



COUNSELLING: A GUIDE FOR **PARENTS AND CARERS**

What is Counselling?

Counselling is an opportunity to talk in confidence about things that are of concern with a qualified counsellor. What is spoken about will depend on the individual, but common themes are stress, relationships, change, loss and distressing or traumatic events.

What does a counsellor do?

Counsellors are trained to listen without judging and to help people sort out their thoughts and feelings about whatever is concerning them.

Why have a counsellor at the Academy?

A school based service brings counselling to young people in a place that is familiar, safe and secure. If young people are able to receive emotional support from a qualified professional they will have more opportunity to fulfil their potential.

How long will counselling last?

Counselling may be for a few sessions or longer term. It is reviewed regularly by the counsellor and the young person.

Where and when does it take place?

Usually, a small, private room is made available in the Academy during the day. Sessions last up to sixty minutes and appointment times can be varied so that time is not always lost from the same subject.

Is it confidential?

A key feature of our service is that information discussed in the counselling session is treated confidentially. Counselling is a time when it's ok to talk about concerns without fear of them being discussed elsewhere.

We encourage the student to discuss the work with parent/carer, but they will not always want to. This can be hard for parents/carers to accept at times, but ensuring confidentiality is crucial for establishing trust so that the young people feel confident to speak openly and freely about what is concerning them. However, if a student or another person appears to be at risk of significant harm it may be appropriate to seek help from other agencies to keep them safe. The counsellor would aim to discuss this first with the student concerned.

All counsellors receive supervision of their work with young people to ensure the quality of their practice and this is confidential.

What if I don't want my child to receive counselling?

If a young person requests counselling and is able to understand what is involved in the process then they have the right to choose for themselves. Parents and carers may not deny them this right. We would, however, prefer to have your support for the work and are happy to talk with you about any concerns you may have about the counselling.

What if he/she refuses to have counselling?

The decision about whether or not to take up the offer of counselling is entirely voluntary for young people just as it would be for an adult.

If my child wants to see a counsellor does this mean that I am failing as a parent?

Absolutely not! We all have occasions when it feels hard to talk to those closest to us about things that are bothering us. This can be because we don't want to worry those we love best, or because we want help thinking things through with someone outside the family. The counsellor will not be judging you or your child, but looking to help them find their way through whatever is troubling them.

Can I support the counselling work?

Yes, and we welcome this. Our experience shows that the most helpful thing a parent/carer can do is to show an acceptance of counselling as a normal and useful activity, and to show an interest if their child wishes to talk about it, but not to press them if they don't.

We acknowledge that this is not an easy task, and it's quite natural for parents to feel anxious about what is being said in the sessions.

It is always our hope that talking with a counsellor will lead to greater openness with parents and families, you may need to allow a little time for this to happen.

How are referrals made to the counselling service?

Referrals may be made through the academy pastoral system, via your child's Raising Standards Leader (RSL) the request may come from you, or your child who can self-refer.

If after reading this information, you have any more questions, you can ask to speak to the counsellor.

Contact Details:

Mrs Sara Firth, Academy Counsellor

Available: Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday

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