



International College

Inspiring learners of today to be global citizen leaders of tomorrow

Student Support Services

Faculty information booklet:

Role of the School Counselor

International College

Vision

The Vision of International College (I.C) is to inspire learners of today to be global citizen leaders of tomorrow.

Mission

The mission of International College is to educate young men and women to be capable of initiative and critical thinking, who will serve as role models in a global society. The curriculum aims for excellence at all levels and embraces the education of the whole person. Graduates of I.C. will have developed self-discipline, problem-solving abilities, social responsibility, self-confidence, and awareness of, and respect for, the interdependence of nations in all their diversity.

“Professional school counselors address the needs of students through the implementation of a comprehensive, standard-based, developmental school counseling program. They are employed in preschool, elementary, middle and secondary school. Their work is differentiated by attention to age specific developmental stages of student growth and the needs, tasks and student interest related to those stages. Professional school counselors work, with all students, including those who are considered at-risk, and those with special needs” (ASCA). They are specialists in the wellbeing of humans on a psycho-social-emotional, academic and behavioral level and they provide assistance to students through four primary interventions: counseling (individual and group), large group guidance, consultation, referral and coordination with outside mental health professionals.

Philosophy, Purpose, and Scope of Counseling Services

Foundation

a. Philosophy and Beliefs

As International College Counselors, we hold the following beliefs:

- Fairness and justice for each of our students, staff members, and parents.
- Self-regulation and personal empowerment.
- Using the solution focused and behavioral-cognitive interventions/counseling.
- In the importance of universal human rights.
- Respecting and valuing each student for his/her individuality and uniqueness.
- Each child's desire and potential to achieve and succeed, regardless of challenge and/or need.
- Being open, honest, and multicultural mind.
- Each student has a right to be safe and secure.
- The right of each of our students to have dreams and goals which they feel they can achieve.
- In a non-judgmental approach.
- Meeting our students where they are.
- That each child has freedom of choice and the right to both equality and accessibility, in order to develop holistically.
- That diversity enriches the social and educational environment.

b. Mission Statement

As a school counseling department at International College, we strive to provide our students, their families and our staff with the following services:

- Getting to know each of our students and planning for each of them accordingly.
- Meeting individual students' needs.
- Building an accommodating and encouraging learner based environment, where each student is enabled to reach his/her potential to be successful.
- Offering comprehensive, professional, and direct counseling services addressing a variety of issues including those of an academic, career, social/emotional, or personal nature.
- Responding to crisis situations, and providing crisis counseling.
- Managing conflict and providing mediation.
- Providing proactive support and intervention for families and school staff.
- Collaborating and coordinating with school staff and families to ensure the holistic wellbeing of the students.

- Creating a data driven systematized method of documenting and reporting.
- Planning and implementing a comprehensive guidance and wellness curriculum.
- Using standardized forms or templates for all school counselors.

c. Domains: Academic, Career, and Personal/Social

Our counseling programs will focus and target one or more of the Counseling domains, listed below:

Academic Development

A student’s social and emotional wellness has a direct impact on their academic success. As such, counselors will work closely with teachers in providing a supportive learning environment. This includes a student’s sense of self-esteem and confidence, as well as, acquiring the attitudes, knowledge, and “life skills” necessary for success both in school and in life.

For some students the counselor collaborates with a special need teacher to ensure the holistic wellbeing.

The Role of the Special Needs Teacher

The Special Needs Teacher provides services to students referred by other teachers and/or administrators in three main ways:

- Working directly in coordination with the classroom/special subject teacher to help facilitate the implementation of an appropriate program.
- Working directly with the student in the classroom by using the inclusionary model (with pull-out ONLY when necessary).
- Helping the student by working with a Student Study Team (SST) consisting of teachers, parents, counselor, administration and other/outside specialists.

The direct services provided by the Special Needs Teacher include:

- Coordinating with the counselor.
- Consulting with classroom/special subject teachers.
- Conducting Informal Assessment.
- Planning for instruction based on an individualized education program to set objectives and monitor the student progress.
- Delivering instruction based on students’ needs.
- Observing/monitoring student progress towards the objectives in the plan of action.
- Formally reporting to director/parents regarding student’s progress towards meeting expectations for grade level.
- Giving and receiving professional development/Study groups.

Career development

The Secondary School Counseling department provides a comprehensive, developmentally appropriate guidance program that encompasses the academic, career/university and personal/social development of all high school students. Three secondary school counselors support the counseling department in this mission to deliver these services, as well as, coordination of curriculum for the teacher advisory program. The university admissions and career guidance counselor supports the career development program and provides guidance for university admission.

The counseling program supports student development by offering the following:

Guidance curriculum – student awareness, skill development and application of life skills completed through consultation, classroom and group work.

Individual Planning – individual academic and occupational planning, decision making and goal setting completed by assessment, planning, placement and consultation.

Responsive Services – prevention and intervention provided by individual counseling, group counseling, referral and consultation.

System Support – Program support and delivery provided through coordination and consultation.

The counseling program supports the IC mission that graduates will have developed self – discipline, problem-solving ability, social responsibility, self-confidence, and awareness of, and respect for, the diversity and interdependence of individuals, communities, and nations.

Personal/Social

Counselors will support students to acquire the social and personal attitudes, knowledge, and skills to develop a healthy respect for themselves and others, to be able to identify and set goals, make informed decisions, and take action to achieve their goals. These goals include awareness of personal safety and security, to identify the positive and negative influence of peer pressure, and to evaluate the consequences of one's actions on themselves, family and others.

d. Ethical Standards

As International College Counselors, we are guided by a set of professional and ethical standards including:

- Confidentiality of students and their right to privacy, except in case of harm to others/self; criminal intentions; abuse.

- Confidentiality of parents and their right to privacy except if we detect possible harm to the student (academic, social or psychological).
- Informed Consent by parents and students (when applicable).
- The duty to cause no harm, as well as, to protect from psychological and physical harm.
- The right of each student to be an active participant in his/her counseling and support plan.
- The school counselors will be able to meet with the parents without the presence of the director or other third parties.
- In order to ensure effective collaboration, it is highly recommended that the parents inform the counselors if their child is followed up by outside mental health professionals (psychologist, psychiatrists, psychomotor therapists, speech therapists...)
- If there is information that the parents/guardians DO NOT wish to share with the school counselor, the school counselor will not be held liable for any consequences of NON disclosure.

Delivery System

a. Guidance Curriculum

International College Counselors are responsible to plan, develop, implement and review a comprehensive, school wide guidance curriculum.

b. Individual Student Planning

This particular domain is directly linked to the responsive services explained in the next section. It involves the following:

- Assisting students in identifying, investigating, and completing their personal and career oriented goals. This is otherwise known as Advising.
- Individual planning involves assessment, communicating with teachers and students, tracking student performance, networking with teachers concerning students, and placement.

Topics that will be addressed (individually and/or in group setting) include, but are not limited to:

- Student Interviews
- Collaborative work on graduation plans
- Transitions
- Goal-setting
- Behavior planning and monitoring
- Promotion and retention information

- Job shadowing, internship, entrepreneurship
- College and university applications and choice
- Career guidance and interest assessments
- Testing Interpretation
- Social skills
- Bully prevention
- Study / organization/time/test taking skills
- Problem-solving and decision making skills
- Personal health and wellness
- Alcohol, drug and substance abuse and prevention

c. Providing Responsive Services

This component involves the following counseling duties:

1. Early intervention
2. Crisis intervention
3. Individual Counseling
4. Group Counseling
5. Consultation with parents/teachers/administrators/outside agencies
6. Referrals
7. Facilitation with peers, and between student and any second party

d. Providing Support System

As counselors, we continuously update, research and train in new areas of counseling. We also offer workshops (in-service training) for teachers and staff, as well as, partnering with parents, staff and community agencies.

Our team, at IC, is composed of counselors for both the Ras Beirut and Ain Aar campuses:

- Ain Aar: A counselor for the pre-school and lower elementary school and a counselor for the upper elementary and middle school.
- Ras Beirut: A counselor for the elementary school, two counselors for the middle school and three counselors for the secondary school, one of whom specializes in university admissions

The following representative duties for each school level are provided by counselors:

1. Preschool Department

The pre-school counselor is a professional educator with a mental health perspective who works with students, parents and staff to help determine and improve the child's social and emotional

well-being. Counseling facilitates social skills and development of one's personality with the ultimate aim of enhancing the educational and psycho-social development of children.

Accordingly, at IC, the role of the counselor is to provide age appropriate services according to the student's age and grade level and consistent with the PYP educational philosophy:

- Observe students as required and as needed.
- Present advisory sessions addressing: Social skills, behavior issues, personality and emotional development.
- Provide a safe, supportive learning environment.
- Work with teachers, school employees and parents to improve the mental and emotional development of students in coordination with the Director.
- Offer professional workshops to parents.
- Work closely with all school student support personnel.
- Keep a thorough, comprehensive and confidential record of each student/group of students consulted.
- Assist with interviewing children for admission.
- Collaborate with outside specialists.
- Attend class meetings as appropriate or as needed.
- Hold regular meetings with the Director.

2. Elementary Counseling Department

Comprehensive developmental school counseling programs provide education, prevention and intervention services, which are integrated into all aspects of children's lives. Early identification and intervention of children's academic and personal/social needs is essential in removing barriers to learning and in promoting academic achievement.

The elementary years are a time when students start to develop their academic self-concept and their feelings of competence and confidence as learners. They are beginning to develop decision-making, communication and life skills, as well as character values. It is also a time when students develop and acquire attitudes toward school, self, peers, social groups and family.

Accordingly, at IC, the role of the counselor in the Elementary School will provide the following, according to the student's age and grade level following the PYP philosophy:

- Detect a student in distress
- Psycho-socio-emotional support
- Individual and/or group counseling
- Crisis intervention
- Assist students during transitions
- Accommodation/differentiation to students in need of academic and social support

- Advisory sessions related to area of unit or to address a certain topic (Anger Management, Changing Families, Friendship, Grief, Self-Esteem, Social Skills)
- Peer education/ Peer support (Peer Buddies, Circle of Friends, etc.)
- Bullying prevention and peer conflict resolution
- Prevention and awareness on safety (personal, physical, internet, hygiene, emotional, healthy lifestyle)
- Workshops to parents and teachers
- Referrals
- Collaboration with outside specialists

3. Middle School Department

- Provide direct support service to individual students, small groups, and classrooms on psycho social issues.
- Counsel students and advise parents when needed.
- Assist teachers in working with students experiencing social, behavioral, and or emotional difficulties.
- Observe students as required and as needed.
- Attend parents/teachers/director meetings when needed.
- Attend class meetings.
- Complete assessment and referrals.
- Consult with other professional staff and outside agencies and other organizations when needed.
- Serve as a member of the guidance team (director, students' affair coordinator and counselor).
- Suggest topics to be tackled through the advisory program.
- Serve on the counseling and guidance committee.
- Pursue continuous professional growth.
- Complete written reports as needed or as requested by the Director.
- Handle all cases referred by the Director.
- Submit a report at the end of every term evaluating the cases and making recommendations.
- Represent the Middle School on all college committees as assigned by the Director.
- If need be, the counselor will run an advisory session to address personal and social/emotional needs for specific students in a specific class.
- Document all cases for future reference and generating statistical reports related to the cases upon the Director's request.
- Conduct group discussions and level assemblies whenever needed.
- Help with the development of the advisory program (PSE) as needed.
- Hold regular meetings with the Director.

4. Secondary School Department

The secondary school counselors offer a comprehensive school counseling program. They work with all students, including those who are considered at risk and those with special needs. They are specialists in human behavior and provide assistance to students through 4 primary interventions: individual and small group counseling, large group guidance, consultation, and coordination.

I. Counseling Duties:

The secondary school counselors of International College strive to provide students, their families and staff the following services:

- Getting to know students on an individual basis through class and break observation and planning for each one of them accordingly.
- Meeting each of their individual students' needs.
- Building an accommodating and encouraging learner-based environment, where each student is enabled to reach his/her optimal potential and be successful.
- Offering broad, competent and direct counseling services, geared towards addressing a variety of issues (academic, social/emotional, personal).
- Addressing crisis situations, and providing crisis counseling.
- Managing conflict and providing mediation.
- Providing proactive leadership to support families and school staff.
- Collaborating and coordinating with school staff and families to ensure the holistic well-being of the student.
- Creating a data-driven, systemized method of documenting and reporting, based on needs and effective methodologies.

II. Confidentiality

Secondary School Counselors are guided by a Confidentiality Policy: all information remains confidential unless it is determined that the student may be subject to harming him/herself and/or others.

III. Visits

A student may wish to visit the counselor's office for a variety of reasons that can vary from simple guidance to more complex issues. If a student feels anxious, depressed, and uncontrollably angry or confused, he/she may choose to turn to the counselor for help in responding to the feelings and/or situation. Or, when faculty or parents observe that the student might benefit from guided help, they may share concern with the student and/or with the counselor and arrange for the student to meet with the counselor to talk over the student's circumstances and explore what might be done to resolve the issue.

Students are free to come for counseling during their breaks, after school hours and during their elective course.

Occasionally the student finds himself or herself in need of support beyond the training or time capacities of the counselor or advising teacher. In such a case, referral to a caring outside specialist can be facilitated.

Management System

International College Counselors take the following into account in their day to day work, in order to be organized and efficient:

- Accounting for use of time and scheduling
- Student monitoring and developing action plans
- Collection and usage of data for program planning and development
- Administration and implementation of the counseling program

Accountability

School counselors are responsible for the following:

- Program Organization
- Individual Student Planning
- Responsive Services
- System Support
- Student Monitoring
- School Counseling/administration agreement regarding needs identified, programs to be developed and implemented and management of the counseling department.

Counseling Procedure at International College

There are many important issues to keep in mind regarding counseling on school premises and how students access counseling sessions.

An important clarification is that school counseling is not therapy and counselors do not serve as therapists. In other words, counselors do not diagnose students. The primary goal is to assist students in dealing with issues that are affecting their ability to function successfully in and out of school. When counselors detect a problem that may need further assessment or professional intervention, students maybe referred for out of school services.

Counselors are helpful by following up on students disciplinary matters. In other words, they assist students in becoming aware of why they were disciplined, pointing out what they did wrong, and helping them process the associated feelings while, simultaneously, modifying thoughts and behaviors that originally were the cause of the problem. Counselors also work closely with the student support specialist teachers in support of those with special learning needs.

When do students come for counseling?

Some students, after having been assessed, observed and referred, will have fixed counseling schedule. This may range from one to three weekly sessions.

Counseling is not indefinite, and is intended to be short term. Also, the duration of the counseling plan varies, sometimes it is a matter of a few meetings, other times it may require longer term strategies. A student may be referred by a teacher or a member of staff. For that to occur, the referring person informs the counselor through a referral form, an email, over the phone or in person. A parent may also refer a child for counseling. The counselor may be informed of this through a referral form, by phone or in person. Counselors regularly observe, monitor, and meet with the students assigned to them.

In exceptional cases, a student may wish to leave a class to see his/her counselor. If and when a student asks a teacher if he/she can visit the counseling office, it is the teacher who decides whether to let the student go or not. **Please do take into account the following, when making such a decision:**

If a student seems to be displaying the following symptoms for at least a period of 2 consecutive weeks:

- **restless**
- **anxious**
- **distressed**
- **upset**
- **hyperactive**
- **unusually quiet**
- **extremely tired**
- **angry**
- **aggressive**
- **appears sad or unhappy**
- **poor hygiene**
- **poor social skills**
- **poor academic performances**
- **any sign of neglect (torn clothes, long hair which impair sight...)**

In such cases, counselors prefer that the student be allowed to come to his/her assigned counselor, who will decide whether to send the student back to class or not. School counselors are often privy to private information, in order to be aware of what is going on in a child's life. In case, when a student asks to be sent his/her counselor, he/she will be given a counseling permission slip, which the student will present to the counselor. Likewise, the counselor will give one back when the child is sent back to class. This is to be given to his/her teacher.

When in need of a school counselor's assistance

When a student has a concern to share with a counselor, He /she should always feel at ease doing so. However, at certain points during the day, the counselor may not be available immediately, but the request will be addressed as soon as possible

Exceptional student-counselor requests

Sometimes a student, due to personal circumstances, might request test postponement or ask for extra time to finish an assignment. When recommended by the counselor, the teacher is kindly requested to take this into account if reasonable and feasible.

Theoretical Counseling Orientation Used at International College

In addition to basic counseling protocols and active listening, International College counselors work within the following two theoretical schools of thought:

Solution Focused Approach: this approach consists of focusing on students' assets rather than deficits. It builds on what they are good at, and on what they like doing. They also feel more empowered when counselors tap into strategies they might be using, which seem to be working for them. The key of such an approach is the focus on solutions rather than ruminate about the problem and emphasize a positive framework. It is building on what students already know. It also focuses on the here and now!

Cognitive-Behavioral Approach: this approach has a concrete, problem-oriented, short term, action focused, re-educative framework. It focuses on addressing cognitive distortions, self-verbalizations and maladaptive behaviors. The strategies used enable thought reconceptualization, which in turn affects feelings, as well as, behavior modifications. Some techniques used are role play, rehearsal, direct instruction, modeling...this too, focuses on the here and now, immediacy is emphasized!