



MARLBOROUGH GIRLS' COLLEGE

Te Kāreti Kōhine o Wairau

MGC GUIDANCE COUNSELLOR

JOB DESCRIPTION

Last Updated: September 2026

MGC Vision for Learning

At Marlborough Girls' College, our values underpin our mahi - Whanaungatanga, Manaakitanga and Kotahitanga. Our purpose is that everyone learns and everyone thrives. The school's Vision for Learning is held within the whakataukī:

Mā te kahukura ka rere te manu

"Adorn the bird with feathers so that it may fly."

This whakataukī describes the guidance and counselling role directly: the Guidance Counsellor's task is to equip (adorn) students with the insight, skills and connections they need to fly under their own power. As set out below, the Guidance Counsellor is expected to work in a way that enhances and makes explicit MGC's Vision for Learning, Te Whare Tapa Whā as the school's Hauora | Wellbeing model, its relational and restorative culture, and our Ākonga Learning Capabilities across all aspects of their practice — building students' capabilities and independence.

The Guidance Counsellor gives practical effect to mana whenua aspirations and values as outlined in Ngā Kōrero Tuku Iho — the cultural narratives shared by Ngāti Toa Rangatira, Ngāti Rārua, Ngāti Kuia and Rangitāne o Wairau — ensuring that pastoral care in our kura is culturally grounded, inclusive, and responsive to the identity, language and culture of every student.

Purpose of Position

The key objective of this position is to provide professional counselling and pastoral support to students, whānau and staff, working within the New Zealand Association of Counsellors (NZAC) Code of Ethics, the Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand's Code of Professional Responsibility and Standards for the Teaching Profession, and the school's vision for learning and values.

Accountability

The Guidance Counsellor will report and be accountable to the Deputy Principal - Hauora | Wellbeing and the Principal.

This is a 40 hour per week position. For a candidate who is suitably qualified and experienced, this role may carry the Head of Guidance leadership responsibility, remunerated with 2 Middle Leadership Units (2MU) and 1 Middle Management Allowance (1MMA).

Functional Relationships

The Guidance Counsellor will develop, foster and maintain relationships with:

- The Guidance Team: Counsellors, Educational Psychologist, Deans, Youth Workers, Hauora Leader and Kaiawhina
- Whanau teachers and all school staff
- School based Attendance staff and Marlborough Attendance Service staff
- DP - Hauora | Wellbeing and the Principal and Senior Leadership Team
- The CL Learning Centre
- Outside agencies, including health and social service agencies - government and NGO's
- Whānau, and where relevant, mana whenua representatives
- An NZAC-registered clinical supervisor, for regular professional supervision

Professional and Ethical Framework

This role is bound by, and is expected to remain current with, the frameworks below. As these are periodically revised, the Guidance Counsellor is responsible for checking the current published version of each with the relevant body.

The Guidance Counsellor holds, or works towards, Teaching Council registration or a Limited Authority to Teach (LAT), and full membership of the New Zealand Association of Counsellors (NZAC).

The table below sets out the Standards for the Teaching Profession (2026) and, for each, the expectations of the Teaching Council standard, the NZAC Code of Ethics (2002, revised 2020), and the relevant expectation of mana whenua as set out in Ngā Kōrero Tuku Iho.

2026 Standard for the Teaching Profession	Integrated expectation for the Guidance Counsellor — Teaching Council, NZAC, and mana whenua
1. Te Tiriti o Waitangi Partnership <i>(across all domains)</i>	Understand and recognise the unique status of tangata whenua, and practise and develop te reo and tikanga Māori in support of positive engagement with Māori students, whānau and communities. This aligns with NZAC's requirement that its Code of Ethics be read alongside Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and gives direct effect to mana whenua's aspiration that tauira know their whakapapa, ancestry and identity, and mana whenua's aspiration for staff to normalise the use of te reo Māori and apply tikanga and kawa in everyday practice.
2. Know the Content and How to Teach It <i>(Professional Knowledge)</i>	Maintain current, well-founded knowledge of counselling theory, evidence-informed practice, and the statutory frameworks relevant to school-based counselling (e.g. the Oranga Tamariki Act and Vulnerable Children Act requirements). This reflects NZAC's expectation that counsellors practise within their competence and current evidence base, and supports mana whenua's expectation that frameworks such as Te Whare Tapa Whā sit alongside clinical models of practice.
3. Know the Learner and the Learning Process <i>(Professional Knowledge)</i>	Understand the cognitive, emotional and social factors affecting each student, including neurodivergence, disability and trauma, and richly contextualise support to each student's culture, identity and interests. This mirrors NZAC's ethical requirement to respect each client's frame of reference rather than impose assumptions, and supports mana whenua's expectation that tauira are seen and supported holistically, including through their whakapapa and identity.

4. Plan for and Implement Effective Teaching and Learning <i>(Professional Practice)</i>	Plan and deliver counselling, casework and programmes (such as peer support and restorative practices) that build students' agency, self-regulation and resilience rather than dependency, and specifically support the educational aspirations of Māori learners. This is consistent with NZAC's expectation of clear contracting and negotiated goals with clients, and gives effect to mana whenua's aspiration that taura develop self-determination, patience, commitment and resilience.
5. Create and Maintain Supportive and Safe Learning Environments <i>(Professional Practice)</i>	Foster a physically, socially, culturally and emotionally safe environment for counselling and casework, with clear and restorative approaches to behaviour and the safe, ethical handling of records and technology. This reflects NZAC's requirements around confidentiality, professional boundaries and client safety, and supports mana whenua's expectation of a safe and inclusive school culture free of intolerance, harassment and bullying.
6. Assess, Provide Feedback, and Report on Learning <i>(Professional Practice)</i>	Use regular, appropriate assessment of student need and risk to inform casework, provide clear and understandable feedback to students and whānau, and report to the Principal in line with statutory obligations. This aligns with NZAC's requirements for clear contracting, informed consent and secure record-keeping under the Privacy Act 2020, and supports mana whenua's expectation that communication with whānau is conducted with manaakitanga and whanaungatanga.
7. Engage in Professional Learning <i>(Professional Engagement)</i>	Engage in an ongoing cycle of reflection, supervision and professional learning to improve practice. This directly parallels NZAC's mandatory requirements for regular clinical supervision and annual continuing professional development (CPD), and should include professional learning in tikanga, te reo Māori, and mana whenua's cultural narratives.
8. Engage in Productive Professional Relationships <i>(Professional Engagement)</i>	Work constructively and collaboratively with Deans, In-School Attendance Support and Marlborough Attendance Service staff, the Educational Psychologist, outside agencies, and colleagues, and build positive, culturally appropriate relationships with whānau to support each student's learning and wellbeing. This reflects NZAC's expectations of collaborative, multi-disciplinary practice and clear communication, and supports mana whenua's aspiration for an effective tangata whenua voice in decision-making and for growing opportunities for mana whenua to participate in school processes and activities.

In practical, day-to-day terms, this also requires the Guidance Counsellor to:

- Hold, or work towards, full NZAC membership and a current NZAC practising certificate
- Undertake regular clinical supervision with an approved supervisor, and complete annual CPD verified for certificate renewal
- Contract clearly with clients about confidentiality, and follow NZAC's complaints process where required
- Engage with the school's Professional Growth Cycle against the 2026 Standards for the Teaching Profession

Sector-Specific Guidance

In addition to the integrated standards above, this role is informed by sector-specific guidance developed jointly by NZAC and PPTA for school settings, including:

- The School Guidance Counsellor: Guidelines for Principals and Boards of Trustees (NZAC/PPTA) — covering the principal/counsellor relationship, confidentiality, and the assessment and management of at-risk students
- NZAC's published key competencies for how school guidance counsellors contribute to student learning and to the Key Competencies of The New Zealand Curriculum
- Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health guidance on suicide prevention activity in schools

Outcomes for Taurira

The Guidance Counsellor's work is expected to result in outcomes where students:

- Know their whakapapa, ancestry, and identity
- Have self-determination in making their own future
- Have patience, commitment, and resilience to build and maintain strong relationships and complete tasks
- Recognise the skill and excellence in themselves and others
- Understand the importance of learning and maintaining knowledge of Iwi and Māori

Responsibilities Specific to This Role

- Take a lead role alongside the Senior Leadership Team for the guidance network and whānau teachers, ensuring pastoral care meets the needs of the school community
- Promote and model Te Whare Tapa Whā as MGC's model of Hauora | Wellbeing across the school community
- Strengthen MGC's relational and restorative culture, using its frameworks to resolve/repair relationships and barriers to student learning, and empowering students to take agency and ownership of their choices, actions, and outcomes
- Work collaboratively with all staff in their guidance and teaching roles to ensure students meet their potential
- Network within and outside the school to ensure individuals have access to appropriate support and information
- Help establish a safe and inclusive culture free of intolerance, harassment and bullying
- Act as an agent for positive improvement within the school community
- Demonstrate leadership in area of expertise, particularly by providing research-based evidence and advice on key school improvements and in crisis management
- Engage in positive and proactive communication with all members of the school community
- Review the functioning of the Counselling and Guidance area alongside the Deputy Principal in charge and other team members, to improve outcomes for students
- Meet statutory obligations to keep the Principal informed of key information

Key Functions

Counselling

- Accept self-referrals from students, whānau and staff
- Accept appropriate student referrals from staff, whānau and outside agencies
- Provide one-on-one and group counselling sessions as appropriate
- Communicate with whānau as appropriate and within the bounds of confidentiality
- Meet with students and whānau as appropriate
- Organise in-school support for students in consultation with the Dean and Head of Level
- Complete referrals to outside agencies as required, and inform the Principal of all statutory referrals

- Facilitate restorative meetings and conferences between members of the school community
- Apply a strengths-based, capability-building approach in line with the Ākonga Learning Capabilities (particularly Manage Self, Identity, Grit and Communication), empowering students towards independence and self-management rather than creating dependency on counselling or other support
- Keep appropriate records of counselling work, ensuring they are kept securely and confidentially in line with the Privacy Act 2020 and the Health (Retention of Health Information) Regulations 2020

Programme Work

- Co-ordinate and/or assist with the preparation, delivery and evaluation of school programmes such as the Hauora programme, Tuakana Teina programme, restorative practices
- Develop and present guidance-related training programmes to meet the needs of staff, students and whānau
- Maintain currency in contemporary issues for adolescent girls. Research, develop and present courses and programmes as agreed with the SLT in charge of Guidance and the Principal

Administration

- Assist with the transition of students from previous schools
- Assist with administration and management of the Guidance Department, including the Guidance Handbook, department goals, the Whānau Teacher programme, and pastoral curriculum support

Professional Development

- Attend regular professional supervision in line with NZAC requirements
- Complete continuing professional development through relevant professional learning and conferences, verified annually for NZAC practising certificate renewal
- Engage with the school's Professional Growth Cycle in line with the Teaching Council's 2026 Standards for the Teaching Profession

School

- Take an active role in the school community by supporting house, whole-school, and extracurricular activities
- Other roles and responsibilities as negotiated and agreed between both parties

Professional Development and Annual Review

The staff member is expected to set professional goals and participate in the school's Professional Growth Cycle, reflecting the current Teaching Council Standards for the Teaching Profession. Professional Growth Cycle discussions will help identify strengths, highlight areas of development needing assistance, and confirm professional goals. The Professional Growth Cycle will be reviewed with respect to the effectiveness with which the key roles detailed in this job description, and the professional and ethical frameworks referenced above, are being performed.

Personal Health and Safety

The staff member agrees to take all reasonable care to avoid damage to themselves or any other person or school property through any action, inaction, or instruction given by them while representing the school or using school property.

Guidance counselling is emotionally demanding work. The staff member is responsible for actively managing their own emotional and mental wellbeing, including through regular clinical supervision, and for raising any concerns about their workload, wellbeing, or capacity to safely carry out this role with their employer at an early stage. The school will engage with any such concerns in a timely and supportive manner, and in a way consistent with its obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 and other relevant employment law.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

Guidance Counsellor