



Sharples
S C H O O L

School Counselling Policy

Written by:	C. Wood	Date: February 2023
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Introduction

At Sharples we seek to meet the needs of the whole person. Our aim is to respond and recognise the talents of every student and provide the most appropriate means of developing their potential to Learn, Dream and Achieve. We are mindful that some students from time to time may need additional support and would benefit from having the opportunity to work through some of their difficulties. The school's counselling service is designed to complement the excellent pastoral system we provide.

There is a strong body of evidence about the beneficial impact of all pupils having access to counselling support when necessary. The significant role schools can play in helping to promote the emotional health and wellbeing of pupils is now recognised, as outlined in the government document [Counselling in schools: a blueprint for the future Departmental advice for school leaders and counsellors - February 2016](#). Pupils experiencing stress or emotional problems may find it difficult to engage with the education process and reach their potential. At any time pupils may need extra emotional support beyond the normal pastoral care offered by teaching staff or Pastoral staff.

Pupils who have suffered bereavement, trauma, family break-up, who are young carers, or are experiencing other emotional difficulties may appreciate the opportunity to speak to an adult who is not directly involved with their education. School based counselling provides that opportunity and offers pupils a comfortable, non-judgemental and confidential space to talk about their difficulties, so they do not become a block to their learning and self development.

Counselling procedures at Sharples

Referrals

Pupils can be referred to the school counsellor by a parent, the pastoral team or by self-referral.

The counselling service is child centred and Sharples respects all pupils' rights to be involved in decisions. Counselling is not compulsory and a pupil may choose whether or not to attend.

During the initial session the counsellor will complete a referral form with each student (see appendix one) to establish the nature of the referral, the level of need and whether the student is Gillick Competent.

Gillick Competence

“As a general principle it is legal and acceptable for a young person to ask for confidential counselling without parental consent providing they are of sufficient understanding and intelligence.” (Gillick v West Norfolk AHA, House of Lords 1985)

Under the [Gillick Competency](#) Principle, young people aged 16 and under have the right to access confidential counselling without parental knowledge or consent, provided they are of sufficient intelligence to understand what is being proposed and the potential consequences. Most secondary students are deemed intelligent enough to understand the counselling process. The counsellor and school will complete an assessment to ascertain if the student is Gillick competent.

If a student is deemed not to be Gillick Competent, written consent from their parent / carer will be required before counselling can begin. The school counsellor will make every effort to inform and encourage students of the benefits of informing their parent(s) that they are receiving counselling, unless this is detrimental to their safety and wellbeing.

Confidentiality

All young people are entitled to confidentiality as outlined by the BACP ([British Association of Counsellor and Psychotherapists](#)) Code of Ethics. This means that the information they bring to the session will be held in confidence between themselves and the counsellor.

Safeguarding

In the first meeting the counsellor will explain that they may need to break confidentiality should they deem the young person to be at significant risk to themselves or others. At this point information may need to be shared with the designated safeguarding lead, who would decide whether a referral would need to be made to an outside agency. Confidential records are kept securely by the counsellor, separate from other information held by school on the student. Counselling records consist of notes on sessions held with students with details of the issues discussed (see appendix two).

Counselling sessions

The counselling sessions will be offered on a weekly basis for approximately 6-12 weeks, though this can vary according to need and circumstances. The actual session will last for approximately 50 minutes and the appointment times are varied so that the same subject is not missed each week. Students are seen in the counsellor's room so as to provide continuity and facilitate a safe, therapeutic space in which individual difficulties can be explored.

In the counselling sessions the student can discuss various aspects of their life and feelings, talking about them freely and openly in a way that is rarely possible with friends or family. Bottled up feelings such as anger, anxiety, grief and embarrassment can become very intense and counselling offers an opportunity to explore them, with the possibility of making them easier to understand. The counsellor will encourage the expression of feelings.

Due to the nature of counselling students are seen individually though some specific group work may be offered. Although they can be encouraged or recommendations can be made to attend, ultimately the young person must have the choice as counselling is voluntary.

For any further information about the counselling service, please contact Mrs Wood (Assistant headteacher) who would be happy to help. As well as being available to individual students the counsellors are involved in other aspects of school life, contributing to the pastoral care and emotional wellbeing of the wider school, therefore they are members of the Pastoral team within school.

Appendix 1



The aim of this document is to help counselling services within Sharples to provide a high-quality service, ensuring that young people receive treatment in a timely and appropriate manner and that we deliver improved outcomes for children and young people whilst providing other stakeholders with the information they need to work collaboratively with counselling services.

**Please ensure this log is completed in the first appointment and uploaded to Bromcom.
Session notes to be stored securely by counsellor for all future appointments.**

Student name:		Year group:		Referred by:	
Referral date:		First appointment date:			
Permission given for sessions	Pupil Gillick competent		Parental permission		
Pupil signature					
Pupil gives permission for	Counsellor to take notes		Notes to be stored by counsellor		
	Outcomes to be discussed with safeguarding staff		Outcomes to be discussed with parents		
Nature of referral (please circle):	anxiety / exam stress, depression, eating disorders, trauma, other (please state) _____				
Pupil currently / previously open to any other services?	CAMHS	Children's services	Other (please state):		
Assessment score at first appointment:					
Additional referral needed:					

Appendix two



Counsellor log to be completed each session:

Appointment date:				
Outcome, targets and next steps:	School contract, safeguarding, referral, students concerns.			
Safeguarding concerns:				
Reported to (please state date and time):	Children's services		DSL	
Additional referrals needed:				
Assessment score:				
Next appointment:				