

Counselling Policy



Approved by : A H Malek

Updated : September 2022

Next review due by: September 2023

Students

Counselling provides a structured time and space for students to explore worries and concerns and reflect upon matters that are troubling them. Students are offered a chance to understand and manage difficult thoughts and feelings and to discover new ways of responding to situations or people they are finding difficult. The counselling service is open to all students, who should expect to be treated seriously, respectfully and in a manner that protects their confidentiality (subject to safeguarding procedures.)

The counsellor, however, reserves the right to refuse to see a student after an initial assessment period, who she believes cannot make use of the service or who sees counselling as a means of avoiding lessons.

Students may self-refer, with or without some encouragement from a member of staff. Whilst they are strongly encouraged to discuss this with their parents or carers, there is no obligation on the school to pass this information on. Parents/Carers of students from Year 7 who self-refer and undertake work with the counsellor that is more than the initial 3 sessions offered, will be informed by the counsellor of this in writing – the content of the sessions will remain confidential. Pastoral support is provided to Primary students in conjunction with the counsellor.

The counsellor will make every effort to make parents aware of the service and to enlist their support, and students are always encouraged to tell their parents that they have seen the counsellor. However, as long as the young person is 12 years or older, and is assessed as being of sufficient understanding and intelligence.

Where students are referred by a member of staff via the Head of Year, parents will be consulted (all Primary school years, Years 7 and 8) or informed (Years 9 – 11). The counsellor will inform Heads of Years of the identities of students in their house who have self-referred, but the content of the sessions remains confidential.

Counselling sessions are normally fortnightly during term time. This will be confirmed with the student at the first session.

The counsellor will aim to keep one period a week available for new or emergency clients, so that no one is kept waiting for an initial appointment more than a week. A waiting list system will operate thereafter as and when necessary.

Ongoing appointments are booked for the following week, trying to avoid important or favourite lessons and cooperating with any expressed child, teacher or parental preference. Rotating times and changing days help to ensure that the same lesson is not repeatedly missed.

Afifah School

Initially, students are offered up to three sessions, and the counselling is reviewed with each client after 6 weeks. During this time the counsellor and client will agree together whether to continue with further sessions.

Where the counsellor feels that family therapy would be helpful or there are serious concerns about the student's mental health, a referral is made to an appropriate outside agency – usually the local Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (**CAMHS**).

Parents will be involved at this stage. Child Protection/ Safeguarding issues are referred in the first instance, to Mr Abdul Huy Malek, (Head Teacher). If Mr Malek is not available, Mrs Tazeen Ahamed (Deputy Head Teacher) or Romessa Iqbal (Nursery Manager) will be the next point of contact.

Confidential records are kept securely by the counsellor, separate from other information held by school on the student. These consist of individual record sheets for each client, recording essential information, contacts made, action taken and an outline of issues discussed. Confidentiality and data protection are covered in the first session and agreed to by every client.

Staff members

If any member of staff approaches the counsellor for sessions, they will agree a suitable time for meetings. Staff may be offered a single session of counselling or a short course of sessions over a few weeks or months.

At the appointment, they will be encouraged to talk about their feelings and emotions with a trained counsellor, who will listen and support them without judging or criticising.

The counsellor can help them gain a better understanding of their feelings and thought processes and encourage to help find their own solutions to problems. But they will not usually give advice or tell them what to do.

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