



**KING  
GEORGE V  
COLLEGE**

# Counselling Policy & Procedures

2019-2020

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## 1. Purpose of the Policy

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1.1 This policy sets out the College’s counselling policy for students in line with the College’s stated aim to create a safe and secure environment in which equality of opportunity, diversity of backgrounds and experiences are valued. The College is committed to achieving outcomes for students which include the necessity for them to be healthy, stay safe and enjoy and achieve at the College. If students are in control of their personal lives they are more likely to achieve educationally and contribute to the overall success of the College.

## 2. Scope

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2.1 This policy applies to all students of the College who study at main sites or at any of the outreach and community centres. The policy also covers those students who are on placement as part of their course and Work Based Learning students.

### 3. Professional Practice and Standards

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- 3.1 All counsellors are trained to at least diploma level and committed to maintaining their competence through continued professional development (CPD).
- 3.2 To fulfil the requirements of the Ethical Framework of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP 2018) counsellors must participate in CPD which may include networking professionally, training courses with the local LSCB, workshops or conferences.
- 3.3 To ensure their safe practice counsellors ensure they have elected time for clinical review. Counsellors have supervision of up to one and half hours per month with an appropriately trained professional.

### 4. Monitoring and Review

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- 4.1 Implementation of this policy will be monitored through the Safeguarding committee, the Safeguarding sub-group and through an annual report to the College Executive Team (CET).

### 5. Definitions

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- 5.1 **Student** – the term ‘student’ for this policy covers students of the College who study at main site or at any of the outreach and community centres. The policy also covers those students who are on placement as part of their course and Work Based Learning students.
- 5.2 **Child** – in accordance with The Children Act 1989, and therefore in accordance with law, the College shall regard any young person below the age of 18 as a child.
- 5.3 **Vulnerable Adult** – a person aged 18 or over who may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is, or may be, unable to take care of himself or herself, or unable to protect himself or herself against significant harm or serious exploitation.

### 6. Data Protection and Confidentiality

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- 6.1 16-18 year old students have the same entitlement to confidentiality as adults.
- 6.2 Counsellors work within Southport Colleges Safeguarding and Confidentiality Policies and also the BACP Ethical Framework which includes clear guidelines for confidentiality and safe practice. Counsellors also keep confidential information in line with the Data Protection Act 2018.
- 6.3 Counsellors cannot offer absolute confidentiality to their students. In exceptional circumstances the counsellor may take the decision to break confidentiality, with or without the student’s consent, if necessary. In this case their professional judgement will be used:
  - There is a risk of the student harming themselves or being harmed
  - There is risk of another person being harmed
  - There is risk of a serious crime being committed
- 6.4 In these cases the counsellor will refer the student/concern to the Safeguarding Officer who may invoke and follow the College’s Safeguarding Procedures.

- 1.1 All personal and sensitive information will be managed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation and the Common Law Duty of Confidentiality.

## **7. Support for staff**

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- 7.1 Southport College recognises that staff may at times need support. Counselling services are available to all staff and employees will be afforded reasonable time off work to attend counselling and support sessions. All employees are encouraged to make use of these services if they are feeling stressed, for whatever reason. Advice and assistance will be given by trained independent counsellors. Any employee can telephone and arrange an appointment in confidence concerning their condition, the causes of it and appropriate action which might be taken to assist them. Further information can be sought from Personnel on 01704 392721.

## **8. Supervision for Safeguarding Officers**

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- 8.1 Each safeguarding officer will be provided with access to supervision and support sessions as required. This will enable the staff to have a de-brief session with a counsellor supervisor. The counsellor assigned will be the same person for the whole team to enable them to gain an understanding and insight into the work of the team and the individual practitioners.
- 8.2 The service will include access to the counsellor/supervisor for any ad hoc advice/information between sessions. In addition, if staff needed additional support for any issues, they can be then referred to the counselling service as part of our normal contractual service. Further information can be sought from Personnel on 01704 392721.

## **9. Counselling Procedure for Students**

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### **9.1 Referral options**

- 9.1.1 Students are able to access the service via a number of different avenues which have been made available to ensure the service is fully accessible to all students.

### **9.2 Contact options:**

- 9.2.1 The Counselling Service offers the following contact options:
- Email
  - Mobile phone
  - Home number
  - Face to face (via Student Information Centre)
  - Via Progress Tutor/Curriculum Leader
  - Via Safeguarding Officer
  - Drop in sessions
- 9.2.2 Once a referral has been received the name of the student and the date of referral will be logged and added to the waiting list.
- 9.2.3 Counsellors will make 3 attempts to contact the student by the preferred form of contact. If no response within 10 days the student will be removed from the waiting list and logged as unable to make contact.

- 9.2.4 Students who have made an appointment who do not attend are offered one more additional appointment, if they did not attend this they will need to re refer back into the service.

### ***9.3 Making an Appointment***

- 9.3.1 All students will be offered an initial assessment which will enable the counsellor and student to briefly discuss the issue and ensure the College Counselling service is appropriate. Once this has been agreed the counsellor will offer 6 sessions of either 1 hour or 12 sessions of ½ hour once per week.
- 9.3.2 It is anticipated that students will attend once a week outside of their teaching timetable.

### ***9.4 Drop in appointments***

- 9.4.1 All students can also access the drop in service that operates on Monday 8.30am – 12.30noon (term time only) in Student Hub. This is a one off opportunity for students who may be in need of support but do not want to commit to a regular session. Referrals for this service are through self-referral or with the support of a staff member. Students are contracted into the service bound by the same rules of confidentiality as all other appointments.

### ***9.5 Additional Sessions***

- 9.5.1 A small number of students may require more than 6 sessions due to the nature of their issue. Counsellors will take this request to the Head of Central Services each student will be discussed as to the benefit of further sessions. The Head of Central Services will give a decision on the number of additional sessions.
- 9.5.2 On occasion a student may require an extended block of counselling, the above procedure will be followed with the addition of weekly feedback to the Head of Central Services to ensure best practice and appropriateness of extended sessions.

### ***9.6 Significant/Safeguarding concerns***

- 9.6.1 Students who disclose harm or self-harm including suicidal thoughts are deemed at risk and vulnerable. Counsellors will refer students to the Colleges Safeguarding Officers and also the Head of Central Services. Counsellors will continue to work with the student, however a referral to Access Sefton (Sefton)/Mind Matters (Lancs)/GP maybe more appropriate. Counsellors and Safeguarding Team can support students to make this external referral.

### ***9.7 Electronic client files/notes***

- 9.7.1 Counsellors will keep electronic records of all students' attendance to counselling. The database is password protected and only the counsellors, Deputy DSL and Senior DSL have access to this. The counsellor notes section is only open to the counsellors, Senior and Deputy Designated Lead for Safeguarding.
- 9.7.2 Counselling files will contain:-
- Referral form
  - Counselling contract
- 9.7.3 In addition to the counselling files, the students' ILP (Pro-monitor) will be updated with a start date of counselling and an end date. This will be stored under Confidentiality Level 4.

### **9.8 Exceptional Circumstances**

- 9.8.1 At times during the academic year a number of students will need to be seen immediately e.g. sudden death or serious injury of peer. This type of referral maybe by arrangement via the student, Progress or Pastoral Tutor or by request from a Safeguarding Officer. Counsellors will make themselves available to these students to ensure they are supported via the counselling service. All documents including contract to be completed at the start of the session.
- 9.8.2 In these circumstances these students may access the service for one session or will be given the option to book further sessions.

### **9.9 Named college counsellor**

- Nikki Vernon

## **10. Supporting Documentation**

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- 10.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the Ethical Framework of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (2018, BACP) and the following College documents:
- Safeguarding Policy
  - Guidelines for dealing with suspicions or allegations of abuse - All Staff
  - Anti-Bullying Policy (Students)
  - Criminal Convictions Policy and Procedures
  - Fitness to Study and Practise Policy and Procedures
  - Drugs, Alcohol & Substance Misuse Policy & Procedure - Students