



## Counselling Policy

### What is Counselling?

Counselling provides an opportunity to discuss anxieties or conflicts with someone who is professionally trained to listen attentively, and who then can help the client find their own solutions. Counselling is a way of facilitating choice. The School employs qualified independent counsellors from Arc in Wokingham. Arc is affiliated to the British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists, (BACP). In accordance with the guidelines of the BACP, the Counsellor will attend regular supervision with an external Professional.

### Referral Process

The Counsellors are in School every Tuesday and Thursday during term time. The client, (students or staff), can refer themselves by email to arrange an appointment, Members of staff can signpost and refer students too. The Counsellor meets the client in the Health Centre.

In-school counselling is not generally suitable for students who are under the care of CAMHS unless this is authorised by CAMHS. In addition, in-school counselling is not suitable for students who are receiving counselling from another practitioner unless this is part of a coherent and agreed plan of support managed by the student's GP or psychiatrist and agreed with the school counsellor.

Private counselling outside school should be managed by the student's GP or psychiatrist.

### Confidentiality and Sharing of Information

Confidentiality is an essential element of the counselling process and enables trust to be developed within the counsellor/client relationship. However, confidentiality cannot be absolute.

A clear contract must be made explaining the boundaries of confidentiality in the interests of safeguarding and promoting the well-being of students and others.

In-school counsellors adhere to the school's safeguarding and child protection policy which is available on our website.

School counsellors seek only to share information that is necessary, to prevent significant harm. In practice, this means that if a counsellor believes that a child has been significantly harmed or is at risk of significant harm (either from themselves or others), they will notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in the School on the same working day. The DSL will then follow the School's procedures detailed in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Although there is a duty to report the information whether or not the student gives consent, such consent will always be sought before information is shared unless it is not possible to do so.

In the case of students who are adults (those aged 18 and over), the counsellor will not share information without their consent unless they believe they are at imminent risk of significant harm.

### **Costs of counselling**

We are fortunate to be supported by a highly qualified and expert team of professional counsellors. However, counselling is a significant cost to the school and it is important therefore that it works under a sustainable model.

We recognise that counselling can be very sensitive and we want to enable **free access** to our counsellors as this will best enable our students to be helped through challenges that they may face.

We offer six counselling sessions initially free of charge. Many situations can reach a satisfactory resolution within six sessions. At times there is a waiting list and students may not get seen immediately.

Should a student require more than six sessions in a year, the counsellor will consult with the Head of Pastoral Welfare to review the length of subsequent sessions required.

The counselling service is in demand and so if a Leighton Park Student misses two appointments, they will be removed from the appointment list.

### **Counselling during the Covid-19 Pandemic**

Arc counselling Wokingham will conduct remote counselling during Lockdown and at times the School is operating in year group bubbles. Online Zoom counselling sessions are scheduled through their school email address. At School, students receive their counselling in a quiet, private office in Old School. During lockdown, parents are advised that students need a quiet, private space to conduct their scheduled counselling sessions. Any safeguarding concerns during online counselling sessions are reported in the same way to the DSL.

Author: Nicky Hardy, Deputy Head Pastoral  
Sign off: Matthew Judd, Head  
Reviewed: May 2021  
Next Review Date: March 2022  
Publication: Z:\Policies\Current Policies\Counselling Policy  
V:\School Policies\Counselling Policy  
<http://www.leightonpark.com/About/Policies>