



MACEDON PRIMARY SCHOOL
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Re: Heidi Winchester - Mental Health Clinician/School Counsellor

Dear Parent/Carer

Children may need the guidance of a counsellor to help them deal with anxiety, friendship issues, behaviour issues, grief or many other reasons. This pack contains the steps that you need to take to start your child with Ms Heidi Winchester who visits the school regularly to consult with students. Please read the information in this pack and then see me if you have any questions, or need help to fill in any of the forms. It would be beneficial to meet with me so that we can complete the 'Counselling Intake Form' together.

The first step is to read the information and complete the intake and consent forms in this pack. Please see me if you have any questions, or need help with the forms.

Next step is to take your child to their GP, paediatrician or psychiatrist to discuss the problem. The doctor can then develop a mental health treatment plan which may involve visits to a mental health professional. The doctor also needs to provide a referral letter to this professional. The mental health treatment plan allows for your child to have up to 10 sessions with the mental health professional each calendar year, with the costs covered by Medicare.

To start with, the doctor will refer the child for up to 6 sessions at a time. If more are needed, the doctor can recommend further sessions. Please note that currently the Australian Government will provide 10 additional Medicare subsidised counselling therapy sessions (until 31 March 2021).

The final step is to bring the completed forms, the mental health treatment plan and referral letter to school and I will send the referral to Heidi. Heidi will then contact you to talk about the referral and set up a time for counselling sessions. Heidi will consult with your child at school.

Please contact me if you have any questions at all about this process or need any advice or assistance.

Yours faithfully

Matthew Forrest
Principal

Information about Heidi Winchester

Heidi Winchester

BA SW (Hons); Developmental Psych

Mobile: 0402 280 240 Email: [hjuristic@yahoo.com.au](mailto:hjurisch@yahoo.com.au)



I am a qualified Child Mental Health Clinician – with an Honours Degree in Social Work and specialist training in developmental psychology and child mental health.

I have previously worked at Royal Children’s Hospital, Austin Child Mental Health Unit, Community Child and Adolescent Mental Health, and in Early Childhood Intervention.

I’m a registered provider with Medicare Australia and have been assessed by Commonwealth Government as having specialist mental health expertise.

In my work in schools I provide confidential counselling arising from concerns regarding a child’s emotional, social, and/or behavioural functioning or difficulty.

Areas I work in include:-

- Fears; phobias and anxieties
- Behavioural problems at home or at school
- Self harm
- Depression
- Managing anger
- Social skills
- Eating disorders
- Grief and loss
- Trauma
- Divorce
- Family relationship issues

I offer individual and group work.

I can also work with children registered with NDIS with a self-managed plan.

I use a range of interventions in helping children and families including the following focussed counselling strategies:

- Cognitive Behavioural therapy – behavioural interventions, cognitive interventions
- Relaxation strategies
- Skills training – problem solving, social skills, anger management, stress management, parenting skills
- Interpersonal therapy
- Psycho-education
- Parent education

Information for Parents/Carers

Your child can access between 6 and 10 bulk-billed (free) counselling sessions per calendar year, with the consultations taking place at school. However, in order to access this service, you need to complete the forms included with this information sheet and return them to school with a Mental Health Treatment Plan and a referral letter from your child's doctor, paediatrician or psychiatrist.

Some information about these documents is provided below:

1. **Counselling Intake form** (Complete and return to school)

This form can be completed by the parent/carer or completed in conjunction with the school. Take the completed form to your child's doctor, paediatrician or psychiatrist to inform the development of a Mental Health Treatment Plan. A copy is also retained by the counsellor to provide basic information about the presenting issue/s.

2. **Parent Consent form** (Complete and return to school)

The **Parent Consent form** contains information regarding confidentiality, and an agreement that you consent to the confidential collection and release of information to other professionals, such as the referring doctor. This should be signed and returned to the school. The counsellor needs to collect and record personal information, in order to determine the most appropriate support for the issue/s presented.

3. **Mental Health Treatment Plan** (Doctor will complete. Please return it to school)

The Mental Health Treatment Plan is a support plan developed with your child's doctor, paediatrician or psychiatrist.

4. **Referral letter** (Doctor will complete. Please return it to school)

Please ask the doctor to provide a referral letter addressed to Heidi Winchester *BA SW (Hons)*, Medicare Provider number: 5198016H

Please return all of the above documents to school. Once the paperwork is received, your child will be then able to engage in up to 10 fully bulk-billed counselling sessions with Heidi Winchester. Heidi Winchester will contact you prior to commencing counselling with your child. She will also provide feedback in relation to the progress of the sessions.

Counselling Intake Form for Students

Student Name: _____

School: _____

Student Address: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Contact Number: _____

Student Date of Birth: ____/____/____

Medicare Number: _____/_____

Reason for Referral/Presenting Problems at school or home:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Aims and outcomes of receiving counselling support:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Any additional information?

A copy of this form should be filled out when a student has been identified as requiring extra support, and given to their GP, paediatrician or psychiatrist to obtain a Mental Health Treatment Plan

Parent Consent Form

Collection and exchange of confidential information

- As part of providing a counselling service to your child, your counsellor needs to collect and record personal information that is relevant to the situation, such as name, contact information, medical history and other relevant information. This is necessary as part of providing counselling services. The counsellor will only collect personal and health information as necessary to provide services for your child.
- On occasions your child may speak about other members of your family, or other people. As a consequence, the counsellor might collect personal or health information about people other than you while providing services.
- There may also be occasions where the counsellor will collect information from other organisations such as other health professionals or other government agencies. There may be circumstances where information may be released to a third party including medical practitioners and other health professionals who are also involved with your child's health care. This collection or release of personal information may be a necessary part of the counselling assessment and treatment that is conducted.
- From time to time as good practice, mental health clinicians are required to obtain both individual and group consultation with other professionals including supervisors, to ensure that they are practising in a competent and ethical manner. During this time, content from client sessions may be discussed with other professionals who are bound by confidentiality.
- Information may be stored in hard copy form in a confidential student file within a locked cabinet, and/or electronically as a secure encrypted file. Only the clinician working with your child will be able to access these hard copies or electronic files. Administrative staff may have access to contact and basic personal details for administrative purposes. No confidential information is stored onsite within the educational institution.
- The services that Heidi Winchester offers, are provided at school during school hours. **Please note that Heidi Winchester will not provide legal or court reports.**

Disclosure of personal information

Personal information gathered by the counsellor during the provision of the counselling services will not be disclosed except when:

1. Failure to disclose the information would, in the reasonable belief of the counsellor, place your child or another person at serious risk to life, health or safety; or
2. Your prior approval has been obtained to
 - a) Provide a written report to another professional or agency (eg. a referring GP); or
 - b) Discuss the material with another person, (eg. a parent, teacher or health provider); or
 - c) Disclose the information in another way; or
3. It is subpoenaed by a court; or

4. Disclosure is otherwise required by law.

I confirm the following:

- ◆ I have read and understood the Parent Consent Form.
- ◆ I agree to the above conditions for the counselling service provided by Heidi Winchester, including the confidential exchange of information with other health professionals and/or agencies.

Name of student

Name of Parent/Guardian 1.....

Relationship to student.....

Signature..... Date/...../.....

Name of Parent/Guardian 2.....

Relationship to student.....

Signature..... Date/...../.....

Please note: If, after reading this form you are at all unclear about any of the information provided, please contact the school principal or Heidi Winchester prior to your appointment.

Emergency Information

For emergency assistance

Lifeline 13 11 14 (24 hours) <https://www.lifeline.org.au/>

SuicideLine 1300 651 251 (24 hours) <http://www.suiceline.org.au/>

Kids Helpline 1800 551 800 (24 hours) <http://www.kidshelp.com.au/>

eHeadspace

<http://www.headspace.org.au/is-it-just-me/getting-help/eheadspace>

BeyondBlue 1300 224 636 (24 hours) <http://www.beyondblue.org.au/>

Mensline 1300 78 99 78 (24 hours) <http://www.mensline.org.au/>

Parentline 132 289 (Mon-Fri, 8am-midnight; Sat & Sun, 10am-10pm) <http://parentline.com.au/>

Women’s Domestic Violence Crisis Service <http://www.wdvcs.org.au/>