



Budmouth College

Counselling Policy

Governors' Committee responsible:	Personnel & Resources
Link Senior Leader responsible:	Zillah Rainback
Date reviewed:	September 2017
Next review date:	September 2021

Working Together, Creating Opportunities

The policy has been reviewed using the equality impact assessment initial screening record and positive impact is explicitly intended and very likely.

All *policies* can be found on the College 'R' drive in the Policies folder.

Equality Impact Assessment – initial screening record

1. What area of work is being considered?

Counselling

2. Upon whom will this impact?

Student Body

3. How would the work impact upon groups; are they included and considered?

The Equality Strands	Negative impact	Positive impact	No impact
Minority ethnic groups		X	
Gender		X	
Disability		X	
Religion, Faith or belief		X	
Sexual Orientation		X	
Transgender		X	
Age (N/A to pre-school and school children)		X	
Rurality		X	

4. Does data inform this work, research and/or consultation, and has it been broken down by the equality strands?

	NO	YES	Uncertain
Minority ethnic groups		X	
Gender		X	
Disability		X	
Religion, Faith or belief		X	
Sexual Orientation		X	
Transgender		X	
Age		X	
Rurality		X	

Does the initial screening highlight potential issues that may be illegal? NO

Further comments:-

Do you consider that a full Equality Impact Assessment is required? NO

Initial screening carried out by ...DAWN LARRETT.....

Signed Date...17/03/17.....

Comment by Headteacher:

Date.....



BUDMOUTH COLLEGE

COUNSELLING POLICY

This policy has been compiled using:

- BACP Good Practice in Action 046 Commonly Asked Questions Resource: Working with children and young people (2016), BACP
- Counselling in schools: a blueprint for the future (February 2016), DFE
- Dorset County Council Guidelines for Schools on Provision of Counselling for Pupils in Schools (final draft)
- *Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions* (2016), BACP
- Mental health and behaviour in schools (March 2016), DFE
- School-based Counselling Operational Toolkit (March 2011), Welsh Assembly Government and BACP

What is Counselling and how can it help Children and Young People?

‘Professional counselling’ involves an agreed contract with clear boundaries and a commitment to privacy and confidentiality. This is different to ‘counselling skills’ employed by other staff in a variety of roles at Budmouth College.

‘Good mental and emotional wellbeing is an integral part of children and young people’s holistic development. When this development is inhibited, counselling can be an effective and important resource. The aims of counselling are to: assist the child or young person to achieve a greater understanding of themselves and their relationship to their world; to create a greater awareness and utilisation of their personal resources; to build their resilience; and to support their ability to address problems and pursue personally meaningful goals.’
DFE, Feb 2016

‘Counselling is a skilled way of helping young people with personal and developmental issues and difficulties. Counselling gives individuals an opportunity to explore, discover and clarify ways to live in a more satisfying and resourceful way. It offers the young person the opportunity to increase their self-awareness, develop their personal resources and understanding of their own problems as well as developing strategies to cope with change.’
Welsh Assembly Government and BACP, 2011

Why Counselling at Budmouth?

Student welfare is a fundamental part of pastoral care at Budmouth. The College Counselling Service is designed to complement the pastoral system by offering additional personal support to students who may benefit from the opportunity to work with a professional counsellor.

The Counselling Service provides a confidential and impartial service to students in order that they can talk and express themselves freely within a safe, respectful and supportive setting. Counselling allows time and space for students to talk through personal issues and offers a structured and focused environment to enable students to find new ways of coping. Through a range of specialist interventions, including art therapy, the service aims to help students with social, emotional or behavioural

concerns to move toward greater well-being and to be able to make the most of the opportunities offered for their development at Budmouth.

Qualities and Qualifications of Trained Counsellors at Budmouth:

A school counsellor needs to be aware of and sensitive to the different needs and demands which working in a school community imposes on clients and those who have responsibility for them. Therefore it is essential that counsellors have knowledge of the developmental issues as well as relevant experience and demonstrable competence in working with children and young people. It is also important that they have attended specific counselling trainings which will help practitioners to develop their skills in working with children and young people. Counsellors will be guided by the competences required for the delivery of effective humanistic counselling for young people within the 11–18 age range as outlined by The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP). The BACP have compiled Competence Frameworks and curricula for children and young people which gives guidance on the knowledge and skills required to work therapeutically with this client group.

The personal attributes and natural skills of the counsellor will have been developed with sound training. It is a requirement that all qualified counsellors have reached a minimum of diploma level and that all counsellors have attended an interview, provided references as to their suitability for the post and have passed appropriate DBS checks. The counsellors will also be expected to access appropriate clinical supervision with experienced supervisors as well as attend regular team meetings, ongoing regular and relevant CPD training and Child Protection/Safeguarding updates.

Given the vulnerability of the client group within schools, it is imperative that counsellors are qualified in stringent theoretical principles, high level practice skills and other specialised aspects of counselling. Budmouth College has organisational membership of BACP and counsellors are expected to work within the *Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions* (2016) as outlined by the BACP. Fully qualified counsellors will be registered members and ideally have obtained, or be aiming for Accreditation with BACP or equivalent.

Insurance cover maintained by Dorset County Council on behalf of schools includes liability cover that extends to indemnify volunteers of the school (including volunteer and placement counsellors) whilst they are acting in good faith in the course of their duties.

The insurance cover **does not** extend to any occasions where Budmouth College is paying a non-employed counsellor for the provision of professional advice, rather than the advice being provided on a voluntary basis. In these instances, the counsellor maintains their own insurance cover (including both public and professional indemnity).

Trainee Counsellors:

Where counsellors are not fully trained they will be actively studying the first or second year of a recognised Diploma in Counselling. Trainee counsellors will work

closely with the Director of Counselling who will monitor and discuss the trainee's work during regular meetings. Client contact time will be limited to a few hours per week with Budmouth College students who are 16+ years. It is understood that trainee counsellors will be gaining experience and are supported by relevant and appropriate supervision and personal counselling.

Role of the Counsellor at Budmouth:

Counsellors will be aware of and involved in the needs, demands, policies and practices within the college and be a supportive part of the college community however, the counsellor must also be seen as independent, this is particularly important when dealing with students who feel alienated from school and with parents who may feel uncertain about approaching the school to discuss difficulties.

Depending upon the allocation of time and roles, a school counsellor will be expected to carry out the following key tasks:

Responsibilities of the Director of Counselling:

1. To provide students with a confidential counselling service using an integrative counselling approach.
2. To offer to include parent/carer(s) for one or two sessions, where appropriate and with the young person's agreement.
3. To administer a system of referrals and appointments, this takes account of student's timetables/commitments and avoids/minimises any undue disruption to the learning process.
4. To provide information about the counselling service inc. parent/carer and staff guides and student leaflets which outline the service, role of the counsellor, 'Gillick Competence' and constraints to confidentiality.
5. To carry out the initial assessment of clients, gain written parental consent where applicable and allocate clients to a counsellor within the team or refer on to an outside agency.
6. To maintain confidential case records and keep all records in securely locked cabinets within a securely locked room.
7. To liaise with Tutors, Progress Leaders, Director of Inclusion, Behaviour Support Leaders, Student Support, Subject Teachers, Parents and Outside Agencies if required.
8. To offer guidance to staff regarding the understanding and safe management of children and young people's behaviours and emotions in school.
9. To liaise with personnel from other agencies with a view to providing necessary complimentary support.
10. To liaise with college safeguarding staff (DSL) and MASH team with regard to safeguarding issues.
11. To continuously review and evaluate the service and conduct an annual audit providing anonymous numbers of clients that use the service and a general overview of the types of issues explored. Report to the Principal and Governors as required.
12. Attend regular clinical supervision with a suitably qualified and appropriate supervisor with experience of counselling young people.

13. To maintain individual membership of a governing body (BACP or equivalent) and work to an *Ethical Framework*.
14. To commit to Continued Professional Development and attend a minimum of 30 hours CPD annually.
15. To liaise with a line manager to discuss administrative requirements, accountability and the management of the service.
16. To monitor provision of the service ensuring Performance Management of the counselling team volunteers.
17. To meet bi-weekly with each individual counsellor to discuss client or safeguarding concerns, confidentiality or procedural issues.
18. To provide regular supervision for key staff working with vulnerable students ensuring the resilience of staff and safe practice as well as improving outcomes for young people in their care.
19. To devise and, where appropriate, deliver a programme of training and consultation in order to support and develop the counselling service.
20. To oversee and manage the counselling budget.
21. To observe health and safety and security requirements.
22. To ensure an 'Emergency Protocol' is in place in the event of the Director's serious illness or death.

Responsibilities of Employed/Voluntary and Trainee Counsellors:

1. To offer individual counselling to students attending Budmouth College using an integrative counselling approach.
2. To endorse the college counselling policy and adhere to the protocol and systems established in the college.
3. To agree and work to a written student counselling contract, delivering 50 minute counselling sessions under the terms as agreed in the contract.
4. To maintain confidential case records and keep all college records in securely locked cabinets within locked counselling room whilst keeping own personal process notes in a securely locked place as per BACP guidelines.
5. To inform and discuss any client issues or concerns with the Director of Counselling prior to liaising with Tutors, Progress Leaders, Director of Inclusion, Behaviour Support Leaders, Student Support, Subject Teachers, Parents and Outside Agencies as appropriate.
6. In the event of any safeguarding concerns, to consult with the Director of Counselling/Supervisor and assess whether confidential information is to be passed on to Designated Safeguarding Lead as per college policy.
7. Attend regular and appropriate clinical supervision with a suitably qualified and appropriate external supervisor, who has experience of counselling young people, in accordance with case load and/or course requirements.
8. To attend fortnightly line-management supervision with the Director of Counselling to discuss issues relating to clients, caseload, new referrals, confidentiality, policies and procedural issues, counsellor well-being and fitness to practice.
9. To evaluate and monitor the quality of their client work and professional counselling standards with the Director of Counselling.
10. To complete an annual audit of their own client work.

11. To maintain individual membership of governing body BACP or equivalent and work to an *Ethical Framework*.
12. To commit to Continued Professional Development and attend trainings provided by the college.
13. To maintain firm boundaries between professional work and personal life and take personal issues that may arise to personal counselling.
14. To observe health and safety and security requirements.
15. To provide 12 weeks' notice prior to terminating placement and work with clients.

Supervision:

Clinical supervision is a formal arrangement for counsellors to anonymously consider their cases with someone who has adequate levels of experience and understanding of children/young people and of a school setting, thereby ensuring safe and effective practice. The BACP requirement is at least 1.5 hours per month, on a one-to-one basis, relative to caseload. For qualified counsellors, the arrangement of regular and appropriate supervision is the responsibility of each individual counsellor. Trainee counsellors on placement will organise, finance and attend external clinical supervision with an appropriate supervisor in accordance with governing body guidelines and training provider requirements. Trainees are generally expected to attend 1 hour's supervision per every six hours of client contact or as required by their course. All counsellors agree the selection of a clinical supervisor with the Director of Counselling to ensure they have sufficient experience and qualifications in therapy and supervision.

It is agreed that the external supervisor holds clinical responsibility and that it is the supervisor's responsibility to alert the college if there are concerns. With regards to trainee counsellors, the training provider will be also be notified.

All counsellors working at Budmouth have regular supervision in order to maintain proper professional counselling standards and monitor the quality of their work with clients within the school setting. Young people are informed that all counsellors receive supervision but that all clients remain anonymous during discussions of case work.

Counsellors also attend 'Line Management Supervision' with the Director of Counselling to ensure good practice.

Accountability:

The counsellor is ultimately accountable to the client but the nature of their work in a school setting also means that the counsellor is accountable to the Principal. Where the complex nature of accountability leads or may lead to a conflict of interest, counsellors must discuss this with the client, their supervisor and the Director of Counselling.

Facilities:

Counselling is carried out in a dedicated room. It is an accessible, private, safe, comfortable and secure space where the work will not be overheard, viewed or interrupted. A risk assessment is undertaken to ensure that the environment is safe and conducive to counselling and that confidentiality can be maintained.

Referrals:

Referrals to the counselling service can be received from any interested parties including the young person themselves, parents/carers, teachers and outside agencies. If a young person requests counselling, the adult can encourage a self-referral, or with their permission, seek an appointment on their behalf. Young people have the right to refuse or discontinue counselling at any time and it is the responsibility of the counsellor to ensure that their rights of autonomy are respected.

Individuals wishing to make referrals on behalf of the young person are required to complete a confidential College Counselling referral form. An informal discussion with the Director of Counselling may take place prior to a form being completed. Those persons making a request for counselling on behalf of a student should do so after a discussion with the young person has taken place and after the young person has given their full consent. This process respects the young person's autonomy and choice. Once a referral has been received, the student will be placed on a waiting list and the Director of Counselling will contact them to arrange an appointment as soon as possible. Urgent cases will be seen at the next available cancellation or free appointment. It is the responsibility of the referrer to inform the Director of Counselling at the outset if the young person poses any concern.

During the initial meeting the Director of Counselling will explain the nature of counselling, provide a leaflet, whilst checking that they fully understand the counselling process, what it can and cannot offer and the limits to confidentiality. The Director of Counselling will assess the needs of the young person and agree a plan of support which takes into account the individual needs of the young person.

If a student is **not** considered to be 'Gillick competent', a letter is sent home along with a parental guidance sheet. Parent/carer written consent is obtained in advance of the counselling commencing. The student is given an appointment with a counsellor from the team. No further feedback is given to the referrer unless deemed appropriate, and in consultation with the student.

Young people who are currently receiving support from other agencies are eligible to access the Counselling Service. There should be no apparent conflict with any impending legal proceedings or overload in the support or interventions being given to the young person. Any concerns should be discussed with the young person at the outset or should issues emerge during the work in order to establish the best way forward.

Whilst it is intended that the service is accessible to all, there is however limited capacity and some students will need to access support from outside agencies.

‘Gillick Competence’

The Counselling Service at Budmouth College maintains high levels of confidentiality to ensure client trust is established and maintained. One of the key factors in deciding on whether a young person has the right to choose counselling for themselves is a young person’s capacity to meet one criterion embodied in the ‘Gillick Principle’.

“As a general principle it is legal and acceptable for a young person to ask for confidential counselling without parental consent providing they are of sufficient understanding and intelligence”.

Gillick v West, Norfolk Wisbech Area Health Authority (House of Lords 1985)
3 All England Report 402. Children’s Legal Centre

The rationale of the Gillick case is that a child’s ability to make an informed decision may be assessed according to a number of factors, including:

- the nature and seriousness of the decision to be made
- the child’s age
- the child’s maturity
- the child’s understanding of the circumstances
- the information given to the child to enable him or her to understand the potential benefits and risks of what is proposed and the consequences of consent or refusal.

Parental consent for counselling will ‘usually’ be obtained for students under 13 years and for young people who are deemed to be particularly vulnerable. Competence can also be impaired by circumstances such as extreme stress and drug misuse.

In assessing whether the young client is ‘Gillick Competent’, the Director of Counselling may have to consult with her supervisor, line manager and other school staff. In assessing the competence of young people with Special Educational Needs, consultations may take place with the Director of Inclusion.

Appointment System:

Appointments will be organised by the Director of Counselling in consultation with the young person, the counsellor and teaching staff. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their appointments and make any changes or cancellations directly with their counsellor. The counsellor informs teaching staff of lesson absence via e-mail and marks ‘M’ on SIMS to indicate ‘meeting’ as per college protocol. The system should be as discrete as possible in order to maintain confidentiality as well as minimising stress and lesson disruption for the student.

Sessions:

Prior to the commencement of counselling, a ‘written contract’ is agreed with the student, outlining the way of working for the counselling sessions. Sessions will usually be arranged at a regular time, on a weekly basis and last for 50 minutes. The

counsellor will initially offer up to 6 sessions and then review. In consultation with the young person, the counselling contract may be further extended, reduced to bi-weekly or monthly or ceased. The number of sessions with clients can vary from short term (1-6 sessions), medium term (7-12 sessions) or long term (13+ sessions) depending on the needs of the young person. On completion of counselling, the student will be invited to complete and return an anonymous evaluation form. These feedback forms are used to monitor and improve the service.

Mobile Phones:

Each counsellor has their own mobile phone provided by Budmouth College to ensure the student and counsellor can make contact regarding changes in appointment times and to arrange extra sessions if required. These phones may also be used to conduct telephone counselling sessions due to the student being unable to attend college or room inaccessibility during the holidays. Students can also contact the Director of Counselling via her work phone to self-refer for counselling. The mobile phones are for Budmouth College work purposes only.

Dual Roles:

Some counsellors may have dual roles at Budmouth College; therefore careful consideration is given to the wishes and views of the client about the nature of this contact. All counsellors with dual roles have an accountability and responsibility to explore sensitively with clients any conflict of interest which may arise. Counsellors who are also teachers do not counsel students who they are currently teaching or have relationships with through other roles.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing:

Every young person who comes for counselling has the right to confidentiality. At Budmouth College, high levels of confidentiality are established and maintained. The leaflet and written/verbal contract with the student outlines the limits to confidentiality. It is important that the student understands that information shared is not automatically passed on. The exception to maintaining confidentiality is if a young person is deemed to be at significant risk of serious harm. It is considered the counsellor's responsibility to act to protect that young person from significant harm or the risk of significant harm. All decisions will be made in consultation with the Director of Counselling and DSL and college procedure followed.

Decisions regarding breaking confidentiality will always be made in the interest of safeguarding and promoting the young person's welfare. The counsellor will also make every effort to discuss the situation fully with the young person first, involve them in the decision-making process and make them aware of the reasons why certain decisions have been reached. It is important to try and secure the young person's consent for a breach of confidentiality before proceeding. Care will be taken to ensure that any action taken to prevent harm does not leave the young person in any danger from the disclosure.

If a counsellor feels a young person has talked about something which is of concern, the counsellor will either support the young person in passing this on themselves, or if they feel unable to do this, or it is not appropriate for them to do so, the counsellor will agree to do this for them. The young person will be informed that the passing on of the concern is going to take place and where possible, have some say over when, where, and to whom it is made, unless extenuating circumstances dictate otherwise. If confidentiality is broken the counsellor must be able to explain their reasons for doing so and the process that may follow as a result, to their client and supervisor.

Discussions around confidentiality may arise at any time during the counselling process. On occasions students may wish for information to be shared with others and the possible implications of this will be explored with them. The counsellor will also ensure that the client is aware from the outset that he/she is *not* required to pass on information about breaking a college rule or committing a crime unless it could be deemed as the counsellor aiding and abetting a crime.

All counsellors are expected to discuss the difficult ethical and moral decisions that are encountered when reporting disclosures, with their clinical supervisors and the Director of Counselling. The counsellors are expected to keep up to date with current legislation, regulations and case law as well as the '*Ethical Framework*', college policies and protocols. The counselling team have regular discussions and training on the issues of confidentiality, sharing information, safeguarding and child protection procedures.

Drugs, Solvents, Alcohol:

The increasing problem of drug misuse among young people is now a serious educational issue. Responses are required which take account of the individual who misuses drugs as well as the wider community. A punitive approach on its own is no longer deemed sufficient for dealing with the problem and the role of the counsellor is often essential in the handling of drug related incidents. The counsellor's professional judgement is crucial. If the counsellor believes a child is "at risk" they are obliged to inform the Director of Counselling and the DSL. During initial contracting, all young clients will have been advised of the consequences of disclosing this type of information. All counsellors have read and understood the Budmouth College Drugs Policy and will give this careful consideration when working with young clients. Counsellors will work with concerns within the counselling frame unless the young person is clearly at risk.

Client Records and Access to Records:

Client records are kept in securely locked cabinets in a securely locked room, accessible by the Director of Counselling as well as the named person on the 'emergency protocol', should an emergency arise. Counsellors may also keep a record of the case notes and these will remain the property of the counsellor. No identifiable information is kept with case notes and these will be coded. Client's 'named' referral details, emails and other confidential documents are filed separately in a different lockable cabinet. Counsellors will limit their recording to brief details of sessions and

not include their own observations or reflections. Concerns regarding child protection will be sensitively noted.

Any collection of data for the monitoring of the service, audits and evaluations will not contain any information from which the young person or family can be identified.

Third parties can request that notes be made available to them, particularly in the event of a court case. This can happen during or after the counselling work has ended. **Notes will not be released to third parties without a full discussion of the implications with the client and their prior signed agreement.** Most often a report summarising the counselling work is sufficient.

Counselling records and notes will be confidentially stored and retained, separately from their school record, until the young person reaches 25 years of age. This decision has been guided by DCC Children's Services' retention schedule for all records relating to psychological services. After this period they will be disposed of confidentially. This will be the responsibility of the Director of Counselling.

Suicide and Self-harm:

If it is deemed that a young person is imminently about to take their own life and the risk seems very high, counsellors will seek appropriate and immediate medical help for the young person. Those who have parental responsibility for the child will be informed unless there is alleged abuse. If the risk is high, the counsellor will also consider contacting the GP and CAMHS. The Principal and DSL will be informed regarding students with high risk concerns. All decisions must be made in consultation with the Director of Counselling.

Complaints Procedure:

Budmouth College holds organisational membership of BACP and has a contractual commitment to work in accordance with the current '*Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions*' (2016). All counsellors at Budmouth College are also individual members of BACP or UKCP. Any complaint alleging a breach of the '*Ethical Framework*' will be carried out in accordance with the Complaints and Professional Conduct Procedure outlined by BACP. It will however, be raised with the Director of Counselling in the first instance.