

COUNSELING OFFICE POLICIES

Physical Abuse

If physical abuse is suspected or reported, the Counselor will consult with the Division Head and then call DSS.

If DSS determines that their intervention is not necessary, the counselor will work with the student to develop coping skills and a safety plan. The parent(s) may also be contacted, although any communication with parents will be discussed with the student and the Division Head ahead of time.

Sexual Abuse or Molestation

If a student reports sexual abuse or molestation having happened to them at any time, the Counselor will consult with the Division Head and then call DSS. The Counselor will also work with the student on developing a plan to communicate the incident to the parent(s). This, of course, would not happen if the parent(s) is the reported perpetrator.

Substance Abuse

If a student appears to be under the influence of alcohol or other substances at a school event, the following steps will be taken:

- 1) The student will be put under the supervision of a school employee while their parents are contacted and asked to pick them up immediately.
- 2) The parents may be instructed to contact an outside substance abuse professional of their choice (recommendations will be given) and arrange for an evaluation to be completed on their child before they can return to school.
- 3) The parents will give permission to the substance abuse professional to share their findings with the Counseling office.

If a student is arrested for underage drinking or underage possession of alcohol or for use or possession of any illegal drug and law enforcement informs the school of such an arrest, steps 2 and 3 above must be followed.

In both circumstances, the student may be required to check in with the School Counselor from time to time.

Dramatic Weight Loss or Undernourished Appearance

If a student appears to have a dramatic weight loss in a short period of time or if a student appears unhealthy and at risk of being undernourished, the Counselor will consult with the Division Head, the advisor, the student, and, if needed, the parent(s). If the student's condition cannot be explained by illness or other valid condition, the parent(s) will be required to seek attention from a medical professional (physician or psychiatrist) of their

choice (referrals will be given). This professional will need to provide the Counselor with a letter stating that the student is in good physical health and well-nourished. If the student is an athlete, the letter should also include permission for the student to continue with their athletic involvement. Permission should be granted for the Counselor to communicate with the outside physician or therapist.

Self-Harm

If there is physical evidence of self-harm (cutting, burning, strangulation, etc.) talk of suicidal attempts, or talk of the desire to commit harm to self, the Counselor will take the following steps:

- 1) consult with the Director of Counseling and/or the Division Director
- 2) work with the student to develop a plan to communicate the school's concerns with their parents.
- 3) keep the student under the supervision of the Counselor while the Division Head is consulted and the parent(s) is contacted and asked to pick up the student as soon as possible.
- 4) if determined to be the best course of action, instruct the parents to contact an outside mental health professional of their choice (recommendations will be given) and arrange for an evaluation to be completed on their child before they can return to school. Parent(s) will also be asked to guarantee constant supervision of the student until they are able to meet with the mental health professional.
- 5) if number 4 is put in place, require a letter from the mental health professional (and sign a release of information), upon the student's return to school, that states the student is safe to be in school and is in no immediate danger of harming themselves.
- 6) develop a safety plan with the student to be used should feelings of self-harm or suicide occur while they are on campus or at a school-sponsored event.

In all of these situations, the School Counselor will work to instill a sense of control within the student by involving them in these steps. The student's preferences and desires will be taken into consideration whenever possible. Additionally, any students involved in any of the above situations may be asked to check in with the School Counselor on a regular basis.