

Position Description

Permanent full time Guidance Counsellor

Cornerstone Christian school is a Y1-13 co-educational integrated area school. We have a Christian special character and hence all of our staff are expected to be Christian and participate fully in the devotional nature of the school.

Position: Guidance Counsellor

Reports to: Principal and Senior Leadership Team including the Director of Pastoral Care.

Primary Objective:

The vision of Cornerstone is for our students to develop as confident followers of Jesus Christ equipped and inspired to creatively impact our world.

Person Specifications:

- Relates to, and consistently attends, a local Christian church.
- Accepts and recognises a responsibility to maintain and uphold the Special Character of the School.
- Is an example of Christian living and daily demonstrates a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ by the way they relate to children, parents, staff and school administrators.
- Understands and abides by the Code of Conduct
- Has the ability to communicate effectively both in written and verbal contexts.
- Able to work cooperatively in teams with the Senior Management and staff
- The appointee should:
 - Possess a minimum of a Level 6 qualification in counselling or be actively working towards a qualification of at least this level. (Membership of NZAC is restricted to people with counselling qualifications at Level 6 or above. A postgraduate diploma or Master's degree in guidance counselling is the level that is held by the majority of practising guidance counsellors.)
 - Preferably be fully registered teacher and hold a current practising certificate.
 - Hold full membership with NZAC and/or NZCCA.
 - Be prepared to undertake regular ongoing supervision from a professional counselling supervisor.
 - Have an understanding of school systems and contexts and be able to contribute to management decision-making.
 - Be able to work effectively in the bicultural and multicultural contexts of New Zealand education.
 - Demonstrate empathy with the needs and feelings of others.
 - Acknowledge and be gentle towards diversity of culture, gender, age, disability, religion and sexual orientation within a biblical framework.
 - Be a skilled communicator.
 - Demonstrate ability to build and maintain effective working relationships.

- Have skills to identify students and groups of students who are at risk of poor educational and/or social outcomes and develop plans and programmes to assist them.

Primary Objectives:

- To offer counselling opportunities to students, staff and families/whanau as required, working within the NZAC Code of Ethics.
- Assist the Director of Pastoral Care with taking a lead role in the management of the growing guidance network in secondary and classroom teachers, to ensure that the pastoral care systems meet the needs of the school community.
- To work collaboratively with all staff in their guidance and teaching roles to create conditions in which students can meet their potential.
- To network within and outside the school to ensure that individuals are assisted to find appropriate information and help for themselves.
- To help to establish a safe and inclusive climate in the school, free of intolerance, harassment and bullying.
- To act as an agent for positive change within the school community.

Key Tasks:

1. Counselling

- Accept self-referrals from students, staff and families/whanau.
- Accept appropriate referrals from staff, families/whanau and outside agencies.
- When appropriate, meet with students and their families/whanau.
- Provide specialist advice to the school's crisis intervention team, as required.
- Facilitate group counselling sessions (e.g. grief, abuse survivors, anger management, smoking cessation, etc.).
- Keep appropriate records of counselling work, ensuring they are kept securely and confidentially.

2. Programme Work

- Co-ordinate and/or assist with the preparation, delivery and evaluation of guidance-related programmes to meet the various needs of staff, students and families/whanau.
- Oversight and coordination of peer mediators.
- Oversight and coordination of Breakfast Club.
- Be part of the PB4L team.

3. Administration

- Prepare and manage relevant budget(s) and disperse hardship funds equitably.
- Prepare and maintain a guidance counselling management document.
- Complete documentation in relation to referrals to outside agencies/community groups.
- Provide an annual report, including a statistical analysis of guidance counsellor activities, to the Board of Trustees.
- Contribute to development of policies and practices in relation to guidance activities.

4. Liaison

- When appropriate, act as student advocate, e.g. at Board of Trustees Discipline Committee meetings, Family Group Conferences.
- Act as a consultant and resource person within the school community.
- Be involved in liaising with the community.
- Liaise with outside agencies (e.g. **Oranga Tamariki, ACC**, health providers, Police, Group Special Education, Family Court, iwi/hapu organisations, etc.)
- 5. Professional Development
- Participate in supervision fortnightly.
- Engage in ongoing professional development, including attending relevant training workshops and conferences.
- Responsibilities:

Key roles:

This work includes:

- Providing a professional and confidential counselling service for all students.
- Providing guidance services, programmes and activities.
- Promoting healthy communication between families, peers and staff.
- Student advocacy.
- Mediation/restorative practices.
- Accessing support from a variety of external agencies and social services.
- Identifying students at risk and providing appropriate support.
- Ensuring all services are accessible and appropriate for Maori and other ethnic groups within the school community.

1. Working with staff

A major task for the counsellor is the sharing of expertise to support all staff in their guidance and teaching roles. An allied task is to generate support from staff for students whose individual needs may have become apparent through counselling or other guidance activities. Guidance counsellors work closely with pastoral staff and administrators with pastoral responsibilities in the school.

Work may include:

- Providing a professional and confidential counselling service for all staff.
- Providing opportunities to resolve issues in student-teacher relationships.
- Where appropriate and within the bounds of confidentiality, sharing information with staff so students are effectively supported.
- Taking a specialist role and acting as a resource person in the development of pastoral care programmes.
- Assisting with the review and implementation of the school's guidance policies.
- Assisting teachers to develop appropriate strategies to meet the individual needs of students.
- Working with staff in contributing schools to help with the transition of students from primary to secondary school.
- Assisting staff to access guidance resources.

- Providing staff with professional development in areas such as mediation, listening skills, interview skills, restorative practices and conflict resolution. Working with families/whanau/caregivers Counsellors are well placed to be a resource person for families and should be available to families/whanau/caregivers in both a counselling and consultative role. This work aims to ensure the best educational and social outcomes for their children. Work may include:
 - Providing a professional and confidential counselling service for families/whanau/caregivers.
 - Supporting families in times of crisis.
 - Assisting families with setting appropriate rules and boundaries for their children's behaviour.
 - Sharing information about adolescent development while acknowledging the tensions, challenges and rewards of living with teenagers.
 - Sharing family concerns with staff where appropriate.
 - Facilitating parenting courses.
 - Working with families/whanau to seek appropriate referrals to specialist agencies.
 - Providing counselling, support and advocacy prior to and at Board disciplinary matters.

2. Working with outside agencies and community groups

The diversity and complexity of the issues that clients bring to a school guidance counsellor means that involving outside agencies and community groups, including iwi/hapu organisations, in the work is essential.

The work may include:

- Initial liaison with, and referral to, appropriate agencies and groups to address specific issues for students, staff or their families.
- Acting as liaison person between the agency/group and the school.
- Supporting students and parents in the maintenance of the agency/student/family relationship.
- Working with agency and community group personnel to ensure that help is on-going and appropriate.
- The counsellor will ensure that help provided by agencies and community groups outside the school setting will be delivered in a way that ensures respect for the diversity of each student's background and needs.