



Confidentiality and Counselling

The counselling relationship is between the young person and the counsellor and counselling is a time for the child or young person to talk about concerns without fear of them being discussed elsewhere. Therefore, it is important that the information discussed in the counselling sessions is treated confidentially. The only exception to this would be when the child or young person or someone around them are at risk of harm. The limits of confidentiality are discussed with the child or young person in the initial session when contracting the working agreement. All counsellors adhere to Scottish Legislation, GIRFEC and Aberdeenshire Council's policies, including child protection and data protection.

Contact us

schoolcounselling@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Anything else I need to be aware of?

- At the moment only secondary school pupils can access school counselling. As the service grows, this will be opened up to primary school children aged 10 years and above.
- Access to counselling is via referral, at a future point there will also be the opportunity for young people to self-refer for counselling.
- Young people will be offered counselling in six session blocks, more than one block may be offered to a young person. Counselling sessions take place on a regular basis during the school day and usually last around 50 minutes each.
- It is always a young person's choice whether to come to counselling and they should not be 'sent' to counselling for help or persuaded one way or another, even if school staff, parents/carers or other adults think they could benefit from talking to a counsellor.
- All our counsellors abide by the ethical framework of BACP (British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy), a professional body which supports and regulates the profession.

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SCHOOL COUNSELLING INFORMATION FOR SCHOOL STAFF



From mountain to sea

What is counselling?

Counselling provides a safe and confidential space for young people to talk to a trained professional about issues and concerns they face. The counsellor will help the young person explore their thoughts, feelings, and actions so they can develop a better understanding of themselves and of others.

Being really listened to, and having feelings, worries or thoughts understood or clarified by somebody who is not directly involved in the young person's problems or concerns can be very helpful. Young people often find that having access to a regular time, space, and a caring adult, enables them to build a trusting relationship which helps them better understand themselves and it often aids them in forming meaningful connections with others.

As well as listening, counsellors also help young people to clarify their problems, and see patterns in their relating, thinking and/or actions.

Counsellors do not give advice or tell young people what to do, instead, they help young people make their own choices to facilitate personal growth and self-awareness. While external conditions may not substantially change for the young person, their feelings about themselves and their ability to meet the challenges they face can be significantly enhanced by relational counselling.

How does this differ from other support in school?

School Counselling is an intervention delivered by a trained professional with recognised qualifications in counselling, who receives clinical supervision, works to a theoretical model and practices with accountability, confidentiality and continued professional development.

Young people experiencing significant and persistent mental health challenges may be referred to CAMHS and Pupil Support Workers may work with emotional distress that requires a skilled listening service and / or a defined programme of support.



School Counsellors fit into the space between these services. Counsellors work with young people facing more entrenched mental health challenges that do not meet the criteria for CAMHS referrals. Counselling is not an ad hoc or one-off intervention during an emotional or behavioural crisis, but longer-term work based on building a trusting and meaningful relationship between the young person and the counsellor.

How can I refer a young person?

Speak to their named person in the first instance and let them know why you think a particular young person might benefit from counselling. This is usually the Head Teacher / Depute Head Teacher or Guidance Teacher.

Who might counselling help?

Some examples of when counselling may be helpful for a young person:

- Feeling sad, unhappy, anxious, or lonely
- Experiencing problems at home
- Feeling angry
- Experiencing relationship changes and loss
- Feeling confused about their identity
- Wanting to hurt themselves or others
- Being bullied
- Experiencing suicidal thoughts
- Worrying about sex or relationships
- Having problems at school
- Struggling with body image, weight or disordered eating
- Questioning their sexuality or gender
- Experiencing difficulties with peer relationships and friends
- Experiencing school and exam stress
- Dealing with traumatic events from the past
- Struggling with substance misuse
- Having difficulties attending school

When may counselling not be appropriate?

There are challenging life experiences we all go through where it is natural to experience difficult emotions. This does not always mean that a young person needs counselling, with some time and if a supportive family structure is in place, many will be able to work through difficulties on their own. At other times an alternative intervention to counselling is more appropriate in meeting a young person's needs.

Some examples of when counselling may not be appropriate include when the young person:

- does not wish to attend
- is attending CAMHS
- is accessing mental health support from another professional in the school
- is experiencing a one-off difficult day
- is experiencing the immediate aftermath of bereavement