

FAMILY DEVELOPMENT COUNSELLOR POLICY
NEW PARK ACADEMY – JUNIOR & SECONDARY SITE
FIRST CREATED: FEBRUARY 2011 – EDITION 1

EDITION NO.	REVIEW DATE:	FGB APPROVAL DATE:
		17/01/2011
2	NOV 2012	13/11/2012
3	MAR 2015	24/06/2015
4	APR 2017	26/6/17
5	MAY 2018	28/6/18
6	MARCH 2019	27/6/19
7	MAY 2020	JULY 2020
8	MAY 2021	No changes
9	MARCH 2022	No changes
10	MARCH 2023	Minor changes

Policy Agreed	JULY 2020
To be reviewed	MARCH 2024
Owner	KAREN SEYMOUR
Designation	POST 16 OFFICER & COUNSELLOR

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide a counselling service with a high degree of confidentiality for students with social, emotional or behavioural concern, to enable them to fulfill their potential personally, in college and in the community

Includes:

Introduction
Code of Practice
Confidentiality
Child Protection
Counselling Supervision
Referral process
Counselling explained – information for pupils
Client assessment sheet
Case record sheet
Counselling contract
Parental consent letter

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS COUNSELLING?

Young people experience developmental changes, but these changes occur differently in each person.

Counselling is a process which assists the individual young client to focus on their particular concerns and development issues, while simultaneously addressing and exploring specific problems, making choices, coping with crisis, working through feelings of inner conflict and improving relationships with others. Counselling enables young people to gain a better understanding of themselves and situations as well as developing strategies to cope with changes.' (1)

The BACP definition is given below:

‘Counselling takes place when a counsellor sees a client in a private and confidential setting to explore a difficulty the client is having, distress they may be experiencing or perhaps their dissatisfaction with life, or loss of a sense of

direction and purpose. It is always at the request of the client as no one can properly be 'sent' for counselling.'

Counselling sessions are available to pupils at New Park School, who need and want them, to allow them the opportunity to discuss and explore issues and feelings that are affecting their emotional wellbeing. This allows them the opportunity to move forward in their social, emotional and behavioural development.

PARENTAL PERMISSION

Every school year parents will be given a guidance pack / consent forms. Counselling is covered within this pack and parents have the right to agree to or refuse their child's participation in sessions. Parents also have the opportunity to refer their child to counselling sessions.

THE COUNSELLOR

The counsellor is a diploma qualified counselor, registered with the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP). She is required to work within the code of ethics and practice. Her work is regularly supervised to ensure effective, safe practice by an external practitioner.

THE COUNSELLING SERVICE PROVIDES:-

- A BACP registered counsellor who holds a Diploma in Counselling, to offer counselling sessions in school.
- Counselling with as little disruption to class studies as possible. The counsellor will liaise with tutor teams to arrange session times.
- Liaison with Headteacher, class teachers regarding referrals.
- Contact with parents / carers who have concerns over their children
- Sessions/Group work offered to address anger management (2)
- BACP guidelines for Good Practice
- Group work is not personal therapy; therefore intimate disclosure will be discouraged.
- **Covering all aspects of the BACP competences for work with children and young people**

CODE OF PRACTICE

The counsellor will endeavor that any pupil referred to counselling, will have been given a guidance pack allowing parents / carers the opportunity to give their consent, or state that they do not wish their child to be involved in the counselling process.

The counsellor will explain clearly to the pupil exactly what counselling is, what it can offer and what is expected of both the client and the counselor in terms of the process, duration and procedures. As the counsellor has a dual role within the school, this will be explained to the client covering the issues of professional boundaries. The client will be given the opportunity to agree or opt out of

working this way.

The degree of confidentiality that can be promised will be discussed in such a way that the client fully understands the steps which the counsellor must take if they feel the client is in serious danger, or are themselves a risk to the safety of another person. The counsellor will only make a decision to break confidentiality after consulting with the client, a counselling supervisor / designated safeguarding officer.

The counsellor will keep records of the client's case notes in a safe place where others cannot access. The identity of the client will be protected in supervision.

The counsellor will not normally give advice but will work in a way that promotes the client's control over their own life, thereby respecting their ability to make decisions in the light of his / her own beliefs, values and context.

The counsellor will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the client suffers no physical or psychological harm during counselling sessions. Counselling supervision will help the counsellor to monitor her working practice.

Counselling will take place in a private room where privacy is safeguarded as much as possible and care will be taken to avoid disruptions.

The counsellor will not normally act on behalf of her client. If this happens it will only be on the request of the client, or else in exceptional circumstances.

When clients have received the help they sought, it is apparent that counselling is no longer helping or if clients want to end, the counsellor will work with the client to reach a recognized and appropriate.

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

A high degree of confidentiality is essential if counselling is to be effective for young people it enables them to work through their issues with confidence and without fear of reprisal. This policy aims to provide a clear understanding of the issues around confidentiality in staff, students, parents and outside agencies who may be involved with the young person. The circumstances where confidentiality must be broken by the counsellor and the procedure for doing so will also be explained in the following guidelines of which all staff must be made aware.

- The policy guidelines are as follows:-
- Parental permission will be obtained if possible before a young person enters into counselling. A guidance pack/ letter will be sent that allows parents the opportunity to say if they do not want their child to take part in counselling sessions.
- Clients, parents and school are made aware of the confidentiality policy.
- All information about the individual is the responsibility of the counsellor. Notes and other information about the client held by the counsellor are to be kept secure at all times.

- The client will always be consulted before any information will be given to other agencies or individuals
- Clients will be made aware that there is a supervision system and that outside supervisors are also bound by this policy.
- Telephone conversations regarding clients are to be taken in private.

A situation may arise which gives the counsellor good grounds for breaching confidentiality. Confidentiality will only be breached where there is a strong risk of serious harm to the client or others.

If confidentiality has to be breached, the counsellor will make every effort to allow the client to gain control of the problem themselves. The counsellor will make every effort to allow the client to gain control of the problem themselves. The counsellor will not make a decision to break confidentiality alone, this will always be done in consultation with their supervisor / designated person for child protection/safeguarding in school. Any breach in confidentiality will be kept to a minimum and only the issues causing serious concern will be disclosed. It will not extend to aspects of the clients life that are not relevant to the situation.

THE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The counselling service aims to work to the highest achievable levels to protect young people from harm

The counsellor aims to provide a safe and trusting environment, to enable the young person to express their concern or distress.

The welfare of the young person is paramount importance in guiding decisions related to child protection.

The working practice takes into account the Salford LA, the Sovereign Trust Child Protection Procedures for staff in schools and the document 'Keeping Children Safe in Education (reviewed and updated annually).

The counsellor ensures that each client is clear about the level of confidentiality offered within the counselling relationship.

COUNSELLING SUPERVISION

The counsellor is working within the British Association of Counselling (BACP) Code of Ethics & Practice for Counsellors and is therefore bound to monitor her counselling through the use of regular, ongoing supervision.

What is supervision?

The way the term supervision is used in the counselling world differs from its more usual connotations. It is a colleague to colleague agreement in which the supervisor provides 'extra-vision'. It is a formal arrangement between counsellor and supervisor in which the standard of the counsellor's work is monitored, maintained and developed. The efficacy of the counsellor / client relationship is discussed whilst protecting the confidentiality of the client. The primary responsibility of the supervisor is the welfare of the client by maximizing the

therapeutic effectiveness of the counselling and ensuring that ethical standards are adhered to throughout the counselling process. In addition, the support given to the counsellor is invaluable, as is the opportunity to continue with her professional development.

The Supervisor

- Has received counsellor training to at least diploma level
- Has experience of working with children / young adults
- Is willing to abide by the BACP Code of Ethics for Counsellors and Supervisors
- Is prepared to negotiate styles of working with the counsellor
- Will negotiate length and frequency of supervision sessions in relation to the counsellor's caseload, bearing in mind the minimum requirement of 1.5 hours per month
- Will appreciate the importance of the sessions by protecting the supervision session from erosion, interruption and postponement.
- Is prepared to work with casework presented anonymously and discussed with total confidentiality.

REFERRAL PROCESS

All referrals for counselling at New Park Academy are to be passed through to the counsellor via the head teacher, class teacher or via pupils / parents. Teachers making referrals are to complete a 'cause for concern' form for the school SENCO.

The counsellor is happy to discuss any concerns you may have about a particular young person prior to the referral.

A general guideline is given below:

- Consider referring young people for counselling who:
- Have suffered a bereavement or where loss by death is anticipated
- Have suffered a loss of another kind, e.g. Family breakdown
- Have suffered trauma as a victim or witness
- Are demonstrating behaviour which is not normal for that young person
- Are being bullied or bullying others
- Have difficulties in relationships
- Appear to have low self esteem

COUNSELLING EXPLAINED – INFORMATION FOR PUPILS

What sort of problems could I talk to a counsellor about?

- You can talk to a counselor about anything that might be worrying or upsetting you
- Maybe you are worried or upset about a friend or family member
- You may feel under pressure at school or worried about your future
- You may have worries about your health, or fear for you safety

- You may feel bullied or harassed
- Someone close to you may have died or be seriously ill
- You may feel lonely, isolated or rejected
- You may have painful memories of events that have happened in the past
- Or you may just feel unhappy and not be certain why

What is counselling?

Counselling provides the opportunity and space for you to talk about things that may be difficult to share with anyone else. It can help you find more effective ways of coping and help you to understand your feelings better. It can also be a way to find out about yourself. It is a place to be accepted and not judged. It is not about giving advice or telling you what to do.

Questions:**Will the counsellor repeat what I say?**

The counsellor will not repeat what you tell her unless you or someone else is in danger. She will help you talk to another person if you want to.

When can I see the counsellor?

A set time will be made every week for a 30 minute lesson, counselling will not take the full session but this time is set aside to 'relax' or discuss issues further.

Is the counsellor trained?

The counsellor has a Diploma in Counselling, and has had training and experience in many different areas. This includes Mental Health First Aid, Therapeutic play skills, Attachment disorders, Suicide prevention, LGBTQ, Bereavement & loss.

CLIENT ASSESSMENT

Why counselling now?

Anything going on for the pupil that the counsellor needs to be aware of?

How does the pupil hope that counselling may help?

CONTRACT

Name _____

Date of birth _____

Referred by _____

I understand that by signing this Counselling Agreement / Contract I am agreeing to the following:

- **I will attend a 30 minute counselling session, on the agreed weekly day and time of:**
- **I understand that this contract will be for 6 sessions, after which time a review between myself and Karen will take place, and it will be decided if more sessions are required.**
- **Karen (my counsellor) has explained to me exactly what counselling is, has completed the assessment with me and I agree to commit and take part in the sessions.**
- **I understand that all issues discussed in my sessions will remain confidential unless it breaches child protection and harm to self or others. If Karen needs to disclose anything that I have brought to a session, I understand that it will first be discussed with me.**

Signed _____ (pupil) _____ (counsellor)

Date counselling sessions commenced _____

Date counselling sessions ended _____

Number of sessions attended _____

Parental / Carers consent given _____

(phone call/letter/visit /
guidance pack)