Luccombe Hub

This document forms part of the policy handbook and is intended for use at Luccombe Hub

Title:	**Counselling Services Policy**
Subject Area:	Whole Centre
Applies:	Immediately
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1.Introduction

What is counselling? According to the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP): Counselling takes place when a counsellor sees a client in a private and confidential setting to explore a difficulty the client is having, distress they may be experiencing or perhaps their dissatisfaction with life, or loss of a sense of direction and purpose. It is always at the request of the client as no-one can properly be "sent" for counselling.

1.1Aims

The Luccombe Hub provides access to professional counselling for both learners and staff.

The Luccombe Hub is committed to providing support characterised by good listening and problem-solving strategies. Access to our independent counselling services is an additional step available to those who need this extra element of support and works to enhance the existing holistic/therapeutic approach of the Centre.

For our learners it aims to promotepositive Social Emotional Mental Health and runs in conjunction with existing areas of identified needs support strategies provided inhouse or my external agencies such as, Social Care, Speech and Language, OT etc.

For Staff, please refer to the Staff Handbook, Centre's Wellbeing & Occupational Health Policy and Staff Supervision Policy for further guidance

1.2 Consultation

The Luccombe Hub will communicate this policy to all staff, relevant professionals and learners through inductions, meetings, day to day communications, staff meetings and training. A copy of this policy and all policies will be available on request or via the website.

1.3 Legislation and guidance

Duty of Confidentiality
Children Act 1989
Human Right Act 1998

Department of Education Guidance on Counselling in Schools
Future in Mind Government Proposal
Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education curriculum guidance
'Time to Change' programme – removing the stigma of mental health.
British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) Code of Ethics and Practice

2. Procedures and practice

For young people at The Luccombe Hub

Counselling provision at The Luccombe Hub is provided on a case by case basis following an initial assessment from our onsite Thrive Practitioner and Pastoral & Behavioural Lead. It forms part of the holistic approach to a child or young persons therapeutic journey at the Centre.

It should be noted that there are some difficulties in applying the above BACP definition to the field of counselling children and young people:

- Children and young people are less likely to initiate therapy or counselling; they may be referred or encouraged to attend counselling by their main Centre Lead, Education Lead, Facilitators, carers or other adults in their life.
- Children and young people with challenging behaviour may be referred for counselling in order to help them change their behaviour rather than to provide emotional support or alleviate any underlying distress.

The Luccombe Hub provides the opportunity for learners to undertake counselling, if it is deemed appropriate for them, 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 improve their ways of coping and improve their personal resilience.

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).

Counselling offers learners a regular space and time to talk or think about worries or difficulties and with the support of a professional counsellor helps young people explore their feelings and look at how they might want things to be different, by talking and using a range of activities. The Counsellor's support is available to learners 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 Luccombe Hub's Counselling service is provided by our in-house Pastoral & Behavioural Lead and also, if necessary by an external fully trained counsellor and , who is checked by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) and works within the BACP Code of Ethics and Practice.

Our Counsellors are required to attend regular supervision meetings and comply with continuing professional development requirements. This is to ensure that they are working in a young person's best interests and maintain the quality of work provided through our service.

If a counsellor is unable to continue working with a young person for a period of time due to illness or is taking planned breaks from their counselling work , then they will a manage this within the best interests of the young people and this may include offering to put them in touch with other practitioners or relevant agencies.

2.1 Steps

Procedure for accessing Counselling Service at The Luccombe Hub

Please note counselling at the Luccombe Hub is funded from within the existing service and therefore will only be provided on a needs basis and to provide immediate support whilst waiting for an offer of assessment by CAMHS or similar Psychotherapy support.

Where staff, parents, or the learners themselves identify that they may be in need of a professional counselling service they will be referred, in the first instance to the Centre's Pastoral & Behaviour Lead and/or Thrive Practitioner, where an initial assessment using assessment criteria will be carried out.

Where it is deemed appropriate to refer to our counselling services, a consent form from the learner and parent/carer will be required and a referral placed with either our in-house counsellor or Luccombe Hub's independent counsellor. At the time of this referral we will require your family GP contact details and contact details for any other support your family are receiving. This is to ensure that we are working in the best interests of your child, and we aim to talk to you before sharing information with other professionals, and we will only share the minimum amount of information needed to keep children safe and provide the best quality of service.

Additional referrals to CAMHS or other publicly funded Psychotherapy support will be requested or contact made to those services if the learner is already known to them.

The Counselling service at The Luccombe Hub will be for a period of 8 weeks or less should referral to CAMHS/Other Psychotherapy for assessment be provided. On completion of the 8 weeks a review of the young persons overall wellbeing will be made and a decision if additional counselling support is needed. The counselling process is not just within the young person's weekly session but processing often happens in between these sessions. These sessions will be planned as fortnightly sessions unless a young person is in crisis and is waiting for a CAMHS assessment. Self-care is an important part of their counselling process for in between their sessions.

Support of the child/young person will be made available out of hours if required; and our counsellor will attend, where requested any TAC/CIN or other multi agency meetings as is best practice to promote positive outcomes for the child/young person.

2.2 Aspects

Confidentiality

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.

Confidentiality is important

- to enable the young person to develop a trusting relationship with the counsellor
- to allow the young person to be open and share feelings without fear of blame or reprisal
- to allow the young person to speak freely about issues concerning them
- to encourage others to come forward for counselling
- to reflect obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998 Article 8, the right to privacy.

Mutual trust, goodwill and respect between counsellor, 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 in appropriate cases.

A young person is free to talk to anyone about their counselling sessions if they wish, but will not be directly questioned by staff. Parents are encouraged to be sensitive to a young person's wishes when seeking to discuss their counselling.

The counsellor will keep a record of issues raised by children and young people in general categories, and share this with the Centre in order to help inform the Centres development of its policies and procedures for supporting learners. Sometimes the counsellor will identify that it is in the best interests of the child or young person to liaise with another agency for further help. This will be with the young person's express permission and/or parental consent unless there are child protection/ safeguarding concerns, in which case the need to safeguard the child or young person's welfare and safety will take precedence (please refer to Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy).

What limitations are there to confidentiality?

Whilst it is recognised that: "Any attempt to remove the principle of confidentiality in counselling will rapidly undermine the overall ethos of the school as a caring educational community", (Roger Casemore, Confidentiality & School Counselling, BACP 1995), a child or young person's wishes about confidentiality may be overridden by the paramount duty to protect their safety or welfare.

Information shared with the counsellor by the child or young person, will be recorded on the counsellors own records and notes will not be shared with others including the child or young person's parents other than with the child's or young person's consent or because of concerns for the child or young person's health or welfare, as a consequence of child protection or safeguarding concerns or as a result of a court order.

Breaching confidentiality

The counsellor will at the outset of working with a child or young person make it clear to the young person that they may need to breach confidentiality (ie tell someone and seek support). They will explain it may happen when the young person or any other person (adult or child) is at risk of significant harm.

The counsellor will discuss this again with the young person if the need arises. The counsellor may make disclosures without the child or young person's consent in appropriate circumstances. The counsellor will follow the The Luccombe Hub's Safeguarding policy and in the first instance raise any concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and/or Deputy Safeguarding Leads, as appropriate. Where possible, the counsellor will keep the child or young person informed and involve them in the process.

In the case of a young person threatening suicide or serious self-harm, there is a general acceptance of the need for intervention even when this involves breaking confidentiality.

The counsellor is not required to pass on information about a young person breaking a Centre rule or committing an offence, unless it could be deemed that by withholding information the counsellor was aiding and abetting a crime (eg a young person dealing drugs in the Centre), or placing the child or young person or another person at the risk of significant harm.

Operation of the counselling service at The Luccombe Hub

Learners can only benefit if they want counselling. Counselling is voluntary.

The counsellor and learner will have uninterrupted access to a quiet, comfortable room. Appointments, will be arranged in collaboration with The Centre and the learners existing timetable. Where an external counsellor is used, a Learners facilitator will remain within the area used for the session, but out of 'earshot' in order to be available for support during the session in the event of a behavioural concern. This is for the counsellor and learners safety.

How do our counsellors evaluate and report back on the service?

The counsellor will gather data and compile an annual report for the Centre, giving accurate recorded statistics on:

- numbers, age, gender and ethnicity of young people referred;
- the length and outcomes of counselling;
- the sorts of issues raised during counselling sessions.

They will be free to make recommendations about the way in which the Centre can make changes to support young people.

Consent

Good practice involves working in partnership with parents. In most cases, children and young people are willing to talk to a parent to gain support and at initial referral to the counsellor consent from parents and learners will be requested.

Where a parent withholds consent or the young person may be very distressed and unwilling for the Centre to approach the parents, counselling may go ahead if the counsellor assesses the young person as 'Gillick' competent to consent in their own right.

If a young person is unwilling to involve their parents and is assessed competent, the young person may give their own written consent for counselling. No specific age is stated in legal guidance – it depends on their capacity to understand the issues involved and to give an informed consent.

3. Concluding notes

3.1 Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or earlier if changes to best practice occur.

3.2 Links to other policies

Staff Wellbeing and Occupational Health Policy,
Confidentiality Policy
Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
PSHE and SMSC Policy
Behaviour Management Policy
Staff supervision Policy