**Counselling Service Partnership - Information For Parents**

As part of our proud commitment to sharing good practice we wanted to let you know we have extended our successful counselling service to support those in our feeder middle schools by offering counselling to identified Year 8 students.

The Covid 19 crisis will in no doubt have an impact on the emotional health and social development of our young people. Our approach is one of community healing, focusing on minimising trauma and promoting resilience by taking a proactive role in early interventions around wellbeing.

Early intervention and prevention approaches to mental health have a strong evidence base and we believe that addressing mental health issues at a younger age can help prevent difficulties later down the line.

This service has been established in conjunction with the leading training providers for counselling practitioners.

**Lead Counsellor – Whitley Bay High School: Kirsty Hutchinson BA (Hons), Dip.Couns (Accred), MBACP**

**Training, qualifications & experience**

Experienced Psychotherapeutic Counsellor (Northern Guild for Psychotherapy).

Registered Member of the BACP.

**Qualifications**

Certificate in Creative Supervision

Diploma in Psychotherapeutic Counselling

Deputy Designated Person for Safeguarding Children

Certificate in CBT for Anxiety and Depression

Certificate in Transactional Analysis

Certificate in Mental Health Awareness

BA (Hons) English Language

**Trainee Counsellor Information**

All trainee counsellors are required to have extensive clinical hours before qualification and these individuals have been subject to a strict application and interview process with consultation from the schools involved.

The clinical supervision and line management of the counsellors will be provided by WBHS. The safeguarding responsibilities are held within each middle school. Each counsellor has undertaken enhanced DBS checks.

**Confidentiality and Data Protection–**

All sessions will be conducted in the strictest confidence. This confidence will be maintained, and applied to any and all records, in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998) and GDPR (2018), except in the following situations:

* Where the young person gives consent for confidentiality to be broken
* Where the counsellor is compelled with a legal basis.
* Information which suggests the individual intends to harm themselves or others, or there is significant risk to another which constitutes a vital interest.

**Personal Information –**

* Any hard copy personal information collected (GP referral letters etc) is kept securely in a locked cabinet on each middle school site. The data is stored for record only and in the case of emergency.
* Record keeping of any session notes is stored electronically and is stored in password protected files.
* Data is anonymised and is stored for no longer than 3 years. (see school policy on record keeping)
* Data is not shared with any third party organisation, unless previously agreed or in the interest of Child Protection and Safeguarding (see school policy on Child Protection for more info)

**How it works –**

* The school identifies students who may benefit from a confidential space to work through any issues that may be impacting their school or home life and makes a referral. Parents will be contacted at this stage to discuss the referral and gain consent.
* The referral will be checked and signed off by the lead counsellor before work commences.
* The young person will meet with the counsellor in a safe and confidential space for 6 sessions in the first instance. Each session will last up to 50 minutes. Sessions will take place during a different lesson each week to avoid the young person missing too much academic work.
* If, at the end of the sessions, the counsellor and student feel there is more to discuss and work on, the sessions can be extended.

If you would like more information about our counselling service, please contact Kirsty Hutchinson on 0191 731 7070 or email Kirsty.hutchinson@whitleybayhighschool.org. You can also speak to your school’s Designated Safeguarding Lead.

**Counselling Information For Students**

**What is counselling?**

Sometimes we all have problems that are worrying.

Sometimes it’s difficult to talk to parents, friends or teachers about things that are making us stressed or anxious. A counsellor is someone who you can talk to in a different way,

someone who will listen to you carefully, who will not judge you or tell you what to do.

**What kind of things do people talk about?**

**Whatever is worrying for you. It could be about lots of different things:**

worries at home, in school or with friends

bullying

family problems

relationship difficulties

low self-esteem/ confidence

bereavement

sexuality

self-harm

**How does it work?**

If you think you might want to talk, please speak to your Head of Year.

You will usually have a session once a week or fortnight for up to 50 minutes.

**Will other people know what I have talked about?**

No. What you talk about is confidential. That means it’s between you and the counsellor.

The counsellor will keep confidentiality unless you are at risk of harm. The counsellor may then need to talk to someone else to help keep you safe, but will always try to talk with you about this first.