



South Gloucestershire and Stroud College
Counselling Service Policy & Procedure

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 Please contact the Human Resources Department**

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Job Title/Role:	Inclusion & DDSL
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Date:	07/06/2023
Approved by:	SGS Senior Leadership Team

Counselling Service Policy & Procedure

1. Policy Intent

- 1.1. The purpose of this policy is to outline the scope of the Counsellor's services which provide access to independent and confidential counselling at South Gloucestershire & Stroud College. Counselling is intended to provide support and / or intervention (practical or therapeutic) in order to enhance learner wellbeing and / or academic progress.

2. Scope

- 2.1. This policy applies to all current full-time and part-time learners studying at SGS College.
- 2.2. Learners will have access to independent and confidential counselling from a dedicated, professional and qualified Counsellor.
- 2.3. Providers of counselling at SGS College pay attention to the individual circumstances and needs of enrolled learners. In order to encourage the achievement of their full potential, counselling addresses personal, mental and physical health issues as well as specific learning issues with the intended result that, where a learner seeks or is referred for counselling, the learner's success and enjoyment of the academic experience will also be improved.

3. Procedures

3.1. Referrals to the Counsellor

- 3.1.1. All current full-time and part-time learners studying at SGS College can make an appointment to see the Counsellor.
- 3.1.2. Referrals to the Counsellor may be recommended by:
 - curriculum and / or corporate staff;
 - a parent or carer (learner permission is required in order for the Counsellor to discuss academic progress or personal issues with the parent or carer of any learner aged over 18 years); and
 - a registered medical or health practitioner.
- 3.1.3 Any member of staff may encourage learners to access counselling without the need for discussion with or approval of others about the learners or their circumstances.
- 3.1.4. Staff cannot make a counselling appointment without the learner's agreement but can help make a referral for a learner if this helps facilitate the process.
- 3.1.5. Learners cannot be 'referred' for counselling by staff, nor can learners be required to attend counselling as part of a contract, disciplinary procedure or as a condition of them staying at college.

3.1.6. Counselling sessions will be allocated following referral and assessment by the Counsellor. Sessions are offered subject to availability. If a suitable session time is unavailable, referrals will join a waiting list until a suitable session becomes available.

3.2 Referrals to other professionals

The Counsellor will provide support and therapeutic intervention and may refer for other specialist advice and assistance where it is considered necessary. In such cases the counsellor may continue to work in collaboration with the learner and the external agency.

3. Policy Implementation

4.1 Interventions

4.1.1. In working with a learner, the Counsellor's approach will be flexible, using a variety of professionally recognised interventions with the aim of empowering the learner to bring about change in self or circumstances and to enhance the likelihood of improved personal and/or academic outcomes.

3.1.2. The Counsellor will liaise with relevant curriculum staff, where appropriate, in responding to requests for assistance and in the provision of support to learners deemed to be at academic risk.

3.1.3. Joint intervention involving other relevant staff and / or learners may also be undertaken in particular situations where the participants agree to meet.

4.2. Appointments with the Counsellor

4.2.1. It is the responsibility of a learner to ensure that appointments with the Counsellor do not clash with class times. If attendance during class times is unavoidable, the learner should seek permission from their tutor.

4.2.2. The frequency and length of appointments will depend on the nature and complexity of the issue(s) involved, and / or the point reached within an intervention. The learner is entitled to a maximum of 8 sessions following which a review will take place. Occasionally further sessions may be offered.

4.2.3. Counselling sessions will usually be 50 minutes duration and learners will normally attend on a weekly basis.

4.2.4. One to one counselling will be offered by trained counsellors. This is usually face-to-face, but can be offered via TEAMS chat or video or by telephone.

4.2.5. The Counsellor is available Term Time Only (TTO), during working hours. In an emergency, learners can access a number of emergency mental health services including:

- NSPCC Childline: 0800 1111
- Samaritans: 116 123
- [South West Child Protection Procedures](#)
- [Togetherall](#) – A safe community to support your mental health, 24 / 7

Emergency Duty Teams

- Bristol 01454 615165
- Gloucestershire 01452 426565
- South Gloucestershire 01454 615165

4.2.6. The Counsellor will develop and maintain a bank of resources on counselling related issues for use by staff and learners on a self-help basis.

4.2.7. Counsellor can provide advice and support in non-one-to-one settings through various group sessions dealing with specific learner concerns such as anxiety, anger management, exam stress etc.

4.2.8. Advice can be offered where appropriate to staff dealing with difficult situations / issues.

4.2.9. Supervision may be offered to staff and / or teams within the college.

4.3. Confidentiality

4.3.1. The BACP Ethical framework requires that counsellors offer the highest possible levels of confidentiality in order to respect their client's privacy and create the trust necessary for counselling.

4.3.2. Counselling sessions are confidential to the learner. Unless they have the learner's prior consent, the counsellor will not pass on to a third party any information regarding the learner's presenting issues.

4.3.3. In exceptional circumstances, the counsellor may take the decision to break confidentiality, if in her/his professional judgement:

- there is a risk of the learner harming themselves or being harmed;
- there is a risk of another person being harmed; or
- there is the risk of a serious crime being committed.

4.3.4. It is ethically and legally unwise to promise 'total' or 'absolute' confidentiality but rather the service provides confidentiality within the BACP Ethical Framework and the law.

4.3.5. The confidentiality policy will be explained at the beginning of the first session with every learner.

- 4.3.6. Records and notes will be kept securely in a locked drawer or cupboard. Records will be kept no longer than strictly necessary and will be disposed of safely.

4.4. Professional records

- 4.4.1. In order to comply with professional counselling standards, records confidential to the Counsellor will be maintained with each learner's name, the date of counselling, a brief account of the issue(s) discussed and/or of interventions undertaken. Notes will be taken of relevant telephone conversations and/or email discussions relating to a learner's situation and retained by the Counsellor. Confidential case note books and/or files will be kept in a secure place by the Counsellor.

4.5. Learner records

- 4.5.1. Where issues are relevant to a learner's academic circumstances and/or their attendance pattern, the Counsellor may place a note on Pro-Monitor indicating that the learner sees / has seen the Counsellor. Relevant academic staff may then consult the Counsellor in order to make informed decisions on the basis of any extenuating circumstances that are able to be revealed.

4.6. Reports to SGS College Executive Group and / or Corporation

- 4.6.1. Annual reports will be submitted to the SGS College Executive Group. A general indication of trends may be included in order to inform and advise.

5. Enforcement

- 5.1. Any failure to adhere to this policy, or to comply with related procedures may result in disciplinary action.

6. Related Policies, Procedures, Charters, Plans, Guidance and Legislation

- 6.1. British Association of Counselling & Psychotherapy (BACP)
- 6.2. [Compliments, Complaints & Appeals Policy & Procedure](#)
- 6.3. [Data Privacy & Protection Policy](#)
- 6.4. [Deceased College Learner Procedure](#)
- 6.5. [Learner Anti-Bullying & Harassment Policy & Procedure](#)
- 6.6. [Safeguarding Learners & Child Protection Policy & Procedure](#)
- 6.7. [South West Child Protection Procedures](#)

7. Impact

- 7.1. To encourage the achievement of full potential, counselling addresses personal mental and physical health issues as well as specific learning issues with the intended result that, where a learner seeks or is referred for counselling, the learner's success and enjoyment of the academic experience will also be improved.

9. MANDATORY INITIAL IMPACT SCREENING



Completed by:

Name: Nicki Wyss	Title: Inclusion & DDSL	15/05/2023
I have read the guidance document: Completing a Policy Impact Assessment?		✓
If this policy has been up-dated, please tick to confirm that the initial impact screening has also been reviewed:		✓

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Characteristic	This policy seeks to:	
Age	No appreciable impact	
Disability	No appreciable impact	
Faith or Belief	No appreciable impact	
Gender	No appreciable impact	
Race or Ethnicity	No appreciable impact	
Orientation	No appreciable impact	
Gender reassignment	No appreciable impact	
Economic disadvantage	No appreciable impact	
Rural isolation	No appreciable impact	
Marriage	No appreciable impact	
Pregnancy & maternity	No appreciable impact	
Carers & care leavers	No appreciable impact	
Vulnerable persons	Safeguarding children or vulnerable adults	
Please identify any sections of the policy that specifically seek to maximise opportunities to improve diversity within any of the College's stakeholder groups:	N/A	
Please identify any sections of the policy that specifically seek to improve equality of opportunity within any of the College's stakeholder groups:	N/A	
Is there any possibility that this policy could operate in a discriminatory way?	ü	If you have ticked yes (red), which characteristic will be most affected? Choose an item.
If yes please confirm that the Policy has been sent for a full Equality & Diversity Impact Assessment, and note the date:		Click or tap to enter a date.

Note: if the policy does not seek to increase diversity or improve equality you should go back and review it before submitting it for approval.

MAPPING OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

Which United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Right does this policy most protect:	Art. 3 Best interests of the child Art. 16 Right to privacy Art. 24 Access to health & health services
Which Human Right (HRA) does this policy most protect:	Art. 10 Freedom of expression Choose an item.

DATA PROTECTION & PRIVACY BY DESIGN SCREENING

Tick to confirm that you have considered any data protection issues as part of the design and implementation of this policy; and, that implementing this policy will <u>not</u> result in the collection, storage or processing of personal data outside of official College systems:	✓
Tick to indicated that this policy has or requires a Data Privacy Impact Assessment:	✓