

## OBSERVATION AND EVALUATION PROCESS FOR SCHOOL COUNSELORS

### PHILOSOPHY AND PURPOSE

The philosophy and purpose of the observation and evaluation process for school counselors in the Diocese of Wilmington serves as a guideline to effectively integrate the philosophy of Catholic education into the school counseling program. The goal of evaluation is to continue to strengthen leadership, advocacy, and collaboration, promote student success, and respond to identified needs that provide each student with the support and necessary tools to be effectively engaged in the overall school program.

The school counselor evaluation is based on research-based professional standards and the Ethical Standards for School Counselors as outlined by the American School Counselors Association (ASCA). The following standards provide a framework to measure the counselor's role and responsibilities with two optional standards for counselors with specific responsibilities as noted:

- Ministry of Catholic Education
- Professional Knowledge
- Ethical Responsibilities
- Consultation and Collaboration
- Leadership
- Professionalism
- Effective Instruction *(optional standard for counselors who facilitate classroom lessons)*
- College Counseling *(optional standard for college counselors)*

### RESPONSIBILITY FOR OBSERVATION AND EVALUATION

The counselor is responsible for providing the principal and his/her designee with a current schedule of classes and/or group sessions.

The principal bears the primary responsibility for the observation and evaluation of school counselors. The principal may designate an assistant principal, department chair, or head counselor to assist in the process.

### TYPES OF OBSERVATIONS

The principal or designated observer must keep a record of the dates for each type of classroom/group session observation.

*It should be noted that observations should not be conducted during individual counseling sessions to respect the privacy of the student/family and to maintain the confidence understood in the counselor/student relationship.*

- A. Formal Observation
  - encompasses the entire class period or group session
- B. Informal Observation
  - Is of short duration - approximately 10 minutes
- C. Announced Observation
  - is preceded by a pre-observation conference
  - is followed by a post-observation conference

D. Unannounced Observation

- may be followed by a post-observation conference at the request of observer or counselor

E. Beyond the Classroom/Group Session Observations

- take place outside of the counselor's office/classroom by the principal or designated observer. Examples include but are not limited to behaviors during:
  - o communications and interactions (*not confidential in nature*) with administrators, faculty, staff, students, parents, or the broader community
  - o liturgies, prayer services, and community service experiences
  - o referrals to and interactions with outside professional agencies/individuals
  - o assigned responsibilities
  - o school-sponsored events
  - o faculty meetings and other professional development experiences

## **FREQUENCY AND TYPES OF OBSERVATIONS BY THE PRINCIPAL OR DESIGNATED OBSERVER**

A. Counselors, with less than five years' experience, who facilitate classroom lessons:

- one formal announced or unannounced classroom observation
- two informal announced or unannounced classroom observations
- two formal or informal announced group sessions, if applicable

B. Counselors, with five or more years' experience, who facilitate classroom lessons:

- one formal announced or unannounced classroom observation
- one informal announced or unannounced classroom observation
- one formal or informal announced group session, if applicable

C. Counselors, with less than five years' experience, who are not responsible for facilitating classroom lessons on a regular basis:

- two formal announced group sessions
- two informal announced group sessions

D. Counselors, with five or more years' experience, who are not responsible for facilitating classroom lessons on a regular basis:

- one formal announced group session
- one informal announced group session

*Observations of group sessions must respect the ethics of confidentiality.*

## **TIMELINE FOR OBSERVATION FEEDBACK**

The principal or designated observer should provide the counselor with a written report for each formal observation and each required informal observation within one week of the observation. Verbal and/or written feedback may be offered for non-required classroom/group session observations and beyond the classroom observations. The counselor may choose to respond in writing to the report; this should be done within one week of receiving the report. The counselor's comments should be attached to the report before it is placed in the personnel file. If a counselor chooses not to sign the written feedback, the observer should note this on the document before it is placed in the counselor's personnel file.

Required observations should be completed by May 15 each year.

## **SUMMATIVE EVALUATIONS**

Each counselor will receive an annual, written Summative Evaluation during the month of May or in June no later than seven days prior to the end of the school year. The Summative Evaluation, based on the Professional Standards for Catholic School Counselors, should reflect the information shared from all observations of the counselor throughout the specified year. Each Summative Evaluation must be signed by the principal and the counselor. If the counselor chooses not to sign the evaluation, he/she must submit a written response to be attached to the evaluation.

Each counselor will be offered the opportunity to meet with the principal about the Summative Evaluation and be invited to submit a written response to the Summative Evaluation within one week of receiving it.

The original, signed copy of the Summative Evaluation will be sent to the Catholic Schools Office by June 30. The school should place a copy of the evaluation in the counselor's personnel file and give a copy to the counselor.