

Guidance Officer Policy

APPLICATION OF THIS POLICY

This policy outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Guidance Officer employed at Peregian Beach College and other staff when responding to students' counselling, mental health, wellbeing needs, and learning needs.

1. SCOPE

This policy outlines Peregian Beach College's commitment to provide high quality guidance services. By providing quality guidance services, the school will help to positively support the mental health, wellbeing, and learning outcomes of students, including those with more complex or intensive levels of need.

The Guidance Officer's role includes: Working as a part of the Student Services Team to provide professional expertise, leadership and support that contributes to student wellbeing through the provision of specialised psychological assessment, counselling, intervention, and referral services, in addition to managing universal school wellbeing frameworks, to assist students in achieving positive educational, developmental and lifelong learning outcomes (*See Appendix A – Student Services Team Referrals Teacher Flow Chart, and Appendix B – Role of the Guidance Officer*).

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Peregian Beach College is strongly committed to supporting the mental health, wellbeing, and learning outcomes of students. Peregian Beach College will ensure that students have access to high quality, evidence based and ethically informed guidance services.

POLICY STATEMENT

Student mental health and wellbeing

Peregian Beach College recognises that supporting the mental health and wellbeing of students is vitally important and integral to students' learning, participation in the classroom and school community and achievement of longer-term life outcomes. To better support students' mental health and wellbeing, Peregian Beach College, when required, will help students access services, either through the Guidance Officer directly, or by providing information about relevant internal or external supports. Where the Guidance Officer provides direct service, it will be high quality, evidence-based and ethically informed services.

Duty of care

All Peregian Beach College staff, including the Guidance Officer, have a duty of care to all students enrolled at the school.

2. THE GUIDANCE SERVICE

Peregian Beach College must ensure:

- guidance services are delivered by professionals with the required expertise, qualifications and appropriate professional registration or accreditation;
- operation and location of the service ensure the safety of students;
- the Principal, Guidance Officer and other staff understand and action their roles and responsibilities;
- regular communication between the Guidance Officer, the Principal.

3. PLANNING AND DELIVERING GUIDANCE SERVICES

The following matters must be taken into consideration by the Guidance Officer, and the Principal when planning and delivering guidance services:

Timing of sessions with students

Sessions with students will occur during school hours.

Frequency of sessions with students

Generally, the Guidance Officer will assist students by providing brief interventions, in either individual or small group format. Frequency and duration of sessions will be dependent upon need and access to external services.

Location of guidance facilities

All guidance sessions will take place on school premises in facilities that maintain student privacy, ensure the safety of the student and staff and fulfil obligations in relation to duty of care.

Communication about a student's whereabouts

The Guidance Officer must maintain accurate records of all appointments with students and ensure information about a student's whereabouts is communicated to relevant staff and in accordance with school policy and procedures.

Referral Processes

Outlined teacher, and self-referral processes must be adhered to, unless in exceptional, or highly sensitive circumstances. (*See Appendix A – Student Services Team Referrals Teacher Flowchart*). Student self-referral is also available for students from Grade 7 via the digital secondary student referral form or through a staff member.

Consent for services provided by the Guidance Officer

Valid consent must be obtained prior to the provision of guidance services.

In the Primary School setting, the Guidance Officer will obtain the informed and written consent of the parent or guardian before providing counselling support to a student. Verbal consent can be relied upon if required (for example, if the parent requests the Guidance Officer meets with the student before the signed permission form can be returned). Unless explicitly ordered by the Court, consent can be given by one parent.

In some cases, the Guidance Officer may be directed by the principal (or his or her delegate) to meet with a Primary School student without parental consent. This will only occur in relation to cases where the student is deemed at risk of harm and urgent intervention is required (e.g. suicide risk assessments or safety concerns).

In the Secondary School setting, it is the responsibility of the Guidance Officer to determine whether a young person is capable of understanding their rights regarding support services. The Guidance Officer has an obligation to decide whether a young person has the maturity and ability to give informed consent for self-referral. The decision to obtain parent permission will always be based on the student's needs, maturity, and current context. A guiding premise is that students in Secondary School may work with Guidance Officer without parental permission if they are viewed as mature enough within the current context to provide verbal consent themselves.

Consent for counselling intervention lasts only for the duration of the issue for which the young person was referred.

(See Appendix C – Consent for Guidance Services).

Confidentiality

Guidance Officers and schools must comply with legislation, policy requirements, and professional standards in relation to confidentiality of information disclosed, recorded, and stored about students and families. Prior to providing guidance services, the Guidance Officer must inform the student and/or parent/carer of the limitations of confidentiality, including safety concerns, reporting concerns of harm and abuse, and subpoena. Unless the information relates to a limitation such as described above, the Guidance Officer must obtain consent from the student (and/or parent/caregiver) prior to sharing information with parents and or school staff. In cases when students or parents request information to be provided to external health professionals or other agencies, written consent must be obtained.

Record Management

The Guidance Officer is required to maintain accurate, sufficient, and contemporaneous file records following professional standards. These records include demographic and session information, assessment and personal information and, possibly, third party information relevant to the service provision.

The Guidance Officer's student files are stored electronically on a secure digital management software platform that is only accessible to Guidance Officers and It Support Staff. The collection, storage and archiving of private information contained in the student guidance files must follow the guidelines outlined within the College's Privacy Policy, the Guidance Officer's professional organisation and the relevant legislation.

Accountabilities and reporting

To ensure the provision of quality guidance services and fulfilment of duty of care obligations:

1. the Guidance Officer must meet on a regular basis with the Principal; about their activities and the services provided; and
2. the Guidance Officer and the Principal will, at least once a year, review the services provided to ensure they address the type and volume of need within the school.

4. FEEDBACK/COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIANCE

When a student, parent or member of staff has concerns about or wishes to provide feedback on the guidance services delivered or a Guidance Officer's interactions with a student, they should discuss their concerns or feedback with the Principal who, if required, will respond in accordance with the *Complaints Management Policy and Procedures*.

When the concerns relate to inappropriate behaviour by the Guidance Officer towards a student, the Principal must comply with the *Child Protection Policy and Procedures*. The Principal will ensure this policy is made available to the members of the school community.

5. POLICY REVIEW

The Board, or its delegate, in consultation with the school will review this policy one (1) year from the effective date.

DEFINITIONS

Brief intervention

It is acknowledged that different guidance professionals use different terms to describe the nature of their interactions with their clients. For the purposes of the *Peregian Beach College Guidance Officer Policy* the term 'brief intervention' will be used to describe a short-term intervention by the Guidance Officer where the service is completed in a limited number of contacts, for example in 4 or 5 contacts. Over the course of a school year, the Guidance Officer may provide one or more brief interventions to a student which are discreet blocks of service that arise as the student identifies new issues or needs and seeks the Guidance Officer's assistance in resolving the matters.

Guidance Officer

For the purposes of this policy, a Guidance Officer is:

- a skilled professional with specialist knowledge and expertise in relation to mental health, wellbeing, and learning, who understands educational systems and the unique complexities of schools and classrooms; and
 - an individual who has been employed by Peregian Beach College and works on a full-time, part-time or casual basis.
- A Guidance Officer may be:
- an educator with teaching qualifications and postgraduate qualifications in psychology, who may also be a member of the Queensland Guidance and Counselling Association or the Australian Counselling Association; and
 - a psychologist registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency who may also have membership of the Australian Psychological Society.

Longer term or more complex intervention

It is acknowledged that different guidance professionals use different terms to describe the nature of their interactions with their clients.

For the purposes of *The Peregian Beach College Guidance Officer Policy*, the term 'longer term or more complex intervention' will be used to describe a service provided by the Guidance Officer which:

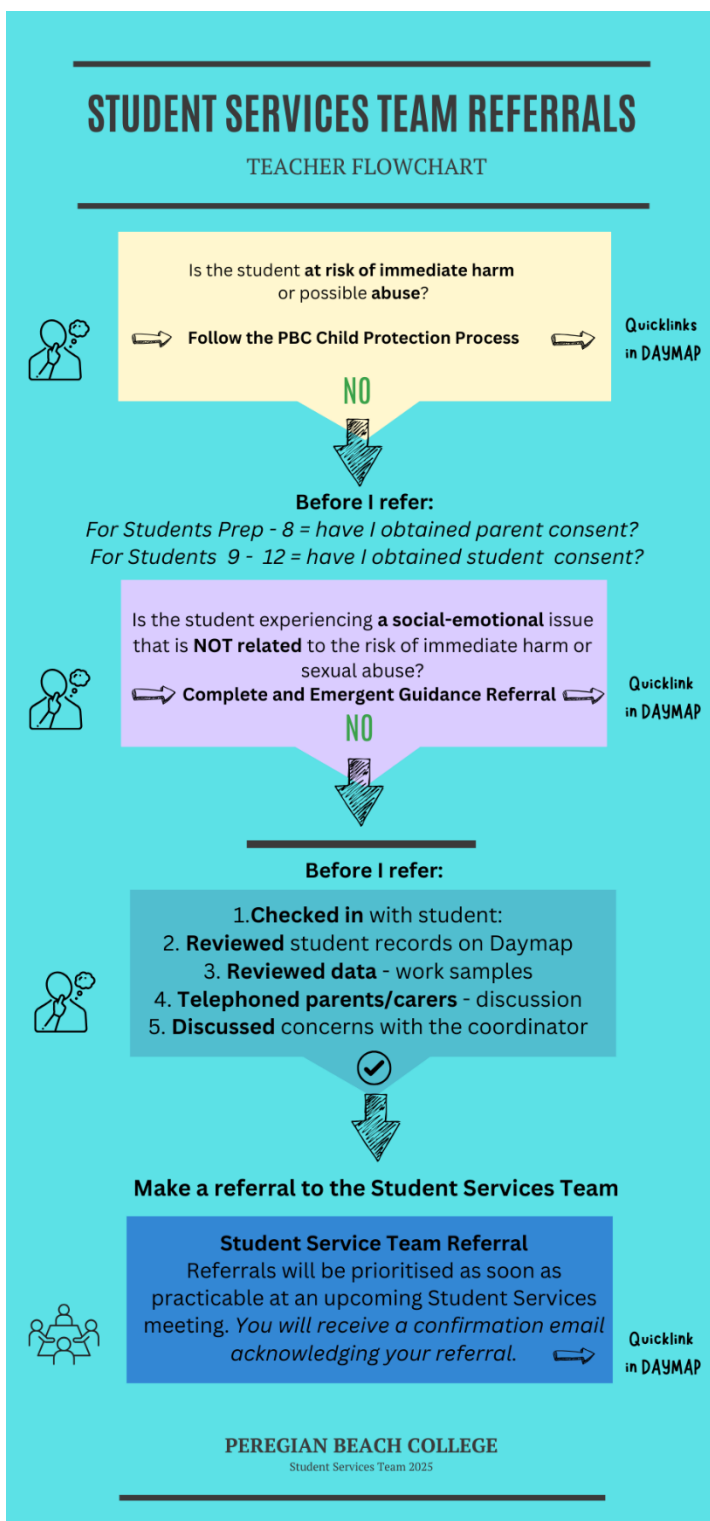
- involves longer term contact with a student, for example more than 5 sessions, in relation to an ongoing issue or counselling need – for instance, a student's mental health condition may require school-based case management over more than six months by the Guidance Officer as part of a mental health plan coordinated by a psychologist, General Practitioner, Counsellor or private psychiatrist; or
- due to the complexity or level of risk associated with the concerns, would necessitate obtaining valid written consent for the services and/or may require the sharing of information to ensure compliance with duty of care or legislative obligations or to enable the development of a support plan.

Valid Consent

The Office of the Information Commissioner has defined the key elements of valid consent as: voluntary, informed, specific and current. Voluntary consent means agreement must be freely given and not based on the person being tricked, forced or threatened if agreement is not given. Informed consent means the individual has been given enough information to understand: the information to be collected; the purpose; who can access the information; and the consequences of agreeing or refusing agreement. Specific consent means the individual is given clear information not broad statements. Current consent means

agreement is relevant to the particular time and circumstances. An agreement may not be current if more than twelve months old.

Appendix A



Role of the Guidance Officer

The Guidance Officer provides professional expertise, leadership and support that contributes to student wellbeing through the provision of specialised psychological assessment, counselling, intervention, and referral services, and manages the universal wellbeing framework, to assist students in achieving positive educational, developmental and lifelong learning outcomes. The Guidance Officer is a fully registered teacher and who also has post graduate qualifications in psychology.

The Guidance Officer is administratively responsible to the principal, who is the line manager. The Guidance Officer should also be registered with the Queensland Guidance and Counselling Association (QGCA).

The Guidance Officer:

- ❖ Provides interventions for students, individually and in groups, including appropriate short term therapeutic interventions undertaken within the constraints of their training, experience and supervision
- ❖ Collaboratively negotiates, develops and implements programs for students that have a focus on preventative and early intervention strategies; are responsive to identified personal, social, emotional and educational needs; and aim to foster resilience and personal skills development
- ❖ Works in consultation with the principal, school executive, staff and student support services to improve student learning and wellbeing outcomes and implement current priorities
- ❖ Implements professional and personal skill development programs and in service activities for administrators, teachers and parents
- ❖ Works collaboratively with the Student Services Team, parents and carers, and other agencies, to develop appropriate school-based support for students
- ❖ Administers cognitive, social, emotional and behavioural assessment of students, reports on the results of assessments and interventions and collaborate to improve learning and wellbeing outcomes
- ❖ Contributes to the social, emotional, and academic development of students by participating in student learning and wellbeing teams
- ❖ Responds as part of a team to serious incidents and emergencies
- ❖ Provides specialised support in response to student protection issues
- ❖ Supports students with complex behavioural needs
- ❖ Refers students and/or their families and carers to other agencies that will support the development of student health and wellbeing outcomes.



Consent for Guidance Services – 2026

This form is to be completed when the student named in the form has been referred to the Guidance Officer and is likely to continue seeing the Guidance Officer for ongoing assessment or support.

Privacy Notice

Personal information is collected on this form for the purpose of obtaining consent for guidance services for the student named in this form and, where relevant, for sharing information about the student with professionals and/or agencies outside the school who are involved with supporting the student. This information will be stored securely and may only be accessed by authorised school staff. The information will not otherwise be used or disclosed unless the student and/or their parent provide consent, or the use or disclosure is authorised by law.

Role of the Guidance Officer

Guidance Officers provide counselling, psychoeducational assessment and individual student support. They also advise students, teachers and parents/carers about educational, behavioural, mental health and personal issues. Guidance Officers use a range of methods to collect information from students, parents/carers and school staff. These include, but are not limited to, informal and semi-structured interviews, observations, questionnaires and psychoeducational assessments. Information collected as a result of working with the Guidance Officer may, in certain circumstances, be shared with relevant personnel, who are involved in supporting the student's educational program (for example, speech language pathologist). A student's, and/or their parent's consent is required for the provision of guidance services indicated in this form.

Student details

Name :

DOB :

Age :

Year level/Class:

Parent/carer details

Name/s

Home phone

Mobile

Email

Consent – Information exchange with external support personnel/agencies

A Guidance Officer will develop a more comprehensive understanding of a student's needs if they can request, receive and share information with a professional or agency who is already providing, or who has in the past provided a service or support to a student, for example, a psychologist, doctor or occupational therapist. Consent is required for the Guidance Officer to request, receive and share such information.

I consent to the Guidance Officer requesting information from and sharing information with the following specialist personnel or agencies outside the school that have supported or are currently supporting the student.

Agency/Professional	Contact person	Contact details
Name	Relationship to student	
Signature	Date	/ /

Consent - Psychoeducational assessment

Guidance Officers carry out psychoeducational assessments to determine a student's individual support needs at school. These assessments might relate to their cognitive, academic, behavioural, social and emotional functioning, or their mental health and well-being. Sometimes a Guidance Officer will carry out more than one assessment for a student in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of the student's needs. The results of these tests will be shared with the student, their parent/carer and with other school staff involved in the education and support of the student (for example, class teacher, speech language pathologist). Guidance Officers will provide further detail to students and parents about the particular tests they will carry out on the student.

I consent to the Guidance Officer undertaking psychoeducational assessments, which may include assessments of cognitive functioning, academic functioning, behavioural, social and emotional functioning and mental health and wellbeing.

Name	<input type="text"/>	Relationship to student	<input type="text"/>
Signature	<input type="text"/>	Date	<input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/>

Consent - Transfer and storage of psychological assessment information offshore

Some psychoeducational assessments carried out by Guidance Officers are processed using online systems administered by a third party provider whose internet servers are located overseas. Before you provide consent here, please ensure you have read and understood the information set out in Part C of the attachment to this form about the transfer and storage of information overseas for the purpose of carrying out these psychoeducational assessments. The attachment also provides further information regarding the type of student information that will be stored offshore.

I consent to limited personal information about the student named in this form being transferred and stored offshore, when necessary, for the completion of a psychoeducational assessment.

Name	<input type="text"/>	Relationship to student	<input type="text"/>
Signature	<input type="text"/>	Date	<input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/>

Consent – Counselling (behavioural, emotional, mental health)

Counselling is provided to individuals or small groups for the purpose of supporting students in relation to personal, social and/or emotional issues, which may or may not be related to the student's education. A student who commences counselling with a Guidance Officer is able to stop at any time. Information a student shares with the Guidance Officer during counselling is generally kept confidential but may be used and/or disclosed with the consent of the student, or if the disclosure is authorised or required by law. More information about how and when disclosure of personal information may occur is included in the attachment.

I consent to the Guidance Officer providing support in the form of individual and/or small group counselling.

Name	<input type="text"/>	Relationship to student	<input type="text"/>
Signature	<input type="text"/>	Date	<input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/>

Additional information related to Consent for Guidance Services

<input type="text"/>

Attachment – Information Related to Guidance Officer Services

Part A – Consent

Guidance Officers are committed to protecting student personal information in line with their obligations under the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* ('EGPA) and the *Information Privacy Act 2009* (IPA). Seeking the consent of a student and/or their parent to record, use or disclose that student's personal information for the purpose of guidance services is one way that Guidance Officers comply with these obligations, and ensures students and their parents are informed about what happens with the student's information.

Consent can only be given by someone who has the legal capacity to give it. Capacity is determined not just by age, but by a person's maturity and ability to understand consequences of providing consent. Students, particularly in secondary schools, will often be asked to give their consent to receive guidance services, however, in some instances a school will require the student's parent to give their consent. For example, when a Guidance Officer would like to carry out a psychoeducational assessment, they must seek the consent of the student's parent. Consent for students who are enrolled in primary schools to receive guidance services is always obtained from the parent.

Consent must be voluntary, informed, specific and current. Providing consent is not compulsory, however access to some guidance services may be limited if it is not provided. Guidance Officers can explain this issue in greater detail to students and parents affected by this issue.

Consent provided in this form will remain valid for the time needed to complete the services agreed to for this student but not longer than 12 months. Consent may be revoked at any other time by notifying the Guidance Officer in writing.

Part B – Information sharing and exchange

Generally, any information a student shares with a Guidance Officer will only be recorded, used or disclosed in line with the purpose for which it was provided. For example, psychoeducational assessments are carried out to determine a student's support needs so the school can provide an individually targeted education program. Therefore, in addition to the student's parents, the results of a psychoeducational assessment may be disclosed to school staff who are involved in meeting the student's support needs.

If a student sees a Guidance Officer for counselling, they may disclose information about their personal affairs unrelated to their education. A Guidance Officer will keep this information confidential unless they believe it is necessary for the safety and wellbeing of the student to share the information with someone else. The Guidance Officer will usually seek the consent of the student first, but in some circumstances they can disclose information a student has shared if the law authorises the disclosure. For example, a Guidance Officer would be obliged to disclose information for the purposes of child protection under the EGPA and the *Child Protection Act 1999*.

It is not uncommon for a Guidance Officer to exchange information with external professionals who are also involved in supporting the student, for example, a psychologist, doctor or occupational therapist. This enables a Guidance Officer to develop a more comprehensive understanding of a student's needs. Student/Parent consent is required before the Guidance Officer will request, receive and share information with a professional or agency who is already providing, or who has in the past provided a service or support to a student. The student or their parent will be asked to sign additional consent forms specifying what information the Guidance Officer can collect from and/or disclose to each nominated external professional. Those forms will be used to demonstrate to the relevant external professional that the student/parent's consent has been given.

Part C – Use of web based service providers: transfer and storage of information offshore

The use of web-based resources in schools is rising steadily. The school makes decisions about using safe and secure technology to meet the needs of its students, in line with whole-of-government procedures designed to ensure the protection of student personal information.

At times the school will utilise services delivered by third-party web-based providers, some of whom may transfer and store data on servers located outside of Australia. When this happens the school will inform students and parents about what happens to their personal information and seek consent of the person whose information is to be transferred, or their parent, in line with section 33(a) of the IPA.

Pearson

In relation to guidance services, Guidance Officers carry out certain psychoeducational assessments of students using Q-global, a web-based platform owned by NCS Pearson, Inc. ('Pearson'). In the course of an assessment, information collected by the Guidance Officer will be entered into the Q-global system, including some personal information about the student. To help safeguard student identities, only limited personal information is used for each assessment undertaken on Q-global, including no more than the student's EQID, year level, date of birth, primary language and gender. The Guidance Officer's name and the date of testing are also entered into the system.

Q-global processes the assessment information, analyses the data and generates reports for interpretation and use by the Guidance Officer. During this process Q-global transfers the information and stores it in secure cloud based servers located in Canada. When data is transferred it is encrypted and remains encrypted during storage. Administrative, physical and technical safeguards have been implemented to protect personal information and ensure only authorised staff have access to the encrypted data.

Personal data transmitted to and stored in Pearson's cloud based servers, will not be disclosed, made available or used for purposes other than the purpose intended by the application, unless with the explicit consent of the individual, or as required by all relevant and prevailing laws. The Department has confirmed with Pearson that the operation of Q-global is compliant with the Information Privacy Principles in the IPA, ensuring that the standard of protection provided for personal information is consistent with the Department's own and will be maintained in all dealing with student personal information.

If parental consent to transfer student information overseas for the purpose of a psychoeducational assessment is not provided, the Guidance Officer will not use Q-global. If a student or their parent would like to know more about how the student's information will be managed in the administration of a psychoeducational test, they are encouraged to speak with their Guidance Officer. The results of each psychoeducational test will be shared with the student, their parent, and school staff who are involved in supporting the student's educational program.
