

DOMINIC COLLEGE

A Catholic School in the Salesian Tradition



STUDENT COUNSELLING SERVICE POLICY

Date	October 2023
Responsible Position	College Leadership Team
Approved By	College Board
Next Review Date	2026
Related Documents	Australian Privacy Principles Child Safe Policy Critical Incident Policy Student Welfare Policy The Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) Wellbeing Policy

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1. OUR PHILOSOPHY

Dominic College is a Catholic school in the Salesian tradition. The policies of the College, underpinned by the Gospel values, serve to promote the wellbeing, dignity and uniqueness of each human person.

The four central pillars in the Charter for Salesian Schools encapsulate our founder Don Bosco's vision and guides the College in all aspects of school life. Accordingly, Dominic College is:

- A HOME that welcomes
- A PARISH that evangelises
- A SCHOOL that prepares for life
- A PLAYGROUND where friends meet

Guided by our philosophy, the purpose of this policy is to outline the role and responsibilities of the Student Counselling Service at Dominic College in promoting a safe and positive school environment for all students.

2. SOURCE OF OBLIGATION

The College Counsellor must meet the probity, qualification and practice standards set by the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) and the Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia (PACFA).

3. COLLEGE POLICIES

The Counselling Service is part of the College's Wellbeing Program and is guided by the various policies related to student wellbeing including the Child Safe Policy, Student Welfare Policy and the Wellbeing Policy. These policies provide the framework for the development of the individual student within the ethos of a Catholic School in the Salesian tradition. Wellbeing at Dominic College is based on St John Bosco's Preventive System and the Charter of Salesian Schools. In keeping with the spirit of St John Bosco, the founder of the Salesians, whereby "education is largely a matter of the heart" that leads young people to "know that they are loved".

Wellbeing is the overall climate of care that exists within Dominic College. It includes the policies, processes, programs, and practices delivered at school level with the purpose of supporting and enhancing the wellbeing of the students based on understandings of human dignity. Wellbeing provides a foundation for relationships between students and staff based on mutual respect. Wellbeing is founded in community and a commitment to developing a deep sense of belonging and connection to and within community. Wellbeing is an authentic expression of the vision and

mission of the school as faith community. All staff have a role in the development of wellbeing at the College.

Parent support for, and involvement in their children's education is a critical factor in student engagement, achievement and wellbeing and the foundation of partnership and a view that the parent is the primary educator.

Dominic College promotes student wellbeing in a variety of ways including but not limited to:

- Providing opportunities to develop an understanding of the strong links between learning, wellbeing, and resilience;
- Believing that all students can succeed in their learning;
- Monitoring student connectedness to the learning environment;
- Stimulating student engagement with learning;
- Providing learning experiences that are relevant to their lives fostering high expectations of all students as learners;
- Engaging staff and students in dialogue about understanding learning;
- Utilising a range of support networks and resources;
- Implementing structures and programs in response to diverse student needs.

4. ADOPTION OF LEGISLATIVE AND AUTHORITY GUIDANCE

The Counselling Service follows the Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework relating to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

MANDATED REPORTING

Mandatory reporting is a term used to describe the legislative requirement for selected groups of people to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to government authorities (Strong Families Safe Kids Advice and Referral Line). All Dominic College staff are required to abide by legislated mandatory reporting requirements. For further details please refer to the Dominic College Child Safe Policy which is available on our website.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The College Counsellor protects clients' privacy and confidentiality in order to maintain a safe and trusting environment in accordance with the Commonwealth Privacy Act and the Australian Privacy Principles. The Counsellor informs clients at the beginning of the first counselling session of the nature of counselling and explains the limits to confidentiality according to Tasmanian law.

PARENT SUPPORT

At Dominic College parental support and involvement in, their children's education is a critical factor in student engagement, achievement and wellbeing and the foundation of partnership and a view that the parent is the primary educator.

The College Counsellor engages with parents, when the need arises and only after the student grants permission to do so, unless the student is of high risk of harm to themselves, to others or by others as defined by Tasmanian Law.

The Counsellor will only disclose necessary information to parents to encourage their involvement with their child at home and with external professional supports (General Practitioner, Psychologists, Counsellors, Paediatricians, Psychiatrists, Police, Hospital, Specialised Treatment Centres and Government Agencies).

5. PRACTICE GUIDELINES

The College Counsellor requires support for the health of their professional practice and personal wellbeing including internal and external supervision, professional development, and self-care practices.

SUPERVISION

The College Counsellors' supervision includes:

- External professionally qualified supervisor offering one-hour supervision sessions once a month;
- Internal supervisor (Principal and Deputy Principals) offering monthly supervision sessions and debriefing opportunities, or as required;
- Group Peer Supervision with Catholic School Counsellors offering one-hour sessions 2-3 times a year.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The College Counsellor will engage in the equivalent of two full days of professional development every year to strengthen skills, knowledge and practice that support the Counselling role at Dominic College.

HIGH RISK STUDENT GUIDELINES

The term 'high risk' correlates to students identified as a student of concern who have specific characteristics that are likely to increase the risk of serious psychological, emotional, and physical harm. Those characteristics may include but are not limited to:

- Exposure (past and present) to abuse (physical, emotional, sexual and neglect);
- Risk taking and criminal behaviour;
- Suicidal ideation and attempts;
- Chronic depression and anxiety;
- Self-harm;
- Eating disorders;
- Psychological disorders that severely impact wellbeing and safety.

Students deemed at high risk are assessed and managed on an individual basis by the College Counsellor or the Learning and Wellbeing Team or a combination of both, and in consultation with the Principal and/or Deputy Principals. The management of the student may include mandated reporting, direct contact with parents/guardians, police and ambulance as required.

STUDENTS HAVING THOUGHTS OF SUICIDE OR SELF HARM

In the case of specific students who are assessed internally as being at a high risk of suicide or who have self harmed, the following procedure will occur:

- Students' parents will be immediately informed;
- Parents will be asked to come and collect the student from the school;
- Immediate further assessment by medical professionals will be requested by the College;
- A safety plan may need to be created with the student, upon their return to school as per the procedure for students presenting as high risk.

In the case of specific students who are assessed externally (professionally qualified persons) as being at a high risk of suicide the following procedure will occur:

- Parents will immediately inform the school;
- Mental Health Plan to be created and implemented by external services and shared with the College;
- Prior to the student returning to school, confirmation from the treating health professional that the student has accessed external medical support will be required.

Students that have been deemed as high risk are able to attend school in accordance with their Mental Health Plan, treating health professional, and provided clearance from the professional has been provided. However, students may be withdrawn from certain events and activities if the risk to themselves and others is deemed too high.

If these students are unable to attend the event, activity or classes due to their mental health (or due to being assessed at high risk), they are required to engage with professional support and receive confirmation from the professional stating when they will be safe to participate.

6. COUNSELLING SERVICE REFERRAL AND PATHWAY PROCESS

Dominic College's Counselling Service is based on the concept of short term intervention with referrals to external ongoing support as required. All referrals are made through the Learning and Wellbeing Team K-6 or 7-10. Where required, students can access up to three counselling sessions before being referred back to the Learning and Wellbeing Team for ongoing support, being referred externally, or having the case closed.

Ongoing counselling is not provided by the College. Supervision approval is required to proceed with further sessions after the third session has been completed.

REFERRAL PROCESS

- Student wellbeing need identified by College staff, students (self disclosure), or parent/guardian.
- Initial contact is encouraged to be with the student's Oratory Teacher (Secondary) or Classroom Teacher (Primary)
- Referral by Oratory Teacher to the relevant Lead Teacher (Primary) or House Lead Teachers (Secondary), and Directors of Learning and Wellbeing (Early Primary, Upper Primary, Secondary).
- Support and assessment by Learning and Wellbeing Team (assist, support, resolve).
- Referral to College Counsellor if unresolved or further support required
 - K-6 Parent Consent and Referral Form completed by family (sent by Lead Teacher to family)
 - 7-10 Online Referral Form completed by Learning and Wellbeing Team
- College Counselling commences.

PATHWAY PROCESS

- College Counsellor referral received.
- K-6 Student Referral: College Counsellor makes contact with parent/guardian prior to sessions commencing.
- 7-10 Student Referral: College Counsellor follows up as necessary with House Lead Teacher prior to sessions commencing.
- Boundaries of counselling explained to each student when counselling commences.
- Counsellor communicates with the family and the Learning and Wellbeing Team, with permission from the student, regarding external support options if the Counsellor deems ongoing external support should be considered.
- On completion of the required counselling sessions (maximum of 3 sessions), the Counsellor will communicate, with the student's permission, with the Learning and Wellbeing Team and the family about suitable support moving forward e.g. no further support required, Learning and Wellbeing Team check-ins, etc.

7. SCHOOL COMMUNITY SUICIDE RESPONSE

- Phone Police and Ambulance and secure the area.
- Move witnesses to a safe private area.
- Call for assistance to the area immediately.
- Remove phones as witnesses are not allowed to contact people until after the police have spoken to them and the family have been informed. This prevents family finding out through social media or texts.
- Inform Suicide Postvention Team, first person contacted to dispatch Counsellor to site immediately. If the Counsellor is the first person contacted, also call another member of the Postvention Team who will inform remaining Postvention Team members.
- Allow police to inform family.
- Staff to attend any meetings called where instructions and information will be given.
- Scripts will be provided for teachers to follow when informing students.
- Note any students who may be of particular concern and inform CLT and the Counsellor.
- Students will be informed on a class basis NOT a year basis.
- Do not call the death a suicide this can only be done with the express approval of the family and can result in legal action if not followed. The College may also not wish to refer to it as a suicide.

8. SUICIDE POSTVENTION TEAM

Principal
Deputy Principals
Chief Financial and Operations Officer
Director of Learning and Wellbeing (Early Primary)
Director of Learning and Wellbeing (Upper Primary)
Director of Learning and Wellbeing (Secondary)
Director of Learning and Curriculum (Secondary)
Director of Faith, Mission and Identity
College Rector
College Counsellor

9. APPENDIX 1: EXTERNAL SERVICE PROVIDERS

GENERAL PRACTITIONER

By taking your child to your General Practitioner (GP) and explaining the issues/stressors, they can create a Mental Health Plan which will give you access to Medicare funded psychological support (with a gap to pay per session). Once the Mental Health Plan is established, the GP can write a referral to a child/adolescent psychologist that they feel is appropriate. If your GP doesn't have a psychologist in mind we suggest the following.

PSYCHOLOGISTS

Derwent Psychology

296 Cambridge Road, Warrane
Phone: 03 62 438715

Archer Street Health

16 Archer Street, New Town
Phone: 03 6124 2222

Psychology Works

8th Floor, 39 Murray St, Hobart
Phone: 03 6234 3555

Salamanca Psychology

Level 1, 8 Brooke Street, Hobart
Phone: 03 6224 1633

Macquarie Psychology

227, Macquarie St, Hobart
Phone: 03 6224 8448

COUNSELLING SERVICES

Making direct contact with one of the counselling services below to arrange an appointment with a child or family counsellor. This is a paying service per session but this will give you access to qualified counsellors who may engage in individual or family therapy. These services can be a good option, as some families and individuals prefer to work with a counsellor rather than a psychologist.

Anglicare

1800 243 232
<https://www.anglicare-tas.org.au/>

CatholicCare

1800 819 447

<https://catholicaretas.org.au/programs/childrens-counselling>

Relationships Australia

1300 364 277

<https://www.tas.relationships.org.au/services>

FREE GOVERNMENT FUNDED SERVICES

Headspace

Individual counselling for youth 12-24 years old

Phone: 62312927 or <https://headspace.org.au/headspace-centres/hobart/>

Eheadspace

Provides free online and telephone support and counselling to young people 12-25 years old and their families

<https://headspace.org.au/eheadspace/>

Pulse

Drop-in centre, no appointment required, 12-24 year olds

404 Main Road, Glenorchy (entrance off Barry Street)

<https://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/service-information/services-files/pulse-youth-health-south>

Kids Help line

24 hour counselling tele and online service

Phone: 1800 55 1800 or <https://kidshelpline.com.au/>

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Reach Out

<https://parents.au.reachout.com/self-help-content>

Beyond Blue

<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>

Healthy Families

<https://healthyfamilies.beyondblue.org.au/>

Kids Help Line

<https://kidshelpline.com.au/parents>