**Kia ora tatou from the Counsellors.**

Week 2 already and the holidays are fast fading into a distant memory. We hope you all enjoyed the break with your young people.

Parents of students who attend counselling sometimes have questions around confidentiality within counselling, so I thought it might be helpful to address this within this column.

As Counsellors we adhere to the NZAC Code of Ethics. In a nutshell, the confidentiality clause directs us to treat all communication within counselling as confidential, with the limits of confidentiality being reached when there is a concern for the safety of the client or others.

It is important though, to put this in the context of counselling within a school. We are very conscious of the responsibility we hold in our work to support our students through supporting their connections with others, and particularly with parents/caregivers. Often when students come to us with a problem it is because something has gotten in the way of the close relationship they usually enjoy with their parents and whanau. We work hard to find out what is getting in the way of peaceful times at home, with the intention of putting your child and you on the same team in standing against this problem and in support of family connection.

This might mean helping them find the words to start a conversation at home about what is troubling them. If this is too hard for them we will offer to phone home to let you know what’s going on, or we can encourage your child to allow us to invite you to come in to school for a talk together. While the decision rests ultimately with the child, we do our utmost to be influential in strengthening the parent/child relationship.

To this end, we also welcome your calls or emails when you have a concern for your child. Often, parents don’t wish their child to know that they have been in touch and we are more than happy to work around this.

When young people seek out counselling it is not because they are “closer” to us in any way, it is because they are NOT “closer” to us. Our objectivity and non-emotional link with our students enables them to speak without the worry of causing upset, something that often gets in the way of them talking in the first instance with you, their parents whom they love dearly.

Na mihi nui kia koe,

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