



ABBAY PARK SCHOOL

FAQs for Parents and Carers about School Counselling

What is Counselling?

The opportunity to talk about things that are of concern, to a child or young person, in confidence, with a qualified counsellor. What is spoken about will depend on the individual, but common themes are stress, anxiety, relationships, change, loss and traumatic events.

What does a Counsellor do?

Counsellors are trained to listen without judging and to help people sort out their thoughts and feelings about whatever is concerning them.

My child has been referred to the school counsellor. What does this mean?

Abbey Park School provides professional therapeutic counselling support in school time for their students. Sessions normally take place weekly in a safe and confidential space for 50 minutes and appointment times can be varied so that time is not lost from any one subject. Their purpose is to enable young people to express how they feel, become clearer in their thinking and then use both to discover what behaviours work best for them, whether at school, home or with friends. Our school counsellors are fully qualified members of national professional organisations, experienced in working with young people and passionate about providing this early intervention for change.

Is it confidential?

A key feature of counselling is that information discussed in the counselling session is treated confidentially. Counselling is a time when it's okay to talk about concerns without fear of them being discussed elsewhere. This includes not discussing the work with parents, unless the child or young person requests or gives consent for this. This can be hard for parents to accept at times, but ensuring the confidentiality of the work is crucial for establishing trust so that the children and young people feel confident to speak openly and freely about what is concerning them. Some young people want to talk about the sessions at home, while others need more thinking time alone. Both are quite normal and may also vary from week to week so it's best to take your lead from them. Sometimes your child may also seem more emotional when feelings emerge in sessions, but this is often necessary before real change can happen, so try not to worry and be sensitive to what they most need from you.

However, if a student appears to be at risk of significant harm it may be appropriate to seek help from other agencies to keep them safe. The counsellor would aim to discuss this first with the pupil concerned. All counsellors receive supervision of their work with young people, to ensure the quality of their practice and this is confidential.

Why can't my child talk to me? What if he/she says private things about the family?

Counselling is not about judging anyone. Having a safe space to talk to a trained and caring adult outside the family is often easier because there is no need to protect anyone's feelings. Supporting your child to express him/herself honestly, whether about school, friends or family, will enable him/her to get the most out of the sessions. The aim of counselling is to support your child to be happier, safer and more able to make the most of their opportunities, relationships and future lives.



Executive Principal:
Operational Principal:
Deputy Head Teacher:



Mr C Zimmerman
Mr J Young
Mr S Leigh



The Learning Campus, Redhouse Way, Swindon, Wiltshire S25 2ND
Tel: 01793 705400 Fax: 01793 707596
email: admin@abbeyparkschool.org.uk



ABBEY PARK SCHOOL

What if I don't want my child to receive counselling?

If a child or young person requests counselling and is able to understand what is involved in the process, then they have the right to access counselling. Parents and carers may not deny them this right. We would, however, prefer that we have your support for the work, and we are always happy to talk with you about any concerns that you may have about the idea of counselling.

What if s/he refuses to have Counselling?

The decision about whether or not to take up the offer of counselling is entirely voluntary for children and young people just as it would be for an adult.

Can I support the Counselling work?

Yes, and we welcome this. Our experience shows that the most helpful thing a parent can do is to show an acceptance of counselling as a normal and useful activity, and to show an interest if their son/daughter wishes to talk about it, but not to press them if they don't. We acknowledge that this isn't an easy task, and it is quite natural for parents to feel anxious about what may be being said in the sessions. It is always our hope that talking with a counsellor will lead to greater openness with parents and families, you will need to allow a little time for this to happen. If you feel concerned about your child or have information of importance concerning his/her well-being, please do not hesitate to get in touch with the counsellor. If ever a counsellor has a safeguarding concern, so as to preserve the trust and support for your child, we will do our utmost to discuss this with him/her prior to involving the necessary wider support.

Please know that any written data, whether electronic or hand-written, is stored safely and would only ever be shared with other professionals in the best interests of your child. If you have any queries about this, please ask.

If you have any further questions about what is involved, feel free to get in touch with us either by email (below) or through your child's Head of Key Stage or Pastoral Support Assistant.

If there is any cause for complaint, you or your child are welcome to contact the Counsellor or the Head of Key Stage who will aim to resolve any issues of concern.

Counselling@abbeyparkschool.org.uk

With thanks for your trust and support.

Mrs Clare Yeoman
School Counsellor, Registered Member (MBACP)

Mrs Kara Stevens,
Head of Pastoral &
Designated Safeguarding Lead
Head of year 7, Primary Liaison & Transition Manager



Executive Principal:
Operational Principal:
Deputy Head Teacher:

Mr C Zimmerman
Mr J Young
Mr S Leigh

The Learning Campus, Redhouse Way, Swindon, Wiltshire S25 2ND
Tel: 01793 705400 Fax: 01793 707596
email: admin@abbeyparkschool.org.uk