How you as parents can help the school

- **Keep** the school informed of important changes that are affecting your child and your family that may impact upon your child at school and upon the school’s interactions with staff & other students.

- **Provide** the school with relevant information pertaining to hospital admissions and presentations for serious mental health issues.

- **Work** collaboratively with the school to ensure proper management and care of your child within the limits of the school environment.

- **Understand** that the school counsellor is a mandatory reporter and must notify Family and Community Services of serious concerns.

- **Providing** the school with any relevant reports that may be helpful in assisting the school to manage & support students with serious mental health issues.

- **Understand** that school counsellors are generally social workers or psychologists who specialise in adolescent mental health & offer a professional service in line with both the NSW Education Act (1990) and the federal registration requirements of their professional associations.

### Who can refer to the school counsellor?

Requests to see the school counsellor can be made by:

- a student
- a parent
- a staff member
- an external provider

## Useful Contacts

Contact the school counsellor for local service providers.

**Family Referral Service:** 1800 066 757

**Catholic Care:**
[www.catholiccare.org/families](http://www.catholiccare.org/families)

**Family Court of Australia:**

**Unifam Counselling & Mediation:**
[www.unifamcounselling.org](http://www.unifamcounselling.org)

**Beyond Blue:**
[https://www.beyondblue.org.au](https://www.beyondblue.org.au)

**CYMS—Child & Young Persons Mental Health Unit,** attached to your local hospital.
What the school counsellor can do

- Undertake mental health assessments.
- Provide counselling & support for students in the form of individual or targeted support/group work.
- Assist with the transition or re-entry of students back to school following serious absenteeism for mental health reasons or following mental health admissions.
- Support to schools in the management of critical incidents.
- Referral to other community based mental health agencies or specialists.
- Liaison with parents about a student’s mental health in situations where the safety & wellbeing of a young person is of serious concern.
- Consultation with staff for the purposes of supporting & managing your child at school.
- Advocacy for young people.
- Contribute to the professional learning of staff in relation to the mental health & wellbeing of students.

The school counsellor cannot/may not:

- Act as the primary treating clinician for students with serious mental health issues or diagnosis. It is an expectation that these students are linked with an external professional who can liaise with the school counsellor to ensure proper management at school.
- Engage in the provision of specialist clinical counselling in areas outside their expertise. (eg. sexual assault counselling).
- Act as a disciplinarian of students.
- Become involved in family law matters or the interpretation or enforcement of court orders. If you disagree about an important decision about your child’s education you need to seek help from the court.
- Engage in family therapy.
- Respond to requests that breach principles of privacy & confidentiality.
- Offer counselling in situations where a conflict of interest exists (eg. the concerns or aims of two different parties are incompatible).
- Transport a student to or from home and school.
- Offer individual counselling to students outside of school hours.