

MANCHESTER HEALTH ACADEMY

COUNSELLING POLICY

Approval History

Approved By:	Date of Approval	Version Approved	Comments
Full Governing Body	16/12/16	1.0	New Policy

Revision History

Revision Date	Previous Revision Date	Rev	Summary of Changes	Changes Marked	Owner/Editor

1. Purpose

Young people experience developmental changes and life events that are unique to each individual. Counselling is a process which assists a young person to focus on their particular concerns and development issues, while simultaneously addressing and exploring specific problems. Counselling enables young people to gain a better understanding of themselves, help cope with the situations they face and develop strategies to cope with change. Counselling can develop young peoples' self-esteem and resilience.

2. Scope

The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) define school based counselling as: 'a professional activity delivered by qualified practitioners in schools. Counsellors offer troubled and/or distressed children and young people an opportunity to talk about their difficulties, within a relationship of agreed confidentiality.'

There are different levels of helping / counselling available. Mentoring will be provided by a qualified counsellor, trainee counsellors, staff members, external agencies or volunteers, MHA also recommends an online counselling service 'Kooth'. The main external agencies we refer to are: CAMHS (Children's and Adolescent Mental Health Service), 42nd Street, The Altrincham Family Centre.

3. Responsibility

3.1. The Pastoral Lead will act as the Academy Counsellor. As specified in the DfE guidance, she possesses a Level 4 Diploma in Counselling, is a member of the BACP (British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy) Register and is working within the BACP ethical framework.

Being a member of the BACP demonstrates commitment to safe, ethical and competent practice by signing up to the BACP [Ethical Framework](#) and [Professional Conduct Procedure](#). There is access to good practice resources to help inform and guide good practice. There is free [ethics support service](#) should MHA need to discuss an ethical dilemma.

3.2. The Counsellor will liaise with the SENCO, the Safeguarding Officer, the School Nurse, SLT Link and the Director of Health to ensure effective communication and prioritisation of students in the Academy.

3.3 Codes of Conduct: the counselling code of conduct will follow guidelines from the BACP, using the [Ethical Framework](#)

4. Our Approach

4.1 **Referral** (BAGS, pastoral leads, teaching staff, school nurse, safeguarding lead, use of CPOMS).

Staff make Year Leads aware of whom they would like to have access to counselling, Year Leads log a request for counselling on CPOMS.

Students will be prioritised and aligned to the relevant intervention based on initial verbal assessment or formal CORE assessment tool (See Appendix 1).

4.2 Communication with parents/carers/ students: see appendix 2

4.3 Communication with Academy staff

Any communication required regarding the student will be available via CPOMS. Any general communication regarding the counselling service will be discussed as an agenda item during BAGS.

4.4 Types of intervention

Mentoring: A mentor is a more experienced individual willing to share knowledge with someone less experienced in a relationship of mutual trust.

External mentors and volunteers will experience an interview, reference checking and DBS verification, this will be co-ordinated and monitored by the Pastoral Leader and relevant SLT Link. All helpers will be offered the opportunity of supervision; for qualified counsellors, external mentors and volunteers this is compulsory.

Person Centred Counselling delivered by a qualified counsellor will be the main model of counselling used to support the Academy's focus on increasing resilience and autonomy, with the option of integrative / Cognitive Behavioural Therapy techniques to offer alternative approaches when needed.

4.5 Delivery of interventions

A designated counselling room in a quiet part of the Academy will be used. Resources available will include; therapeutic play equipment, sand tray, soft toys, arts and crafts.

One method of intervention will be offered at one time with a half termly review by the Pastoral Team. Students will be offered counselling weekly for an average of six, 45 minute sessions. The sessions will be scattered throughout the timetable to ensure one subject isn't compromised. Due to the confidentiality of counselling, it is the student's choice whether they disclose they are receiving counselling. A pass will be issued to the student to excuse them for their lesson.

4.6 Measuring Outcomes: see appendix 1

4.7 Record keeping

All records by the school counsellor will be kept centrally on CPOMS. All notes taken by trainee counsellors or mentors will be kept anonymous. Trainee counsellors may occasionally record (tape) sessions; to ensure client autonomy and confidentiality. Consent will be gained from the student and the Pastoral Leader, this permission will be recorded on CPOMS

4.8 Supervision

Clinical supervision entails overseeing the work; agreeing and monitoring objectives for delivery of the service; ensuring understanding of, and compliance with, wider school policies; and supporting the counsellor as part of the school community. Clinical supervision is focused on ensuring safe and effective practice.

The designated school counsellor will receive one hour supervision per month by an external provider. All external mentors and volunteers will receive monthly supervision by the Pastoral Leader, all mentors / volunteers will be trained in Level 1, Safeguarding.

5. Related Documents

“Counselling in schools: a blueprint for the future, Departmental advice for school leaders and counsellors” – February 2016

Appendix 1: CORE Measurement process

http://www.coreims.co.uk/About_Core_System_Outcome_Measure.html

CORE is a client self-report questionnaire designed to be administered before and after therapy. The client is asked to respond to 34 questions about how they have been feeling over the last week, using a 5-point scale ranging from 'not at all' to 'most or all of the time'. The 34 items of the measure cover four dimensions:

- Subjective well-being
- Problems/symptoms
- Life functioning
- Risk/harm

The responses are designed to be averaged by the practitioner to produce a mean score to indicate the level of current psychological global distress (from 'healthy' to 'severe'). The questionnaire is repeated after the last session of treatment; comparison of the pre-and post-therapy scores offers a measure of 'outcome' (i.e. whether or not the client's level of distress has changed, and by how much).

The CORE Outcome Measure (CORE-OM) was conceived as a non-proprietary measure of psychological distress. Crucially, it was informed by feedback from practitioners as to what they considered to be important to include. Since its development the CORE-OM has been validated with samples from the general population, NHS primary and secondary care, and in older adults.

Two practitioner-completed forms complement the CORE-OM by providing contextual information.



Appendix 2: Letter home / permission

Dear Parent / Carer

Counselling for students at Manchester Health Academy

Your child has expressed an interest in accessing our counselling service at the Academy. The following information is addressed to the student, but I hope is of interest to you.

Counselling means spending time with someone called a counsellor (you will be their client). You decide what you want to talk about during the session; it may be you choose to talk about something you are finding difficult or upsetting. You will never be put under any pressure to talk about something you don't want to.

There can be different ways a counselling session can happen and again this is your choice; you may choose to talk, draw, go for a walk, play games or complete activity sheets. Anything produced in the counselling session such as a drawing or piece of writing will remain in the room until your counselling comes to an end; this helps when we review our time together. Counselling can help you feel better; your counsellor may also explore with you how to cope with problems in the future.

Counselling sessions take place each week. To avoid missing the same lesson this may be at different times and lasts for 50 minutes. This time is set aside especially for you by your counsellor. You can have 6 'sessions' and then decide together if you need more. Your counsellor will pick you up and return you to your lesson.

Counselling remains private! It is your decision whether you tell your friends you're having counselling in school. No one else will know what happens in your sessions – that will stay private, and any notes that counsellors make about you are kept locked safely away in this building. If you see your counsellor around school, they will not discuss anything that you talked about in the session. This is not because they're being unfriendly, it's because they want to make sure that your counselling remains your business. However, if your counsellor thinks that you or someone else may be at risk of serious harm, this concern may have to be shared with our Safeguarding Officer. This will always be discussed with you first, and happens rarely, but we need to let you know about this possibility.

You're in charge! We've talked about you being in charge a few times, but we really must stress the session is all about you! Sometimes, it may be helpful to invite your parent / carer to share a part of the session, so certain things can be discussed that involve you both. But, you're in charge, it's your decision.

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Endings are very important in a counselling relationship. You'll review the work you've done together, which will help you to feel good about yourself, and handle things more easily in the future. This is where you can take any work you have produced home (you don't have to though). Ending properly can also allow for a proper 'goodbye' to someone who has shared a difficult stage in your life with you. If sessions end abruptly, some of the gains from counselling will be lost.

All counsellors working with children and teenagers are fully qualified and have had specialist training for this work. They attend supervision to make sure they are working within the BACP ethical framework. This means they may talk to their supervisor about some of the work they do with you, but your identity is kept secret. All counsellors have supervision to ensure that the best possible service is provided to you and all our pupils.

Counsellors are not qualified to write letters or reports on their client's behalf for solicitors, GPs, police, etc. If you require any written information please contact our Safeguarding Officer, Mrs Maguire.

Please sign the consent form at the bottom of the letter if you are willing for your child to take part in counselling sessions.

Signed		Counsellor
Signed		Client
Date		
Countersigned		Parent

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