

Cambridge Meridian Academies Trust

Counselling Procedures

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Revisions

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1. Definition of 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. It is always at the request of the client and no one can be “sent” for counselling. *Good Practice Guidance for Counselling in Schools*.

This document is essential reading for all Counsellors working on behalf of CMAT, and service users. As well as setting out the ethical standards, it provides an explanation of many aspects of the service provided by the school, to enable Counsellors to offer the most effective support. It forms an integral part of a working relationship, and should be kept in an accessible place for easy reference.

This document is also published on the school website to allow parents and carers to understand the structures in place to ensure good practice in the counselling we undertake at the school.

2. The Role of a School Counsellor

Schools are now employing Counsellors to help them address the emotional needs that young people can have in response to experiences such as family breakdown, bereavement, loss, family and peer relationship difficulties, anxiety and bullying. Counselling can be an effective source of support for these students, enabling them to function better both in and outside school, enhancing their resilience and giving them resources to manage any future difficulties.

Counselling at CMAT is part of the behaviour and well-being services within the school. It is an onsite response for those students needing the additional expertise that counselling brings to the overall pastoral support system.

The Counsellor will provide 6 one to one counselling sessions, once a week for 50 minutes per client.

2.1 Certificates

Counsellors are responsible for providing CMAT with copies of renewed certificates of their DBS checks, professional indemnity insurance and membership of their governing body. Copies should be given to the administrator annually.

2.2 Other Professionals

In order to reduce any potential conflicts of therapeutic effort, the School Counsellor will not provide counselling to young people who are currently in receipt of other therapeutic support from another agency, i.e. CAMHs.

2.3 Supervision

All Counsellors need to engage in regular clinical supervision to maintain and monitor standards and to comply with their ethical code. School Counsellors should undertake counselling supervision with a supervisor who has experience and understanding of children and young people and of the school setting, in accordance with their governing body's minimum requirements.

2.4 Private Work

Where there is a need or wish on the young person's part to move on to private counselling, CMAT expects the Counsellor to provide signposting to other services in order to facilitate this. Recognising the young person's right to be self-governing. However, they may make the informed decision that they wish to enter a new, longer term counselling relationship with the original Counsellor. In keeping with ethical working practices, the Counsellor must talk this through with his/her supervisor, Assistant Principal (Line-Manager) and the parents of the young person, if consent was given, before agreeing to any further work. When approval is given by CMAT, the young person should be made aware of the change of contract and hence the clinical responsibility and written confirmation is required in recognition of this. It is suggested that there

is a gap of a few weeks between the end of school counselling and the start of private work, signifying the change in relationship. The school Counsellor will refer to the Assistant Principal (Line Manager) and act in accordance with the above protocol.

2.5 Statement of Good Practice and Confidentiality

The Counsellor must be a member of a governing professional body, (BACP) and be familiar with and work to the guidelines of the ethical Framework. Any breaches will be dealt with through the complaints procedures of the members' governing body. Counsellors must notify if they are the subject of a complaint to their professional body. In the instance of risk to self or other, confidentiality may be broken and the named Child Protection Officer shall be contacted. This will be outlined in the consent form for the young person from the outset.

3. Administration

Appointments, cancellations, contracting arrangements and all relevant paperwork will be responsibly held by the Counsellor at all times, in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

Counsellors should have in place arrangements for the S.S.A to be notified if they are suddenly unwell/unavailable and should always be notified when individuals are planning to be away and unavailable to take referrals.

4. Referral

Referral by staff can only come through with a signature from a Senior Tutor. Any member of staff may approach a Senior Tutor to request a referral for a student.

Students may self-refer. Where this occurs, the Senior Tutor will be informed.

A referral form will be completed by the member of staff and held in a confidential area, where the Counsellor will hold a waiting list. A consent letter will then be posted out to the parent/s to sign and return before counselling can begin.

On receipt of the consent letter, the School Counsellor will make the first appointment with the child where an Initial assessment form will be completed and suitability for counselling will be assessed.

Parents and carers or who feel a child would benefit from counselling should discuss this with their child's Form Tutor or Senior Tutor.

4.1 Consent

A consent letter is posted out to the parent/carer of the child upon receipt of the referral. Once this has been returned, an initial assessment appointment will be made between the School Counsellor and the young person.

For a young person to be eligible to receive counselling, s/he must understand the nature of counselling and be able to make a valid verbal counselling contract, including the ability to understand the principle of privacy and the need for this to be overridden where the young person is alleged to be at risk of harm from self or other.

For those students who have requested that sessions are 'confidential' a referral/ sign post to Centre 33 may be possible once consultation has been made via the Counsellors Line-Manager/ Deputy Principal.

(Consent may be given by the child without the parent/carers' involvement, if the child is deemed Gillick competent.

As guidance for Gillick competency, the Counselling Service at CMAT will take the following into consideration:

1. The young person has explicitly requested that their parent/carers have no knowledge about them receiving therapy.
2. The Service has done everything it can to persuade the young person to involve their parent/carers.
3. Documentation clearly states why the young person does not want their parent/carers to be informed.
4. The young person understands the advice/information they have been given and have sufficient maturity to understand what is involved and what the implications are. They can comprehend and process information relating to counselling.
5. The young person can communicate their decision and reasons for it.
6. This is a rational decision based on their own religious belief or value system.
7. The young person is making the decision for themselves and not being coerced or influenced by another person?
8. The service must be confident in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the young person.
9. Without the service, would the young person's physical or emotional health be likely to suffer?

If the Service is able to answer YES to these questions, then this will enable the Service to believe the young person is competent to make their own decisions about consenting to and taking part in the counselling process.)

4.2 Initial Assessment

After a referral has been made, an initial assessment form will be completed by the School Counsellor. This will be the measure of risk, and used for on-going reviews and evaluations of the service. An agreement to have counselling is then signed by the young person. The School Counsellor will then refer the young person if appropriate, to begin counselling sessions. They will make arrangements for an appointment to see the young person at a mutually agreeable time in school hours.

4.3 Session Allocation

Appointments are made on a weekly basis for a maximum of 6 sessions. Any extension to these sessions is through discussion between the Line-Manager and the Counsellor. Each session will last for 50 minutes. Appointments will be made to suit the timetable of the young person, so as not have a negative impact on their learning.

4.4 Privacy

Respecting the young person's privacy are fundamental requirements for keeping trust and respecting the young person's autonomy. The professional management of privacy concerns the protection of personally identifiable and sensitive information from unauthorised disclosure. Disclosure may be authorised by the young person's consent or the law. Any disclosures of a young person's confidences should be undertaken in ways that best protect the young person's trust and respect their autonomy.

Client consent is the ethically preferred way of resolving any dilemmas over privacy, but exceptional circumstances may prevent the Counsellor from seeking client consent to a breach of confidence, due to the urgency and seriousness of the situation, for example, preventing the client causing serious harm to self or others. In such circumstances the Counsellor has an ethical responsibility to act in ways which balance the client's right to privacy against the need to communicate with others.

Counsellors should expect to be ethically accountable for any breach of confidentiality.

Confidential information about client may be shared within teams:

1. Where the client has consented or knowingly accepted a service on this basis;
2. The information can be adequately protected from unauthorised further disclosures;
3. The disclosure enhances the quality of service available to clients or improves service deliver.

4.5 Where counselling will take place.

Counselling will take place in an appropriate room. A member of staff from Student Support Services will mark the young person present when in attendance with the Counsellor; over-riding any absence marks a teacher may have made, for not being seen to attend a time-tabled class.

As part of the agreement between the Counsellor and the young person, any missed appointments, without prior discussion, will be counted as one of the 6.

4.6 Sharing Information

The Counselling Service will work within a 'Systemic Approach' and communicate with school staff, parents, other agencies and specialised services, whilst maintaining an appropriate level of privacy. Counsellors may find it necessary to liaise with, share information or refer the young person to another agency for further help. This should only happen with the young person's permission.

4.7 Diversity & Additional Learning Needs

CMAT is committed to providing services to young people that take account of cultural differences and Additional Learning Needs. This includes disabled young people and lesbian, gay and bisexual young people whose identity and experiences may not have been represented in the school setting.

5. Record Keeping

The school adopts a Data Protection policy in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and it is updated as necessary to reflect best practice in data management. Each young person's records are kept under an anonymous ID number and stored in a locked cabinet, in a locked room. Statistical data will be collated on an annual basis and no student will be identified within the data collected.

5.1 Access to Records

The young person has a general right of access to educational records, as a 'data subject' set out by the DPA 1998, and this includes confidential counselling material. A parent/carer however does not have this right, and in accordance with Section 4(3) 6(1) of the DPA 1998, any disclosure or processing of such material 'is unwarranted in any particular case by reason of prejudice to the rights and freedoms or legitimate interests of the data subject' (i.e. the child concerned). The counselling service would consider any request against the child's wishes, to be undermining the child's own right to privacy and confidentiality.

Counselling records, including process notes, may be requested by the courts during hearings about the welfare of children. If the School Counsellor is given a court order to appear in court or produce their process notes, they may obtain legal advice so that they can make representations to the court in the appropriate manner, to limit disclosure of non-relevant sensitive client information.

5.2 Child Protection

If the Counsellor has potential child protection concerns, this could lead to a breach of privacy in the interests of the child's safety. Therefore, as part of the initial assessment, the Counsellor will explain the procedures and possible consequences of involvement by other agencies, and seek the client's views and consent.

Records kept will acknowledge if a young person is on the Child Protection Register and, therefore, any further disclosures of this nature will be reported on to the designated Child Protection Officer within the school.

5.3 Evaluation and Reporting to Assistant Principal (Line Manager)

The Assistant Principal (Line Manager and) the School Counsellor will meet regularly to review the service and address any weaknesses in the system.

The use of the Initial Assessment, Counselling Review Form and End of Therapy System will provide end of year statistics and an over-arching evaluation of the service.

5.4 Reporting to the Academy Council

A termly report outlining the progress of the service will be made available to the Academy Council

5.5 Complaints Procedure

In the first instance all complaints should be raised with the school following the usual school complaints procedure which can be found on the school website.

If necessary, complaints alleging a breach of professional standards will be dealt with in accordance with the procedures outlined by the BACP (British Association of Counselling Professionals).

Appendix A: School Counselling Referral Form

Senior Tutor Signature:
Date:

Date form completed:			
Name of student:		DOB:	Gender:
School year:		Main school contact (e.g. Head of Year, Head of House):	
Lives with (e.g. parents):			
Name of referrer (e.g. self-referral, teacher, school nurse):			
Reason for referral:			
What other agencies are or have been involved?			
Are those with parental responsibility aware that the student has been referred.			
Has the referral been discussed with the student?		Has the student seen this form?	

Appendix B: Counselling Parent Consent Letter

Dear Parent/ Carer,

As you may be aware, Emotional and Mental Wellbeing has been at the forefront of media coverage of late. By request of our young people, and to better enable us to support them with their needs, we feel it necessary to 'pilot' a counselling service within school.

Counselling and Psychotherapy cover a range of talking therapies in order to improve the health and wellbeing of our society. People are able to talk about their feelings, choices of behaviour and are able to make positive changes to their lives.

This service will run for 8 weeks and upon review, we would hope to continue this into the next academic year.

We would like to make this accessible for all year groups and ask that a parental permission slip is returned to your child's house office.

Kind regards,

In-school Counsellor

.....

Please return this permission slip to your Child's House Office.

I do/ do not give my child..... Year..... Tutor group.....

permission to access the 'pilot' Emotional and Mental Wellbeing Counselling Service.

Signed Parent/Carer.....

Date

.....

Information Sharing:

I give consent for the Counsellor to share information internally with relevant staff , to better support the young person.

I give consent for the Counsellor to share information externally with relevant organisations, in order to better support the young person.

I understand that the Counsellor will share any relevant information with me (the parent) but understand that I will not privy to all conversations between my son/daughter and the Counsellor.

Appendix C: Initial Assessment Template

Client I.D	Date of Assessment
<u>Presenting Issue</u>	<u>General background information</u>

<u>Hopes for Counselling</u>

Current Support	
Non Professional	Professional
Parents/ Other family Members	
Friends	CAMHS
Other (please specify)	Connexions/Youth Worker
	Social Worker
	In-School Support
	Health Support
	Other(please specify)

Other Support Needs?

Do they have a EHA? YES NO Consent to view? YES NO

Permission to share information with designated staff? YES NO

Any information shared will be private unless I feel there is a risk to yourself or others.

Relevant History:

Personal-

Medical-

Family-

Appendix E: Risk & Accept Therapy

	None	Mild	Moderate	Severe
Harm to others				
Self-Harm				
Suicide				

Assessment outcomes

Assessment/ One session only

Accepted for therapy

Referred to other service

Unsuitable for therapy at this time

If the client is not entering therapy give a brief reason.

Have other available services been discussed and if so what information has been given?

Summary:

Client name:

Client Signature:

Appendix F: Issues/severity Checklist

(Scale of 1-10, with 10 being worst)

	Less than 6mth	6-12Mth	More than 12Mth	Recurring/ Continuous
Anger				
Anxiety/Stress				
Behaviour problems				
Bereavement/Loss				
Bullying				
Depression				
Family				
Health				
Interpersonal /Relationships				
School/Academic				
Self/Identity				
Self Esteem				
Self-harm				
Trauma/ Abuse				
Other (Please specify)				

DATE:	D.O.B./...../.....	AGE
NAME:	ETHNICITY:	
DATE OF 1ST SESSION:		

(TO BE COMPLETED DURING 1ST SESSION)

- 1) **WHAT ARE THE MAIN DIFFICULTIES YOU WOULD LIKE COUNSELLING SUPPORT WITH?**

- 2) **HOW ARE YOU FEELING RIGHT NOW?**

- 3) **ON A SCALE OF 1 – 10, (1=LOW, 10=HIGH), HOW WOULD YOU RATE HOW ARE THESE DIFFICULTIES MAKING YOU FEEL?**

DATE:..... **MID-THERAPY REVIEW**

(TO BE COMPLETED DURING A MID-REVIEW SESSION)

- 1) **HOW HAVE YOU FOUND COUNSELLING SO FAR?**

- 2) **HAS THE COUNSELLING HELPED WITH ANY OF YOUR DIFFICULTIES SO FAR? AND IF SO, WHICH ONES?**

3) **OVERALL, HOW HAPPY ARE YOU WITH THE COUNSELLING SO FAR? (PLEASE TICK A BOX BELOW):**

VERY HAPPY **HAPPY** **MIXED FEELINGS**

NOT SO HAPPY **VERY UNHAPPY**

4) **COMPARED TO HOW YOU FELT BEFORE YOUR 1ST SESSION, ON A SCALE OF 1 – 10, (1=LOW, 10=HIGH),**

HOW WOULD YOU RATE HOW THESE DIFFICULTIES ARE MAKING YOU FEEL NOW?

DATE:.....

END OF THERAPY REVIEW

(TO BE COMPLETED DURING LAST SESSION)

1A) HAS COUNSELLING HELPED YOU WITH ANY OF THE DIFFICULTIES YOU FIRST BROUGHT TO COUNSELLING? Y/N

1B) IF YES, IN WHAT WAYS?

(PLEASE GIVE A NUMBER RATING HOW MUCH THESE DIFFICULTIES ARE EFFECTING YOU NOW) – 1=LOW 10=HIGH

2) PLEASE DESCRIBE ANYTHING THAT YOU FEEL HAS BEEN HELPFUL ABOUT YOUR COUNSELLING EXPERIENCE:

3) PLEASE DESCRIBE ANYTHING THAT YOU FEEL HAS BEEN DIFFICULT ABOUT YOUR COUNSELLING EXPERIENCE:

4) LOOKING BACK OVER YOUR COUNSELLING, IS THERE ANYTHING WHICH REMAINS UNRESOLVED FOR YOU OR THAT YOU STILL FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE ABOUT?

5) OVERALL, HOW HAPPY DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE SERVICE

YOU HAVE RECEIVED? – PLEASE TICK A BOX BELOW:

VERY HAPPY **HAPPY** **MIXED FEELINGS**

NOT SO HAPPY **VERY UNHAPPY**

6) ANY OTHER COMMENTS:

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS FORM!

POST COUNSELLING EVALUATION OF OUTCOMES

(TO BE COMPLETED AFTER COUNSELLING HAS FINISHED)

1 a) DATE THERAPY BEGAN/...../.....

1 b) DATE THERAPY ENDED/...../.....

2 a) No OF SESSIONS ATTENDED:

2 b) No OF SESSIONS UNATTENDED

3 a) REASON FOR ENDING THERAPY:

4)

WHAT TYPE OF THERAPY WAS UNDERTAKEN WITH THE CLIENT? PLEASE TICK AS MANY BOXES AS APPROPRIATE:

Psychodynamic Integrative

CBT Solution focussed

Person Centred Other

5)

OUTCOMES:

Did you feel heard and understood?

Did you talk about what you wanted to talk about?

Is there anything that could be done differently in counselling?

Do you mind if we keep your name on this feedback sheet?

NAME....