TBS School Counselling Policy & Procedure

Aims

The aim of the School Counsellor is to work alongside students, parents, teachers and support staff, as well as in some cases, outside agencies to support the social and emotional development of the students in a safe and respectful environment. The School Counsellor role is an important part of our holistic approach and may support in some of the following ways:

- Supporting our pastoral staff in identifying students who may benefit from counselling;
- Leading with individuals or small targeted groups in the development of Personal, Social and Emotional well-being;
- Problem solving;
- Anger Management;
- Setting and achieving meaningful goals;
- Developing self esteem;
- Peer relationships;
- Social skills.

Referral Procedure

Counsellors will only work with young people who enter into a counselling relationship voluntarily; counselling is not likely to be successful if the young person concerned is “sent” for counselling against their wishes. The school counsellor will inform the young person about the services they offer in a language that they understand and check that they fully comprehend what counselling is, and what it can and cannot offer.

Referrals for counselling can be made by students, parents or school staff with the young person’s consent. There are separate referral forms for Primary Students and Secondary Students. Referral forms can be found with the Primary and Secondary Reception teams. Alternatively an appointment can be made directly with the Counsellor. Secondary students who refer themselves for counselling will be encouraged to share with parents/guardians that they are having sessions but it is not compulsory. The parents/guardians of primary students will be informed of any referrals suggested by school staff and the parents/guardians will meet with the Counsellor prior to any counselling sessions with the student.

Once the referral form is received an initial consultation will be made with the Counsellor. The Counsellor and student together will decide whether counselling is an appropriate course of action for the student. To ensure confidentiality and discretion, other members of staff will be informed on a
need to know basis only and then, only with the student's permission. Students may be encouraged to share that they are having counselling sessions with a key member of staff if this is in their best interests.

From the information gathered through the referral process and initial consultation, it will be decided whether individual counselling sessions or Group Work are the most relevant. Occasionally, a referral to an external agency may be deemed the appropriate course of action.

**Individual Counselling Sessions** - Typically last 40 minutes - 1 hour for secondary students and 40 minutes for primary students and will usually require a regular appointment. The best way to arrange appointments and reminders will be decided on between the student and the Counsellor and may involve other members of staff such as Mentors or Heads of Key Stage.

**Group Work** - Will take the form of personal and social education with targeted students.

Ending counselling sessions is usually agreed between the Counsellor and the young person. Where necessary other key members of staff will be informed.

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**Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is a fundamental part of the counselling relationship, as such, the School Counsellor will not pass on any detailed accounts of sessions, but may communicate periodically with school staff and/or parents/guardian about general progress, with the child's permission.

A young person is free to talk to anyone about their counselling sessions if they wish, but should not be directly questioned by school staff.

Sometimes, it may be necessary to liaise with or refer the young person to another agency for further help. This should only happen with the young person's express permission subject to child protection and mental health concerns. In certain circumstances confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, such as:

- When there is a concern that the student will cause harm to him/herself;
- When there is a concern that the student will cause harm to others;
- When there is a concern that, or when a student discloses, they have been the subject of recent harm, sexual abuse or neglect.

In any of these situations, confidentiality will be broken and the designated child protection officer will be informed immediately. Parents/guardian will also be informed, as far as it is in the best interests of the child.

**Accountability**

As part of the confidentiality contract all notes and records will be kept in a secure environment accessible only to the School Counsellor.
Each contact with a young person or school staff/parent or other agencies relating to that young person will be recorded for accountability purposes. All records will be made immediately after contact or if not possible within 24 hours to make sure records are kept up to date.

Records made by the Counsellor will remain confidential unless consent to share has been given by the young person or there is a requirement to breach confidentiality.

Records will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.

**Appendices**

- TBS Parental Consent for Counselling Form
- Counselling information for young people
- Counselling information for parents/carers
- Counselling Evaluation Form

*June 2019*