



Information for Parents and Carers

To support students' wellbeing Rushcliffe School offers an in-house counselling service staffed by two full-time counsellors. Students can refer themselves to the service by contacting the counsellors directly or through a member of staff in school (such as staff in the Pupil Support Unit). School staff may suggest counselling as an option that might be helpful to a student. Parents and carers can also request counselling for their child. Counselling is always voluntary for the young person concerned and it will be their decision if they want to attend or not.

What is counselling and how can it help?

Counselling is a chance for students to explore problems or worries they have in a confidential setting. They may choose to do this through talking or by using creative media (e.g. painting, drawing). Counselling can help young people gain a better understanding of their thoughts and feelings, recognise patterns in the way they relate to others and develop new perspectives. It can also help students to make decisions and choices and find ways of dealing with new or difficult circumstances.

Counselling aims to facilitate personal growth in young people by helping them develop their ability to express themselves, increasing their self-esteem and their own understanding of who they are. The student forms a partnership with the counsellor and they will decide together how to use the time, meaning that the work they do together proceeds in the direction, and at the pace, that is right for the young person.

Who are the counsellors at Rushcliffe?

Our two counsellors are Hannah Browne and David Cook. Hannah and David are both fully qualified counsellors who are experienced in, and passionate about, working with young people. They are both members of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and work within the BACP Ethical Framework. Both engage in regular continuing professional development and have regular clinical supervision to support the quality of their work.

Contact Hannah on; HBrowne@rushcliffe.notts.sch.uk

Contact David on; dcook@rushcliffe.notts.sch.uk

Is the counselling confidential?

Yes. The fact that counselling sessions are treated as confidential is an important part of the service that allows young people to talk openly without worrying that what they say will be shared beyond the counselling room. This includes not discussing the work with parents/carers unless the young person requests this or gives their consent. We understand this can sometimes be difficult for parents but confidentiality is vital for establishing the trust that enables young people to speak about the things that most concern them.

If it seems that a young person is at risk of imminent significant harm then the counsellor will raise this with the safeguarding team in school so that steps can be taken to keep them safe. Where at all possible, the counsellor will discuss this first with the young person concerned.

Do I need to give my consent for my child to have counselling?

Not in all cases. We will usually seek parental consent and would always prefer that parents/carers are aware and happy that their child is having counselling. However, we work within legal and ethical guidelines and respect that if young people have an understanding of what is involved in counselling then they have a right to access the service without the knowledge of their parents/carers if that is what they want. We are always happy to talk to you about any concerns you have about the idea of counselling.

How long will counselling last?

Counselling can be on a regular basis or one-off 'drop-in' sessions. Students usually attend up to 6 regular sessions. The counsellor and young person will review this as they work together. More sessions may be offered where it is felt this would be beneficial and where the service has capacity for this.

When and where will the sessions take place?

Sessions take place in school, in our dedicated counselling rooms and last for up to one lesson period. Appointment times are varied so that the same lesson is not missed repeatedly. For Sixth Formers, sessions generally take place in free periods.

If my child comes for counselling, does that mean I've done something wrong as a parent?

Not at all. We all have times when it feels hard to speak to those who are closest to us. This is particularly true for young people during adolescence. Young people often say the reason they feel able to talk to a counsellor is because the counsellor has no other involvement in their life whereas they do not want to worry or stress the people who they see every day. Seeking help through counselling can be a very healthy and mature choice for a young person to make. The counsellor will not be judging you or your child but seeking to help them find their way through the things that are troubling them.

Can I support the counselling?

Absolutely! This is really welcome. The most helpful thing you can do is to show acceptance of counselling as a normal and useful thing to engage in; to be supportive/interested if your child wants to talk to you about it and equally not press them if they do not. It is very normal to feel anxious about what your child is saying in sessions and even hurt that they may not be sharing things with you. It is our experience that speaking to a counsellor can often lead to young people feeling more able to be open with their families and others. But this can take time to happen.

Privacy Notice

All records retained in relation to counselling are treated as confidential. Confidential session notes are made to support the counsellor's work. Once counselling is finished these notes will be stored securely at the school and will only be accessed if there is a 'subject access request' or they are requested by a court order. We will not share this information with any third parties unless required to do so by law. You (or your child once they have the capacity to do so) have the right to make a 'subject access request' to view these documents. Requests to see records should go to Kate Godfrey (Spencer Academies Trust Data Protection Officer): k.godfrey@satrust.com. Records are

kept until 25 years from the date of birth of the student they concern and then are destroyed. More information about how the school handles data can be found on the school website in the Data Protection Policy.