

Counselling Policy



Sandwell Home and Hospital Tuition Service

Signed by Chair of Governors:



Date ratified by Governing Body: 11.10.2023

Date of Review: 11.10.2026



**SCHOOL
MENTAL
HEALTH
AWARD**



1 COUNSELLING SERVICE FOR ALL PUPILS AT ALBRIGHT EDUCATION CENTRE

A good quality of care requires competently delivered services that meet the needs of its clients by practitioners who are appropriately supported and accountable. Good practice involves clarifying and agreeing the rights and responsibilities of both the practitioner and client at appropriate points in their working relationship.

1. 1.1 Albright Education Centre recognises that pupils facing personal difficulties may need counselling and/or support to enable them to achieve their potential.

2. 1.2 Aim

- To offer a free counselling service to all students, their immediate family members and staff who choose to use it, regardless of age, gender, race, culture and disability.
- Counselling takes place at Albright, but can also be offered within a student's home.
- Counselling is a contractual process and both counsellor and client will work together to discuss and review the amount of sessions, boundaries and confidentiality. This will be discussed in the beginning at the assessment stage of counselling as well as being reviewed every half term
- Counselling can be an early intervention strategy to prevent deterioration in the emotional wellbeing, behaviour and attitude of a child or young person. It can provide an opportunity to enhance a young person's self-esteem and ability to cope more effectively in school. It is recognised that counselling will not always be an appropriate intervention, for example young people with long-standing behavioural or personality issues may find it difficult or impossible to engage in the counselling process.

3. 1.3 Objectives

- To ensure students, their immediate family member and staff have access to counselling and support, either within the Centre or through an appropriate external agency, that may specialise in specific psychotherapy i.e. drug and alcohol, eating disorders or early signs of psychosis.
- To encourage and enable students, their immediate family members and staff to reach their full potential and their personal development, individually on a one-one basis.
- To offer support, guidance and advice to staff, whenever the need arises.

- To maintain a professional service, with regular reviews and feedback from attendees.
- To ensure counsellors attend regular clinical supervision with an external supervisor, in line with the BACP ethical framework for good practice.
- We support BACP's recommendation that: "Counselling involves a deliberately undertaken contract with agreed boundaries and commitment to privacy and confidentiality. It requires explicit and informed consent" (BACP Code of Ethics and Practice).

1.3.1 In order to meet these objectives:

- Counselling is available by appointment only. Anyone can be referred to counselling, as long as the client is in agreement with attending.
- Referral document should be completed by the referrer and shared with the counsellor. This is to ensure that referred child will be seen and appropriately assessed by the counsellor.
- No-one can be 'sent' for counselling and where this is the case, the counselling process will cease, however recommendations without consequence can be made for a person to attend. If a client does not want to attend there will be no real investment from the client to move towards change.
- An assessment for counselling needs will be initially undertaken. Therapy will be offered in blocks of 6 weekly sessions. Each session will last up to 50 minutes.
- A confidentiality agreement will be discussed within the initial assessment stage. This will allow clients to understand what the counsellor can and cannot keep confidential.
- Counsellors regularly review and evaluate their client work and supervision is arranged monthly, and in line with BACP guidelines.
- The uptake of the service is monitored and reviewed annually, any trends are reported and Line Manager notified.
- The counsellor is a member professional body i.e. British Association for Counsellors and Psychotherapists and adheres to its Ethical Framework.

1.4

- Depending on need and presenting problem, strategies from Person Centred, psychodynamic and systemic therapies will be used in order for clients to reach their goals.
- Counselling will not take place if the client is receiving regular therapeutic support from another therapist/provision that may present as a conflict or an overlap. It is unethical for a person to have two sets of therapy and this adheres to the Ethical framework set by the British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists.
- Children and young people are less likely to initiate therapy or counselling; they may be referred or encouraged to attend counselling by teachers, carers or other adults.

Children and young people with challenging behaviour may be referred for counselling in order to help them manage their behaviour rather than to provide emotional support or alleviate any underlying distress.

- Albright Education Centre provides the opportunity to pupils to undertake counselling as a way of helping young people through talking and listening. The child or young person is encouraged to express their feelings and thoughts about any issues of concern so they can understand themselves and their behaviour better and identify and alternative ways of coping. The Counsellor's support is available to pupils in relation to a range of issues including developmental issues, resolving family or friendship concerns, improving relationships, making choices, coping with changes, seeking insight and understanding, or growing as a person. The list is not limited to the above.
- Issues or concerns which may be raised with the counsellor could include: Family problems and relationships, School-related issues – homework, pressure of exams, Relationships with peers in school, Relationships with peers outside school, Anxiety, Depression, Anger, Physical health, Identity issues, Sexual behaviours/orientation, Bereavement/loss, Self-harm, Eating disorders, Substance abuse, Future education/careers, Spirituality, Social network abuse and Sleep problems. The list is not limited to the above.

Drop-in sessions

Drop-in sessions will be available for pupils, who require urgent psychological support.

Drop-in sessions are an opportunity for pupils who are looking for a one off session that may or may not require any further actions. It may be a point of self-referral and agreement on continuation of support in form of regular counselling sessions or single solution-focus psychological support.

- Attendance and brief focus of drop-in sessions will be recorded on ACE form and could be used as supportive information in collaboration with third parties, if appropriate.
- Further content of drop-in sessions will be treated as confidential, see point 1.5 of Counselling Policy.

1.5 Confidentiality

- Why is confidentiality important? Confidentiality will generally be essential to the formal counselling process, but the counsellor will be at liberty to make disclosures on a 'need to know' basis to appropriate individuals and agencies if issues of child protection or safeguarding arise. This will be discussed with the client at the assessment and the review stage of counselling.
- Confidentiality is important to enable client to develop a trusting relationship with the counsellor to allow the client be open and share feelings without fear of blame, shame or reprisal to allow the client to speak freely about issues concerning them. Mutual trust, goodwill and respect between counsellor, school, staff and parents, will help ensure that confidentiality is maintained. The staff and the counsellor will

encourage a young person to discuss their counselling with their parents, main caregivers and/or people that they trust in appropriate cases.

- Counselling is considered highly confidential unless, in exceptional circumstances, the counsellor believes that someone may have suicidal intentions. When this is the case, confidentiality will be broken appropriately and sensitively. Appropriate staff members and safe-guarders will be notified. Appropriate staff or 3rd parties may be discussed at the assessment or the review stage of counselling.
- Written notes will be numerically and kept in a locked cabinet and/or a secure password protected document in a secure location. Clients that are discussed in supervision will be anonymous or, first names only will be used. External clinical supervisor will also adhere to BACP guidelines.
- Information stored securely and in line with GDPR recommendations.
- The counsellor will not pass on any detailed accounts of sessions, but may with the clients permission communicate periodically with school pastoral staff about the support being provided such as coping strategies. A client may wish a trusted member of staff to know they are receiving counselling in order to feel supported between counselling sessions. This will be discussed at the assessment and review stage of counselling.
- Sometimes the counsellor will identify that it is in the best interests of the client to liaise with specific members of staff or refer the client to another agency for further help, for example, where there are mental health concerns. This will be with the clients permission and/or parental consent unless there are child protection or safeguarding concerns, in which case the need to safeguard the child or young person's welfare and safety will take precedence. This is supported by the working together to safeguard children act 2018
- All clinical notes are property of Albright Education Centre and will be kept for a minimum of 6 years after last session.
Practitioners are advised to keep appropriate records of their work with clients unless there are good and sufficient reasons for not keeping any records. All records should be accurate, respectful of clients and colleagues and protected from unauthorised disclosure. Any records should be kept securely and adequately protected from unauthorised intrusion or disclosure. Practitioners should take into account their responsibilities and their clients' rights under data protection legislation and any other legal requirements.

2. COUNSELLING SERVICE FOR STAFF

2.1 There is no counselling provision for Albright staff.

3. REVIEW OF POLICY

3.1 The above policy will be reviewed by the appropriate parties. GDPR
Personal data of the individual

An individual is only entitled to their own personal data, and not to information relating to other people (unless the information is also about them or they are acting on behalf of

someone). Therefore, it is important that you establish whether the information requested falls within the definition of personal data. For further information about the definition of personal data please see our guidance on what is personal data.

What is the right of access?

The right of access, commonly referred to as subject access, gives individuals the right to obtain a copy of their personal data as well as other supplementary information. It helps individuals to understand how and why you are using their data, and check you are doing it lawfully.

What is an individual entitled to?

Individuals have the right to obtain the following from you:

- confirmation that you are processing their personal data;
- a copy of their personal data; and
- other supplementary information – this largely corresponds to the information that you should provide in a privacy notice.

(www.ico.org.uk)

Information on clients including clinical notes belong to Albright Education Centre and therefore designated individuals with have access, clients will be informed of this before counselling commences.