



One to One Counselling & Group Counselling Policy

Nano Nagle College

General

The DES Circular 009/2012 and 0010/2017 supports the provision of one-to-one counselling and therapy for students experiencing difficulties. Counselling is an important part of the school's guidance programme. Its goal is to empower students to make decisions, solve problems, deal with behaviour issues, develop coping skills, and work through any difficulties they face. We also aim to help students build resilience that will last throughout their lives.

The guidance counsellor is fully qualified to fulfill that role and is a member of the Teaching Council and Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC). The GC is facilitated to attend sessions of Supervision through the IGC each academic year.

Counselling sessions will take place in the Guidance Counsellors office where vision of the Guidance Counsellor from outside is not obscured. At the guidance counsellor's discretion, they may decide to use suitable alternative indoor or outdoor spaces.

How can a student access counselling?

Students may be referred by a parent, teacher, or by the student themselves.

There are a number of ways a student can seek counselling:

1. The student can request counselling by calling into the Guidance Counsellor's office or by sending an email to the Guidance Counsellors school contact address.
2. A parent or guardian may contact the school to request an appointment for the student.
3. A student may speak in confidence to a teacher about a problem. With the student's permission a referral can be made to the Student Support Team meeting (SST).
4. A student cannot be referred to the counselling service without their permission.

Consent

Information about the School Guidance Service is available on the school website. Parental or guardian consent on an individual basis is not required for one to one or group counselling. However, the Guidance Department encourages students to open a dialogue with their parents or guardians to let them know they have engaged with the guidance counselling service. Parents or guardians are contacted if concerns arise that warrant their involvement, and this is explained to the student in line with the confidentiality agreement.

An opt out option for one to one and group counselling will be available to parents at the beginning of the school year

Suitability of One-to-One Counselling & Group Counselling

The suitability of counselling within the school setting will be determined based on:

- The nature and severity of the presenting concern.
- The student's ability to engage in the counselling process in a school environment.
- The limits of confidentiality and the appropriateness of school-based support.
- The professional judgement of the Guidance Counsellor

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is at the heart of the school's counselling service, forming the basis of a professional and supportive relationship with students. Information shared by a student with the guidance counsellor will not be discussed with anyone else without the student's permission. While it is acknowledged that confidentiality is crucial to clients, whatever their age, it cannot be absolute in any counselling relationship. Decisions regarding any necessary breach of confidentiality—such as when concealment may endanger the client or others, when required by law or professional guidelines, or for purposes of professional consultation or supervision—will be made with the student's prior knowledge and, where possible, their consent.

The Guidance Counsellor may disclose some essential facts regarding a case to the DLP/Principal, DDLP/Deputy Principal or Tusla. Where there is self-harm or suicide ideation the DLP/DDLP and parent/guardian (by the DLP) will be informed.

Information revealing the identity of students attending counselling only applies to their attendance at counselling, and not to the actual content of the counselling session.

The guidance counsellor may refer students to outside agencies for more specialised therapy (for those under 18, this requires parental consent). Serious issues such as depression, suicidal thoughts, self-harm, and eating disorders need professional

intervention. The guidance counsellor will support the student before and after the referral, but not while the outside professionals are providing therapy.

Storage of Information

All written records will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the Guidance Counselling office. Digital files will be password protected. When making or keeping records, care should be taken to distinguish between fact, observation, and opinion and to include only such information as is required for the purpose of professional involvement with the student. Records will be held for seven years post the counselling concluding.