

Psychologists

Mercedes College currently has three psychologists who are employed to assist members of the College community to achieve the most beneficial outcomes for students. They provide a range of direct and indirect services to the College community, designed to enhance the educational and personal wellbeing of students. These include:

- Counselling on matters which may impact on students at school. This may include social, emotional and mental health issues. On occasion, outside of school counselling may be recommended.
- Assisting with learning by working with students, parents and teachers to modify or improve the learning skills and environment for the student. On occasion this may involve psychological testing and/or the recommendation for outside of school assessment and intervention.
- Developing and facilitating programs designed to enhance the wellbeing and resilience of students and staff.
- Promoting and implementing Positive Education within the whole College community.
- Formulating and revising relevant policy documents.
- Being a member of the Pastoral Council and the Crisis Response Team

The College Psychologists may receive referrals in the following ways:

- Students may make an appointment by completing a 'Request to see the College Psychologist' form available from Student Services. Once the form is completed and handed to Student Services, it will be delivered to the College Psychologists who will then make a time for an appointment with the student. Appointments may take up to a week to be scheduled, however if the matter is more urgent, students are encouraged to see their Year Coordinator. On the day of the appointment, the student will receive a note during homeroom with their appointment time and directions.
- Parents may contact the College Psychologists via phone to discuss relevant issues. Generally, face-to-face appointments with parents are not scheduled in order to ensure maximum student contact time. Sometimes a parent may like their daughter to have an appointment with the College Psychologist. The student must also be willing for this appointment to occur, as counselling is unlikely to be beneficial if the student is not a willing participant. Parents are encouraged to discuss the possibility of an appointment with their daughter, and suggest they complete a 'Request to see the College Psychologist' form at Student Services.
- Staff may also contact the College Psychologists to discuss relevant issues

Those who refer students for assistance have a responsibility to work together with the College Psychologist to implement recommended intervention strategies. Information for students and how to refer can be found in the Student Diary. The Diary also contains a list of helpful websites and apps that students can access, as well as general information to support their wellbeing.

Counselling

The Mercedes College Psychologists will assist students through supportive counselling, with whatever issues students wish to talk about. For example, stress, concerns with friends and family, difficulties with sleep, or ways to study more effectively. The psychologists may help students to learn new skills in dealing with friendship, family, or school concerns, and aim to help them solve problems more effectively.

It is the students' choice to access counselling sessions and they may at any time choose to no longer attend. Some students will attend counselling for only a few sessions while others choose to attend over a longer period of time. Students also have the option to resume counselling at any stage. Therefore, parents are not informed when counselling ceases.

The College Psychologists follow the Australian Psychological Society's Code of Ethics. This includes the assurance of confidentiality for all referrals to the College Psychologist. When young people seek help, confidentiality is very important to them. Therefore, parents are not routinely contacted. However, in those unusual circumstances where failure to disclose may result in clear risk to the student or to others, the College Psychologist may disclose minimal information necessary to avert risk.

At times it may be appropriate for the College Psychologists to refer students to outside professionals or agencies that may better assist with the presenting issues. In addition, if a presenting issue is a family concern and is not seen to be impacting on the student's school life, the College Psychologists will suggest that families seek help from outside agencies.

Counselling services at Mercedes College involve no additional cost to students or their families.

The College Psychologists may be contacted via the College Reception on: (08) 9323 1323.