



Counselling Policy

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	January 2019 March 2022
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.

Resilience Programme

Aylesbury High School follows a resilience programme which aims to improve understanding of resilience and highlight models and strategies that can be employed to promote resilience and wellbeing.

Our aim is for young people to:

- recognise and understand their feelings and so become more adept at handling and expressing them appropriately
- manage competing demands more effectively
- become better listeners who are more likely to see the other person's point of view
- form and maintain relationships more effectively
- learn problem-solving methods that lead to enhanced interpersonal skills as adults.
- learn to manage conflicts
- learn skills that enhance their future parenting skills

The school sees its counselling service as one of the ways to help the most vulnerable students achieve healthy wellbeing.

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 Assistant 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.

Following some initial meetings with the student, The Wellbeing and Safeguarding Manager will make a recommendation for the type of support required for this student. One such recommendation may be a referral for counselling. A list of the types of problems for referral to counselling services can be found in the Appendices of the [BACP](#) publication 'Good Practice Guidance for Counselling in Schools.'

The Wellbeing and Safeguarding Manager 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.

Confidentiality

Informing Parents

There is **no legal requirement** for the student's parents to be informed that they have an appointment with the school counsellor. The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy guidelines, however, suggest that before the age of 13, it is 'unlikely' that children will be 'Fraser competent' (of 'sufficient understanding and intelligence') and therefore advises that parents should be informed in most cases.

In unpicking this grey area of law, and seeking to provide a balance between assessing the needs of the student and the concerns of the parents, we have agreed the following guidelines:

- o The Wellbeing and Safeguarding Manager will seek the student's permission to inform their parents before they begin counselling. Where this permission is freely given, the parent will be contacted to inform them of the system and how it works.
- o Where a student is unwilling to allow their parents to be informed, the Safeguarding and Wellbeing Manager should allow the student to attend the first counselling session, but alert the counsellor to the student's decision. In such cases, the counsellor will need to reassure themselves that the student is 'Fraser competent' before commencing the counselling session(s).

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 in the BACP Guidance document.

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 by themselves or others. 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 Wellbeing and Safeguarding Manager will allow any student appropriate time to compose themselves before returning to class.

Record Keeping

The Wellbeing and Safeguarding Manager will keep a weekly record of the names of those students who attend counselling, and will share this information by recording it on CPOMS.

Sometimes, the counsellor needs to keep notes about a student to be able to offer them the best possible service. These notes will not include any personal identifiable information about the young person. All written records must be stored securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. 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 Wellbeing and Safeguarding Manager.

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 accreditation with their own professional body. Relevant certificates will be obtained for scanning by the Student Welfare Coordinator.

How the policy will be monitored and evaluated

The policy will be monitored by the Assistant Headteacher. The Wellbeing and Safeguarding Manager meets weekly with the Counsellor and contacts the students via their school email account receiving the counselling to monitor the provision in place.

8. 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 **Assistant Headteacher** is responsible for:

- o overseeing the implementation of the Counselling Policy
- o ensuring that the policy is applied consistently by the Wellbeing and Safeguarding Manager and Year Heads
- o ensuring that the counsellor's qualifications are current and correct

The **Safeguarding and Wellbeing Manager** 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