

HILLSDALE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

HILLSDALE, NEW JERSEY

**MIDDLE SCHOOL GUIDANCE AND
COUNSELING**

GRADES SEVEN & EIGHT

- 2009 -

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Purpose	Page 3
Seventh/Eighth Grade Guidance And Counseling Program	Page 3
Objectives	Page 4
Administrators, Teachers, Parents, And Guidance Personnel.....	Page 5
Procedures	Page 5
Teacher As A Counselor.....	Page 7
Counseling Techniques	Page 8
Counselor’s Responsibilities	Page 9
Evaluation	Page 11

- PURPOSE -

The Hillsdale Board of Education desires to provide seventh and eighth grade children with GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING SERVICES which promote healthy coping and decision making skills. The middle school student is at a point of transition from the elementary school student to the “emerging adolescent”. This new and challenging environment brings significant problems of adjustment to new peers, to teachers, and to the curriculum. To ensure the fullest development of each child’s talent and capabilities, an effective guidance and counseling program must recognize the many physiological and psychological differences of preadolescents in grades seven and eight.

-SEVENTH/EIGHTH GRADE GUIDANCE & COUNSELING PROGRAM-

Guidance and counseling in the seventh and eighth grade is a team effort involving administrative personnel, counselors, teachers, specialists and parents all working in a cooperative effort helping students in academic development and in gaining greater understanding of and an acceptance of themselves.

Guidance and counseling, in this setting, focuses on the need for a developmental, proactive program for these students that permeates and utilizes as much of each student’s environment as possible in achieving basic goals consistent with the philosophy of education.

The program is pervasive throughout the school. The program may be considered “the heart of the school”. The services provided have elements of both elementary and secondary guidance and counseling programs, yet are specifically designed to meet the needs of the emerging adolescent.

Counselors and teachers provide the needed guidance services for children at the seventh/eighth grade levels. The counselor provides the broader activity in the process of helping students while teachers cover the instructional end of the guidance continuum and focus on those guidance functions that do not require specialized professional preparation. The counselor fosters the personal, social, and academic growth of every child. Therefore, both parties have a responsibility to provide guidance and counseling services to students as a part of the educational process.

- OBJECTIVES -

In addition to the objectives set forth at the elementary level, the seventh/eighth grade student:

- should develop the knowledge and understanding that guidance, counseling, and developmental assistance in “growing up” is the right of all students in the school.
- should become aware that assistance in developmental social tasks at this age can make a difference in school adjustment and productive citizenship of the future.
- should develop understanding of the strong influence of peers.
- should have an understanding of physical development and its meaning.
- should be able to understand conflict arising from new feelings and concerns resulting in fluctuating moods and behaviors within the individual with simultaneous demands to act adult and be responsible from the outside world.
- should be able to move from fantasy to exploratory stage of career development.
- should be able to interact and feel comfortable in relation to peers.
- should be able to establish self-direction and independence from adults.
- should be able to explore interests and capacities relating to future educational plans.
- should be able to develop tentative career objectives which will lead to further educational pursuits and training.
- should be able to develop respect and responsibility for him/herself and others.

-ADMINISTRATORS, TEACHERS, PARENTS AND GUIDANCE PERSONNEL -

Administrators, teachers, parents, and guidance personnel must be aware of the developmental characteristics of seventh/eighth grade children. The moods swings, physical development, peer dependence, resistance to authority, ambivalent attitude toward adults, alternating physical and emotional restlessness, lethargy to move to new cognitive and more levels of understanding are vital in the understanding of this age group.

Administrators, teachers, parents, and guidance personnel:

- should understand the unique character of this age group.
- should help students understand the relationship of the school to the student's needs.
- should assist students in decision-making and growth towards independence.
- should assist students in school adjustment.
- should assist students to understand the relationship of school and academic learnings to future training, employment and future lifestyle.

- PROCEDURES -

School personnel should be guided by the following activities and techniques.

Teachers should:

- assess pupil's individual needs.
- identify pupils who need special help (those who are intellectually talented, those with emotional problems, those who need remedial help, as well as others).
- counsel students about personal and educational matters – (individually/group).
- interpret cumulative data.
- identify those children who need to be referred to the Child Study Team, Guidance, and Administration.
- hold individual conferences with parents about the child's progress and plans.

- interpret pupil data.
- interpret school services available.
- inform parents about information concerning child's progress and development.

Counselors should:

- conduct individual and group counseling sessions with students to aid them in their social development, school adjustment, and academic progress.
- assist parents and school personnel in understanding students of this age group in relating the school environment to student needs.
- assist in marshaling the total resources of the school to assist all students in their educational personal growth.
- assist in providing orientation services to all students.
- assist in the school's testing program.
- assist in maintaining up-to-date records on all students.
- assist in the referral process.
- confer and follow up on students in individual conferences to assist them with problems or concerns.
- counsel students who have particular needs in order to assist them in finding corrective measures or solutions.
- provide placement of students in classes.
- provide school "assistance" groups to address topical needs.

Administrators should:

- plan pupil programs of study.
- study and report factors that might lead to improvement of teaching methods and curriculum.
- plan school programs which are conducive to educational development for all students.
- develop good community-school public relations.

- TEACHER AS A COUNSELOR -

Counseling is a person-to-person situation in which the focus is on enabling children who are being counseled, to work through to solutions of problems which perplex them and in which opportunities are provided to reorient viewed of self and community. The major purpose is to enable individual students to “understanding themselves so that they can solve their own problems” and that, in the process, they are aided to a self-determined resolution of their problems.

The emphasis in counseling, then, is on assisting the individual to change, to solve problems through the establishment of an interpersonal relationship, with a trained person, in which the verbal means are employed.

Teachers having had training in the field of human development are being placed in many situations which fit the definition of a counseling situation. Although the teacher is not a professional counselor, he/she serves in many situations as a front-line counselor. The reality factors of school life require them to know and understand the counseling process and point of view, and to understand how they function effectively in helping individuals through the establishment of counseling relationships.

- COUNSELING TECHNIQUES -

Individual Counseling

Individual counseling is the process of establishing with the child a relationship which enables him/her to learn about one's self, to set goals, and to develop self direction in moving towards these goals.

Counseling with individual pupils may concern issues:

- about students' inability to master subject matter
- about behavior in the classroom
- about family problems with parents and/or siblings
- about problems caused by normal physical maturation
- about emotional problems
- about orientation of new pupils

Small Group Classroom Counseling

Small group counseling is the process of establishing relationships with a small group of children, enabling them to communicate certain identified needs with the counselor and each other.

Small group counseling provides a major learning experience in human relations and could appropriately be applied in situations regarding:

- anti-social behavior (stealing, lying, fighting, etc.)
- poor study habits
- inadequate health practices
- lack of social skills
- understanding of common emotions (fear, hate, etc.)

Large Group Counseling

Large group counseling may be applicable in areas that assist in developing units for classroom use and introduces programs and units of study in various academic areas. Some of the areas that might be addressed in large group counseling are:

- Attitudes
- Social relationships
- Problem-solving
- Study habits
- Bullying and bias reduction
- Character education
- Appreciation of diversity and prejudice reduction
- Conflict resolution
- Career awareness

- COUNSELOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES -

Counselors recognize that some guidance activities require professional preparation and competence. Other services, however, traditionally provided by school counselors, do not require special professional preparation. To ensure the fullest development of all children's talents and capabilities, an effective guidance program must be a team effort with counselors and teachers working together for the benefit of all students. The counselors, therefore, provide the following unique services:

Services:

Counseling services: conduct individual group sessions with students to aid them in their social development, school adjustment, and academic progress

Consultation services: assist parents and school personnel in understanding students of this age group and in relating the school environment to student needs

Coordination services: assist in marshaling the total resources of the school to assist all students in their educational and personal growth

Orientation: assist parents and students

Testing services: coordinate testing programs

Maintenance of school records: maintain records

Referral services

Follow-up activities: confer and follow up students in individual conferences regarding difficulties or concerns

Activities:

Get to know student body

Meet and conference with all seventh and eighth grade students

Coordinate school-based "help" groups

Peer mediations

Peer helpers

Peer tutors

Follow up on all students:

Orientation

Confer with teachers and parents as needed regarding individual students as well as groups of children in regard to their school adjustment and academic development

Pupil placement

Maintaining student records

Summer school programs

Program:

Grade 7

Problem solving
Self concept
Peer relationships
Respect for ones self and others
Parental expectations
Conflict resolutions
Appreciating diversity
Character development

Grade 8

Making choices
Peer relations
Standardized tests
High school course selection
Conformity versus individuality
Prejudice reduction
Conflict resolution
Character development
Coping with crisis
Problem solving
Suicide awareness
Transition to high school
Substance abuse

- **EVALUATION** -

Evaluation of the effectiveness of the program will be determined by:

Follow-up of student attitudes.

The opinion of the teacher/counselor – which took place during the process(es) and the teacher/counselor's estimate of the progress made toward goals.

Scrutiny of the verbal exchange during the process, interview, etc.

Observation.