

R U N S H A W C O L L E G E

POLICY TITLE: Student Counselling Policy		
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POLICY OWNER: Andrea Neild	POSITION: Assistant Principal	VERSION: 10
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1. Purpose

1.1 Runshaw College is committed to supporting students and recognises the importance of a student's health and wellbeing in relation to their academic progression. The purpose of this policy is to outline the scope of the counselling service which is provided by qualified Counsellors at Runshaw College. Counselling is intended to provide support and/or intervention (practical or therapeutic) to enhance student well-being and/or academic progress.

1.2 Objectives

- To enhance wellbeing/mental health
- To develop autonomy and resilience
- To add value to the college student experience
- To provide emotional and wellbeing support

1.3 Counselling is offered to enable students to stay on their course of study and to be successful. It is recognised that without this support, students may be overwhelmed by concerns and be unable to complete their course of study.

Staff counselling is covered in the Wellbeing At Work Policy.

It is not recommended that where a student is already accessing specialist therapeutic support outside of College that they commence another form of therapy/counselling until the support has ended due to a conflict in therapies.

2. Principles

2.1 The College is accredited by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapists (BACP). The College Counselling service adheres to the (BACP) ethical framework.

2.2 Counselling will be available to all students regardless of ethnicity, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion or belief and age or any other distinction which cannot be objectively justified.

2.3 Counselling interviews will be confidential following the standards of the BACP Ethical Framework for the Counselling Profession. If a counsellor has low level safeguarding concerns, they will discuss with the student consent to share with the safeguarding team. A counsellor will refer high risk

concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) without consent if the risk is assessed as serious.

- 2.4 All Counsellors will be trained to at least Diploma level, and hold or be working towards BACP accreditation and will be expected to undertake regular CPD.
- 2.5 All Counsellors will receive external supervision in accordance with BACP guidelines. Counsellors are responsible for making sure this takes place.
- 2.6 All Counsellors will work to contracts agreed with their students at the start of their relationship and reviews will take place every fourth session.
- 2.7 Whilst counselling needs may be ongoing, the length of the contract will be discussed at the start and any further needs will be referred to external agencies as appropriate to ensure maximum availability to all students.
- 2.8 Counselling will be conducted in a confidential environment.
- 2.9 The length of each counselling session will be decided in advance and will be no longer than 50 minutes.
- 2.10 The Counselling Service operates during term-time. Students seeking counselling during the College holidays are referred to appropriate external agencies.
- 2.11 Counsellors offer six counselling sessions, which can be extended following agreement by the Head of Safeguarding and Wellbeing. Students will be offered an initial assessment to ascertain what the students' needs are. If a student is accepted into the service and is considered high priority, they will receive priority status with the Counselling team or be referred to their GP or CAMHS.
- 2.12 Counselling will encourage students to become autonomous (self-reliant).

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Head of Safeguarding and Wellbeing:

- 3.1.1 Line manages the counsellors and ensures appropriate supervision is in place liaising with external supervisors as appropriate
- 3.1.2 Maintains quality assurance and monitoring arrangements. Including ensuring that all high-risk concerns are flagged and responded to in line with the safeguarding framework.
- 3.1.3 Reports on the operation and impact of the Counselling Service maintaining confidentiality as appropriate.

3.2 Counsellors:

- 3.2.1 Work to-BACP-Ethical Frameworks for the Counselling Professions.
- 3.2.2 Keep effective confidential records of their counselling (as required by the Quality Assurance arrangements) and keep these records in accordance with GDPR requirements
- 3.2.3 Ensure any high-risk concerns are reported to the DSL
- 3.2.4 If a counsellor has low level safeguarding concerns, they will discuss with the student consent to share with the safeguarding team

- 3.2.5 Liaise with the wellbeing facilitator in relation to trends in presenting themes, so that these can be included in the Wellbeing Universal offer for all sessions and events
- 3.2.6 Conduct self-assessment and meet regularly with the Head of Safeguarding and Wellbeing to review the effectiveness of the service-

4. Review and Evaluation

- 4.1 The College Senior Management Team (SMT) and the Safeguarding Steering Group will receive reports on the operation of Safeguarding and Wellbeing ~~Student Services~~ including the Counselling service every half term.
- 4.2 An annual self-assessment report will result in an action plan, which will form part of the Safeguarding and Wellbeing SAR and QIP and be validated in a review meeting with the Assistant Principal Student Experience and Support, the Deputy Principal and Principal.
- 4.3 Actions are included in the area QIP and reviewed in line with the College's quality cycle.

6. Accessibility

- 6.1 The Student Counselling Service is fully accessible to the whole College student population. The service ensures it is fully adaptable and can meet the needs of the students on an individual basis.
- 6.2 The majority of appointments are face to face, but appointments are available online or by telephone and the counsellors have undertaken professional training to facilitate such sessions.
- 6.3 If a student misses 2 sessions with or without contact their sessions will be cancelled and the next student on the waiting list fills the space. In exceptional circumstances, students will be offered an additional chance to attend their counselling session after the 2 missed appointments.

7. Feedback, Monitoring and Evaluation

- 7.1 The College uses questionnaires to gain stakeholder feedback on the student counselling service, and uses the feedback to inform the areas QIP which is reviewed on a regular basis

7.2 Complaints procedure

- 7.2.1 A student may make a complaint about a counsellor by following the complaints procedure for students which is set out in the student handbook and is available on the College website.
- 7.2.2 A grievance against a counsellor is referred to the Head of Safeguarding and Well-being who will initiate the investigation so that the complaint can be fully investigated and decide an outcome.
- 7.2.3 Students who are not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint investigation may appeal and details of how to do this and the relevant timescales are set out in the decision letter.
- 7.2.4 If still dissatisfied, a student may contact the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) who will start a professional conduct procedure. A copy of this procedure is available in the BACP Ethical Framework. The professional conduct procedure may only be activated after all local procedures have been implemented.

8. Other Associated Policies

- Safeguarding Policy
- Prevent Policy
- Equality & Diversity Policy

- Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Student Harassment and Bullying Policy