

Counselling Guidelines and Procedures

What do we mean by Counselling?

According to the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy definition:

Counselling takes place when a Counsellor sees a client in a private and confidential setting to explore a difficulty the client is having, distress they may be experiencing or perhaps their dissatisfaction with life, or loss of a sense of direction and purpose. It is always at the request of the client as no one can properly be "sent" for counselling.

The reason for this document

As well as setting out the ethical standards, it provides an explanation of many aspects of the service provided by the school, to enable Counsellors to offer the most effective support. It forms an integral part of a working relationship, and should be kept in an accessible place for easy reference. This document is also published on the school website to allow parents and carers to understand the structures in place to ensure good practice in the counselling we undertake at the school.

Counselling at Ruskin High School is part of the Student Support Services within the school, and is an onsite response for those students needing the additional expertise that counselling brings to the overall pastoral support system.

Counsellor(s)

When possible, there will be a Student Counsellor on placement at the school, who is attending a recognised university or college course in Counselling. They will also be in a position to offer one to one counselling sessions, once a week for 50 minutes depending on the course requirement (up to 5 clients per week). They will work to a recognised ethical framework such as that of the BACP, and they will be mentored and regularly supervised by the university and school safeguarding lead.

Other Professionals

In order to reduce any potential conflicts of therapeutic effort, the Counsellor will not provide counselling to young people who are currently in receipt of other therapeutic support from another agency i.e. CAMHs.

If a student is undergoing counselling sessions, these will be brought to a close at the start of any external or other therapeutic intervention.

Pastoral Support and Counselling for pupils in school.

All pupils have access to pastoral support systems in school.

Students can also be directed to other online support and online counselling. A computer can be made available to students between the hours of 12.00 – 16.00 to access online counselling through Kooth.com. This will be done via a booking system with the office and allowed a 50 minute slot.

Kooth.com is a fully commissioned service from Cheshire East County Council, Kooth.com is a free, safe, confidential and non-stigmatised way for young people to receive counselling, advice and support on-line. This very popular service is used by large numbers of young people and delivers over 8000 counselling sessions each year. Staffed by fully trained and qualified counsellors and available until 10pm each night, 365 days per year, it provides a much needed out of hours service for advice and support. www.kooth.com

Referral Process

A referral can be made by a member of staff by completing the Referral Form in Appendix A. This is then given to the Safeguarding lead to discuss the requirements and any previous support and intervention received.

The student will be put onto the Counsellor's list depending on need. The counsellor will be given the referral and will do an initial meeting to assess the needs of the student. The counsellor will then recommend a period up to 6 weeks of sessions, once per week for 30 - 50 minutes per student.

Administration

Once a student is part of the process an appointment slip will be issued to the student each week informing them of the date and time of their appointment. The time will be varied to avoid missing regular lessons.

A student must inform the office if they are unable to attend. The counsellor can check through SIMS if any of the students are absent due to illness. Any cancellations and all relevant paperwork will be responsibly held by the administrator in Student Support Services at all times in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

If a student fails to attend a counselling session, without notice or explanation they will be removed from the list to allow for others to access the service.

Evaluation of impact

At the completion of counselling, young people, parents, the school counsellor and the link member of staff might be invited to complete and return an anonymous evaluation form. The link member of staff and other staff are well placed to notice how a child responds to counselling and the longer-term outcomes. It is important to recognise that in the early stages, especially as the student starts to talk about their feelings.

Statement of Good Practice and Confidentiality

All professional counsellors must be a member of a governing professional body, and be familiar with and work to the guidelines of the ethical Framework. Any breaches will be dealt with through the complaints procedures of the members' governing body.

Counsellors must notify School if they are the subject of a complaint to their professional body. In the instance of risk to self or other, confidentiality may be broken and the named Child Protection Officer shall be contacted. This will be outlined in the consent form for the young person from the outset.

CONFIDENTIAL

School counselling referral form (a copy is kept on the student's school record)

Student's name:

Date of Birth: M/F

Tutor group: Year:

First Language:

SEND:

PP:

CFC (Cared for Child):

Referral first suggested by (name) _____

Role in school _____

Date _____

Concerns identified / Reason for the referral (please be specific) :

Discussions / interventions with Form Tutors or YAM and outcomes?

Reviewed by:

Counselling intervention required:

Y / N

Focus for Counsellor support:



An appointment has been made for _____ to see (Name) _____,

School Counsellor, on:

Date:

Time:

Room:

Information for Young People

Information for young people Sometimes life can be tough, and people growing up can be under pressure. Having someone you can really talk to may be a help - perhaps a friend, a teacher, your parents, or someone in the family. At times, everyone feels worried or has problems that may be hard to talk about with the people close to you. You may worry about whether they will understand, whether you can trust them, whether they will blame you, or ignore your feelings. That is when you may think about talking to the school counsellor.

How are counsellors different?

- we don't blame or judge you
- we don't tell you what to do
- we are there for you - whatever the problem
- we are good at listening carefully
- we can see you in school time
- we help you sort things out in a way which suits you
- we understand how your school works and can get you more help and information if you need it
- we can give you the time and space you need
- we have had plenty of training and practice to help us do our job well.

Will the counsellor tell anyone about what I say?

We don't ordinarily tell other people about you or your situation without your permission. But if we think that you or someone else may be at risk or in danger, there may need to get help from others to keep you safe. We will talk with you about this and together we will try to find the best thing to do for you.

What kind of things can I tell the counsellor about?

Whatever is on your mind, problems, decisions, worries, and changes. It could be lots of different things - making friends and relationships, parents separating, losing your temper and getting into trouble at home and at school, teasing and bullying, losing someone special, mixed-up feelings, health worries, exams and coursework. All these things can affect how you feel and how you behave. Talking with you about your worries and problems is the start of helping you sort them out.

How does it work?

Seeing a counsellor might be your idea, or your parents or a teacher might suggest it. You don't have to decide straight away. You can meet the counsellor first, to ask questions and find out more. Counselling is voluntary - it's your choice, and whatever you decide is OK. You are likely to be offered appointments for regular sessions for several weeks at a room in school where you won't be disturbed. The school would like to contact your parents/carers to let them know you are seeing a counsellor, but will not go into details. It may still be possible to come to counselling without your parents being told, and you can discuss this with the counsellor.

How do I find out more or ask to see the counsellor? Ask a teacher or your Year Achievement Manager or speak to Mr Vitalis or Mrs Gale.

Information for parents and carers

How can counsellors help?

Counsellors are carefully selected for their experience and counselling qualifications. Counsellors are good at relating to children and are trained to listen without judging. They can help people sort out their thoughts and feelings about what is worrying them. Counsellors usually provide short-term counselling, on school premises, during school time. The length of the sessions may vary.

What is discussed during the sessions is confidential, but the child is told that the counsellor may discuss their problems with other people and agencies and get help from them if he or she thinks the child is at risk or in danger. The counsellor is independent from the school staff but understands the school and works with teachers and other staff to help the child, while at the same time keeping confidentiality. Sometimes the counsellor, with the child's knowledge and agreement, may refer the child to other agencies who can offer further help or guidance.

How does my son or daughter get to see the school counsellor?

Your child may ask to see the counsellor or you or a teacher may recommend it. Counselling needs to be a voluntary process. When counselling is offered to younger children, you will be asked to agree to your child having counselling. **Older children who ask for counselling and are capable of fully understanding what is involved may get counselling in their own right, without permission from a parent. It is legal and acceptable for a young person to ask for confidential counselling without parental consent providing they are of sufficient understanding and intelligence.**

Schools are advised that where a parent withholds consent or the young person may be very distressed and unwilling for the school to approach the parents, counselling can go ahead if the counsellor assesses the young person as Gillick competent to consent in their own right.

Gillick competence is a term originating in England and is used in medical law to decide whether a child (under 16 years of age) is able to consent to his or her own medical treatment, without the need for parental permission or knowledge.

To assess Gillick Competence counsellors need to give careful consideration to the following:

- Client's age (both chronological and mental)
- Developmental stage of the young person (physically, emotionally and intellectually)
- The nature of their problem
- The client's ability to act autonomously and accept precedents within society.

What issues can school counsellors help with?

There can be lots of pressures on young people growing up, for example friendships, teasing and bullying; exams and school work; family relationships, separations and changes; as well as illness, loss or death of someone close. Young people also have to cope with adolescence and the strong feelings and physical changes that go with it. Even quite young children can find that the time and space they get from counselling helps them feel better, and cope better at home and in school.

How can a parent or carer support the counselling?

It will help your child if you accept counselling as a normal and useful activity and show an interest if they want to talk to you about it, without pushing it if they prefer not to discuss it. Counselling is not a magic solution, and sometimes it takes a while to feel the benefit.

Who are the counsellors?

Counsellors are trained for this special type of work and are professionally managed and supervised. They work closely with school staff and other agencies. All counsellors work within a recognised code of ethics and practice such as that of the British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists (BACP). All counsellors provide references to show their suitability for the post and pass appropriate police checks. They should have obtained, or be aiming for, BACP accreditation and United Kingdom Register of Counsellors registration or equivalent.

Please contact Mr Vitalis or Mrs Gale via the school office for further information.