

Head of Department - Counselling

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Purpose of this Position:

To lead and deliver a professional, coordinated, proactive, and responsive counselling service that supports the wellbeing and success of students and staff within the school's pastoral care framework.

Reports to:

Headmaster

Key relationships:

1. Headmaster and Senior Leadership Team
2. Counselling team and Student Support Services Team
3. Pastoral leaders, Deans, Tutor Teachers, and classroom teachers
4. Students, parents, caregivers, and whānau
5. Learning Support, Careers, Health, and Boarding teams
6. External agencies and professional networks

Key Accountabilities:

1. Provide professional leadership and strategic direction for the school counselling service within the pastoral care framework.
2. Manage, support, and develop the counselling team, including professional supervision, service planning, and allocation of referrals.
3. Provide practical, professional counselling to students and staff using appropriate evidence-informed approaches.
4. Assess support needs, manage risk appropriately, make referrals, and liaise effectively with external agencies.
5. Work collaboratively with students, caregivers, colleagues, school leaders, and the wider pastoral care network.
6. Facilitate restorative conversations and processes with young people, caregivers, and staff where appropriate.
7. Train and equip staff with skills and strategies that strengthen effective pastoral care.
8. Maintain high standards of professional ethics, confidentiality, safeguarding, and record-keeping.

Other Accountabilities:

1. Contribute actively to Student Support Services and wider pastoral planning.
2. Monitor service demand, referral pathways, emerging needs, and agreed outcomes to support continuous improvement.
3. Maintain current professional membership with the New Zealand Association of Counsellors or an equivalent professional body.
4. Undertake relevant professional learning, supervision, and review requirements.
5. Contribute to the wider life of the school, including co-curricular activities where appropriate.
6. Undertake other duties as directed by the Headmaster.

Expected Competencies:

1. Current membership with the New Zealand Association of Counsellors or an equivalent professional body.
2. Demonstrated experience providing individual counselling to adolescents and staff, preferably in a secondary school setting.
3. Visible, trusted, and collaborative leadership with the ability to manage and develop a professional team.
4. Strong communication and relationship-building skills with students, staff, caregivers, and external agencies.
5. Experience in restorative practice, referral processes, risk assessment, and multi-agency collaboration.
6. Ability to work flexibly and effectively in a dynamic school environment.
7. High standards of professional ethics, confidentiality, organisation, and record-keeping.
8. Cultural responsiveness and commitment to supporting the diverse needs of students and whānau.

What does success look like?

1. A coordinated, accessible, and responsive counselling service aligned with the school's pastoral care strategy.
2. Students and staff receive timely, appropriate, and professional support.
3. Effective referral pathways and collaborative relationships are maintained across the school and with external agencies.
4. The counselling team is well led, supported, and engaged in ongoing professional development and supervision.
5. Confidentiality, ethical practice, safeguarding, and records meet professional and school expectations.
6. Agreed service measures and stakeholder feedback demonstrate continuous improvement.

Values and Standards:

1. Will always 'Do right'
2. Creates a culture of continual improvement
3. Adheres to all NBHS policies, procedures, and codes