



Job Description – Head of Department Guidance Counselling

POSITION TITLE	<i>Head of Department Guidance Counselling</i>
MANAGEMENT UNITS (MU/MMA)	2MU and 1 MMA
REPORTS TO	<i>Principal and Deputy Principal</i>
DIRECT REPORTS	Guidance Counsellors and School Nurse
WORKING RELATIONSHIPS	<i>External: whānau, External health, social service and youth agencies; Relevant professional bodies and networks</i> <i>Internal: Principal, Senior Leadership Team, Guidance Counsellors, Learning Area Leaders, Teachers, Support Staff, Learning Support Team, School Nurse, Youth Workers, Students</i>

PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

The Head of Department – Guidance Counselling is responsible for providing leadership, direction and oversight of the school's Guidance and Counselling function, ensuring students have access to effective, confidential and responsive counselling and wellbeing support.

The Head of Department provides professional leadership to the Guidance Counselling team, promotes best practice in student wellbeing and counselling, and works collaboratively with the Support and Guidance Team, Senior Leadership Team, Deans, teaching staff, whānau and external agencies.

The role combines strategic and operational leadership with the provision of individual and group counselling and therapeutic support. The position contributes to the school's vision, mission, principles and commitment to supporting the wellbeing, safety, inclusion and success of all students.

The Guidance Counselling function operates in accordance with the NZAC Code of Ethics, relevant legislation, Education Council requirements and professional standards.



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KEY RESPONSIBILITIES	APPRAISAL INDICATORS
Leadership of the Student Support Department	• Provide professional leadership and direction to the Guidance Counselling team. • Establish and maintain clear, effective and consistent systems and processes for the delivery of counselling services. • Coordinate the day-to-day operation of the Guidance Counselling function, including allocation and management of caseloads and referrals. • Support counsellors to manage complex and high-risk student matters appropriately and in accordance with professional and legislative requirements. • Promote a collaborative, supportive and professional team culture. • Provide mentoring, guidance and support to counsellors and contribute to their professional growth and development. • Identify professional learning needs within the department and support appropriate professional development. • Ensure appropriate supervision arrangements are in place for counselling staff. • Support the induction and orientation of new Guidance Counselling staff.
Student Counselling and Wellbeing	• Provide confidential individual and group counselling, therapeutic support, mediation and wellbeing services for students. • Maintain an appropriate counselling caseload alongside HOD responsibilities. • Respond appropriately to students experiencing emotional, social, behavioural or wellbeing concerns. • Support students experiencing significant distress, crisis or risk, including appropriate escalation and referral. • Ensure student wellbeing concerns are managed in a timely, professional and student-centred manner. • Promote early intervention and preventative approaches to



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	student wellbeing. • Support the development of effective pathways for students to access counselling and other wellbeing services.
Safeguarding and Risk Management	• Provide professional leadership in relation to student safety, safeguarding and wellbeing within the Guidance Counselling function. • Work collaboratively with Senior Leadership, Deans and relevant staff in responding to concerns regarding student safety and wellbeing. • Ensure appropriate referral and escalation processes are followed for students presenting with significant risk or complex needs. • Liaise with appropriate external agencies and services where required, including Oranga Tamariki, Police, Youth Aid, health services and specialist youth and community organisations. • Maintain an up-to-date understanding of relevant legislation, school policies, professional obligations and best practice relating to student safety and wellbeing. • Support the development and review of guidance-related policies, procedures and risk management processes.
Support and Guidance Team	• Be an active and collaborative member of the Support and Guidance Team, currently comprising the Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellors, School Nurse, Youth Workers and SENCO. • Work collaboratively with Deans, pastoral staff, Learning Support and Senior Leadership to provide coordinated support for students. • Contribute professional counselling expertise to student wellbeing planning and case management. • Support a coordinated and consistent approach to student wellbeing across the school. • Contribute to identifying emerging student wellbeing needs and developing appropriate responses.
Wellbeing Programmes and Initiatives	• Lead and contribute to the development, implementation and evaluation of school-wide wellbeing initiatives. • Identify emerging trends and priorities affecting student wellbeing and recommend appropriate responses. • Work collaboratively with staff to develop preventative and educational programmes that promote positive mental



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	health, resilience, relationships and student wellbeing. • Contribute to relevant curriculum, pastoral and wellbeing initiatives. • Promote student voice and participation in the development of wellbeing initiatives where appropriate.
External Relationships and Referrals	• Develop and maintain effective professional relationships with relevant external agencies and community providers. • Establish clear referral pathways for students requiring specialist or additional support. • Liaise with external agencies regarding student support, with appropriate consideration of confidentiality, consent and professional obligations. • Represent the school professionally when working with external organisations and agencies.
Communication and Record Keeping	• Communicate effectively and in a timely manner with students, whānau, staff and relevant external agencies. • Ensure appropriate and accurate counselling and wellbeing records are maintained in accordance with professional, legal and school requirements. • Maintain appropriate confidentiality while recognising circumstances where information must be shared to ensure student safety or meet legal/professional obligations. • Provide relevant reporting and updates to Senior Leadership while protecting the confidentiality of individual students.
Department Planning and Review	• Contribute to strategic planning for the Guidance Counselling function. • Establish appropriate departmental goals and contribute to the school's annual planning and review processes. • Monitor the effectiveness and accessibility of counselling services. • Identify opportunities to improve systems, processes and student access to support. • Provide appropriate information to Senior Leadership regarding departmental priorities, emerging trends and resourcing requirements.
Professional Practice	• Practise in accordance with the NZAC Code of Ethics and relevant professional standards. • Maintain current NZAC membership and Teaching Council registration.



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	• Undertake regular and appropriate professional supervision. • Participate in professional learning and maintain current knowledge of counselling practice, adolescent wellbeing and relevant legislation. • Maintain appropriate professional boundaries and confidentiality. • Participate in the school's annual appraisal and professional growth processes.
Other Professional Duties	• Attend relevant school, departmental and Support and Guidance Team meetings. • Participate in the annual appraisal and professional learning cycle of the school. • Contribute to school-wide initiatives and activities as appropriate. • Undertake other reasonable duties consistent with the position and as negotiated with the Principal or relevant Senior Leader. • Model the school's vision, mission, principles and values in all professional interactions.

TASKS AND DUTIES

- To provide confidential individual and group counselling, mediation and support services for students, staff and families that effectively meet identified priorities and needs;
- To be an active member of the Support and Guidance Team (comprising DP, Lead Counsellor, Counsellor, School Nurse, Youth Workers, SENCO);
- To work proactively and collaboratively to develop ongoing and implement new relevant wellbeing education initiatives and programmes;
- To communicate effectively and in a timely fashion;
- Ensure effective day-to-day management of caseloads and effective record-keeping;
- To liaise with and refer to relevant staff and external agencies such as Oranga Tamariki (CYFs), Marinoto, Odyssey House, Youth Aid as required;
- Undertake regular and appropriate supervision.

Qualifications and Professional Requirements

- Bachelor's degree or equivalent in a relevant subject area



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- Recognised counselling qualification
- Diploma of Teaching or higher, or relevant equivalent qualification
- Current full registration with Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand
- Current membership of of New Zealand Association of Counsellors (NZAC)
- Demonstrated experience in secondary school counselling and/or youth wellbeing;
- Demonstrated leadership experience or the ability to provide effective professional leadership;
- A sound understanding of adolescent development and the wellbeing needs of young people;
- Knowledge and understanding of child protection, safeguarding and risk assessment;
- Demonstrated ability to establish effective relationships with students, whānau, staff and external agencies.

DECLARATION:

Approved by:	Kirsty Dowding (Principal)
Date approved:	21 October 2026
Reviewed:	
Appointee: (Name and Signature)	
Date appointed:	