



# Counselling and Mentoring Policy

Hylands School



## Principles

Hylands School was built to serve the community in which it is placed. Accordingly, we are a comprehensive, community school with a clearly defined catchment area and cater for pupils of all abilities.

## Counselling and Mentoring

**Counselling and Mentoring are two different services and require different skills and levels of responsibilities. Schools have a duty under Safeguarding to ensure that staff and students are kept safe and in order to do so, it is necessary to make explicit the differences between counselling and mentoring and their differing roles in the school.**

## Definition of counselling

Psychotherapy and Counselling are professional activities that utilise an interpersonal relationship to enable people to develop self-understanding and to make changes in their lives. Professional counsellors and psychotherapists work within a contracted, principled relationship that enables individuals to obtain assistance in exploring and resolving issues of an interpersonal, intrapsychic or personal nature. Professional Counselling and Psychotherapy are explicitly contracted and require in-depth training to utilise a range of therapeutic interventions and should be differentiated from the use of a mentoring programme.

Counselling involves intervening with current problems, immediate crises, or long-term difficulties.

The work may be short-term or long-term, depending on the nature of the difficulties, and may involve working with individual **School Counselling Service Policy** **What is counselling and how may it help?**

- It can help us to understand our relationships better and improve them
- It can help us to increase our level of self-awareness
- It can help us to explore our feelings, and understand and manage them better
- It can help us to recognize unhelpful thought patterns and adopt new ones
- It can help us recognize the past and current behaviours which we do not want to take into the future
- It can help us to improve our communication skills
- It offers a place to reflect upon oneself and one's relationship with the world



Young people face many challenges while growing up, and may find at times that they need someone to talk to external to either home or school. Counselling is a process which offers support and guidance when things feel particularly difficult. The counsellor will provide a safe and confidential place for a young person to explore thoughts and feelings, which perhaps are overwhelming and upsetting in a drive to enable change.

### Issues young people may be struggling with include:

- Bullying
- Academic pressure
- Parental divorce or separation
- Peer pressure
- Drugs and/or alcohol
- Sexual health/ sexuality
- Arrival of a new sibling
- Low mood
- Anxiety
- Exam stress
- Bereavement
- Confusion
- Anxiety about the future
- Self-harm/injury

### Referrals and Assessments

Referrals should be made through the member of staff responsible for Pastoral matters which will provide a referral form for the counsellor before an appointment is made. The referral acts as a primary link to understanding the issues that the young person is facing.

Once the referral has been made, the Counsellor will meet and assess the student. This process is important to identify the needs of the young person and ensure that they have agreed to come along. **Counselling must be voluntary.** Students can be encouraged to attend, or a recommendation can be made, but ultimately young people have the choice. The assessment also provides an opportunity for both student and counsellor to meet to decide on the best course of action.

Students can come for counselling for as long as is required, which will often be discussed at the first session with the counsellor. This can vary between a one-off session in order to offload, or may lead to weekly sessions throughout the term.



## Confidentiality

All young people are entitled to confidentiality as outlined by the BACP Code of Ethics. This means that the information they bring to the session will be held in confidence between themselves and the counsellor. **Information will not be shared** unless the young person has agreed to it.

The counsellor **must**, however, state that they have a duty of care to break confidentiality should they deem the young person to be at significant **risk** to themselves or others. At this point, the information will need to be shared immediately with the pastoral link which will, in line with school policy contact, other agencies or parents as appropriate.

Counsellors must be aware of Child Protection procedures and adhere to these as appropriate. The Designated Child Protection Officers must ensure that all counsellors working in school have outside supervision and are CRB checked.

If a student is under sixteen years of age, the school must seek permission for counselling from the parents, guardians or carers. If an older student specifically asks that their parents should not be informed this request should be honoured. Every effort is made to engage parents and where appropriate, young people are encouraged to notify their parents that they are receiving counselling.

## Documentation in place for counselling

- Signed student consent form specifying counselling
- Signed parental consent form specifying counselling ( usually for under 16s)
- Counselling recorded on the IMP and on safeguarding grid
- Pastoral team, SECO and Head of Inclusion monitoring delivery and paperwork
- CRB checks for all involved
- Counselling service recognised by LA
- Counsellors qualifications have been checked and individually should have a BACP or if under traineeship be taking a BACP accredited course qualification with supervision
- Name of external supervisor
- Counsellor has Public indemnity

## Definition of mentoring

Mentoring in school often takes the form of academic or behavioural mentoring. It can be provided by a range of adults including TAs, teachers or in some cases older students. Mentors are not trained, counsellors.

Mentoring is a powerful personal and development tool. It is an effective way of helping people make progress, develop their skills, improve their performance and achieve their potential so that they can become the person they want to be.



## Role of Mentor

A mentor is a guide who can help the mentee to find the right direction. They help the mentee believe in themselves and boost confidence. They ask questions and challenge while providing guidance and encouragement. It is a chance for the student to look more closely at issues both academic and social, opportunities and to reflect upon what they want from life.

A mentor may provide a time out or calming down period when a child is distressed or upset following an incident inside or outside of school.

No member of the school staff should act as a mentor in isolation. A mentor should keep their line manager updated as to the child's progress and needs. No mentor must guarantee confidentiality as it is their duty to disclose any areas of concern. Schools must ensure that mentors know and take appropriate action through a referral to the pastoral manager. No mentor should take on any student without a reference from their line manager. All cases causing concern or outside the school's remit needs to be referred on within school so that a referral may be made to the appropriate agency, e.g. CAMHS or the school counsellor.

Failure to do so is regarded as a disciplinary matter.