



## **COUNSELLING POLICY**

For over twenty years Southborough High School has recognised the need for the services of a professionally qualified counsellor. It has been felt that the mental health of the students has been of great importance and that the inclusion of a counsellor would enhance, an already strong, pastoral team. This view is still held today and is evidenced by a strong counselling presence.

The principle purpose of the counsellor is to give one to one support to students who are experiencing emotional issues which are causing them distress and preventing them from functioning well in their everyday lives. We know that young people are at risk of experiencing a range of emotionally linked problems such as anxiety, depression, bereavement, family breakups, bullying, self-harming, exams, eating issues, gender issues and many others. It is therefore important that they have access to appropriate support in terms of expertise and time.

### **REFERRAL**

Referrals can be made by staff, parents or the students themselves. There is a simple referral form which is completed and passed to the counsellor.

### **AGREEMENT**

There is a client/counsellor agreement which details the basis on which the process will work. This includes timings, duration, confidentiality etc. The student is asked to sign the agreement and is offered a copy to keep.

### **ASSESSMENT and EVALUATION**

At the initial meeting the CORE (YP) assessment is carried out and when counselling is complete the same assessment is carried out giving one measure of change. There is also a Post Counselling Evaluation Questionnaire form where the student can give feedback on their experience of the counselling process.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Parental permission will not be sought if it is considered that the child is Gillick Competent. (In the case of counselling, this means that the child is sufficiently mature to decide for himself if he would like to access the counselling service). However a conversation will take place between the client and the counsellor regarding disclosure of participation in the counselling process to the parent. In the vast majority of cases parental knowledge and support in the counselling process is extremely beneficial.

The service is confidential in that the counsellor is bound to keep confidential issues discussed unless, as per the agreement, they relate to serious crime, significant self-harm, harm to others and child protection in which case communication to a third party may be necessary. If this were to be the case

the client would, where appropriate, be informed of the counsellor's decision. It would be hoped that they would appreciate and support the counsellor's action.

The client is at liberty to discuss any interactions between themselves and the counsellor with whoever they choose.

### **DURATION**

In the agreement is specifies that there will be six sessions, in the first place, including a review after three or four sessions to decide if further counselling is appropriate.

### **COUNSELLOR**

The counsellor should be professionally qualified and be a member of the BACP (British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists) or similar professional body. They will abide by the standards and ethics laid down in the Framework published by the BACP (July 2016). They should attend training to update their skills and knowledge in the counselling of Young People. They will undertake external supervision to support and guide them in their work. They will be line-managed by the Assistant Head responsible for Pastoral Care within the school.

Each month the counsellor will provide their line manager with a Counselling Update detailing current clients, clients who have finished and a waiting list.

The counsellor will keep brief notes on each session which the student is at liberty to see. These notes will be kept in a secure place and will comply with the current Data Protection Act (1998).

### **REFERRING TO OTHER AGENCIES**

There may be occasions where the counsellor feels that the young person may need the support of a specialist agency, in which case school staff, parents and the young person will need to be involved in the discussions.

### **STAFF**

The service is open to staff who can use it in the short term and can, if necessary, be signposted to outside agencies.

### **Review of Policy.**

This policy will be reviewed in March 2019

Owen O'Toole (School Counsellor)

March 2018