to meet with a student irrespective of the wishes of the said student, tutor or teacher.

School Nurse

The School Nurse will refer students for counselling in agreement with the student, in the first instance encouraging the student to self-refer. At such a stage it is also good practice to ask students to talk to their parents.

In the first instance, a tutor or teacher may refer students for counselling by encouraging the student to self-refer. At such a stage it is also good practice to ask students to talk to their parents.

Tutors or Teachers

Tutors or teachers who would like to refer students to the Counsellor must first seek advice from the DSL who will liaise with the School Nurse and/or the Counsellor before a student appointment is made.

The student will be the ultimate arbiter of whether they use the service. Though, where cases demand, parents may be brought into school to discuss the need for counselling (which may be undertaken externally if the parents so wish).

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Pastoral Leaders' Meeting

Students in the Lower or Upper Schools may be referred through a pastoral leaders' meeting. The School Counsellor will attend these meetings.

Parents

Parents may contact any relevant person at the school, e.g. tutor to request counselling for their children.

When a student has self-referred, the Counsellor will hold an initial meeting. When appropriate and in keeping with all aspects of this policy and the Safeguarding Policy, the designated members of staff will be informed (as is agreed with the student) of the recommended course of action by the Counsellor, within the ethical standard of confidentiality. Further disclosure will be at the discretion of the DSL.

Student Suspension

In the case of student suspension, the suspended student is required to see the counsellor for a follow-up session following the suspension period. The standard procedure is as follows:

1. A counsellor is appointed to the student, or the student may choose his/her counsellor for a meeting once he/ she is back at school. The appropriate senior leader will be informed.
2. The student will attend the meetings as frequently as the counsellor sees fit.
3. The counsellor will make recommendations on the student's progress and whether regular sessions to see him/her are required.

These sessions are to ensure emotional well-being and adjustment in the school system. These sessions will also explore any underlying issues the student may have leading up to the suspension or maladaptive behaviour.

Please note, the Counsellor must not be used in place of the normal academic and pastoral support arrangements. In most circumstances, counselling will only begin on a voluntary basis, with the student's unforced consent; though there may be times when attending counselling (internal or external) is part of a behaviour management protocol, is deemed necessary for the child's wellbeing or is a condition of entry to/continuance at the School.

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4. PROCEDURES

4.1 Confidentiality

The Counsellor can promise confidentiality to students within set guidelines. These are made clear in full in the BACP [British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy] ethical framework.
Confidentiality between student and counsellor is acknowledged as fundamental to a counsellor's ability to effectively provide a counselling service.

The position regarding confidentiality is clarified with the student at the beginning of the counselling process.

The only occasion when the Counsellor would break confidentiality is where the student indicates that they or another person are at risk or in danger. Such a breach will only take place in consultation with the student, unless extreme circumstances necessitate otherwise. Such breaches of confidence are very rare indeed. The School Counsellor operates within the school's established policies concerning Safeguarding & Child Protection. Unless the case has no relevance to the learning, emotional or social capability of the student in the school context, the counsellor should not accept a case in which full confidentiality is requested, unless the student is aware that:

- Each consultation is logged and documented.
- The appropriate senior leaders are informed that the student is receiving the support of the counsellor.

Other than to register the student's name, the counsellor has no obligation to divulge specific details of the case. The counsellor will inform students of the confidentiality agreement under which they may receive counselling at or before the time when the counselling relationship is entered. Disclosure notice includes explaining the limits of confidentiality such as:

- Harming themselves
- Harming others
- Others harming them (see child abuse)
- Knowledge of someone else being harmed
- Illegality of action

4.2 Informing Parents

All parents are informed of the arrangements for counselling when their son/daughter enters the school. Any parents who do not wish counselling to be available to their children

are welcome to make this known to the relevant Head of School phase who will keep a record of these names.

It is usual that the parents of children in the Primary School are informed that counselling is taking place.

Parents of students in Upper School who seek counselling are not informed as a matter of course that counselling is taking place, though the Counsellor will encourage some of these students to tell their parents. There will be cases where it is useful for the Counsellor to work with parents and this will be at the discretion of the school.

The Counsellor, or pastoral lead or School Nurse will inform parents about the sessions as appropriate. On occasion, direct contact between the Counsellor and the parents will be undesirable, certainly without the student's permission being given. This is to avoid the counselling relationship of trust being undermined. When there is any contact with the parent, it must always be remembered and made clear, that the student, not the parent, is the client, and that the Counsellor thus has the need and right to maintain confidentiality. If such conversations do take place without prior discussion of this with the student, the matter must be discussed with the student at the earliest opportunity following the event.

However, on other occasions the Counsellor will work with parents in conjunction with the student and in the Primary School there will be occasions where it is important to share the work being done with a particular child so that the parents can employ similar tactics or support the work of the Counsellor at home.

4.3 **Record Keeping**

Counsellors will keep a formal record of students, which should include session notes and relevant documentation. Such formal records are in addition to any private case notes which the Counsellor makes confidentially for aide-memoire purposes.

The time period for which these records are kept should be determined by local statute.

4.4 **Liaison between the Counsellor and Other Staff**

It is important that there is an ethos of trust that characterises the arrangements for counselling to help both the counselling process itself and the degree to which counselling plays a successful role within pastoral care at the school.

This has involved and will continue to involve recognition that the Counsellor will not be required or expected to disclose confidential information to senior leaders, pastoral leaders departing from the rules of confidentiality set out above.

However, this does not preclude the Counsellor from being consulted or involved in discussions about the most appropriate forms of support and response to students' pastoral or behavioural difficulties. The Counsellor is required to contribute valuably to these processes without disclosing confidential information.

The Counsellor/s will hold a brief meeting with each Head of School phase on a weekly basis to discuss safeguarding issues and with the relevant senior leader in each School in charge of pastoral matters to discuss other issues to update them on the students they have seen and offer a brief summary of progress. This will not breach confidentiality issues.

4.5 **Introduction of new Counselling Arrangements for Students**

The Counselling services available in the school should be explained to students as part of their induction. Staff should also be part aware as part of initial staff induction.

If a parent would like to request that their child is to be exempt from counselling arrangements in the school, they must contact the relevant senior leader who will hold a list of students who will not have access to this extra level of pastoral care.

If any student or parent has questions or concerns about the counselling arrangements, they are invited to contact the Head of Primary or Head of Upper School.

5 STUDENT SELF HARM CASES

5.1 If a teacher believes that a student has a self-harm issue, the following procedure is followed: An initial discussion between the teacher and student and an examination of the student's file. Notify the DSL in person and on CPOMS.

5.2 The counsellor will:

a) Meet with the student
b) Plan a strategy – work with the student
c) Notify the Head of Primary/ Head of Upper School.
d) Work with the Head of Primary/ Head of Upper School regarding a response

5.3 The general response, unless otherwise stated, will be:

a) The Counsellor informs the Head of Primary/ Head of Upper School.
b) The Counsellor gains the student's approval for confidentiality release to parents.
c) The student signs a non-self harm agreement in the presence of the counsellor.
d) The Counsellor gains the student's approval for confidentiality release to a tutor, where deemed appropriate. The Head of Primary/ Head of Upper School / counsellor arranges a meeting with the student's parents/ legal guardian to gain permission for a psychiatric evaluation to be made with a school appointed psychiatrist.
e) A meeting with the parents/ legal guardian, Head of Primary/ Head of Upper School and counsellor.
f) The psychiatrist will then direct the student's case and notify the Counsellor of the student's general progress and strategies that should be employed at the school.
g) The counsellor may meet with the student, teachers, pastoral leaders.
h) The counsellor gives guidance, support and consultation to the student and concerned parties, where appropriate.
i) The counsellor gives regular (at least termly) feedback to the above parties, where appropriate.
j) In cases which, in the professional opinion of the counsellor, directly affect the safety of the student or someone known to the student, it is the duty of the Counselling Service to inform the Head of Primary/ Head of Upper School (see

Protocol on Confidentiality). Information provided to other members of staff regarding a referred student will be provided at the discretion of the Counselling Service on a 'need to know basis'. This also applies to students received outside the referral system, i.e. walk-ins. Once a student case reaches the Counselling Service, other interested parties may approach the student in regard to his/ her case only with the prior agreement of the Counselling Service.

5.4 Where relevant, all outgoing communication and action regarding a student's case will be executed through the Counselling Service, in consultation with the Head of Primary/ Head of Upper School. If there are conflicts of opinion regarding a particular case, this may be brought to the attention of the DSL.

5.5 The counsellor will report progress on the case to the Head of Primary/ Head of Upper School on a pre-arranged basis.

5.6 **Non-Self-Harm Agreement**

The student agrees not to self-harm on school premises, and agrees to employ the following strategies if he/she wants to self-harm: Talk to a teacher or tutor who will then refer him/her immediately to the counsellor. If the counsellor is unavailable, the child may be escorted to an admin office or the Health Centre for monitoring.

The Head of Primary/ Head of Upper School /Counsellor initiates the meeting with parents. The Counsellor may conduct the meeting with the parents alongside the Head of Primary/

Head of Upper School. The counsellor explains the situation and any issues surrounding the case, and the necessity for the student to receive a psychiatric assessment. The school may state that it is policy that a student with self-harm issues must be allowed to receive an evaluation. If parental resistance is encountered, it may be stated that continued attendance is dependent upon the student attending and co-operating in this assessment. A contract to that effect is signed by all parties. An appointment for an assessment should be made as soon as possible after the meeting, thereby ensuring that the student will have as little disturbance to his/her general daily school routine as possible.

6 SEXUAL HEALTH

6.1 This section outlines the Counselling policy and procedure with student cases regarding underage sexual relations. (See *Safeguarding Policy (HS19)* for more detail).

6.2 Disclosure to parents is to be embarked upon after careful deliberation and, where possible, after consultation with other qualified counselling professionals, the Head of Lower and/or Upper School, and the Head. **In all cases disclosure must be in line with local statutes.**

6.3 This policy attempts to minimize the threat to the student and protect his/ her emotional and physical wellbeing.

6.4 **Procedure**

Initial Preparation:

1. Upon being made aware of the situation, the counsellor interviews the source(s) of the information, ensuring that all subject matter is documented and signed. The counsellor must then inform the Head of Primary/ Head of Upper School immediately. The counsellor informs the student that, depending on their age and the legal age of consent, confidentiality may have to be breached to the Head of Primary/ Head of Upper School and parent, where appropriate.

2. In conjunction with the Head of Primary/ Head of Upper School, an assessment is made regarding the seriousness of the case and validity of the information provided. A written recommendation is made by the Counsellor.
3. If appropriate, the student might then be moved to a safe area where he/she can be monitored e.g. medical centre and will be instructed to wait there until the Head of Primary/ Head of Upper School can meet with him/her. If possible, the student should remain in normal classes.
4. If the Head of Primary/ Head of Upper School decides to proceed with the case, a meeting with the Head or his representative is arranged, where an explanation of the case is provided and permission to proceed is sought. If a case is not to be proceeded with, a written notification is provided to the Head of School and the Counselling Service detailing the reasons why this case is not being taken further.

5. When appropriate the parent(s)/legal guardians are asked to meet with the Head of Primary/ Head of Upper School and Counsellor at their earliest possible convenience.

Prior to the parent(s)/ legal guardian meeting, an interview with the student is conducted. Proceedings should be documented by the counsellor.

N.B. A meeting with the student should not be entered into unless there is definite understanding that the parent(s)/ legal guardians will be at the school premises on the same day.

6.5 **Meetings**

After the student's initial meeting with the counsellor, a further meeting is held with the student, Head of Primary/ Head of Upper School and Counsellor. Where agreement is reached regarding disclosure of information to the parent, the student should have input as to how and by whom the breach will be made to his/her parent(s)/ legal guardian(s).

6.6 **Options**

- If considered reliable, the student may disclose the issue to parent(s)/ legal guardian alone. Student disclosure of the issue should only be undertaken if he/she is seen as reliable in this regard and should be at the discretion of the Counsellor. Once the student has confirmed this has been done, the Counsellor will contact the parents/legal guardian to arrange a meeting.
- Disclosure to be made to the parent(s)/legal guardian by the counsellor or Head of Primary/ Head of Upper School prior to meeting with the student, parent(s)/ legal guardian, counsellor and Head of Primary/ Head of Upper School.
- Disclosure to be made at a meeting held with the student, parent(s)/ legal guardian, Head of Primary/ Head of Upper School, and Counsellor.

6.7 **Short Term**

Several options are available:

- The student is signposted to relevant medical help regarding pregnancy, STD and HIV testing.
- A subsequent meeting with the parent(s)/ guardians, Counsellor and Head of Primary/ Head of Upper School to be arranged.

The above recommendations would be best discussed with the student's doctor in collaboration with parents.

6.8 **Long Term**

- The student receives counselling (either within school or by an outside professional) regarding safe sex practices, strategic decision making, etc.
- A supportive and caring environment for the student is provided at home.
- Outside professional contacts utilised by the school to be made available upon request.

6.9 **Final Meeting**

Since the student's health and welfare is of primary importance to all, a final meeting where recommendations are made, will be arranged.

A letter recording the issue, the school's response and recommendations should be drafted by the counsellor and a final draft sent out by the Head of Primary/ Head of Upper School to the parent(s)/ legal guardian.

7 ANTI-BULLYING PROCEDURES

7.1 Bullying is any repeated behaviour that results in an individual or group feeling hurt by another individual or group. It can lead to isolation and exclusion undermining the school's educational effectiveness.

7.2 **Students and staff understand that:**

- Some bullies do not recognise their behaviour is bullying
- Targets of bullying behaviour are targeted because in that situation they do not have the ability to defend themselves or to seek help in a specific situation.
- Bullying relationships will develop and prosper unless others intervene.

- Eliminating bullying is everyone's responsibility.

7.3 Counselling support given:

- The school counsellor/s help develop an awareness of what bullying is and why it hurts students of all age levels. This is presented at Head of House or year group meetings and students are introduced to the 'no-blame' circle.
- The counsellors introduce and train staff members to be able to conduct a 'no-blame' circle and to foster a "telling environment" for students who have been bullied.
- The counsellor provides a safe environment to encourage the student(s) to speak of his/ her bullying experiences (physical/ verbal/ non-verbal) and to gently persuade

  the student to inform who the bully/ bullies are. If the student does not want to reveal who the bully/ bullies are, the counsellor will work on self-esteem and confidence building to enable him/her to handle the bullying situations (role play/ will-power for the victim).
- Surveys on bullying will be conducted, facilitating the opportunity for students to speak of their bullying experiences and for counsellors to gather data. Inclusion of pupil name(s) to be voluntary.
- Anti-bullying presentations to be given to prospective parents, Friends of Harrow, new staff and updated, periodically, for staff members.

7.4 **The counselling procedure for named students:**

Bullied students (victims):

- Having completed the initial interview, the counsellors meet all bullied students for follow-up.
- The counsellor obtains a written statement from the victim to be used in a no blame circle.
- Bullied students who require further support/ counselling will be offered a support session with other bullied students.

Students who are bullies:

- Pastoral Leaders are to be informed of who the named bullies are.
- If the bully's name appears again, a no-blame circle will be held by his/ her tutor or pastoral lead. Present will be the bully, 2 bully-proof students, 1 or 2 friends of the bully and 2 bystanders. The victim will not be present.
- The counsellor will also hold a support session for the victim.

7.5 **Training**

Counsellors will regularly train new staff to conduct the “no blame circle”.

7.6 **Crisis Support**

The school promotes two crisis-support platforms students can access outside school hours, one in the English language and the other in the Chinese language.

8 CULTURAL INCLUSION POLICY

8.1 The demands placed upon a child entering a new school are many and varied. The demands placed upon a child entering an International School, whether from abroad or the host nation, are complicated by the issue of culture. Third Culture Kids (TCKs) are children who have spent a significant period of time in one or more culture(s) other than their own.

8.2 It is commonly accepted that:

- The issue of TCKs and the challenges of adjusting to a new culture have been with us from the very inception of international schools.
- The pressures of the new culture, whether national or institutional, can exhibit themselves in symptoms commonly associated with homesickness, such as feelings of longing, accompanied by anxiety and depression.
- These symptoms, if left unaddressed, can lead to self-imposed isolation by the student, and an undermining of academic and social performance in school.

8.3 The Counselling Service offers support in the following ways:

- Meeting students who are new to the school. Attention is given to students from nonhost national backgrounds and local students who have lived abroad for several years. Liaison is maintained between a tutor who will monitor the student’s progress. A meeting will be initiated on the student’s arrival which will be followed by a meeting towards the end of term to check on the student’s progress. Further meetings may be arranged depending on need.
- Initial meetings aim to develop rapport, and subsequent meetings continue up to the first six weeks of the student’s attendance at Harrow. Meetings focus on the positive aspects of living in the host culture, making special attempts to focus on similarities rather than differences. Students will also be introduced to probable ‘highs and lows’ that they can expect when adjusting to new cultures. Attention and affirmation is given to the strong and often conflicting feelings encountered by the student.

- Prospective cultural adjustment and TCK presentations to be provided for parents and new staff.
- The extension of this program involves meeting High School students who will be leaving for universities overseas. The programme deals with basic cultural adjustment issues for local students and reverse cultural adjustment for students from non-host national backgrounds.
- Counsellors will implement surveys on the effectiveness of the above meetings to give students the opportunity to provide input on the future direction of this programme.

9 BOARDING STUDENTS

9.1 Boarding students, due to being away from their home environment may potentially need greater support. At the request of the Head of Boarding, counsellors will be contacted out of school hours, should an emergency arise.

10 STAFF WELLBEING COMMITTEE

10. 1 The school will establish School Wellbeing Committee. A senior leader will have oversight, helping ensure recommendations can be acted on, while a teacher chairs the committee day to day. This combines senior-level support with practical coordination. In time, the committee could also take on an external-facing role.

11. SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH LEAD

11.1 The school has a designated School Mental Health Lead. They coordinate the school's approach to student mental health and wellbeing. Responsibilities include:

- Coordinating support by helping staff identify concerns, agree next steps, and connect students with appropriate school or community services.
- Advising staff on how to respond to concerns and when to escalate them.
- Coordinating preventive wellbeing activities, policies, and learning.
- Strengthening partnerships with families, health professionals, and community providers.
- Reviewing how support is working, identifying gaps, and improving referral pathways.