



Parkhall Integrated College

Counselling Policy

Agreed by Board of Governors: November 2024

To be reviewed: November 2027

Rationale

Parkhall Integrated College is committed to providing an inclusive, caring learning environment where we all feel valued and respected and are empowered to reach our full potential. At Parkhall Integrated College, we recognise the importance of mental health and emotional well-being for our students. This Counselling Policy outlines our commitment to providing a safe, supportive, and confidential environment where students can access professional counselling services to help them navigate personal, social, and academic challenges.

Purposes

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide a framework for the delivery of counselling services within the college.
- ensure that students have access to appropriate support for their emotional and mental health needs.
- promote a culture of openness and understanding regarding mental health issues.
- outline the roles and responsibilities of staff and external professionals involved in counselling.

This policy applies to all students at Parkhall Integrated College and covers all aspects of counselling services provided within the college.

Guidelines

Counselling is an ongoing activity which all teachers engage in during the college day. It may be formal or informal and this often reflects the seriousness and/or the urgency of the issue. If staff feel the situation is urgent and it must be dealt with immediately, the Head of Pastoral Care or any other member of the child protection team should be informed and time will be made available for that member of staff to deal with that particular issue or concern.

Students may benefit from counselling if they have issues with:

- Low self-esteem, lack of confidence and self-consciousness
- Emotions, moods and self-control.
- Sexuality.
- Family relationships.
- Friendship/Peer group pressures.
- Anxiety.
- Bereavement.

Provision of Counselling

- **Qualified Staff:** The college will engage with agencies who provide counsellors who adhere to professional ethical standards and guidelines.
- **Accessibility:** Counselling services will be available to all students, with flexible appointment times to accommodate their needs.
- **Confidentiality:** All counselling sessions will be conducted in a confidential manner, with information shared only with consent, except in cases where there is a risk of harm to the student or others.

Referral Process

Students find out about the service through assemblies, posters and information shared on the college website.

- **Self-Referral:** Students can refer themselves for counselling by contacting a designated staff member or by placing their name in the 'Self-Referral Box'.
- **Staff Referral:** Teachers and staff members may refer students to the counselling service if they observe signs of distress or if a student expresses a need for support.
- **Parental/Guardian Involvement:** Parents/guardians may also refer their child for counselling, with consent from the students where appropriate.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality remains with the staff of the service and information will not normally be conveyed outside the service without the permission of the client. Young people the age of 18 years deemed to be "Gillick Competent" will be afforded the same level of confidentiality as adult clients.

Any child protection issues that arise will be passed immediately to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection in the College.

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Counsellors:** Responsible for providing counselling services, maintaining confidentiality, and keeping accurate records of sessions.
- **Head of Pastoral Care:** Responsible for counselling in the college and ensuring that appropriate procedures are followed.
- **Teachers and staff:** Responsible for recognising signs of distress in students and referring them to the counselling service as needed.

- Parents/Guardians: Encouraged to support their children in accessing counselling services and to communicate any concerns to the college.

Training and Development

The college will promote mental health awareness training for all staff to foster a supportive environment for students.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The effectiveness of the counselling service will be monitored through regular feedback from students, staff, and parents/guardians.

The college will conduct annual reviews of the counselling policy to ensure it remains relevant and effective in meeting the needs of students.

These policy Guidelines are translated into action through other policies and procedures, for example:

- *Pastoral Care Policy*
- *Child and Adult Care Protection Policy*
- *Addressing Bullying in Schools Policy*
- *Bereavement Policy*
- *The Critical Incident Plan*