



## SPECIAL CHARACTER FACT SHEET

### Example policy for counselling and health services

#### Rationale

St. Gerard's College is a Catholic school that operates in a Catholic environment and is committed to each student's intellectual, spiritual, emotional, physical and social development. Recognising that each person has an innate human dignity because they are made in the image and likeness of God.

The college will provide access to school-based health and counselling services for students.

#### Purpose

To support parents in caring for their children.

To promote students' personal health, spiritual wellbeing and responsibility in the context of Catholic moral teaching.

To assist students to understand and take responsibility for their mental and physical health, emotional development and general wellbeing.

To provide students with professional counselling services that are easily accessed.

To support the delivery of the general school curriculum consistent with the special character and policies of the college.

#### Guidelines

The college reserves the right to ensure that any on-site counsellor offers services that are consistent with the special character of the college and Catholic moral teaching. The Board of Trustees must approve the selection and appointment of any counsellor. Guidance counsellors and on-site health professionals should complete the NZCBC approved *Having Life to the Full* course or other recognised Catholic moral theology course or paper.

The college will respect the right of parents/caregivers to exclude their children from counselling services.

Student confidentiality will be respected in accordance with the Privacy Act and the Health and Disability Services Consumers' Code of Rights.

Counsellors will abide by the ethical framework that operates at St. Gerard's College, which in turn will reflect Catholic moral teaching.

Counsellors recognise the role of parents/caregivers in the services they provide and will seek and encourage their involvement and that of the family doctor where appropriate, unless privacy and/or safety requirements prevent this.

Counselling and information will be provided in accordance with Catholic moral teaching. When students are assessed as at risk, information will be provided to them to ensure their safety. This may include information about other agencies known to respect the beliefs of Catholic clients.

In matters of sexuality, counselling and information will be provided in accordance with Catholic moral teaching. The provision of, organisation of, or referral for termination of pregnancy, and the provision of contraceptives will not be offered by the college's counsellor.

School counselling services will be financed by the St. Gerard's College Board of Trustees.

The Board, through the Principal, will monitor the provision of counselling services by way of an annual report, to ensure that they are meeting their stated aims and objectives and the requirements of this policy.

## Procedures

The Principal, staff members and counsellors will cooperate to advance the wellbeing of all students.

The college will provide a suitable and appropriate space for the counsellor to operate from.

The college Guidance Counsellor and the Principal will work closely together, acknowledging the Principal's CEO role in the managing of the school. (In schools where there is a chaplain, there will be close collaboration between the counsellor, the chaplain and the Principal.)

The counsellor's employment contract will state that the employee operates within the general parameters of the school's charter and policies.

**NZCEO February 2010**