



Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School

Student Counselling Service Policy

Date of last review:	Summer Term 2025 LCA
Date of next review:	Summer Term 2027 LCA
School Based Policy	

Introduction

A Counselling service is offered by Bishop's Hatfield Girls School. The comprehensive therapeutic aim for all students is to enhance mental and emotional wellbeing while promoting engagement in education and reducing barriers to learning. The counselling service aligns with the Bishop's 360 holistic model and "commitment to developing the whole person" while promoting character leading to "fulfilled lives both within, and beyond school".

Therapy sessions offered within the school are seen as a core activity carried out by a professionally trained practitioner. The service adheres to the Ethical Framework of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP), The Health and Care Professionals Council (HCPC) Standards of Proficiency and The British Association of Art Therapists (BAAT) Code of Ethics and Principles of Professional Practice.

The service provides targeted interventions including assessments, individual counselling, art psychotherapy, daily accessible drop-in provision and crisis intervention. Therapeutic group work is provided with a focus on communication, creativity, self-esteem and psychoeducation. Sessions provide a safe and confidential space for students to express themselves openly and honestly and feel supported.

Principles for Good Practise

This document reflects Government Guidelines for Counselling in Schools, the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) Good Practice Guidance for counselling in schools and the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). 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 staff.

Working with students offers them personal time to explore their concerns, issues and wellbeing. The range of issues is widespread and as per Government and BACP guidelines covers: Therapeutic, Developmental and Educative/supportive.

Work with staff involves offering support and consultation to staff who are involved in supporting 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 Assistant Headteacher who is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) has overall line management responsibility for the service. This is to ensure the service reflects the needs of students and contributes to the success of Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School.

The lead practitioner along with pastoral support responds to referrals for counselling support. Following an initial meeting and assessment, sessions are arranged at a time to suit the needs of the student with consideration for their studies. Responsibilities for the Lead Practitioner 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, where the work discussed is about the work undertaken at BHGS. The clinical supervisor must be named and documented to the school. Currently this is Hephzibah Kaplan, Director of The London Art Therapy Centre, HCPC (AS00548) and BAAT registered.

Continuing Professional Development

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is a professional requirement to maintain registration with the HCPC standards of conduct, performance and ethics. A continuous, up-to-date and accurate record of CPD activities must be recorded for audit. CPD is used to ensure the quality of practice and service delivery. It should enhance knowledge, skills, and professional competence to benefit the service users.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an integral part of the Ethical Framework to which the service adheres. (A separate policy documents the full details). Maintaining confidentiality is essential for an effective service. Consent to disclose information will be sought wherever possible. 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 you may harm yourself or others
- If you have serious health issues and a medical professional could

Practitioners 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.

The person with overall responsibility for child protection issues is the Designated Safeguarding Lead along with the Safeguarding Team.

Working Practices

Referrals to the Counselling Service can be made via Teachers, the School SENDCO, Heads of Year, Support staff and Parents directly to Head of Year or direct to the counselling service.

Louise Carroll 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. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for attending their sessions. Sixth Form are responsible for checking their emails to confirm their appointment times. Frequent absence (without clear explanation) may require termination of sessions.

Upon attending their first 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 practitioner.

Counselling records are securely stored for seven years or until the student turns 25 and then destroyed using a confidential process.

The Pastoral Care Team holds weekly meetings during term time to explore student support. Confidentiality is shared within the team and some aspects of the sessions may need to be discussed. The agenda and any minutes that may be recorded are communicated by the Lead Counsellor and distributed to members of the Pastoral Care Team.

Reports and statistics are produced at the end of the academic year in a report made available in September.

Documents

- Student Details Form
- Record of Sessions Attended
- Assessment Form
- Session Notes
- Feedback Questionnaire

The documents listed above have been developed as standard documentation for the service. Counsellors working within the service use these documents when working with students. The Lead Practitioner will review and update them in line with BACP Guidelines, HCPC and Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School policies and procedures.

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.

C-POMS will be used to record start and end dates, key information, safeguarding and parental contact.

Throughout the academic year the Lead Counselor will provide relevant mental health resources, staff training, marketing and wellbeing signposting as required.

Working with Multiple Support Services

It is recognised that 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 avoid duplication and ensure the student receives the most appropriate support. This also reflects the need to use resources effectively, ensuring support is directed where it can have the greatest impact. Any decisions will be made in consultation with relevant staff and the student), with consideration given to the student's individual needs, preferences, and the best therapeutic outcome.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The service is committed to upholding the values of equality, diversity and inclusion within all aspects of provision. An intersectional approach is adopted, recognising that each young person's experiences are shaped by multiple and overlapping aspects of their identity, such as race, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, and disability. The service is mindful that pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium, those who are Children Looked After (CLA) or Previously Looked After (PLA), young carers, or students with SEND may face additional barriers. Prioritisation will be considered with equity in mind.

Exploring aspects of identity can be a meaningful part of therapy. We also acknowledge that the practitioner's identity, including culture, background, and lived experience may influence the relationship. We are committed to open, reflective and honest discussions.

Counsellors may seek guidance from the schools Equality and Diversity Lead and other staff to ensure that student voices are heard and that support is inclusive. We encourage young people to speak freely, seek guidance, and advocate for themselves in a safe and non-judgemental environment.

Louise Carroll

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