



Counselling at Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School

Information for Parents and Guardians

The school counselling service is provided by Louise Carroll, a qualified Art Psychotherapist, registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and the British Association of Art Therapists (BAAT). Louise offers a therapeutic space in room 202 for students to explore emotional difficulties in a safe and supportive environment.

Therapeutic Approach

A person-centred approach is used, which means counselling is led by the student's needs. It focuses on building a trusting relationship where the student feels heard and understood. The sessions are 50 minutes and involve active listening, empathy, and non-judgmental support, working through emotional challenges.

Art Therapy is also offered. This allows students to use creativity—such as drawing or painting—as a way to express thoughts and feelings that may be difficult to put into words. These two approaches are used interchangeably, depending on the needs of the student.

Assessment

Before counselling begins, each student will have an assessment session. This includes exploring background, current concerns, reviewing any previous mental health support and deciding on the most appropriate approach. If counselling at school is not deemed suitable, referral to alternative services and support will be suggested.

At the start of therapy a Therapeutic Agreement will be completed, setting out the expectations for counselling, including the confidentiality policy.

The number of sessions will vary depending on need and will be discussed following the initial assessment. Sessions are reviewed every 6 weeks. Frequent absences without communication can impact the effectiveness of counselling and the availability of the service for others. If sessions are missed regularly without explanation, we may need to review the continuation of support.

As part of the process, (directed by the SENDCo), relevant documentation such as Inclusion information, CAMHS assessments, or screening questionnaires, may be completed. This can help support a clearer understanding of the young person's current presentation and helps to advocate for their mental health needs.

Engaging with more than one therapist at the same time can complicate the therapeutic process and may not be in the best interests of the student. In cases where additional

agencies become involved, counselling sessions provided through the school may need to be reviewed to ensure the student receives the most appropriate support.

Student Therapists

Your child may be referred to a student therapist who is undertaking a clinical placement. These students are fully supervised, adhere to the same standards of confidentiality, and are bound by the ethical codes of their accrediting bodies (e.g., BACP, HCPC, BAAT). Student therapists are carefully selected and supported to ensure safe and ethical practice. Students will be informed if their therapist is a student and consent will be sought.

Confidentiality and Safeguarding

Sessions are confidential. As part of the school's safeguarding responsibilities, there are limits to this confidentiality. If there is significant concern for a student's safety or the safety of others, relevant information may need to be shared with the school Safeguarding school team. Louise is a trained Deputy Safeguarding Lead (DDSL).

Wherever possible, the student will be kept informed if a disclosure needs to be made. The service seeks the student's informed consent before sharing any information, unless this would place them at greater risk. All decisions are made in line with the BACP Ethical Framework, HCPC Standards, and the BAAT Code of Ethics.

Parental Involvement

Parents and guardians are welcome to contact Louise to discuss the counselling work in general terms. In order to respect the student's confidentiality, specific details of the sessions will not be shared unless there is a safeguarding concern or the student consents.

Under UK law, students do not require parental consent to access counselling if they are considered Gillick competent. Gillick competent means a student is deemed to have the understanding to make the decision to attend counselling and what it involves.

Appointments

Appointments are scheduled to minimise disruption to learning and ensure the same lesson is not missed repeatedly. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for attending. A daily drop-in is available during morning break, which is also a good time to check appointments. Students can choose to end counselling at any time. Students are encouraged to attend a final session to close the process positively.

Please feel free to make contact if you have any further questions.

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School Counsellor (Art Therapist/Psychotherapist Reg. AS017480), BAAT, DDS