



Counselling Information for Parents

What is counselling?

Counselling provides an opportunity to talk in confidence to a qualified counsellor about any issues or concerns. The issues will depend on the individual, but common themes are stress, anxiety, relationships, bereavement, traumatic events and family breakdown.

Who are counsellors?

A counsellor is a professionally qualified person who has experience of working with adults and children. Counsellors are trained to listen without judging and to help people sort out their thoughts and feelings about whatever is concerning them.

Our counsellor is a member of staff who has the appropriate qualifications in counselling to undertake this specialist role. She has experience in working with children both as a counsellor and previously as a Teaching Assistant within our school.

Why do we need a counsellor in our school?

Few of us are able to work well or even function when we are stressed or unhappy. The impact of distressing or difficult situations can be felt even more acutely by young people than by adults. If pupils are able to receive emotional support from a suitably qualified person then they will have greater opportunity to reach their full potential.

Where and when will it take place?

We have a small designated room for counselling. It is comfortable and private and is intended to be a calm and relaxing space. Sessions will take place within the school day and will be mindful of your child's lessons.



How will the counselling service be Covid-safe?

Ideally, counselling is a free-flowing process, however in these times we must maintain a Covid-safe environment to protect each other. Therefore, the counselling service will look different to how it would usually. Just as in pupils' classrooms, unfortunately pupils will not have access to items such as cuddly toys, a dolls house or other items that they would in a normal counselling room.

To ensure Covid-safe practices, we will be adopting the same protocols as external counselling services: both counsellor and pupil will hand sanitise on arrival, each pupil will have their own equipment where possible, any other equipment and surfaces will be cleaned after each pupil uses the room and there will be at least a 30-minute break in between pupils to allow airflow and cleaning time. Chairs are also positioned 2 metres apart to maintain social distancing between pupil and counsellor.

How do you ensure confidentiality?

All notes and records are held in a secure place when not in use. The venue is in a quiet area of the school, thus enabling pupils to feel confident that they will not be overheard and can speak openly and freely with the counsellor.

What if my child makes a disclosure to the counsellor?

If a disclosure is made that would appear to place the pupil at risk of harm or potential harm to others then the school's child protection policy would be implemented.

What if my child refuses to have counselling?

The decision to take up counselling is entirely voluntary for young people just as it would be for an adult.

Can I support the counselling service?

Yes, and this is most welcomed. Experience shows that the most helpful thing a parent or carer can do is to show an acceptance of counselling as a normal and



useful activity and to show an interest if their child wishes to talk about it, but not to press them if they do not. Our counsellor acknowledges that this is not an easy task, and it is quite natural for parents to feel anxious about what may be being said in the sessions. It is hoped that talking with a counsellor will lead to greater openness, but you may need to allow a little time for this to occur.

If my child sees a counsellor does this mean I am failing as a parent?

Absolutely not! We all experience occasions when it feels hard to speak to those who are closest to us about things which may be bothering us. Often this can be because we do not want to worry those we love best, or because we want help thinking things through with someone unbiased and removed. The counsellor will not be judging you or your child, but looking to help them find a way through whatever is troubling them.