



## COUNSELLING POLICY

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|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Status                                                       | Non Statutory         | Date created                              | October 2003      |
| Any other statutory names for this policy (where applicable) |                       | Date first approved                       | October 2003      |
| Responsibility for this policy (job title)                   | Assistant Headteacher | Date last reviewed                        | Summer 2026       |
| Governors' Committee with responsibility for its review      | Teaching and Learning | Frequency of review                       | Every three years |
| Tick here if Bucks Policy attached in its entirety           |                       | To be put on the school website? (Yes/No) | Yes               |
| Approval necessary                                           | Sub Committee         |                                           |                   |

### Aims

Our school statement commits our staff to recognising every student's individual needs. It also expresses the belief that learning is enhanced by a happy, friendly and secure environment. We recognise that there are times when the support of parents, school staff and peers is not sufficient to address the complex issues facing young people today. In such cases, we believe that the provision of an organised period of counselling not only provides support for the student's personal development but can also strengthen their ability to take advantage of the educational opportunities offered at school.

### The policy and related procedures

Students will be referred to the School Counsellor following a referral from the Safeguarding and Wellbeing Manager.

### The Referral System

Students who may benefit from counselling might come to the attention of the Year Head or Student Wellbeing Team as a result of:

- A subject teacher or form tutor alerting them to a perceived problem
- Students approaching them themselves
- Friend(s) approaching a member of staff
- Parents approaching a member of staff

The Head of Year or Student Wellbeing Assistants will discuss students in need of support with their line manager. If necessary, a decision may be made to refer the student to the

Student Wellbeing Team who will meet with the student within an agreed time frame. A student can also self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Team. There is a counselling referral form on the Wellbeing page of the AHS website.

Following some initial meetings with the student, The Senior Mental Health Lead and DDSL will make a recommendation for the type of support required for this student. One such recommendation may be a referral for counselling. Priority will be given to PP students. Students will not be referred to the school counsellor if they are already receiving counselling out of school.

The Senior Mental Health Lead and DDSL oversees the Counsellor's appointments and a private space for the appointments to take place. The student is contacted via email using their school email account. A note is put on the register to state that the student will be absent from the lesson. It is never acceptable for students to be referred to the counsellor against their will.

Students will be offered a block of 6 sessions, which will then be reviewed and up to a possible 6 further sessions may be offered.

### **Confidentiality**

#### **Informing Parents**

There is no legal requirement to inform a student's parents that they are attending counselling. Decisions about sharing information are guided by the principle of Gillick competence, which considers whether a young person has sufficient understanding and maturity to make their own decisions.

Guidance from the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) does not set a fixed age for this. However, younger children are less likely to be considered Gillick competent, and in many cases it may be appropriate to involve parents.

When the counsellor first meets the student, they will discuss confidentiality and assess the student's level of understanding to determine whether parental involvement is appropriate.

#### **Confidentiality between the Counsellor and Student**

At the start of the series of counselling sessions, the counsellor will explain the extent to which the student can expect confidentiality, as set out by the BACP.

The counsellor will abide by the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy in cases where the student discloses information which suggests that they are at risk of significant harm. It is the responsibility of the counsellor to ensure that they have a working knowledge of this policy and are clear about the procedures to be followed in the event of such a disclosure.

#### **After the Counselling Session**

The Counsellor will allow any student appropriate time to compose themselves before returning to class.

#### **Record Keeping**

The counsellor will keep a weekly record of the names of those students who attend counselling. They will record start and end dates of counselling on CPOMS.

The counsellor keeps notes that are stored in line with the Data Protection Act. The counsellor should be aware that they may be called upon to produce such notes by a court order. Unless required as part of a court order, any notes should not be divulged to a third party without the permission of the student.

### **Accountability**

The counsellor is ultimately accountable to the student concerned but also has accountability to the school. Where the complex nature of this accountability may lead to a conflict of interest (for example, in cases which would call for the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy to be followed), the counsellor must declare this to the student.

The counsellor will be line-managed by The Senior Mental Health Lead and DDSL.

### **Supervision of the Counsellor**

All counsellors are required to arrange regular meetings with an experienced colleague. These meetings are referred to by the term 'supervision'. It is the responsibility of the counsellor to ensure that they are abiding by the guidance of the BACP in arranging for sufficient supervisory contact.

### **Training**

It is the responsibility of the counsellor to attend any training which is necessary for them to maintain their knowledge and skills. Our School Counsellor also completes the AHS Safeguarding training.

### **How the policy will be monitored and evaluated**

The policy will be monitored by the Pastoral Deputy Headteacher.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The **Governing Body** is responsible for

- o ensuring that the school has considered implications of the need for counsellor/student confidentiality
- o putting in place an adequate policy and procedures for referrals and the involvement of parents

The **Pastoral Deputy Headteacher** is responsible for:

- o overseeing the implementation of the Counselling Policy
- o ensuring that the policy is applied consistently by the Senior Mental Health Lead and Year Heads
- o ensuring that the counsellor's qualifications are current and correct

The **Senior Mental Health Lead** is responsible for:

- o applying the policy consistently when making referrals
- o monitoring and evaluating the work of the counsellor on a regular basis
- o liaising with the counsellor on a regular basis in order to discuss trends and concerns with particular groups of student

**All staff** are expected to:

- o be alert to signs that a student may be experiencing emotional or social difficulties and to discuss these with the student and/or Year Head
- o be discrete when students request permission to leave lessons or when, as a tutor, giving the student an appointment slip