



Counselling Policy

Bancroft's
Independent Co-educational Day School 7–18

Counselling Policy

We believe that it is in the best interests of a child to share worries, in the first instance, with their Class teacher, Tutor, Housemaster/Housemistress (House Staff) or other trusted adult. They can also call on the support of the School Nurse, the Head and Deputy of the Prep School, or the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and Assistant Head (Pastoral). However, pupils should approach any teacher with whom they feel at ease if they would like to talk about a concern.

Whatever pupils have to say will be treated with sensitivity and discretion and the child has a right to privacy. If pupils are concerned about confidentiality, they should seek reassurance by asking about the boundaries. All staff have a professional responsibility to report concerns of a safeguarding nature.

Three school counsellors attend the Senior School and between them they operate on every day of the working week. The Prep School have one dedicated counsellor. All counsellors at Bancroft's are either Registered and / or Accredited with the British Association of Counselling & Psychotherapy (BACP). They adhere to the BACP's professional Ethical Framework which can be viewed at <https://www.bacp.co.uk/>.

The main principles and points are:

- **commitment to the students** to work to a high professional standard and to build ethical relationships with students.
- **Ethics** specifies the values, principles and personal moral qualities that inform their work and underpin supervision.
- **Good practice** considers the application of their commitments to student /clients and ethics to their practice

Senior School pupils can be referred to the school counsellors through the Pastoral Team, but they may also self-refer directly should they be reluctant to speak to a member of staff first. In the sixth form appointments will, where possible, be made to avoid missing timetabled lessons.

A block of eight sessions is available to pupils who seek or are referred to counselling. If eight sessions are not used initially the remaining sessions may be used at any time during a pupils' time at Bancroft's.

If the counsellors deem it clinically necessary for a pupil to receive more than eight counselling sessions this will be discussed with the Pastoral team and a decision to extend made on a case-by-case basis.

We encourage pupils to tell their parents if they are receiving or wish to receive counselling, but should a pupil not want to do so, the School will respect their wishes and will not share that information without the pupil's consent. The School will continue to encourage pupils to be fully open with their parents.

The Deputy Head (Pastoral), the Assistant Head (Pastoral) and House Staff will advise pupils or parents who enquire about the options for professional counselling available to them outside school. A Well-Being / Pastoral page has been added to the pupils' portal with details of external agencies which they might find useful.

Prep School children do not self-refer for counselling. A referral to either the trained Emotional Learning Support Assistant (ELSA) or the Prep School's designated counsellor only occurs after discussion with a parent and with their consent. The Prep pastoral team, which includes the Deputy Head, the two Assistant Heads and the Prep class teachers, may have raised concerns themselves about a child's well-being or they may be responding to concerns brought to them by a parent or the individual child themselves. Therapies available include 'drawing and talking', a twelve-week course led by the ELSA which provides children with a safe, quiet space in which to talk through their feelings and emotions. Lego play therapy is used to aid communication skills and build friendships. If it is felt that neither of these is appropriate or sufficient, our next step is to suggest to parents a course of sessions for their child with the Prep School counsellor.

The counsellors have a professional responsibility to report anything that is disclosed to them during a session which constitutes a safeguarding concern. This could be a disclosure of self-harm, suicidal ideation, abuse, neglect or exploitation regarding themselves or someone else. This is clearly explained to all pupils at the beginning of their first session and counsellors will also tell a pupil if they are going to report information to the safeguarding team. In such cases the counsellor will contact the safeguarding team by phone and the DSLs (Designated Safeguarding Lead) will act accordingly, contacting parents or external agencies as appropriate.