



**HUNTERHOUSE COLLEGE**

**COUNSELLING POLICY**

**Date/date Reviewed: January 2017**

**Previous: October 2015**

**Next Review due: October 2019**

This policy is available in pdf format from the school website

[www.hunterhousecollege.org.uk](http://www.hunterhousecollege.org.uk)

or on request from the School Office 028 9061 2293

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## **COUNSELLING AT HUNTERHOUSE COLLEGE**

1.1 Counselling is an integral part of the Pastoral system at Hunterhouse College. Counselling for post-primary schools is delivered through the Department of Education Independent Counselling Service for Schools in co-operation with Familyworks.

### **2. WHAT IS COUNSELLING?**

2.1 Counselling gives our students the opportunity to talk about things that are concerning them, in confidence, with a qualified Counsellor. What is spoken about will depend on the individual, but common themes are stress, relationships, change, loss and distressing, and traumatic events.

### **3. RAISING AWARENESS OF THE COUNSELLING SERVICE WITHIN THE SCHOOL**

3.1 At all meetings for new parents, time is spent explaining the overall Pastoral Structure within the College and reference is made both visually and verbally to the place of the Counsellor within this.

3.2 The Counsellor speaks with students in Assembly during the Autumn Term to outline what is involved in counselling and to explain how the system of referral works.

3.3 There is a noticeboard in the Concourse which advertises the Pastoral Structure and explains the role of the Counsellor.

3.4 A leaflet is available at Reception showing the Pastoral Structure within the College and copies are also posted in each Form Room.

3.5 There is a direct link on the school website to the Familyworks website

3.6 All new staff are made aware of the Counselling service.

### **4. HOW CAN A STUDENT AVAIL OF COUNSELLING?**

4.1 A student may be referred to the Familyworks Counsellor in a number of ways. She may self refer by completing a self-referral slip and leaving this in the Counselling box. This is emptied each week by the Counsellor. Alternatively a student may be referred by a parent or teacher who will complete the relevant form.

4.2 It is important to note that attendance at counselling sessions is entirely voluntary and that where a student is referred by a parent or teacher she may decide not to attend. This decision will be respected.

### **5. GUIDANCE ON PRACTICE**

5.1 Counselling is a non-compulsory service. As stated above, attendance is entirely voluntary and a student may withdraw herself at any time.

5.2 While each individual is different, in all instances the focus is on empowering students to formulate their own ways of dealing with the circumstances in which they find themselves.

5.3 Any information relayed to the Counsellor will remain confidential unless it involves the disclosure of a Safeguarding / Child Protection issue. If this occurs the Counsellor will forward the information as soon as possible to the Designated Teacher (or in her absence the Deputy Designated Teacher), who will take appropriate action as required by law and in accordance with the College's Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy.

5.4 During counselling sessions the Counsellor will make professional judgments about how best to proceed. The strategies will be explained at a level appropriate to the age of the student and will not be initiated without her consent.

5.5 Respecting the student's right to confidentiality means that information will not be relayed to parents. However where it is agreed to be desirable, this will be undertaken by the Pastoral Co-ordinator or Vice Principal with oversight of pastoral care.

## **6. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

6.1 Additional information about Familyworks Counselling may be found on the organisation's website [www.familyworksni.com](http://www.familyworksni.com)