



# Information for students

## ✚ What is counselling and how can it help?

Counselling is a chance to talk about and explore the things that are important to you. We all have worries and problems and talking to somebody about these can be a first step in changing them. Talking to friends, parents or teachers can be really helpful but sometimes it is easier to talk more openly to someone who is not connected to the rest of your life.

As well as (or instead of) talking with your counsellor, you may use sessions to express yourself creatively, for example by using painting or drawing. This is your choice and not something you have to do.

As counsellors, we are here to listen carefully to you without judging you and to understand things from your point of view. We are not here to tell you what to do or to push you into talking about anything you don't want to, but we can help you to find ways forward that are right for you. We respect that you are the person who knows best about your own life and your own thoughts and feelings.

Counselling is about helping you to work out what is important to you, helping you make sense of your thoughts and feelings and helping you make decisions and choices. Often, people find that in doing this they begin to feel differently about things, see things from different perspectives and find their own ways to make changes.

It is always your choice whether to come to counselling or not.

## ✚ Will people know what I've talked about?

No. What you say or do in counselling is confidential – meaning it stays between you and your counsellor and they won't discuss it with anyone else apart from their supervisor. This is someone they meet with regularly to reflect on their work and make sure they are working to their best of their ability. Their supervisor is someone who is outside of school and who will also keep things confidential.

The counsellor will keep things confidential unless you are at risk of serious harm. They may then need to talk to someone else to help keep you safe but, if possible, will always try to talk to you about this first.

## ✚ Who are the counsellors?

There are 2 full-time counsellors in school: Hannah and David. We both specialise in working with young people and have previously worked in other schools and agencies providing counselling. People sometimes like counselling to be private so we often keep a low-profile around school but we are always willing to talk to you if you see us around or want to come and find us.



### **How do I get to see a counsellor?**

You can come and speak to us directly for an informal chat or to request a session. Hannah is in room 212 in B Block and David is in room 651, upstairs in the Sixth Form Building. We'd be really happy to speak to you! You can also email us: Hannah – [HBrowne@rushcliffe.notts.sch.uk](mailto:HBrowne@rushcliffe.notts.sch.uk); David – [dcook@rushcliffe.notts.sch.uk](mailto:dcook@rushcliffe.notts.sch.uk).

You can ask a member of staff (such as the staff in the Pupil Support Unit or Sixth Form Office) to refer you for counselling. Sometimes members of staff or parents/carers will request that their child has counselling, but we will only see you if you want to come.

Counselling sessions can be one-off 'drop-ins' or regular sessions that take place every week or fortnight. Sometimes people like to come for a drop-in first to see what it's like and then will decide with the counsellor if regular sessions would be helpful.

Once we have received a request for counselling we'll contact you and invite you to come for a session at a particular time. There is usually a waiting list for regular sessions. We try to keep waiting times as short as possible and can see you for a drop-in session if needed while you are waiting.

### **Will my parents or carers know if I see a counsellor?**

If you are 16 and over then you can come to counselling without your parents being informed.

If you are 13-15, we will ask for your parent's or carer's consent for you to have counselling unless you do not want your parents to know. In this case, we will meet with you and if we feel happy that you understand what counselling involves then we can go ahead without informing your parents.

If you are 11 or 12, we will need to get your parent's or carer's consent for you to have counselling.

### **The counselling rooms:**



### **When does counselling take place and how long does it last?**

Counselling sessions take place during the school day and last for up to one lesson period. Regular sessions are usually at a different time each week so you don't keep missing the same lesson. For Sixth Formers, they are usually during free periods.

Students coming for regular counselling are normally offered 6 sessions. Before the end, this will be discussed by you and your counsellor. If it is decided that it would be helpful, and it is possible, then more sessions may be offered.

### **Will anything be written about me?**

It is very important to us to keep information about people safe and confidential. After each session your counsellor will write some notes to help them in their work with you. These will be kept in a locked filing cabinet and only shared in the unlikely event that a judge requests to see them. Other documents about your counselling (for example your referral form) are also confidential and are kept in a locked cabinet or securely on a computer. Like your school records, these documents are kept for 25 years from your date of birth and then destroyed.