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| **ST ANDREW’S COLLEGE POLICY DOCUMENT** | |
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**This policy should be read in conjunction with:**

* **Mental health policy**
* **Safeguarding policy**

***Equality and diversity statement***

*It is the policy of* ***St Andrews College, Cambridge*** *to recognise and encourage the valuable and enriching contribution from all who work and learn here and the rights of all individuals who come into contact with the College, such as prospective students and job applicants.*

*We believe that people from a range of backgrounds and experiences can enhance the life and development of the institution and that all individuals should be treated on the basis of individual merit and without prejudice. The College will, therefore, aim to provide an education service that actively promotes equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination on grounds of age, cultural background, economic status, disability, ethnicity, gender, religion/belief, marriage/civil partnership or sexual orientation in both education and employment. We will strive vigorously to remove conditions that place people at a disadvantage and will actively combat bigotry and discrimination. The College expects all employees, students, and associated partner organisations to adopt this policy.*

**1. Background to the policy**

St Andrew’s College recognises that people may face a variety of difficulties and challenges whilst at college, which impact on the chances of success and progression. Counselling can help students (and staff) to work through personal or mental health issues and to form coping strategies and build resilience.

Offering counselling within the college provides students with easy access to a valuable service. It forms an integral part of the college pastoral care system and the whole school approach to wellbeing and mental health.

**2. Definitions**

Counselling- Counselling takes place when a counsellor sees a client in a private and confidential setting to explore a difficulty the client is having, distress they may be experiencing or perhaps their dissatisfaction with life, or loss of a sense of direction and purpose. (The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, 2004)

**3. Scope of the policy**

The counselling service is available to all currently enrolled students within St Andrew’s College, irrespective of the level, mode or duration of study. An exception to this is for those that are known to the counsellor on a personal level. In this instance these students will be referred to relevant external services.

This policy covers:

• Entitlement to counselling

• Accessing the service

• Assessment of need and allocation to the counsellor

• How support is agreed between the client and the counsellor

• What can be expected from counselling, including number of sessions

• Reviewing and monitoring

• Data protection and confidentiality

• How counselling sits within the college pastoral care system

**4. Policy statement**

St Andrew’s College is committed to providing a safe, professional, accessible and confidential counselling service which supports students to overcome issues which may be affecting a student’s ability to study at College.

**Entitlement to counselling**

This service is available to students of the College, who may be experiencing emotional or psychological problems that could inhibit their personal development and/or chances of success and progression. The service aims to promote and contribute to the wellbeing and achievement of students.

To ensure this aim is met, we commit to:

• Offering a service that conforms to the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) code of ethics. Information on these codes of ethics is communicated to each client when they first use the service.

• Encouraging equality of access and promoting a sense of welcome and privacy through inclusive and appropriate publicity and accommodation for the service. The service is offered to students regardless of age, disability, gender (including gender reassignment), marital status, race, religion/belief, and sexual orientation.

• Offering a one-to-one counselling service for enrolled students.

• Delivering the service through staff trained to diploma standard, or currently undergoing recognised training, who are professionally supervised as required by the BACP and have a commitment to ongoing training, personal development and study.

• Providing a response to a counselling request within 2 working days and an initial appointment within 14 working days. If this is not possible then an external service will be organised.

• Ensuring confidentiality for the student in accordance with the BACP’s Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy. Tutors, relatives, friends etc. are not involved in the counselling process.

• Keeping accurate and up-to-date information on other sources of support and signposting students to other agencies if appropriate.

• Listening to clients

• Reviewing the counselling service regularly and providing an annual report which will be produced by the Head of Pastoral Care in conjunction with the counsellors, drawing on data collated throughout the year.

**What can be expected of one-to-one counselling**

• The service currently offers an ‘open-ended’ provision. However, there may be occasions when the demand for the service is so great that a limit needs to be imposed. If this is the case existing clients would be given as much notice of the change as possible.

• The service will be delivered in a private and comfortable environment.

• Each session is usually 50 minutes long although clients may wish to shorten the session if they choose.

• The service is client-led and the counsellors will not be directive with regard to topics for discussion. Clients will have the opportunity to express themselves through their preferred media. This is usually talking but art, music or any other method is welcomed.

• It may be the case that a counsellor and a client will meet outside the counselling room, for example when working with certain issues. The client will be informed of the possibility. The counsellor will not acknowledge the client outside the counselling setting. Clients will be given the opportunity to discuss unplanned meetings and any concerns raised at the next session.

• An important aspect of the counsellor’s work is to recognise the onset of serious physical and psychological disturbances and refer appropriately. This may be to a GP or psychiatrist or other medical consultant for expert opinion. The referral will usually take place in consultation with the client. Therapeutic sessions can continue with the counsellor if agreed by the referral agency and the client.

**Data protection and confidentiality**

The counsellor works openly and honestly and information recorded about clients is available for the client to see on request. All information about clients, both paper-based and computerised, is held securely and is only accessible to the counsellor.

The counsellor will keep appropriate records in accordance with ethical and professional guidelines. Records are kept to enable the counsellor to maintain contact with the client and to deliver the service (for example, session notes may be retained to allow the counsellor to develop future sessions with a particular client).

Counselling is confidential, unless safeguarding concerns are raised. In the event of a safeguarding concern the counsellor will inform the college Designated Safeguarding Lead in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy. The Head of Pastoral Care will be aware of the names of clients accessing the service but will not have access to any detail of presenting difficulties or session content.

Parents/carers, tutors, teachers or support staff do not have access to information about students receiving counselling and will not be informed that students are accessing the service, unless consent is gained from the student to share this information.

All information is stored for seven years and then destroyed, in line with BACP guidelines. If a client wishes for their information to be destroyed before this deadline, they should speak to their counsellor.

**5. Procedures associated with policy**

**Accessing the service**

The counselling provision is communicated through posters, the College website, induction sessions and by tutors. Clients can also access information through the Counselling Referral Form (Appendix 1).

Clients can access the service through the following mechanisms:

• Direct contact with a member of staff by phone, text or email.

• Referral by tutor or other member of staff.

• Completing a counselling referral form (available throughout the school).

• Referral by General Practioners or other healthcare professional.

• Posting a request for an appointment and contact details in the post boxes at reception.

The Counsellor keeps accurate and current information on all other sources of support, both internal and external, and can signpost or refer to other agencies when appropriate.

**Assessment of client needs**

The counselling service aims to provide a non-directive counselling experience.

The counsellor will complete an assessment with each client at the first appointment. This information is then held confidentially in a secure location.

**How support is agreed**

Clients are encouraged to use the sessions in whatever manner is most helpful. The counsellor will talk through a ‘contract’ with the client in the first session that outlines expectations of both the counsellor and the client. The contract also covers confidentiality and safeguarding.

If a client feels that they have been placed with a counsellor who does not suit them, the Head of Pastoral Care will attempt to offer sessions with an alternative provider.

**Reviewing and monitoring**

• Review discussions will take place at regular intervals between the client and the counsellor to ascertain how beneficial the sessions are. This is to ensure that the client’s needs are being met.

• If a client accesses the service for longer than twelve weeks, a review will take place between the counsellor and the Head of Pastoral Care to ensure that the needs of the client are being met. No confidential information will be shared at this meeting.

• When the counselling takes place because of a safeguarding issue, the Counsellor, Head of Pastoral Care and Designated Safeguarding Leads will work together whilst simultaneously respecting confidentiality agreements, to ensure that all processes work effectively.

• Clients will be asked to complete an initial questionnaire which they then complete again in their final session. They are asked to complete an additional feedback form after they have completed their course of sessions. This data will be used by the counsellor and the Head of Pastoral Care to monitor the service. The data given to the Head of Pastoral Care will not reveal clients’ personal details.

• Clients are encouraged to give informal feedback on all aspects of the service, including promotion activities and methods and policy.

• If clients have concerns about the service they are receiving, they are strongly encouraged to speak to their counsellor or the Head of Pastoral Care. Formal complaints should be made using the Complaints procedure. If the complaint is not resolved the client can then make a formal complaint via the BACP. The BACP can be contacted by:

Email: [bacp@bacp.co.uk](mailto:bacp@bacp.co.uk)Telephone: 01455 883300  
Mail: BACP, 15 St John's Business Park, Lutterworth, Leicestershire LE17 4HB, United Kingdom

**6. How counselling sits within the college pastoral care system**

The counselling service is distinct from college pastoral care and SEND provision, and it is important that students understand that the counsellor is independent from the college and will maintain confidentiality except where child protection is a concern. However, it is equally important that appropriate links are established and maintained between the counsellors and the Head of Pastoral Care, SENCO and Designated Safeguarding Leads. Ways in which this is achieved are:

* The Deputy Head Boarding and Pastoral Care will act as the named link between the counselling service and the college.
* The counselling service is advertised throughout the school on posters, in handbooks and in newsletters so that students are aware the service exists and is available to them.
* All staff are encouraged to refer students for counselling (with the student’s informed consent), if they notice behavioural or mental health problems that they think may be alleviated through counselling.
* Staff may also refer a student (with the student’s consent) to counselling for assessment purposes, so the counsellor can identify specific issues and ways in which the student can be supported to seek advice or treatment for such issues.
* If the counsellor suspects that a child may be experiencing, or is at risk of significant harm, they should inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead in accordance with the college safeguarding policy.
* If counsellors find that they are supporting a number of young people with issues which are related to the school environment, such as bullying, academic pressure, or the handling by teachers of difficult issues such as gender identity, they should advise the college so that the college can identify where a change in policy or practice may be needed. Counsellors must seek permission from children and young people, or their parents/carers where appropriate, to share information that would identify any children and young people who are using the counselling service.
* Counsellors should share information with the college, in accordance with confidentiality and reviewing and monitoring procedures described above, so that the effectiveness and usefulness of the counselling service within the college can be assessed.

**Reviewed: August 2017, June 2018, August 2019, July 2020, April 2021, July 2021, August 2022 and August 2024**

Next review: August 2025

**Appendix 1**

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| **COUNSELLING REFERRAL FORM** | |
| STUDENT NAME: | |
| COURSE: | |
| EMAIL ADDRESS: | |
| MOBILE NUMBER: | |
| BEST METHOD OF CONTACT (PLEASE TICK) :  ☐ PHONE CALL  TEXT  EMAIL | |
| BRIEF REASONS FOR WANTING TO ATTEND COUNSELLING (OPTIONAL) : | |
| COUNSELLING IS AVAILABLE AFTER 3PM. PLEASE TICK WHICH DAYS WOULD BE CONVENIENT FOR YOU TO ATTEND: | |
| * MONDAY * TUESDAY * WEDNESDAY | * THURSDAY * FRIDAY |
| YOUR DETAILS WILL BE FORWARDED TO THE COUNSELLING DEPT. AND YOU WILL BE CONTACTED TO ARRANGE YOUR FIRST APPOINTMENT. IF YOU PREFER TO BE CALLED, WHEN WOULD BE THE MOST CONVENIENT TIME TO CONTACT YOU? ……………………………………………. | |
| SOURCE OF REFERRAL (PLEASE TICK) :  ☐MYSELF  PERSONAL TUTOR  HEAD OF PASTORAL CARE  PRINCIPAL  TEACHER  HOUSE MANAGER  HOMESTAY  ☐OTHER | |
| NOTES/COMMENTS : | |
| **PLEASE PUT YOUR COMPLETED FORM IN THE ENVELOPE PROVIDED AND RETURN TO**  **HELEN WIDDALL AT 13 STATION ROAD. ALTERNATIVELY, EMAIL THE FORM TO counselling@standrewscambridge.co.uk**  **BEFORE SUBMITTING THIS FORM, PLEASE READ THE COUNSELLING INFORMATION OVERLEAF.** | |

**COUNSELLING INFORMATION**

The cost of counselling is £45 per 50 minute session. Payment will be arranged directly between the client and the counsellor.

If you are referring yourself or someone else to the counselling service, please read the St Andrew’s College *Student Counselling Policy*. This can be found on the St Andrew’s College website. If you require a copy of the policy, please ask the Head of Pastoral Care, Helen Widdall ([helen.widdall@selectenglish.co.uk](mailto:helen.widdall@selectenglish.co.uk)).

**The Counselling Service is confidential**. The Head of Pastoral Care will know the names of the people who are attending college counselling, but will not know any other details including what is discussed in the sessions.

The counsellor will keep information about their clients including what is discussed in sessions, but this will be kept in a secure location and not accessible to anyone else.

**If the counsellor believes that there is a safeguarding issue affecting their client** (if they think the client is experiencing, or is likely to experience, harm), **they will tell the Designated Safeguarding Lead**. They will attempt to gain consent from the client before doing so, unless it is not possible to gain consent, or if gaining consent puts the client at risk of further harm. Please read the St Andrew’s College *Child Safeguarding Policy* (available on the college website) for further information.

**If you are referring someone for counselling, you must seek their permission first.**

For guidance and information about counselling please visit the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy website www.bacp.co.uk/about-therapy/we-can-help/