



AMERICAN UNITED SCHOOL OF KUWAIT  
المدرسة المتحدة الأمريكية في الكويت

# **American United School School Counseling Handbook**

## Introduction

The overall goal of the School Counseling Program at AUS is to encourage and enhance the development of the whole student. Our counseling program draws upon the frameworks of the American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) National Model and the International Model for School Counseling Programs. The school counseling program at AUS supports student needs by integrating the counseling standards within the domains: academic, career, personal/social, and global development. The emphasis is for all students during their matriculation at AUS to realize academic, personal, social, emotional success.

The counseling department's aim is to support students emotionally and socially in all aspects of the school environment. By fostering healthy self-esteem and self-awareness, as well as a sense of responsibility to self and others, AUS students will learn the meaning of being a lifelong learner and respectful global citizens of the world. At present, there are three school counselors on staff at AUS: one Elementary School Counselor servicing students in grades PK-5, one Middle School Counselor servicing students in grades 6-8 and, one High School/College Career Counselor servicing students in grades 9-11. In addition, we are also fortunate to have the services of a School Psychologist that services students in grades PK-11.

<b>Personnel Contact</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>Grade Level Responsibility</b>
Torino R. Johnson ES Counselor	<a href="mailto:t.johnson@aus.edu.kw">t.johnson@aus.edu.kw</a> +965 2553 0100 ext. 3011	1st-3rd
Andrea Phillips ES/MS Counselor	<a href="mailto:a.phillips@aus.edu.kw">a.phillips@aus.edu.kw</a> +965 2553 0150 ext. 4151	4th-5th & 6th-8th
Dareen Tawil HS Counselor	<a href="mailto:d.tawil@aus.edu.kw">d.tawil@aus.edu.kw</a> +965 2553 0150 ext. 4122	9th-12th
Wendy Alfalah School Psychologist Early Childhood Counselor	<a href="mailto:w.alfalah@aus.edu.kw">w.alfalah@aus.edu.kw</a> +965 2553 0100 ext. 4011	Pre-K - 12th

## **Professional School Counseling Program**

A Professional School Counseling Program is:

- ❖ Comprehensive in scope, preventative in design, developmental in nature, and focuses on personal/social, academic, career, and global development
- ❖ Designed to ensure that every student benefits from the program
- ❖ Conducted in collaboration with teachers, administrators, parents/guardians, and other support service professionals in order to meet student needs
- ❖ An integral part of the educational program and implemented by certified/licensed educators with a minimum of a Master's degree in School Counseling

### **The School Counselor's Role:**

The professional school counselor has a minimum of a Master's degree in school counseling, and has special qualifications and skills to address students' academic, personal/social, and career development needs. They uphold the ethical and professional standards of ASCA and other applicable professional counseling associations.

### **The Professional School Counselor**

- ❖ Supports a safe student learning environment
- ❖ Addresses the needs of all students through prevention and intervention programs that are a part of a comprehensive school counseling program
- ❖ Collaborates with other key stakeholders to promote student achievement and development
- ❖ Helps to create a welcoming, inclusive school climate
- ❖ Proactively serves as an advocate for all students
- ❖ Serves a crucial role in maximizing student achievement as well as personal/social and career development
- ❖ Promotes equity and access to opportunities and educational experiences for all students
- ❖ Abides by ASCA's professional school counseling ethics
- ❖ Engages in relevant professional development

## **Ethical Standards for School Counselors**

ASCA has developed a document entitled 'Ethical Standards for School Counselors' which specifies the principles of ethical behavior necessary to maintain the high standards of integrity, leadership and professionalism among its members. These standards clarify the common ethical responsibilities held by school counseling professionals and serve to inform stakeholders of acceptable counselor practices and expected professional behavior.

AUS School Counselors:

- ❖ Follow the ethical standards set forth by the American School Counselors Association (ASCA)
- ❖ Adhere to the proper safekeeping of confidential student records
- ❖ Have a duty and responsibility to the students we serve
- ❖ Follow the policies and laws as outlined by the Ministry of Education (MOE) in Kuwait, as well as all policies and procedures set forth by AUS' governing body; United Educational Company (UEC), Founding Director, School Advisory Board, Associate Directors, and building level Principals

## **AUS School Counseling Vision**

The vision of AUS' school counseling program aligns with the school's Mission, Vision and Guiding Principles.

### **AUS' mission is to:**

- Promote creativity and collaboration
- Challenge academic growth
- Embrace our diverse community
- Enhance student learning through technology

### **AUS' vision is:**

To provide an outstanding American education that enables students to be inspired lifelong learners and responsible global citizens.

## **AUS' guiding principles are:**

LEARNING – ANYTIME, ANYWHERE

We believe learning is not confined to a classroom or a campus—it should be available wherever and whenever the learner needs it

- At AUS we continually demonstrate how to be a caring community of learners— our students, teachers, staff and families are committed to educating the whole child.
- Our school community acknowledges and recognizes the personal, cultural and social value of each individual.
- We believe technology is an integral part of students' lives, expectations, and the future – this cannot be ignored but rather explored with a deep sense of intellectual inquiry.
- We are dedicated to the future global success for this planet which depends on having a diverse, well-educated workforce.

## **The vision of AUS' School Counseling program is to:**

Provide a comprehensive, developmental counseling program that addresses the personal/social, academic, career, and global development of all students affording them an opportunity to become lifelong learners and productive global citizens of the world.

## **What do AUS Counselors do?**

### **Academic Development**

The school counselor understands the learning process and academic environment, and develops programs and interventions that promote the achievement of all students.

AUS School Counselors:

- ❖ Consult with teachers, administrators, and parents concerning the academic needs of students
- ❖ Consult with Student Support Services to ensure that all students are provided with the best opportunities to succeed academically in school, as well as ensuring that students instructional needs are being supported

- appropriately
- ❖ Provide support to all students to allow for academic success

Issues pertaining to academic progress may result in a team meeting involving the educational professionals involved with the student. Across the Elementary, Middle School and High School levels, this is referred to as a **Student Support Team (SST)** meeting. The SST collaborates and consults with parents, teachers and other school personnel on the development, implementation and monitoring of strategies and accommodations for the purpose of improving academic achievement.

### **Career Development**

The school counselor is knowledgeable about the world of work, career theories, and related life processes, and develops programs and interventions to promote the career development of all students. Career development currently at AUS is introduced upon our students' transition to middle school. Career development lessons are carefully planned by the middle/high school counselor, and are delivered to students during their Advisory blocks by their Advisors.

AUS School Counselors:

- ❖ Administer career, interest, and personality assessments
- ❖ Facilitate the exploration of careers and university majors/courses that support careers
- ❖ Advise on appropriate post-secondary placement for desired career training
- ❖ Advise on the college application processes of specific institutions, and/or countries

### **Personal/Social Development**

The school counselor understands the developmental needs of the school-aged population and develops programs and interventions that promote optimum personal and social development.

- ❖ Personal and Social Development is an integral component of the Elementary School Counseling curriculum. The Elementary School Counselor provides classroom guidance instructional delivery for students in grades PK to 5 on topics such as self-awareness, self-management, interpersonal skills, skills for building relationships and expectations of behavior.
- ❖ On the Middle and High School levels, the Personal, Social, and Career

Guidance counseling curriculum is delivered through a planned Advisory system that is facilitated by student advisors, as well as the school counselor. Students' advisory classes are held twice per week.

### **Individual Student Planning**

The school counselor understands and uses a variety of strategies to encourage students' development of academic, personal/social, and career competencies.

AUS School Counselors:

- ❖ Are available for individual meetings with students and parents to address developmental, academic, social, behavioral, emotional, and academic needs, as well as create and monitor a plan of action to ensure the success of each student.

### **Consultation**

The school counselor understands various consultation models and maintains collaborative relationships within and outside the school community.

AUS School Counselors:

- ❖ Regularly consult with administration and teachers to ensure that students' needs are being met
- ❖ Consult with parents as necessary
- ❖ Consult with community professionals as necessary
- ❖ Consult with university admissions representatives as necessary

### **Systems Support**

The school counselor understands the overall educational system, acts as a facilitator of change, and engages in planning and management tasks needed to support the comprehensive and developmental school counseling program.

AUS School Counselors:

- ❖ Are involved in all aspects of the school community
- ❖ Are members of committees and groups that are responsible for developing and implementing change in the school environment
- ❖ Provide workshops for administration and staff to address the needs of students

- ❖ Regularly undertake professional development to remain up-to-date on issues pertinent to counseling in an international environment

### **Assessment**

The school counselor understands concepts and implications of various assessment and evaluative instruments.

AUS School Counselors:

- ❖ Demonstrates the ability to administer and interpret standardized tests and assessments, and utilize the data for planning purposes for students
- ❖ Offers the new PSAT to students in grades 8 – 10
- ❖ Utilizes the PSAT results as a part of the university planning process
- ❖ Arranges provision within the school for additional college readiness tests including; SAT and ACT
- ❖ Informs students and their parents about external tests that may be required including; TOEFL, IELTS, etc.

### **Research and Program Evaluation**

The competent school counselor understands the importance of, and engages in, research and program evaluation.

AUS School Counselors:

- ❖ Administers annual surveys to students, staff, and parents to gauge the impact of the counseling program
- ❖ Makes any required adjustments to the counseling program as suggested by the results of surveys
- ❖ Evaluates the university advising within the school, learns from changing university practices and published research, and make changes as necessary

### **Professional Orientation and Identity**

The school counselor understands and actively participates within the profession of School Counseling.



AUS School Counselors:

- ❖ Are involved in the counseling community in Kuwait and internationally
- ❖ Are active members of the Kuwait Counselors Network
- ❖ Regularly attend workshops and conferences to remain up-to-date on trends in counseling and university advising
- ❖ Are active members of American School Counselor Association (ASCA)

### **Crisis Intervention**

The school counselor understands and implements an appropriate response to a crisis and utilizes a variety of intervention strategies for students, families, and the community when facing emergency situations.

AUS School Counselors:

- ❖ Are available to assist with any crisis (personal or school wide) in accordance with the crisis response manual of The Grief Project Team of Kuwait
- ❖ Have a list of appropriate community resources for referral should the need arise

### **Counseling Delivery Model**

#### **Referral Process**

Students may be referred to the counselor by parents, teachers, administration, self-referral, or by request of a counselor. When teachers or Administrators refer, they complete a Counseling Referral Form.

#### **How and Why Parents Would Contact the School Counselor?**

- ❖ Concerns over student achievement
- ❖ New school registration and orientation
- ❖ Test interpretation
- ❖ Discussing special concerns of their child
- ❖ Early discussion of potential crises
- ❖ Family difficulties or concerns

## **Individual Counseling**

The school counselor understands and utilizes a variety of individual counseling strategies and provides appropriate referral services.

AUS school counselors use an approach often referred to as ‘Brief Counseling’ when providing counseling services to individual students and families. This approach is solution focused rather than problem-focused, and is designed to resolve current issues and concerns. The goal of the individual counseling is to:

- ❖ Assess and understand the needs of the student
- ❖ Help the student to think and act differently, by developing a plan of action to best assist the student
- ❖ Provide individual support as needed
- ❖ Refer to appropriate community resources as needed

If a counselor feels that school counseling is not sufficient to meet a student’s needs, then the counselor may make a referral to an external professional after consulting with the student’s parent or guardian. The school works in collaboration with the wider community to update the database of available mental health professionals.

## **Group Counseling**

The school counselor understands and implements principles of group counseling in the school setting. Counselors at AUS believe in the benefits that group counseling can provide. Group counseling is a counseling model that is used, should there be a need to address problems specific to a group of identified students.

## **Transitions and the Buddy System**

The school counselors and the wider school community are always eager to help new families and students adjust to their new school environment. We offer an official orientation session, as well as student programs on transitions. One-on-one counseling is available to assist both students and parents with the transition process.

Across all levels, Elementary through High School, “***Class Buddies***” are utilized to help new students get settled in the first couple of weeks. The class buddies will introduce the new student to their classmates and other students, spend recess and lunch with the new student, as well as show the new student around their class and the

rest of the school. Teachers will assign class buddies to new students before the new students first day at school. The class buddy will accompany the school counselor in welcoming the new student to AUS.

All students new to AUS' elementary school division will have an opportunity to eat lunch with their school counselor. The purpose of the Lunch Bunch is to check in with the new students to see how they are transitioning within their new school, provide the students an opportunity to meet other students who are also new to AUS, provide students a safe and fun place to ask questions they may have, and give them a chance to meet the school counselor in an informal environment.

For those families and students leaving AUS, counselors meet individually with students to discuss their feelings about their impending move, and have the students to complete an exit survey, which is completely anonymous.

Additionally, there is a transition program designed to assist rising middle and high students with adjustment to new expectations and responsibilities they begin their educational matriculation. This occurs during AUS' transitional "Fly Up" week in the Spring of the school year.

### **The "Heart of the School"**

School Counselors have, and will continue to be the "heart of the school". As School Counselors, we help in creating a safe and nurturing school environment for students. We work to encourage students academically while providing students with the social and emotional knowledge that they need to move forward as productive global citizens. AUS School Counselors elated to have the privilege to work with students, families and community of AUS. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns. We are here to serve YOU!

## Appendix

# Counseling Parent Consent Form

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

School based counseling services are provided at American United School by a Certified School Counselor or Licensed School Psychologist. School based counseling services are generally short term, and are intended to assist the student in removing the barriers that are interfering with their learning. The topics may include academics, personal issues, social skills, or other relevant topics. The format may take the form of either small group or individual sessions.

School counseling is based upon a trusting relationship between the counselor and the student. Therefore, any information shared by your son or daughter will be kept confidential. However, in certain situations in which there are ethical or legal requirements to limit confidentiality, the counselor may have to breach confidentiality. These situations include:

- If the student reveals information about harm to themselves or another person
- If the student reveals information about abuse
- If the counselor's or psychologist's records are subpoenaed by the courts
- If you grant me permission to release records to another professional

As legal guardian of \_\_\_\_\_ (student), with an understanding of the conditions above, I give permission for him/her to participate in counseling services at the American United School.

Your permission may be revoked at any time by informing the School Counselor or School Psychologist in writing. This authorization is valid for one (1) academic school year, unless the parent chooses to withdraw their consent in writing before the

conclusion of the aforementioned academic school year.

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Service(s) Offered: Weekly Individual Counseling, Individual Counseling as Needed, Group Counseling (when available), and Bi-Monthly Individual Counseling

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I give my informed consent for my child to participate in school based counseling services at the American United School.

\_\_\_\_\_ No, I do not give permission for my child to participate in school based counseling services at the American United School.

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Parent/Guardian Signature Date