



Position Description

School Counsellor (Full Time)

Berengarra takes a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and is fully committed to ensuring that its strategies, policies, procedures and practices meet all Child Safety Standards as specified in Ministerial Order No. 1359 (2022).

About Berengarra School

Berengarra School is an independent, not-for-profit, co-educational secondary school for students who have had significant difficulties in mainstream education settings. All students who attend Berengarra School have social and/or emotional disability, that have contributed to their difficulties remaining engaged in education. Berengarra School offers innovative programs to engage young people and meet their individual needs in a stimulating, non-judgmental learning environment delivered by specialist staff.

Berengarra School's values of Hope, Belonging, Nurturing and Success are at the core of everything we do. Our curriculum is delivered through applied learning and school processes are designed to realise positive learning outcomes for our students. This work is underpinned by a strong focus on wellbeing.

Berengarra School consists of the Box Hill Campus with 50 Year 7-10 students studying the Victorian Curriculum and the Chadstone Campus with 30 Year 11-12 students where the Victorian Pathways Certificate (VPC) and VCE Vocational Major (VM) is delivered.

Child Safety

Berengarra School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making. Berengarra School has zero tolerance for child abuse. We are committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability. Every person involved in Berengarra School has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the

forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

The Role

The School Counsellors are part of the school's Wellbeing and Enrolment Teams. They play a vital role in addressing the safety, social and emotional needs of the students at Berengarra School. They provide support and guidance to students and parents/caregivers who are experiencing mental health and social issues that are impacting students' ability to successfully engage in education. They do this by delivering appropriate, evidence-based, therapeutic interventions to support and improve mental health outcomes with the goal of successful school engagement. The School Counsellor assists other Berengarra School staff with student management approaches by providing specialist information and knowledge to meet the needs of students who require extra support.

This role is primarily located at the Box Hill campus, but attendance at other campuses may be required in the performance of their duties.

Key Responsibilities

- Deliver formal and informal counselling to students and their families as required
- Utilise evidence-based, best practice approaches including trauma-informed strategies to inform work with students and families/caregivers
- Coordinate and deliver innovative, specialised programs for students presenting with school-refusal and/or long-term school disengagement to assist them in reaching full engagement in the Berengarra School program
- Offer guidance to staff around how students' mental health issues impact their school engagement and how to manage these issues at school.
- Share knowledge around the mental health and welfare sector with Berengarra School staff
- Work as a member of the schools Wellbeing Team
- Participation in meetings with students and parents/caregivers around behaviour management issues when appropriate
- Attendance at school camps and other off-site activities to support the safe and effective engagement of students as directed
- Liaise externally with service providers involved with students and ensure coordinated approaches are taken towards students' wellbeing including referral of students and their families/caregivers to external services when required



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- Undertake risk assessments around self-harm and suicidality and put safety plans in place accordingly
- Assist the leadership team and teaching staff in decision making around compliance with Child Safety, Mandatory Reporting and other legal requirements.
- Ensure the effective communication to school leadership of critical information around student safety and wellbeing
- As part of the Enrolment Team, conduct enrolment interviews, assessments and screening of new students
- Ensure compliance with legal privacy and confidentiality requirements
- Write funding applications and deliver specialist programs involving external services when appropriate
- Respond as part of a team to critical incidents or emergencies
- Maintain electronic records of work with students and contact with families and external service providers through use of school information management systems ensuring that the legal obligations of the school are met
- Participate in daily staff briefings and debriefings to ensure the efficient running of the school and that student needs are being met
- Active participation in supervision and reflective practice and ensure that decisions made through this process are followed through
- Attendance at external meetings such as care team meetings, case conferences and network meetings as required
- Maintain positive relationships with other staff and the wider community
- Be proactive in managing self-care and wellbeing needs using the supports and structures provided by the school
- The school Counsellor will be an active member of the Berengarra School Enrolment Team, interviewing perspective students and families and assessing them against the school enrolment criteria

As part of personalising the learning for individual students in the counselling role pursuant to the levels of adjustment of the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD).

- Providing timely and specific feedback to students to support learning growth (particularly through formative assessment practices).
- Student management (including an understanding of trauma-aware practice, or a willingness to gain this knowledge)



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- Other duties as directed

Key Selection Criteria

- Demonstrated experience counselling role young people and their families/caregivers
- Demonstrated experience working with young people with challenging behaviour, mental health issues and social and emotional challenges
- Demonstrated experience working in a school setting
- Ability to articulate relevant evidence-based approaches to working with young people with mental health issues, in particular knowledge of trauma-informed principles and practices particularly as they relate to an education setting
- Demonstrated capacity to think and work creatively to engage young people with challenging behaviours
- Demonstrated skill and experience in risk management particularly as it related to self-harm and suicidality
- Demonstrated experience in and knowledge of working with external agencies such as DHHS, clinical and community mental health services etc.
- Understanding of Child Safety Standards and Mandatory Reporting requirements
- Highly developed verbal and written communication skills including electronic record keeping
- Enthusiasm and a strong energy base for working with challenging young people
- Demonstrated capacity to work autonomously and as part of a team
- An ability to be open, self-reflective and receive feedback and intact changes in work practices as a result of this process
- An open, accepting, caring and non-judgmental approach to work and life

This position description is an overview of the duties and responsibilities of the role and does not represent the entirety of this position. The School reserves the right to vary this position description to meet the changing needs of the School.

Essential Qualifications

- Minimum Bachelor level qualification in Social Work, Counselling, Youth Work, Psychology with eligibility for membership of relevant professional body



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- Current Working with Children Check
- National Police Record Check

Desirable Qualifications

- Post-graduate qualification in counselling, mental health, adolescent health, family therapy etc.
- Recent completion of Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)
- Knowledge or experience of Social and Emotional Disability and Trauma-informed Education
- Current First Aid qualification
- Current full Victorian Drivers' Licence