



# FAIRFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Counselling Policy 2023-24

*At the time of publishing, the following roles are held:*

Designated Safeguarding Lead	Mr Jordan Gale
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)	Mr Chris Steele, Mrs Hannah Birkett & Mrs Lorraine Barrow
Designated Mental Health Lead	Mr Jordan Gale
School Counsellor	Mrs Lisa Fisher
Governor with Safeguarding responsibility	Mrs Christina Jones
Governor with Pastoral Care responsibility	Mr Mark Clucas

### Approved by

Name:	Mr. C. Steele
Position:	Headteacher
Signed:	
Date:	August 2023
Review date <sup>2</sup> :	August 2024

## **1. Introduction**

**1.1** Counselling is available at Fairfield Primary School as part of our pastoral care support to pupils, to help promote well-being, relieve any tensions and enable a greater capacity for coping and enjoying life, which ultimately impacts on the ability to learn successfully.

**1.2** The school's counsellor is Mrs. L. Fisher, who has a diploma in counselling which is accredited by The Open College and the Sherwood Foundation Therapist Register (SFTR) - National UK Therapist Register and has an accredited Diploma in Cognitive Counselling Skills and Techniques. Mrs. Fisher works within their guidelines and is bound by their ethical framework and professional conduct procedure. Mrs. Fisher is solely employed as our dedicated school counsellor- delivering pastoral care. Moreover, Mrs. Fisher is also fully trained in Draw and Talk Therapy (See Appendix 6) and fully abides by the guidance outlined by the company when delivering this support to pupils in school.

**1.3** Pupils can access the services of the school counsellor via an internal school referral by the parent or teacher; this service is free of charge. Parental consent will always be obtained.

**1.4** Parents wishing to make a referral should contact the Deputy Headteacher Mr. J. Gale or our counsellor Mrs. L. Fisher on 01900 821133 or email [deputyhead@fairfieldprimary.co.uk](mailto:deputyhead@fairfieldprimary.co.uk). Alternatively, a referral form may be downloaded from the school website and posted to the above members of school staff marked "Private and Confidential".

## **2. What is counselling?**

**2.1** Counselling is a way of helping through a process of talking, listening and empowerment. The process enables the pupil to focus on their particular concerns, work through feelings of inner conflict, gain a greater understanding of themselves and their situation, and can help children to build emotional resilience. Moreover, it can relieve emotional tension and enable a greater capacity for coping and enjoying life.

**2.2** Pupils are provided with a safe place to express their feelings and thoughts about what they perceive to be an issue in their life. The school has a designated counselling room, which is a homely and comfortable venue containing specific resources, in the Key Stage 2 building.

**2.3** Pupils may have issues relating to bereavement, loss, family breakdown, family or peer relationship difficulties, anxiety etc. Without support, these issues could lead to a deterioration in behaviour, attitude and mental health and impact negatively on the ability to learn and make good progress.

### **3. Referral and Assessments**

**3.1** Pupils are referred by a member of staff using our internal referral form with the full consent of the parent, who may have raised their initial concern with the school. Pupils may self-refer but consent will be sought from parents with a meeting taking place between the counsellor and parents before any sessions commence.

**3.2** In some cases, referral for counselling may be part of a support package or may be part of a pupil premium allocation, where applicable.

**3.3** Initial contact for appointments is usually made directly by the counsellor, who will meet with the parent or make telephone contact to discuss their concern or perspective before a meeting takes place with the pupil.

**3.4** Successful counselling is based on trust, self-motivation and commitment. At the initial session, the counsellor will undertake an initial assessment to identify the needs of the pupil and decide on the best course of action. Pupils can come to sessions for as long as is required. This could vary from a one-off session or may lead to weekly on-going sessions. The timing of the session is arranged to try to cause as little disruption to learning as possible.

**3.5** Should it be felt that any referrals need to be made to external agencies then this will be discussed with the pupil, and with consent, the parent.

**3.6** Sessions with the counsellor usually last around 45 minutes and are carried-out on a one-to-one basis. However, sessions may be longer or shorter as appropriate.

**3.7** The school promotes the counselling service through the school website, prospectus, social media and show-around tours.

### **4. Confidentiality and Information Sharing**

**4.1** All pupils are entitled to confidentiality as outlined by the SFTR code of ethics. This is vital in enabling pupils to express their distress in counselling sessions. Whilst acknowledging that confidentiality is crucial, it cannot be absolute in any counselling relationship. Limits to confidentiality will be explained to pupils at the beginning of the counselling relationship and periodically thereafter as required.

**4.2** The requirement to protect pupils is sensitively weighted against their right to privacy and confidentiality. In the cases of a potential child protection concern, events may develop that could lead to the counsellor considering that a breach of confidentiality is necessary to safeguard the wellbeing of the pupil. Where there is an indication of a pupil being at risk of harm from others or themselves, the counsellor will seek the views of the pupil and their consent in advance of any disclosure of information being made and the possible consequences of involvement of other agencies.

**4.3** Any sharing of information involving a breach of confidentiality will be kept to a minimum and will be concerned only with the issues at hand and not extend to other areas of the pupil's present or past life. Consideration will be given as to whether historical abuse has implications for the safety of the pupil concerned and/or any other child or young person.

**4.4** Where a pupil is at risk of significant harm, the counsellor will initiate the school's Child Protection Policy and procedures. One of the designated child protection officers: Mr Jordan Gale (DSL), Mr Chris Steele, Mrs Hannah Birkett or, Mrs Lorraine Barrow, will be contacted immediately to do so and the concern and action will be recorded on CPOMS.

## **5. Record Keeping**

**5.1** The counsellor will keep a formal record of sessions with pupils, which may include a mention of the types of problems discussed.

**5.2** The referral form and parent consent will be held with the pupil record on CPOMS.

**5.3** All paper records will be kept in a secure, locked cabinet. Records are retained by the school until the pupil transfers to another school.

## **6. Monitoring**

**6.1** The counsellor will brief the Deputy Headteacher (Mr. J. Gale) on at least a monthly basis on the number of referrals and number of pupils undertaking counselling sessions; this will form part of school monitoring. Mr. J. Gale will also chair half-termly, pastoral care meetings.

**6.2** When monitoring our counselling service, the school will consider the following for pupils attending counselling sessions:

- Number of pupils
- Gender of pupils
- Numbers who discontinued or did not attend
- Nature of presenting issues (family breakdown, domestic violence, bereavement, self-harm, safeguarding issues, etc.)
- Nature of any Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND)

**6.3** In addition to the factual information provided to the Deputy Headteacher, an annual report will be produced by the counsellor to measure the impact of our counselling service on pupils and the broader impact on the school.

## **7. Complaints**

**7.1** Complaints regarding our service will be investigated through the school's Complaints Policy and procedures. This is available on the school website or in hard copy from the school on request.

**7.2** Where a complaint is judged to be an allegation of abuse then the procedures within the school's Child Protection Policy will be followed as opposed to a complaints route.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Child Protection Policy
- Child on Child Abuse Policy
- SEND Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- PSHE & Citizenship Policy

## Appendix 1: Parent feedback form



Fairfield Primary School



### Pupil Counselling/Pastoral Care – Parent's feedback form

Dear Parent,

Your child has recently been seeing the counsellor at our school. It would be helpful to us to know how successful these sessions have been for your child and it will enable us to continue to improve our service for others in the future. The information you provide will remain confidential and will be held in your child's personal record.

1. Is your child?            Male \_\_\_\_\_            Female \_\_\_\_\_
2. Age \_\_\_\_\_
3. Did the counselling/pastoral care sessions help?    Yes/No
4. Please indicate on a scale of 1-10 how helpful you feel the sessions have been for your child in the following areas. If you feel they are not applicable/relevant to your child please use N/A.

1	Improved behaviour at home	
2	More able to communicate	
3	More willing to attend school	
4	Happier	
5	Less worried/anxious	
6	More settled in school	
7	Less separation anxiety	
8	Improved relationships with family members	
9	Improved relationships with peers	
10	Improved confidence/self esteem	
11	Improved coping strategies	

5. What were your initial feelings about your child seeing our counsellor?

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6. What would you say to other parents, whose child was unhappy or experiencing difficulties, about the school counselling/pastoral care service?

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7. Do you think the school counselling/pastoral care service is a good idea?

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8. Any other comments?

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Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Please return to the school counsellor via your child's class teacher.

Mrs Fisher





### Appendix 3: Pupil feedback form



Fairfield Primary School



### Counselling/Pastoral Care – Pupil feedback form

#### Confidential

Please answer the following questions to help us understand how helpful your counselling/pastoral care sessions have been. This will help us to improve our service for other pupils.

1. Are you? Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_

3. On a scale of 1-10 please answer the following questions.

1= very unhappy, 10 = very happy.

1	I was happy about the way I was asked to see a counsellor	
2	I feel I have had enough sessions with the counsellor	
3	I felt relaxed and comfortable with the counsellor	
4	I was able to tell the counsellor what was on my mind or troubling me	
5	I was able to trust the counsellor	
6	Counselling has made me feel less anxious	
7	I am happier now I have had counselling	
8	I am now able to concentrate on my work more	
9	My relationship with my family have improved	
10	My relationship with my friends have improved	
11	I know what to do now if I get anxious or worried	
12	I know which trusted adults I can go to for help if I need it in the future	

Is there anything else your counsellor could do to help you?

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## **Appendix 4: Information leaflet for parent and carers**

### **What is counselling?**

*Counselling provides an opportunity to talk in confidence to a qualified counsellor about any issues/concerns. The issues will depend on the individual, but common themes are stress, anxiety, relationships, bereavement, traumatic events and family breakdown.*

### **Who are counsellors?**

*Our counsellor is a member of staff who has the appropriate qualifications in counselling to undertake this specialist role. She has experience in working with children in our school both as a counsellor and previously as a Senior Teaching Assistant.*

### **Why do we need a counsellor in our school?**

*Few of us are able to work well or even function when we are stressed or unhappy. The impact of distressing or difficult situations can be felt even more acutely by young people than by adults. If pupils are able to receive emotional support from a suitably qualified person then they will have greater opportunity to reach their full potential.*

### **Where and when will it take place?**

*We have a small, designated room for counselling. It is comfortable and homely and is intended to be a calm and relaxing venue. We can provide soothing music, self-help and advice stories and a venue that offers confidentiality.*

### **How do you ensure confidentiality?**

*All notes and records are held in a secure place when not in use. The venue is in a quiet area of the school, thus enabling pupils to feel confident that they will not be overheard and can speak openly and freely with the counsellor.*

### **What if my child makes a disclosure to the counsellor?**

*If a disclosure is made that would appear to place the pupil at risk of harm or potential harm to others then the Child Protection Policy would be implemented.*

### **What if my child refuses to have counselling?**

*The decision to take up counselling is entirely voluntary for young people- just as it would be for an adult.*

### **Can I support the counselling service?**

*Yes, and this is most welcomed. Experience shows that the most helpful thing a parent or carer can do is to show an acceptance of counselling as a normal and useful activity and to show an interest if their child wishes to talk about it, but not to press them if they do not.*

*Our counsellor acknowledges that this is not an easy task, and it is quite natural for parents to feel anxious about what may be being said in the sessions.*

*It is hoped that talking with a counsellor will lead to greater openness, but you may need to allow a little time for this to occur.*

**If my child sees a counsellor, does this mean I am failing as a parent?**

*Absolutely not! We all experience occasions when it feels hard to speak to those who are closet to us about things which may be bothering us. Often this can be because we do not want to worry those we love best, or because we want help thinking things through with someone unbiased and removed. The counsellor will not be judging you or your child, but looking to help them find a way through whatever is troubling them.*

## **Appendix 5: Information leaflet for pupils**

### **What is counselling about?**

*Sometimes we all have problems that are worrying. Think of a confusing jigsaw when all of the pieces are difficult to match together. Talking about a problem in counselling is like sorting out the pieces so that we can build a picture that makes more sense to us.*

### **What happens in counselling?**

*Counselling gives you the opportunity to talk in private about anything which is worrying you. The counsellor will not take sides or tell you what to do or how to live your life, but they will help you to look at choices and encourage you to make your own decisions.*

### **Who are counsellors?**

*A counsellor is a professionally qualified person who has experience of working with children and/or young people. Counsellors are trained to listen without judging and to help people sort out their thoughts and feelings about whatever is concerning them.*

### **Where will the counselling take place?**

*The counselling will take place in our Counselling and Medical Room which is situated behind the library in the Key Stage 2 building. The room is in a quiet area of the school and has been designed to be a homely and comfortable place to make you feel at ease.*

### **When is counselling available?**

*The counsellor in our school will arrange a time with you that is suitable for you both. The counsellor in our school is Mrs. L. Fisher.*

### **Is counselling confidential?**

*What you say in counselling is not repeated to others without your permission, unless there are serious concerns about your safety or another person's safety. This will be explained to you at the initial meeting with the counsellor.*

### **Do my parents need to know?**

*Counselling works best when you are able to tell your parents and then they can support you. We usually ask parents to sign a consent form before the first session. Older pupils, such as those in secondary school, can ask for counselling without the consent of parents if they are thought to be "Gillick competent".*

## **What is Drawing and Talking?**

**Drawing and Talking is a person-centred therapy focusing on prevention, early intervention and recovery.**

Originally designed as a school-based therapeutic intervention, Drawing and Talking have now established relationships within the mental health and well-being sector with varying professionals.

Providing a highly effective person-centred therapeutic playwork approach, this tier 1-2 intervention is intended to complement rather than replace the work of CAMHS, art or other specialist therapists; enabling children who would otherwise go untreated to get the help they need before problems become entrenched.

Drawing and Talking technique is a safe and easy to learn short term, time-limited therapy to be used with anyone (age 5+) who has suffered trauma or has underlying emotional difficulties. It supports those who are not realising their full potential either academically, professionally or socially.

The purpose of the method is to draw with a person who with whom they feel comfortable at the same time each week. The trusted person will learn to ask a number of non-intrusive questions about the drawing, and over time a symbolic resolution is found to old conflicts and trauma is healed.

Work with the children needs to be carried out safely and non-intrusively, with respect for their own pace and state of being. This is why anyone using Drawing and Talking learns to stay in the world of the child's drawing. The child sets the pace and decides what to bring to the session.

Often in a first session a child will produce a very neutral drawing, something in the room or the view from a window, however once they feel safe and have created a secure attachment, their imagination begins to unfold.

### **Children that will benefit from a therapeutic intervention such as Drawing and Talking:**

- Are not realising their full potential, either academically or socially
- Are at risk of being/is excluded from school
- Have suffered trauma
- Are (or are in the process of being) adopted or fostered
- Suffer because of separated or divorced parents
- Suffer from anxiety, stress or phobias
- Have suffered a loss or bereavement of any kind
- Are withdrawn or continually unhappy
- Are ill, disabled or autistic
- Find it difficult to make friends
- Quarrel frequently with peers or siblings
- Bully others or are bullied themselves
- Display inappropriate behaviour
- Incarceration of a family member
- Don't play
- Gang, grooming and exploitation
- On poverty line
- LGBTQ+
- Suffer with transition

After completion of Drawing and Talking Therapy, children are more able to control their behaviour, better able to access an academic curriculum and most importantly have higher self-esteem; this allows them to thrive in the world around them. We want all children and young people to have the opportunity to achieve and develop the skills and character to make a successful transition into adult life.