

# The School Counselling Service

## Information for Parents and Carers

### Student Welfare

In every school, school counsellors, teachers, year advisers, careers advisers, the principal and senior teachers are available to assist students and their families. In some schools there are also Aboriginal Education Assistants or community liaison officers.

All work to create safe, caring schools, free from violence and discrimination.

All can help you or your child in different ways.

School counsellors are experienced teachers who have a degree in psychology and post-graduate qualifications in school counselling. They work with students of all ages, and their families, from pre-school to Year 12.

District guidance officers also provide school counselling services and, in addition, co-ordinate a team of school counsellors.

Every government school has access to a school counsellor or district guidance officer.

### School Counsellors

School counsellors work with students, parents or carers and teachers in a variety of ways.

Their work includes:

- counselling students
- assisting parents or carers to make informed decisions about their child's education
- assessing students' learning and behaviour
- assisting schools to identify and address disabilities that affect students' learning
- liaising with other agencies concerned with the well-being of students.

School counsellors are members of schools' student welfare and learning support teams. With the agreement of parents or carers, school counsellors will pass on to **teachers**, information that will assist them to better meet the needs of their students.

**Students** may refer themselves to the school counsellor or may seek an interview at the suggestion of a teacher, a parent or carer, or a friend.

A student's reasons for seeing a school counsellor may include worrying about school work, conflict with friends, being in trouble at school or just feeling "down".

**Parents or carers** may seek advice from school counsellors about their child's school progress, educational options, including access to special education services, behaviour and for information about help available from other agencies.

Except when students refer themselves to the school counsellor, parents or carers will be involved from the outset. Their consent is required before any psychological testing is undertaken.

Whether working with students, parents or carers, or teachers, school counsellors will explain how they work, listen carefully to what is said, help clarify options and encourage informed decision-making.

### **Confidentiality**

School counselling is a confidential service and school counsellors will check with students, parents or carers before passing on information (such as the results of tests of learning difficulties) to others. Confidentiality will be maintained unless legal requirements, e.g. child protection legislation, override it. Nor will confidentiality be maintained where someone may suffer serious harm from information being withheld.

### **Referral**

School counsellors are not at every school every day. It is necessary for parents or carers to make an appointment by telephoning the school.

Students will be told of the arrangements applying in their school as to how they can see the school counsellor.

Priorities for the school counsellor's time will be determined, in consultation with the school counsellor, by the principal.