



From the heart

Student Counselling Services Policy

ST JOHN'S COLLEGE
Cardiff

St John's College, Cardiff

STUDENT COUNSELLING SERVICES POLICY

This policy applies to all sections of the School:

Sixth Form, Senior School, Junior School,
Infant School & Nursery.

Version: September 2023

Introduction

A confidential Counselling Service is offered by St John's College in partnership with BCS Counselling Service to our pupils. The primary task is to enable individuals to become more effective in their lives within and outside of the college setting.

While academic staff, support staff and others may use counselling skills, it is vital to recognise the service as a core activity, carried out by professionally trained practitioners.

This document reflects Government Guidelines for Counselling in Schools, the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (NCPs) Good Practice Guidance for counselling in schools and the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). This document will be updated and reviewed in conjunction with the development of the service provision.

These policies and procedures apply to all individuals working for BCS in partnership with St John's College.

Role of the Counselling Service

Working with students offers them personal time to explore their concerns, issues and wellbeing. The range of issues is widespread and as per Government and NCPs guidelines covers:

- **Therapeutic**
- **Developmental**
- **Educative/supportive**

Work with staff involves offering support and consultation to staff who are involved in supporting students. Work with other professionals either internal e.g. SENDCO, Heads of Year or external agencies e.g. CAMHS, contributes to the overall well-being of students for consultation and referral purposes.

Accountability

The Deputy Head Teacher – Pastoral (Mrs E Jones) who is also the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) has overall line management responsibility for the service (at time of writing). This is to ensure the service reflects the needs of students and contributes to the success of St John's College.

Our counselling team along with pastoral support responds to referrals for counselling support. Following an initial meeting and assessment, sessions are arranged at a time to suit the needs of the student with consideration for their studies. Responsibilities for the Health and Wellbeing Officer (Mrs M Holland) include, day to day contact with BSC Counselling Services, overall management of the service provision, communication strategy, development ideas, coordination of the counselling meetings, liaising with key members of staff and production of all reports and statistics.

Clinical Supervision

Our dedicated counselling team will receive Clinical Supervision which takes place once per month for 1.5 hours at the offices of BCS, where the work discussed includes the work undertaken at St John's College. The clinical supervisor must be named and documented to the school.

Paul Phillips - paul@bcscounselling.com

Continuing Professional Development

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is used to maintain and develop knowledge and skills relevant to the scope of practice within the service and to adhere to HCPC standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an integral part of the Ethical Framework to which the service adheres. Maintaining confidentiality is essential to both students and to the school who are seeking to offer a professional and effective service. However, for legal reasons it is not possible to offer absolute confidentiality and the limitations are made clear to each new student within the assessment:

- If anyone else under 18 years old is at serious risk
- If you are under 18 years old and your safety is at risk
- If you may harm yourself or others
- If you have serious health issues and your GP could help

N.B. Consent to disclose information will be sought wherever possible

Practitioners working with young people under the age of 18 need to be clear about the applicable law; generally, under English/Welsh law young people aged 16-18 have the same entitlement to confidentiality as adults. A triangle of trust has been formed between the counsellors, the Health and Wellbeing Office and the DSL who are named in this document when considerations are required for a pupil's wellbeing.

Reporting abuse can never be an easy decision nor can policies be written to cover every eventuality. St John's College has a policy and procedure for dealing with disclosures of abuse by students. The person with overall responsibility for child protection issues is the Designated Safeguarding Lead along with the Safeguarding Team.

Working Practices

Referrals to the Counselling Service can be made via DSL, Heads of Year, Health and Wellbeing Officer and Parents directly to Head of Year. A copy of the referral form is in the appendix alongside a copy of the letter sent to parents of pupils.

Meredyth Holland - Health and Wellbeing Officer, with the counselling service (BSC), manages all appointments under the guidance of the Pastoral Care Team. Appointments are issued weekly. Students' appointment times are issued to have minimal impact on their studies. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for attending their sessions. Sixth Form are responsible for checking their emails to confirm their appointment times. Where possible Sixth Form students are issued an appointment during their free periods. Counselling sessions can either take place face to face in the **Quiet Room** - main site or online. Preferably sessions will take place face to face.

Upon attending their first session, students are given a parent and carers information sheet. This document is designed to give guidelines on the service provision and provides an outline of the working agreement between student and practitioner. Students are informed that they have six funded sessions and that they must inform Mrs Holland if they are not able to attend a session due to illness or a planned excursion. None attendance without informing Mrs Holland will be counted towards their six funded sessions.

Parents are notified that the college will be funding the initial 6 sessions and should they wish to continue the sessions, a charge of £40.00 per session will be charged to the school account. Parents must agree to these terms in writing. The college will not charge any oncosts for the parent paid sessions.

Written records are kept securely by the service and retained for 7 years, at which time they will be destroyed within a secure and confidential process.

Reports and statistics are produced at the end of the academic year in the following format:

- Counselling Report - An overview of the service provision together with any new developments and future strategy.
- Statistics – Detailing student information accessing the service and attendance data.

Counselling Documents

- Student Details Form
- Record of Sessions Attended
- Assessment Form
- Core Score Forms
- Session Notes
- Feedback Questionnaire

The documents listed above have been developed as standard documentation for the counselling service. All counsellors working within the service must use these documents when working with students. The Lead Practitioner will review and update them in line with NCPS Guidelines, HCPC and St John's College policies and procedures.

St John's College is committed to the principle of equal opportunities for all, as well as promoting respect, honesty, ambition, teamwork, trust and kindness amongst students and staff.

Student feedback questionnaires will be given out towards the end of counselling for ongoing evaluation purposes of the service provision.

School Counselling service is provided by **BCS Counselling services**

School counsellors

Victoria Lock

Tahreen Arshad

Confidential Referral Form - Counselling

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Name: | Year Group: |
| Presenting Issue: | Parental Consent Given: |
| Date of Referral: | Date of Ending Session: |
| Number of sessions completed: | Notes: |

If the counsellor is concerned about the pupil's safety or the safety of other pupils, they will share the information with Mrs Emma Jones and Mrs Meredyth Holland and this will be seen as a triangle of trust.

Emma Jones DSL

ejones@stjohnscollegecardiff.com

Meredyth Holland Health and Wellbeing mholland@stjohnscollegecardiff.com

Example of letter sent to parent/s / guardian/s

Dear Parent/s / Guardian/s.

Following discussions, we have had with your child and he is interested in utilising our school counselling service.

With your permission, we can arrange a series of six fully funded sessions, which will be held during the school day. Your son/daughter will be meeting with a fully accredited qualified counsellor who has specialist training working with children.

The benefits to a pupil of accessing the school counselling service are numerous and can have a positive impact on their well-being and academic success. Some of the key advantages include:

Highlighted below are several reasons why engaging with counselling can help our pupils.

- **Emotional Support:** Counselling provides a safe and confidential space for students to express their thoughts, feelings, and concerns. This emotional support can help them cope with stress, anxiety, depression, or any other emotional challenges they may be facing.
- **Improved Mental Health:** Access to counselling can lead to improved mental health outcomes. Students can learn coping strategies, stress management techniques, and develop better self-awareness, which can contribute to a healthier mental state.
- **Enhanced Academic Performance:** When students are emotionally and mentally well, they are better equipped to focus on their studies, leading to improved academic performance. Counselling can help them address any issues that may be affecting their ability to concentrate and learn.
- **Conflict Resolution:** Counsellors can assist students in resolving conflicts with peers, teachers, or family members. Learning effective communication and conflict resolution skills can lead to better relationships and a more positive school environment.
- **Increased Self-Esteem:** Through counselling, students can work on improving their self-esteem and self-confidence. This can have a lasting impact on their self-perception and how they interact with others.
- **Life Skills:** Counselling can teach essential life skills such as problem-solving, decision-making, and goal-setting. These skills are valuable not only in school but also in future endeavours.
- **Prevention of Escalation:** Early intervention through counselling can prevent minor issues from escalating into more significant problems. Addressing concerns promptly can reduce the risk of more severe emotional or behavioural issues later on.
- **Healthy Coping Mechanisms:** Students can learn healthier ways to cope with stress and adversity, reducing the likelihood of turning to negative behaviours or substance abuse as a means of escape.
- **Support During Transitions:** Counselling can be particularly beneficial during times of transition, such as moving to a new school, dealing with family changes, or preparing for exams. It provides a stable support system during these challenging periods.
- **Promotion of Resilience:** Counselling helps students build resilience, allowing them to bounce back from setbacks and face challenges with a more positive outlook.

There is an opportunity to extend the counselling sessions, the cost for the 7th session and any further sessions would be charged to your parent pay account at cost of £40.00 per session.

If you have any questions at all please do not hesitate to contact me at any time.

Please could you email your consent for the funded sessions to take place to mholland@stjohnscollegecardiff.com

Best Wishes,

Meredyth Holland
Health and Wellbeing Officer

Emma Jones
*Assistant Head, Pastoral
& Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)*