

### **School Counselling Services during Home Isolation or School Closure**

The government has announced that schools are to remain open, however we acknowledge that many families are choosing to keep their children home.

Our School Counsellors and Psychologists will continue to provide counselling support to students as required during this period of COVID-19 outbreak and will be offering counselling online or over the phone to students who are staying home. This type of remote counselling is referred to as telehealth services.

Appointments will be available within the same time periods as during regular school operating hours (8:30am – 2:45pm) and term dates. School Counsellor/Psychologists' days of work are:

Rachel-Monday-Wednesday

Kellie-Tuesday-Friday

Students with pre-arranged appointments prior to the closure announcement will be given first priority. New requests will be assessed as to whether the presenting issue and level of associated risk is appropriate to be managed remotely. In the event that the presenting issue needs face-to-face management, a referral to a provider within the community will be suggested. This also applies in the event that a pre-existing client's presentation changes to the extent that remote support is no longer appropriate. *Please note that these providers may be similarly affected by the current public health conditions and a referral is not a guarantee that these providers will be able to see your child.*

#### ***How the sessions will work***

Students may indicate whether they would prefer a phone call or a video session.

In the event that a phone call is preferred, the student will be asked to provide a contact number. The phone call will be made from a private number or the school landline, so if the call is missed by the student they may not be able to return the call. Instead, the Counsellor or Psychologist will make another attempt to call the student after a few minutes. If the student is no longer able to take the call at the designated time, renegotiation of a time can occur via email. Similarly, the School Counsellor or Psychologist will advise a student as soon as practical if they are no longer able to connect at the pre-arranged time.

If students would prefer a video session, the Counsellor or psychologist will connect with the student via Zoom at the time advised in the meeting invitation (sent via email). Your child will need to have access to a Zoom account on a device that they can use in a private location at home. Zoom is a free service for one-to-one video calls, and the usual 40 minute limitation on the free

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account has been lifted for 1 : 1 sessions. You DO NOT need to purchase the pro account. As with phone calls, if the student does not accept the video connection at the agreed time, another attempt will be made to connect after a few minutes. Visit <https://zoom.us/> to sign up for a free Zoom account.

Students (and parents of Junior School students) will be advised as to privacy and confidentiality considerations (see below) and encouraged to take the call or video conference in a private location. Many families have rules at home about phones and devices in bedrooms or other private places, so this will need to be discussed with your child in the event that they choose to access counselling support remotely.

The sessions are not allowed to be recorded at any time without permission. If your child is consulting with a Provisional Psychologist or Trainee Counsellor, sessions may need to be recorded for the purpose of supervision. Consent is required for this to happen, so please indicate on the consent form whether you agree.

### ***Making an appointment***

Remote counselling appointment times can be arranged via direct email request to the School Counselling Team: [counsellor@mvac.adventist.edu.au](mailto:counsellor@mvac.adventist.edu.au). Once your request has been received the School Counsellor or Psychologist will make contact with you or your child to arrange a Zoom or phone session.

Once the time is arranged, middle and senior school students 14 years and older will receive an appointment invitation via their school email. Any real-time school lessons scheduled will take precedence as much as possible.

For Junior School students, the Counsellor or Psychologist will negotiate an appropriate time with a parent or guardian, who will then support their children to access the session. If a parent is not available and a child is being cared for by another family member (such as a responsible older sibling, other relative or family friend), we will ask permission to liaise with the person who will be supporting the child during their session.

As always, our School Counsellors and Psychologists are available to support parents and guardians in regard to their children's wellbeing. Parents and guardians may also request a call or video conference via the above email address.

### **Dealing with COVID-19: Resources for Families**

How parents can talk to kids about the coronavirus (video)

[https://kilvington.vic.schooltv.me/wellbeing\\_news/special-report-coronavirus](https://kilvington.vic.schooltv.me/wellbeing_news/special-report-coronavirus)





How to talk to kids about COVID-19

<https://theconversation.com/how-to-talk-to-your-kids-about-covid-19-133576>

Tips from the Australian Psychological Society for coping with coronavirus anxiety

<https://www.psychology.org.au/getmedia/38073179-4701-48bd-afd9-988c560ee2f9/20APS-IS-COVID-19-P1.pdf?>

This is a printable PDF book written for younger children

[https://www.mindheart.co/descargables?fbclid=IwAR0--wtczsF2OodUPcHve9Mnyh9VJuGMzk6cviSdxtJqZZdDI0JHn7\\_caJQ](https://www.mindheart.co/descargables?fbclid=IwAR0--wtczsF2OodUPcHve9Mnyh9VJuGMzk6cviSdxtJqZZdDI0JHn7_caJQ)

This website has a range of resources on coping with anxiety, meditations and podcast discussions

<https://www.tenpercent.com/coronavirussanityguide?>

Spiritual resources and links to live-stream church

<http://www.digitaldisciples.info/covid-19-digital-discipleship-resources/>

These services all provide counselling by phone and via text chat:

Kids Help Line

1800 55 1800

<https://kidshelpline.com.au/get-help/webchat-counselling>

Headspace

<https://headspace.org.au/ehespace/>

Beyond Blue

1300 22 4636

<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/national-help-lines-and-websites>

Lifeline

13 11 14

<https://www.lifeline.org.au/>





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