

School Counselling Service

The counselling program offered at St Thomas the Apostle Primary School is a confidential service designed to assist students in resolving the emotional, behavioural or interpersonal difficulties that may be affecting their development and well-being. 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.

Counselling can assist students with any of the following difficulties:

- Behavioural concerns at school or at home;
- Emotional problems such as anxiety, grief and loss, low self-esteem, anger, depression;
- School refusal;
- Family issues such as separation/divorce, parenting difficulties, relationships with parents and/or siblings;
- Developmental and academic concerns where appropriate;
- Social problems.

What other services does the school counsellor provide at St Thomas

- Parent and teacher consultation
- Small group programmes
- Professional development programmes for teachers
- Professional development seminars for parents
- Referral to services external to the school

When should I refer a child for counselling?

- Your child is not meeting his/her full academic potential
- Your child is having difficulty cooperating with adult authority
- Your child is having difficulties making and/or maintaining friends or being with peers
- Your child appears overly worried, sad or angry
- Your child has experienced or is experiencing a significant event in their life such as the loss of a significant other or parental separation
- You have an instinct that the child may need counselling

Who can refer a child to school counselling at St Thomas?

- Parents
- Teachers or other members of the school staff
- School Welfare Co-Ordinator
- The child

If you are concerned about a child you may discuss this with the welfare co-ordinator or the school counsellor. You may want to discuss your concerns with the child's teacher as well. School counsellors are not at every school every day. It is necessary for parents or carers to make an appointment by telephoning the school.

Confidentiality

School counselling is a confidential service and school counsellors will check with students, parents or carers before passing on information 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.

St Thomas prides itself on the total wellbeing of our students and we recognise that emotional support in a range of areas is critical. Support from professional counsellors at Catholic care enriches our work.