



Student Counselling Service Policy

Introduction

A confidential Counselling Service is offered by Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School to all students. The primary task is to enable individuals to become more effective in their lives within and outside of the school setting.

While academic staff, support staff and others may use counselling skills, it is vital to recognise that counselling as a core activity, carried out by a professionally trained counsellor, is a complementary specialist service not available elsewhere in school.

This document reflects Government Guidelines for Counselling in Schools and the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy's (BACP) Good Practice Guidance for counselling in schools. 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 in the counselling service including permanent, trainee and voluntary counsellors.

Role of the Counselling Service

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

- Therapeutic
- Developmental
- Educative/supportive

Work with staff involves offering support and consultation to teachers who are involved in helping 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 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) has overall line management responsibility for the counselling service. To ensure that the service reflects the needs of students and contributes to the success of Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School.

The lead Counsellor along with pastoral support responds to all referrals for counselling support. Following an initial meeting and risk assessment, counselling sessions are arranged at a time to suit the needs of the student with consideration for their studies. Responsibilities for the Lead Counsellor include 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

Clinical Supervision takes place twice a month. All Counsellors who work with the Counselling service at Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School must make their supervisor known to the school and attend supervision sessions regularly where the work discussed is exclusively about the work undertaken at BHGS.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an integral part of the Ethical Framework to which all BACP members should adhere. 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 the Counsellor feels 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

Counsellors working with young people under the age of 18 need to be clear about the applicable law; generally under English law young people aged 16-18 have the same entitlement to confidentiality as adults.

Reporting abuse can never be an easy decision nor can policies be written to cover every eventuality. Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School has a policy and procedure for dealing with disclosures of abuse by students. The person with overall responsibility for child protection issues is Adrian Dudley Designated Safeguarding Lead along with Melissa Jackson (DDSL) as part of the Safeguarding Team. The team also consists of Sarah Allott and Melissa Dayton.

Working Practices

Referrals to the Counselling Service can be made via the Heads of Year, The Safeguarding Team and Natalie Laidler (Lead Counsellor) directly.

Natalie Laidler 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. Great lengths are taken to make sure that the same subject lesson is not missed repeatedly. Students are also encouraged to take responsibility for attending their sessions once their confirmation slip has been issued relaying the day and time of a session. 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. Sixth Form students may be expected to attend counselling sessions before or after school during busy periods.

Upon attending their first counselling 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 counsellor. Prior to attending their first session

students will also receive a Counselling information sheet, which informs them of the counselling process.

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

The Pastoral Care Team hold regular meetings during term time, to discuss aspects of the service provision. Whilst students are not specifically discussed at these meetings, it is expected that statistics and other general information is shared. The agenda and any minutes that may be recorded are communicated by the Lead Counsellor and distributed to members of the Pastoral Care Team. This includes:

- Designated Safeguarding Lead
- SENDCO
- Heads of Year
- PSC Manager
- School Counsellor

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 Counsellor will annually review and update them in line with BACP Guidelines and Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School policies and procedures.

Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School 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. The Lead Counsellor is responsible for collation and evaluation of this data.

Throughout the academic year the Lead Counsellor at the request of Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School management will carry out the ongoing marketing strategy in the format of staff training, student tutorials and student wellbeing literature.

Natalie Laidler
School Counsellor
Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School

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