

1 Guidance and counseling programs are provided by the school system with the ultimate aim of
2 improving student performance by implementing strategies and activities that support and
3 maximize student learning; helping students to grow in their personal and social development;
4 and providing a foundation for acquiring the skills that enable students to make a successful
5 transition from school to the world of work. The principal of each school shall develop a
6 counseling program that meets the objectives of the State Board of Education's comprehensive
7 school counseling program curriculum and the needs of the student population at that school.
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9 School guidance counselors and other guiding adults in middle and high schools shall provide
10 guidance and information to students about high school course selections and requirements prior
11 to ninth grade, in order to inform them about the requirements for college entry, including
12 accelerated preparation for college entry. Guidance counselors shall encourage ninth grade
13 students to complete these requirements in less than four years if feasible and appropriate.
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15 The counseling program is the shared responsibility of teachers, counselors, parents, and
16 community members, and should operate with the collaboration of all individuals involved in
17 educating students, including those who assist children with special needs or students who are at
18 risk of dropping out of school or not meeting performance expectations. Input from parents and
19 students should be sought in accordance with the school's plan for involvement of the
20 community in school programs. All school personnel must follow the Parental Involvement Plan
21 (policy 1310/4002) in regard to parental notification and permission for counseling programs. In
22 addition, school personnel shall annually provide all students in Grades 9 through 12 with
23 information on the manner in which a parent may lawfully abandon a newborn baby with a
24 responsible person, in accordance with G.S. 7B-500.
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26 Counseling may be provided on an individual basis or in small or large groups. School
27 counselors may refer students who have extensive needs or needs that go beyond the purpose of
28 the counseling program to community resources.
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30 Students may seek counseling or be referred by staff or parents. Any staff member who is aware
31 that a student is contemplating suicide or is otherwise suffering from an emotional or
32 psychological crisis must immediately notify the counseling program in accordance with any
33 rules established by the superintendent or principal. Any counselor or other staff member who
34 knows or has cause to suspect child abuse, neglect, dependency, or death as a result of
35 maltreatment must report the information as provided in policy 4240/7312, Child Abuse –
36 Reports and Investigations, and as required by law.
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38 Counseling programs are most effective when voluntarily entered into by a student. School
39 officials and teachers may recommend a counseling program to help a student meet standards of
40 conduct and academic performance established by the board and school system. However,
41 students will not be required to attend individual or small group counseling sessions to address
42 identified significant personal issues unless agreement has been reached with the parent and
43 student in a behavior contract, an intervention plan, or, for special education students, an
44 individualized education plan. (See Student Behavior Policies (4300 series), policy 3420,

45 Student Promotion and Accountability, and policy 3520, Special Education Programs/Rights of
46 Students with Disabilities.)

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48 Information obtained in a session with a counselor may be privileged and protected from
49 disclosure as provided by law. A counselor cannot be required to testify concerning privileged
50 information unless, as provided by G.S. 8-53.4, the student waives the privilege or the court
51 compels testimony as necessary to the proper administration of justice. The school counselor
52 privilege does not, however, exempt the counselor from reporting child abuse as required by G.S.
53 7B-301. Any notation made by a counselor for his or her own use is a confidential document
54 and is neither a public record nor a part of the student's record. Such confidential documents do
55 not have to be shared with parents or others except as required by law. Any document prepared
56 by a counselor that is shared or intended to be shared with other staff is considered an
57 educational record of the student and is available to the parent or eligible student in accordance
58 with policy 4700, Student Records.

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60 Legal References: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. 1232g; G.S. 7B-301, -
61 500; 8-53.4; 115C-12, -47, -401; State Board of Education Policies ~~GCS-F-011, GCS-L-~~
62 ~~006~~GRAD-006, SCOS-011

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64 Cross References: Parental Involvement (policy 1310/4002), Goals and Objectives of the
65 Educational Program (policy 3000), Student Promotion and Accountability (policy 3420),
66 Special Education Programs/Rights of Students with Disabilities (policy 3520), Child Abuse –
67 Reports and Investigations (policy 4240/7312), Student Behavior Policies (4300 series), Student
68 Records (policy 4700)

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70 Adopted: January 19, 2016

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72 Revised: [DATE] (legal references only)