

At Mortimer we offer an in-school counselling service to our students. The counselling sessions are a confidential service which respond to personal, social, emotional and educational concerns that students may be experiencing. They are carried out by our counsellor Amanda Dinning.

Confidentiality – whilst the service offers confidentiality, the counsellor is required to act on any safeguarding concerns.

What is counselling?

- Counselling is a way of exploring problems and looking at how students can manage them.
- It aims to offer a safe space for students to talk about difficulties and distress.
- Sometimes the cause of distress is clear from the start, sometimes it is not.
- It is often easier to talk in confidence/private to someone who is not involved in students' everyday life.
- The counsellor is trained to listen respectfully and carefully, without judging. Students will not be told what to do; the counsellor's role is to support and not to give advice.
- Counselling can help to clarify thoughts and feelings, come to terms with experiences or help to find ways of resolving problems and making changes.
- Counselling not only builds self-esteem, confidence and resilience but also encourages self-awareness and the development of positive mental health coping strategies.

Counselling can help with but is not limited to:

- Worry and anxiety
- Low mood/depression
- Bereavement and loss
- Anger
- Friendship issues
- Bullying
- Low self-esteem
- Low self-confidence
- Relationships at home

In-school counselling is unable to help with:

- Addiction
- Eating disorders
- Serious mental health conditions such as psychosis
- A diagnosis
- Suicidal ideation

If it comes to light that any of the above are relevant to a student's current situation then we will offer support and guidance by referring to them to the most appropriate services such as LifeCycle or CYPS.

Just because a young person receives counselling does not mean that anyone has failed or that you will be judged as a 'bad parent'. The reality is that sometimes children and young people are unable to understand what is going on for themselves so find it even harder to explain their thoughts and feelings to the adults in their life; it can often be that they don't want to worry the people that they love the most. Experience says that children and young people find counselling useful in the same way as adults do. Being able to talk to someone who is not a family member, friend or teacher makes it easier to explore thoughts, feeling and emotions in a safe, secure and supported environment. If children and young people are able to receive emotional support from a qualified professional then they will have greater opportunity to fulfil their potential. It is our role to help children and young people find their way through whatever is troubling them and give them the tools, confidence and resilience to tackle future obstacles.

Getting a referral to counselling

Counselling in school can be offered to all students who request help through their Head of Year; this can be the student themselves or through their parent contacting school. Before counselling can occur, all students in Key Stage 3 will only be able to have counselling with parental consent. This will be liaised with the Head of Year and a first initial phone call to the parent, by the counsellor. Students who are in Key Stage 4 and who are deemed Gillick competent are entitled to confidential services including in-school counselling without parental consent, however parental consent is encouraged in order to support students at home too.

