

## Job Profile – Functional Summary For the Position of a School Counsellor

This resource has been developed for the purposes of assisting in the identification and development of rehabilitation programs for injured or ill employees, and to provide detailed information about **common** job demands. When supporting an injured employee in their return to work this document is used in conjunction with Workplace Specific Details to ensure information is customised.

**DISCLAIMER** - This job profile explains the common work activities and physical demands of a School Counsellor. Due to the different settings and circumstances where this role may be undertaken, there may be differences to times and activities as outlined in the job profile.

### Description of the role of the School Counsellor:

The school Counsellor has dual qualifications in both teaching and post-graduate qualifications in psychology. The School Counsellor provides counselling, psychological assessment and intervention services for students from pre-school to year 12. They work alongside families, school staff, and other professionals to support the learning, mental health and wellbeing needs of students to create safe, healthy and supportive learning environments.

It is the role of the school Counsellor to provide a comprehensive student support program within the school environment, offering counselling with students on a one-on-one basis or in a group setting assisting the students with specific issues, acting as a mediator or providing information on other life skills.

This document indicates the average time spent during a working day on common work activities and physical work demands that have been identified as essential to the successful performance of the role. The frequency of these work tasks is described using one of the following measures: Descriptor, Percentage of Time, or Amount of Time, based on an average 7-hour working day.

Descriptor	Percentage of Time	Amount of Time based on 7 hours per day
Not present	0%	0
Rare	1% - 7%	From 4 mins to 30 mins
Occasional	8% - 33%	35 mins to 2 ¼ hours
Frequent	34% - 66%	2 ½ hours to 4 ½ hours
Constant	67% - 100%	4 ¾ hours to 7 hours

*This table is derived from the US Department of Labor Physical Demand Characteristics of Work, 1996*

### Hours of Work and Scheduled Breaks

**Hours of Work:** Employees work during the normal daily hours of operation of the school, during which classes are conducted; this is commonly Monday to Friday. There may be a need to be present half an hour before school starts and half an hour after dismissal in the afternoon. Where special circumstances arise which, in the interests of the school, necessitate attendance beyond these hours, the attendance of employees may be required.

**Meal Breaks:** Employees are entitled to a lunch break of not less than 30 minutes.

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### Frequency of Physical Job demands (Average % of Full Time Work Day)

Note: If absent then assume it is rare (1-7%) or not present			
	Occasional (8-33%)	Frequent (34% - 66%)	Constant (67%-100%)
Sitting			
Standing -Static			
Standing – Dynamic			
Walking – Flat Terrain			
Walking – Slippery/Gravel			
Climbing – Step stools/Ladders			
Climbing – Stairs			
Stooping			
Kneeling			
Couching – One off			
Crawling			
Balancing – above ground			
Reaching			
Handling			
Pushing			
Pulling			
Lifting			
Carrying			
Fine Motor			
Tactility			
Driving			
Visual Function			
Speech			
Auditory			

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Tools/ Equipment Handled
Pens/pencils/whiteboard markers and books
Computer workstation/telephone
Test resources – approximately 5 – 8kg. Use of trolley bag when travelling to complete testing

Loads Lifted & Carried (Average % of Full Time Work Day)					
Weight range	Not present	Rare (1-7%)	Occasional (8-33%)	Frequent (34-66%)	Constant (67 – 100%)
0-5 kg				Floor to Waist to Shoulder	
6-10kg			Floor to Waist		
11-15kg	X				
15-20kg	X				
21-25kg+	X				

**Note:** - Loads are a guide of maximum required in a full time work day.

Common Job Activities (used in conjunction with Workplace Specific Details)		Average Time	Critical Job Demand
1	<b>Counselling</b> Students who are referred to the School Counsellor may require counselling regarding difficulties that they are experiencing at school, relationship or family issues, and concerns around student protection. Counselling generally occurs on a one-on-one basis of varying duration as determined appropriate by the School Counsellor. As part of this process the School Counsellor may act as a mediator between parties, may implement specific training programs or may liaise with Welfare Services including non-government organisations. The School Counsellor may also refer students to external health professionals for ongoing specific health-based treatment. School Counsellors also conduct a range of psychometric or cognitive testing in a one-on-one situation with identified students and write extensive reports to meet staff and departmental requirements. School Counsellors may need to take an active role across the school in supporting serious incident responses that impact on students, teachers or the school community.	(8 students generally seen in a day); Cognitive assessments can take 2 hours	Yes
2	<b>Stakeholder liaison</b> School Counsellors liaise with a range of stakeholders including parents, teachers, external health professionals and other professionals as required via telephone or in meetings as required to discuss specific issues. In some cases, Counsellors may involve parents in counselling sessions with their child.	Parent meetings can take 30 – 60 minutes each	Yes
3	<b>Computer based tasks</b> Includes electronic case notes and records management, emails, test scoring, research, and writing reports. Report writing forms a large component of the role.	Average 1-2hours per day	Yes

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4	<b>Meetings</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School Counsellors are required to have frequent one on one supervision meetings with their Senior Psychologist Education (SPE) to discuss case matters, issues or management of difficult cases and their own mental health.</li> <li>Staff meetings/liaison with teaching employees: involving face to face meetings at which day to day operational issues, short term and long-term strategic planning for the school occur.</li> </ul>	Varies according to school	Yes
5	<b>Committee meetings</b> <p>School Counsellors may also be required to, or choose to, participate in certain school-based committees (for example the school's professional learning committee).</p>	Varies according to school	No
6	<b>Extra curricular activities</b> <p>School Counsellors may also participate in extra-curricular activities most of which are of a voluntary nature. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overnight camps (attended by some School Counsellors, voluntary)</li> <li>External professional learning</li> </ul>		No

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### Environmental Factors

The following environmental factors exist in the workplace.

Low - level ambient noise (from students, practical activities e.g. music practice) requiring considerable voice projection to be heard.

Often offices have limited space which makes it difficult to maintain personal space or to hold group sessions.

Worker/ team relationships – the work environment may require the employee to adjust to and manage different working styles, and demonstrate an ability to work cooperatively.

Shortened work breaks may be taken on a voluntary basis.

While deadlines exist for many tasks, the level of demand is dependent upon the school environment and staffing level. School Counsellors may also be required to address multiple demands and a large number of unplanned interruptions may occur throughout the working day.

The nature of this roles means that the School Counsellor may need to deal with people who are undergoing stressful or emotional events.

### Core Workplace Expectations (Organisational, Interpersonal, and Psychosocial).

The following major workplace expectations have been identified with reference to Department Policies and Guidelines, the NSW Institute of Teachers website and O\*NET (the Occupational Information Network, a comprehensive database of worker attributes and job characteristics).

All employees have a responsibility to comply with legislation, departmental policy, procedures and the Department's Code of Conduct, perform their duties effectively, provide impartial and accurate advice and act in a manner that promotes a productive and harmonious working environment.

Negotiating with others - In dealing with other people, employees should be able to accommodate and tolerate different opinions and perspectives and sort out their disagreements by rational discussion.

Departmental employees have a duty to take reasonable care for the safety and welfare of the students in their charge.

Establishing and maintaining effective communication – includes appropriate communication with supervisors, peers, subordinates, students, parents and community members

Employees who work with students have a special responsibility in presenting themselves as appropriate role models for those students.

Training and Teaching Others – Includes identifying the educational needs of others, developing formal educational or training programs or classes, and teaching or instructing, and assessing and reporting for effective learning

School Counsellors create and maintain safe, healthy and supportive learning environments. Effective strategies for the management of student behaviour and the maintenance of a safe working and learning environment include WHS procedures, student welfare procedures, curriculum and environmental management.

Investigations – participate in reporting investigation and resolution processes, including mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse or neglect, and participation as a witness or party to performance, discipline, grievance, Work Cover or other processes.

Have the capacity to be flexible, adaptable and willing to work in an environment where the day-to-day priorities and tasks may vary considerably. Have the capacity to maintain their own mental health and a balanced approach to life when constantly dealing with challenging situations.

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The use of this terminology, referred to in Frequency of Physical Job demands table on page 2, helps to establish a common language for key stakeholders when describing job demands in terms of frequency of activity performance, type of posture or movement and the level of strength/ lifting required.

Definition of Physical Job Demands	
<b>LIFTING</b>	Raising or lowering an object from one level to another (includes upward pulling and/or exerting upward force to hold an object in static position).
<b>CARRYING</b>	Transporting an object, usually holding in the hands, arms or on the shoulder.
<b>PUSHING</b>	Exerting force upon an object so that the object moves away from the force (including stooping, striking, kicking, treading and exerting force to hold an object in static position).
<b>PULLING</b>	Exerting force upon an object so that the object moves toward the force (including jerking and exerting force to hold an object in static position).
<b>SITTING</b>	Remaining in a seated position.
<b>STANDING</b>	Remaining on one's feet in an upright position without moving greater than three steps.
<b>WALKING</b>	Moving about on foot greater than 3 steps.
<b>CLIMBING</b>	Ascending or descending ladders, stairs, scaffolding, ramps, poles and the like, using feet and legs, or hands and arms.
<b>BALANCING</b>	Maintaining body equilibrium to prevent falling when walking, standing, crouching, or running on either elevated and unguarded, narrow, slippery or erratically moving surfaces.
<b>STOOPING</b>	Bending the body forward and downward by bending spine at waist, requiring full use of lower extremities and back muscles.
<b>KNEELING</b>	Bending legs at knees to come to rest on knees.
<b>CROUCHING</b>	Bending body forward and downward by bending legs and spine.
<b>CRAWLING</b>	Moving about on the hands and knees.
<b>REACHING</b>	Extending arms(s) in any direction.
<b>HANDLING</b>	Seizing or grasping, holding, turning or otherwise working with the hands. Fingers are only involved to the extent that they are extensions of the hand.
<b>FINE MOTOR</b>	Picking, pinching, or otherwise working with the fingers, other than with the whole hand or arm as in handling.
<b>TACTILITY</b>	Perceiving attributes of objects, such as: size, shape, temperature, or texture by touching with skin; particularly that of fingertips.