



## **Beths Grammar School Counselling Policy**

### **1. Definition**

For the purposes of this policy, counselling takes place when a school counsellor sees a student in a private and confidential setting to explore a difficulty the student is having, distress they may be experiencing, dissatisfaction with their life, or a loss of a sense of direction and/or purpose. By listening attentively and patiently, the counsellor can begin to perceive the difficulties from the student's point of view and can help them to see things more clearly or possibly from a different perspective. Counselling is a way of enabling choice, change or reducing confusion. It does not involve giving advice or directing a student to take a particular course of action. [1]

### **2. Counselling at Beths**

The counselling service aims to build upon the school's pastoral care by providing specific therapeutic interventions to students who are identified as needing additional support in order to achieve their potential, both socially and academically. The service is available to all the 11 to 18 year olds registered as students at Beths Grammar School.

The school counsellors are members of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and, as such, work within their guidelines and are bound by their Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions. For more information please see [www.bacp.co.uk](http://www.bacp.co.uk).

Upon receipt of a referral, a counsellor will make contact with the student concerned and set up an assessment session. This allows the counsellor to explain how counselling works, determine what the student would like to focus on and agree a plan of action. It is usual practice to offer a weekly appointment. Appointment times will be varied to ensure the same lesson is not missed each week. Sessions are usually delivered in blocks of 6 to 8 and progress/therapeutic goals are regularly reviewed.

Every effort will be made to ensure that a student's counselling sessions remain as private as possible.

### **3. Referral Systems**

Students may be referred to the counselling service by a member of staff, parent or themselves. Students can self-refer by either talking to any member of staff or making an appointment directly with the school counsellors. Times during which students can see the counsellor to make an appointment are well publicised around the school. Staff can refer by using an internally recognised referral form. Parents/carers can refer by either calling or emailing the school.

On occasion, a school counsellor may determine that a student requires greater emotional support than the school's counselling service is able to provide. If this is the case, the school counsellor, after consultation with the Designated School Lead for Child Protection or her Deputy

will organise, usually following discussion with the student and their parents/carers, referral to an outside agency (e.g. GPs, CAMHS, Children's Services).

#### 4. **Confidentiality**

The principle of confidentiality is the cornerstone of any counselling relationship as it allows students to share their feelings and concerns without fear of reprisal, blame or shame.

However, no confidential guarantee can be absolute as students' safety is always the paramount issue. Accordingly, whilst the counsellors provide a confidential counselling service they also practice in accordance with the BACP Ethical Framework, current UK law and the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (see separate policy).

#### 5. **Parental Consent**

Ordinarily parental consent will be sought before a student accesses the counselling service at Beths. However, on occasion, a student may wish to use the service without their parents/carers' knowledge. In these circumstances, whilst every effort will be made to encourage and support the student to share this information with their parents/carers, we will provide counselling to the student as long as they are deemed capable of providing informed consent (in accordance with UK case law). The counsellor concerned will therefore carefully assess the student to determine if he/she has 'sufficient understanding and intelligence to be capable of making up their own mind on the matter requiring decision' [2]. This is known as being 'Gillick and Frazer competent' [3].

Please note however, in line with both the BACP Ethical Framework and the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, if there are any concerns the student may be at risk of serious harm then parents/carers (or any other relevant agency) will immediately be informed.

#### 6. **Record Keeping**

The school counsellors collect, store and process data in line with the GDPR Act 2018. As such minimal notes together with the date and number of counselling sessions will be kept in a locked cabinet accessible only to the counsellors. Any notes will be coded to ensure they remain anonymous.

#### 7. **Supervision**

All professional counsellors are required to have clinical supervision at least monthly. This supports the counsellors' work and ensures the best possible service to the students accessing counselling at Beths.

#### 8. **Service Monitoring and Evaluation**

In order to evaluate the counselling service at Beths each student will be asked to complete various questionnaires at different stages of the counselling process. The anonymous data collected from these questionnaires will be collated, analysed and disseminated to key members of staff once every term.

#### 9. **Complaints**

Any complaints regarding the counselling service at Beths should be directed to the Headteacher in the first instance. In the unlikely event that the complaint is not satisfactorily dealt with, please contact the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy ([www.bacp.co.uk](http://www.bacp.co.uk)), whose professional code of conduct the counsellors abide by.

#### **10. Review Date**

This policy will reviewed each September by the school counsellors and their Line Manager and/or the Deputy Head responsible for Wellbeing.

[1] British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP), Good Practice Guidance for Counselling in Schools 4<sup>th</sup> Edition

[2] Gillick v West Norfolk, 1984

[3] This was established by the House of Lords in 1985

*Reviewed Autumn 2019  
Next Scheduled Review Date: Autumn 2020*