

# **PARKVIEW ACADEMY**

# **COUNSELLING AND WELLBEING**

# **POLICY FOR STUDENTS**

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Rationale and Commitment

Parkview Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the emotional wellbeing of every pupil. A strong and growing body of evidence demonstrates that timely access to high-quality counselling significantly improves young people's social, emotional, and academic outcomes.

We adopt a whole-school approach to Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH), recognising that pupils experiencing emotional distress, trauma, or prolonged stress may struggle to access learning effectively. By identifying needs early and responding through our structured Graduated Response (Assess, Plan, Do, Review), we maximise both wellbeing and educational attainment.

### 1.2 Whole-School Integration

This policy operates alongside our universal Relational Trauma-informed approaches and Character Development Curriculum, which proactively develops resilience, emotional literacy, self-regulation, and positive social mindsets in all pupils. Counselling is positioned as a targeted or specialist intervention within this wider framework, not as a standalone service, but as part of an integrated wellbeing strategy.

### 1.3 Professional Standards

All counselling provision adheres to the ethical framework and professional standards of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP). Practice aligns with:

- Safeguarding and child protection legislation
- Trauma-informed principles
- Evidence-based therapeutic approaches
- Best practice guidance on transitions between universal, targeted, and specialist support

## 2. Strategic Leadership And Oversight

### 2.1 Senior Leadership Responsibility

The Senior Management Team (SMT) recognises counselling as a core element of the school's SEMH strategy. Counselling provision is strategically aligned to the Graduated Response model:

- **Universal Support** – Relational approaches, Nurturing environment, psychoeducation and Character development curriculum
- **Targeted Support** – ELSA, SEMH partner and 1:1 mentoring
- **Specialist Support** – In-school counselling and/or referral to external services

## 2.2 Key Roles and Collaboration

The Headteacher, Senior Mental Health Lead, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Personal Development and Behaviour Lead and School Counsellors work collaboratively to ensure:

- Continuity of care
- Appropriate safeguarding oversight
- Clear referral pathways
- Integration with Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans where applicable

## 2.3 Consent and Psychoeducation

For pupils aged 16 and under, informed parental consent will be obtained prior to counselling commencing.

Alongside consent, the school provides psychoeducation to pupils and parents, ensuring clarity regarding:

- The purpose of counselling
- Expected outcomes
- How counselling reinforces resilience and emotional regulation skills taught in the classroom

## 2.4 Policy Alignment

The Counsellor is provided annually with the updated:

- SEMH Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy

This ensures clinical practice remains aligned with whole-school expectations and statutory responsibilities.

## 3. Delivery Of The Counselling Service

### 3.1 Professional Standards and Safeguarding

The School Counsellor:

- Holds a minimum Level 4 Diploma in Counselling (or equivalent)
- Maintains enhanced DBS clearance
- Is registered with a recognised professional body

- Works in accordance with the BACP Ethical Framework

The Counsellor collaborates closely with the SENCO to ensure SEMH provision is integrated into any existing EHC plans.

### 3.2 Therapeutic Approach and Psychoeducation

The service provides both therapeutic intervention and structured psychoeducation. Pupils may be supported to understand:

- The brain's stress response
- Emotional regulation systems
- Cognitive distortions and thought patterns
- Practical coping and grounding techniques

These approaches complement and reinforce learning from the Character Development Curriculum.

Therapeutic modalities may include:

- Talking therapy
- Creative therapeutic approaches
- Solution-focused techniques
- Trauma-informed interventions

### 3.3 Urgent and High-Risk Referrals

- All standard referrals will receive an initial response within 5 working days.
- Urgent concerns (including suicidal ideation or significant self-harm risk) will be reported to DSL immediately.

High-risk cases are managed in line with the school's Suicide Concern Intervention protocols and Safeguarding Policy.

## 4. The Graduated Response And Referrals

### 4.1 Assess, Plan, Do, Review

All SEMH concerns are addressed using the structured cycle:

- Assess – Identification of need, including use of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) and other measures (For pupils below 14 years old, the *Children and Young People Star Chart* is used. For pupils aged 14 and over, the *Young Person–Core Form* is used.)
- Plan – Clear intervention planning and goal setting
- Do – Delivery of counselling or psychoeducational sessions

- Review – Evaluation of impact and next steps

## 4.2 Referral Process

New referrals are discussed at termly review meetings between the Counsellor and the Personal Development and Behaviour Lead. Earlier review may occur if risk levels change.

Following approximately 12 sessions, a formal review determines whether:

- The intervention has met identified needs
- Further in-school support is appropriate
- Referral to Children and Young People's Mental Health Services (CYPMHS) or other specialist provision is required

## 4.3 Confidentiality and Safeguarding

Counselling sessions are confidential. However, confidentiality cannot be maintained where there is disclosure or evidence of:

- Child abuse or neglect
- Significant risk of harm to self or others
- Suicidal intent

In such circumstances, safeguarding procedures take precedence. Concerns are recorded on the school's central safeguarding system (e.g., MyConcern), and appropriate staff are informed in line with statutory guidance.

## 5. Counselling: The Learner's Perspective

### 5.1 Pupil-Centred Practice

Pupils are placed at the centre of the counselling process. Sessions are collaborative and goal-oriented, empowering pupils to:

- Develop insight into their emotional experiences
- Build self-regulation strategies
- Apply resilience skills learned in lessons

### 5.2 Voluntary Participation

Participation in counselling is voluntary. Pupils have the right to:

- Decline counselling
- Withdraw at any stage

- Express preferences about session focus

Their autonomy and voice are respected throughout.

## 6. Counselling: The Parents' Perspective

### 6.1 Partnership with Parents

Parkview Academy recognises that counselling is most effective when parents and carers are supportive and informed. The school provides guidance to help families reinforce resilience-building techniques at home.

### 6.2 Escalation to Specialist Support

Where targeted in-school support is insufficient, the school will work collaboratively with parents to seek external specialist support, including:

- GP referral pathways
- Children and Young People's Mental Health Services (CYPMHS)

The school remains committed to supporting families throughout this process.

## 7. Practice, Governance And Quality Assurance

### 7.1 Non-Disciplinary Status

Counselling is a supportive, therapeutic intervention. It must never be used as:

- A behavioural sanction
- A disciplinary consequence
- A substitute for appropriate behaviour management procedures

### 7.2 Clinical Supervision

The Counsellor receives a minimum of **1.5 hours of clinical supervision per month**, ensuring:

- Safe and ethical practice
- Professional reflection
- Ongoing development
- Risk oversight

## 7.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

At the end of each academic year, the Headteacher and DSL receive an anonymised report outlining:

- Emerging SEMH trends
- Recurring presenting issues
- Intervention outcomes

This data informs strategic planning and ensures the school's universal offer remains responsive to the evolving needs of the pupil body.

## Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team to ensure continued compliance with statutory guidance, professional standards, and best practice.

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