



## Elementary Guidance Counseling

### **Introduction:**

Guidance Counseling for Elementary students is an important aspect of the RRCA initiative to develop the whole child. There are specific steps that teachers and administrators take to ensure that not only academic, but also social, emotional, and spiritual needs of students are identified, targeted and successfully achieved.

### **Classroom :**

The classroom setting is a prime environment for developing teacher and student relationships. Teachers strive to create a nurturing atmosphere where mutual respect is expected and practiced. It is a priority for RRCA teachers to foster a sense of community in which all members feel secure and valued. Because of small class sizes, teachers have the opportunity to not only know their students on a personal level, but also develop rich relationships with families as well. Therefore when children are struggling academically, socially, or emotionally, the teacher is often the first line of defense. Parents and teachers partner together to develop a plan of action in order to support students who are exhibiting behaviors that limit or prevent successful outcomes in the classroom.

Teachers use biblical principles as the foundation for, not only instruction, but also behavior management. Students are held accountable for their behavior choices, however, teachers value the heart of the child above all else. Therefore discipline is conducted in a loving, redemptive manner. If a student is referred to the Elementary Principal for their behavior, there will be natural consequences . Wise counsel based on biblical principles, time out, and parental contact are typical results of an administrative referral. Often, the Principal will pray with the child before allowing them to return to class. This gives the student an opportunity to ask forgiveness and help from a loving Heavenly Father, and the child knows they have a “clean slate” and fresh start when they walk into their classroom again.

### **Academic Needs:**

Instruction is differentiated in the subjects of Math and Reading in all Elementary grades in order to meet the academic needs of students. Homogenous groups enable teachers to utilize rotating centers and work with individuals at their learning level. Every Elementary teacher also provides a weekly scheduled “Help Class” in which students can access additional tutoring with the teacher. When students with learning differences require more intervention than the classroom teacher alone can accommodate, they have the option to enroll in RRCA’s Discovery Program. The Discovery teacher works with students, who are struggling academically, in their classroom during their scheduled Math or Reading time. This allows both the classroom and Discovery teachers to work cohesively and collaborate until the student is successful in achieving targeted learning objectives. If these interventions are not sufficient in meeting the student’s academic needs, the Discovery teacher may refer the student for academic testing through our partnership with Round Rock Independent School

District. RRISD will conduct a full battery of tests for qualifying RRCA students that will result in determining if a learning difference is present, as well as a plan of modifications that will best support the student academically. After formal testing has been completed, a meeting with the parents, teachers, and administrators is conducted so that the RRISD Diagnostician can go over the results and plan in detail. Once a student is identified with a learning difference that requires a modified curriculum, those modifications will be put in place for the student.

Likewise, students who excel academically, and need to be challenged intellectually beyond the classroom, have the option to enroll in RRCA's Discovery Advanced Program. This is a "pull-out" program for Elementary students who have outstanding academic performance in the classroom and have been identified through standardized test scores as having a high aptitude for learning.

### **Social, Emotional, and Spiritual Needs:**

RRCA is a ministry for families. The school community is an extended family. When one member is hurting, many members are affected. Should a student exhibit signs of social or emotional distress, the teacher will partner with the parents to develop a plan of action. When necessary, the parents, teacher, and principal will meet to discuss the most productive ways to support the child at school. Sometimes, despite everyone's concerted efforts, the child will not display expected outcomes in a desired timeframe, and the principal will meet with the parents again to refer the family to outside counseling. The first line of defense for distraught children is their local church. Often, there is counseling available for children and families within the church at a free or low cost. With the family's permission, the school will work with the pastoral staff of the church that the family attends. When home, school, and church are working together to reach the same targeted goals in support of a child, the best outcome is possible. RRCA students have also successfully utilized several counseling resources including Starry Counseling of Round Rock, the Timothy Center in Austin, Abundant Life Counseling in Austin, as well as others. It is our goal to embrace children and support parents with every resource possible in order to bring their children back to emotional health and stability.