

Therapy Policy

Approval status	Approved
Last reviewed on:	September 2023
Next review due on:	September 2025

Rationale for this Policy

OPGS believes that the mental health and wellbeing of all students is of paramount importance. We employ a suitably qualified school counsellor one day per week during term time to support students on a 1:1 basis. This Policy is written to ensure that parents/carers, students, and staff understand what is offered, by whom, for how long and how the service is operated.

What service does OPGS use?

We employ Kent Counselling for Schools [KCS] to provide our counselling service as we know that all of their counsellors are qualified appropriately and registered with the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy [BACP].

What is offered?

Our counsellor is in school every Wednesday during term time. This day may change when school events and/or enrichment days fall on a Wednesday. They offer a course of 6 x 1 hour sessions per student. Our counselling room is located in the main building, between the Staff Room and Art.

Are the sessions confidential?

Yes. Students can feel secure that discussions in their counselling sessions are confidential and will not be discussed outside of the session, nor will information be passed from the counsellor to parents/carers and/or school staff. Confidentiality will only be broken in the event of a safeguarding concern. In this instance the counsellor will liaise directly with the school safeguarding leads.

How does my son/daughter access the service?

Counselling is managed by Student Development and Support, however referrals must be directed to your child's Director of Study. The Director of Study will then meet with the SENCo to discuss whether school counselling, mindfulness or external support would be the most effective and beneficial help. If school counselling is appropriate, sessions can start immediately if the schedule permits. If this is not possible, your son/daughter will go onto the waiting list until a space becomes available.

Your son/daughter will be taken out of lesson for their counselling session. However, we rotate the schedule on a weekly basis to ensure that they do not miss the same lesson repeatedly. They, and their teachers, will be informed of their session time by email at the start of each week.

We will send you a consent form to complete, even if your son/daughter is 18 years old.

What happens when the 6 sessions are completed?

Counselling sessions are intentionally time limited to 6 weeks. This is because we want students to use the tools and knowledge they have amassed and put them into practice for themselves. This builds resilience and all important life skills whereas too many sessions can create a co-dependency and in some cases, reinforce problems. 6 sessions should be enough for most students, and mirrors what is available via external services.

If students are still struggling to manage their wellbeing after the 6 sessions and a period of self-management, they can be referred back to the service. This will be in discussion with you as parent/carer and the Director of Study. In some cases, we may recommend more specialist support via external services.

My son/daughter has counselling outside of school. Can they still access the school counsellor as well?

As a rule, we don't recommend that students see two separate counsellors as methods can conflict and confuse the student. If your son/daughter has an external counsellor, we recommend that this service continues without school sessions.