

ST. CATHERINE'S BRITISH SCHOOL

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Counselling Policy

Nurturing Mind-Body Mental Health and Wellbeing

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This Policy is in line with the strategy of the school.

- *Purpose: To empower young people to understand, care and create a better future.*
- *Mission: Foster learning with a rich curriculum that develops intellectual, social, physical and creative skills, preparing students for global citizenship.*
- *Our Values of care, integrity, dedication and curiosity are the base from which everything flows:*
 - o ***Care** – compassion, empathy, looking after each other, asking difficult questions with respect, wellbeing and happiness.*
 - o ***Integrity** – honesty, fairness, transparency, doing our part, respect.*
 - o ***Dedication** – commitment, putting my all, going the extra mile, consistency, showing up when things get tough, striving for excellence.*
 - o ***Curiosity** – keep asking questions, drive to evolve, inquisitive, explore ways to do things better, keep learning, be creative*

We foster a community of opportunity and excellence, celebrating achievements and empowering students to take ownership of their learning, uphold high standards, and contribute positively. Policies provide the structure to support these goals.

At St. Catherine's, staff and students will work together to create an environment which is inclusive, nurturing, consistent, fair and enables all students to feel safe, thrive and feel a sense of belonging.

This policy, to be read in conjunction with the:

- *Statutory guidance on 'Keeping children safe in education'- Current edition*
- *Anti-Bullying Policy*
- *Safeguarding Policy*
- *SEND Policy*
- *PSHCE Policy*
- *Data Protection Policy*
- *Exclusion Policy*
- *Online Safety Policy*
- *Mobile phone policy*

Introduction

At St. Catherine's British School, we recognise a student's unique capabilities and their ability to a whole school approach to promoting emotional health and wellbeing. The values of **Care, Dedication, Integrity** and **Curiosity** are central to everything we do. These principles guide the mission of our counselling department, whose slogan- "**Nurturing Mind-Body, Mental Health and Wellbeing**"- captures our commitment to supporting the holistic development of all students. The counselling service is inclusive and designed to meet the diverse needs of our student body.

The aim of the school counselling programme aims to inspire and empower students, equipping them with the skills and support needed to excel academically and contribute meaningfully to both local and global communities. The policy aims to outline the procedures, practices, and principles for school-based counselling services for all students from EYFS right through to IB2 (aged 3-18). It ensures that students receive the necessary support for emotional, psychological and social well-being, fostering holistic development. The policy also emphasises nurturing resilient and well-rounded individuals from an early stage, rather than focusing solely on addressing challenges later in life. This proactive approach prioritises teaching essential life skills and strategies that enable students to flourish. Preventative education is integrated through various methods, including one-on-one and group sessions, as well as classroom lessons, ensuring the programme aligns with the developmental needs of students at every stage of their journey. The policy applies to all stakeholders-including parents/guardians, teachers, school staff, students and counsellors-to ensure that referrals and interventions are handled appropriately.

What is counselling?

Counselling is a professional, supportive process where students are provided a safe, confidential environment to explore their emotions, thoughts, and challenges. This process empowers students to develop coping strategies, improve emotional regulation, and build resilience to address difficulties such as anxiety, behavioural issues, social pressures, and family challenges. Counselling services are inclusive and meet the diverse needs of the student body.

Counselling is not an alternative to safeguarding procedures. Where there is a concern that a student may be at risk of harm, safeguarding procedures take precedence over confidentiality.

The Importance of School Counselling

Research indicates the positive impact of counselling on student wellbeing and educational outcomes. Emotional health is a crucial factor in enabling students to fully engage in their education and reach their potential. Schools play a pivotal role in promoting emotional wellbeing by identifying and addressing students' needs with compassion and expertise. When students feel supported emotionally, they are better equipped to succeed academically and socially.

The role of the School Counsellor

The school counsellor is a qualified professional who is trained to provide counselling services to students. School counsellors have a deep understanding of child development and adolescence. The school counsellor plays a vital role in supporting the emotional, social, and mental wellbeing of students, as well as any academic challenges across both the upper and lower school.

In the lower school, the counsellor focuses on helping younger students build foundational emotional skills such as self-regulation, resilience, and positive peer interactions. This includes providing individual support, small group sessions, and classroom interventions to address age-appropriate challenges like separation anxiety, friendship dynamics, or early signs of behavioural concerns to name a few.

In the upper school, the counsellor addresses more complex developmental issues, such as stress management, academic pressure, identity exploration, executive functioning and interpersonal relationships. Through individual and group counselling, the counsellor empowers students to navigate adolescence with confidence and equips them with coping strategies for personal and academic challenges.

Across all levels, the counsellor, on a case-by-case basis, collaborates with teachers, parents/guardians, and senior leadership to create a nurturing environment that supports every student's growth, ensuring the welfare of the school community is prioritised. This includes advising on safeguarding matters, developing intervention plans, and serving as a bridge to external resources when additional support is needed.

How Counselling Supports Pastoral Care

Counselling integrates seamlessly into the school's pastoral provision. All students can access a wide range of support services. Our staff prioritise listening, problem-solving, and fostering resilience. For students requiring additional care, counselling provides

specialised, evidence-based intervention, enriching the broader pastoral framework of the school.

Our counsellors are experienced and empathetic professionals skilled in building rapport with students. They understand the unique challenges of school life and offer tailored support to help young people navigate these demands effectively.

Services Offered by the Counselling Department

Individual Counselling

- A safe and confidential space where students can explore issues such as anxiety, stress, family challenges, friendships, identity, grief, and other personal concerns.
- Sessions are tailored to individual needs and may involve goal setting, coping strategies, and emotional support.

Group Counselling

- Facilitated sessions addressing common concerns, such as conflict resolution, managing stress, boundaries and personal space, building self-esteem, or improving peer relationships.

Classroom Presentations and Lesson Plans

- Interactive workshops on topics like emotional resilience, conflict resolution, and self-awareness, with follow-up resources and guidance for teachers.

Classroom Management and Observations

- When requested, providing behavioural insights and strategies to teachers, ensuring inclusive and supportive environments for all students.

Parent Engagement-Partnership with Parents

- Community presentations on topics like mental health awareness, positive parenting strategies, and managing stress.

Teacher Collaboration

- Meetings with teachers to share strategies, exchange ideas and provide support tailored to specific students or classroom dynamics.
- Behaviour Management Plans: Counsellors work closely with the Learning Support Team to create and implement targeted strategies that support students with behavioural challenges, fostering a more structured and supportive school experience.

- **Classroom Strategies:** Based on observations, feedback, and the needs of individual students, counsellors collaborate with teachers to create tailored strategies to improve classroom dynamics and better support students' emotional and academic development.

Parent Collaboration

- Partnership with parents is key to effective support. The school counsellors collaborate closely with parents and are offered resources to equip them with tools to support their children.
- **Home Behaviour Plans, Session Reports and Interventions:** When necessary, counsellors help design individualised behaviour management plans for students to use at home. These plans are tailored to address specific needs, ensuring consistency between home and school environments.

Assemblies

- Whole-school engagements addressing topics such as mental health, wellbeing, and inclusivity.

External Partnerships

- Working with therapists, psychologists, and other professionals to provide a coordinated approach to care.

Diversity and Additional Needs

At St. Catherine's British School, we are committed to fostering an inclusive environment that values diversity and respects the unique identities and experiences of all students. Our counselling services are designed to support young people from diverse cultural backgrounds and to address the needs of students with Additional Learning Needs, including those with disabilities. We also strive to create a safe and affirming space for LGBTQ+ students, ensuring their identities and experiences are recognised and celebrated within the school community. Our goal is to ensure that every student feels valued and supported as they grow and learn in a global environment.

Common Issues Addressed in Counselling

Students may seek counselling for:

(But not limited to)

- Mental Health issues such as anxiety, stress, low mood
- Low self-esteem or self-worth.

- Peer conflicts or bullying.
- Family difficulties, including divorce, bereavement, conflict.
- Identity and self-discovery, including cultural or neurodiverse needs.
- Executive Functioning: how to organise and plan
- Conflict Resolution
- Emotional regulation and Impulse control
- Character education
- Growth Mindset and Emotional Intelligence
- Transitions

School Counselling Protocols

Referral Process (See Appendix A)

Why and Who Can Make a Referral?

If a student shows emotional, behavioural, social and/or academic difficulties that affect his/her learning or social interactions and emotional wellbeing, then a concern is raised by the class teacher/Head of Year/Head of Key Stage. If a parent(s) is concerned about their child, they must inform the class teacher/Head of Year/Head of Key Stage who will then contact the wellbeing counsellors. External professionals, such as healthcare providers, may also suggest counselling services as a recommendation after assessment.

How to Make a Referral?

Lower School Referrals

In the lower school, referrals are typically initiated by:

- Classroom Teachers: Teachers identify students who may benefit from counselling based on observed concerns and discussions with Head of Key Stage.
- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Safeguarding matters are referred directly to the counsellors by the DSL when necessary.
- Parents must first discuss their concerns with the classroom teacher or relevant pastoral staff to ensure a collaborative approach.
- Referrals from staff members are submitted through the electronic form (see Appendix B), providing a detailed account of the concerns and actions taken before the referral. Once received, an initial meeting with the school counsellor and the member of staff will take place to gather more information. A final assessment meeting will be scheduled with the student. Parents will be included and are encouraged to take part in discussions regarding the referral.

Upper School Referrals

In the upper school, most referrals occur through the following channels:

- Self-Referral: Students can access the walk-in counselling service directly, without needing a formal referral form.
- Heads of Year/Key Stage: Staff members may identify and refer students who may benefit from additional support.
- Safeguarding Referrals: When a safeguarding concern arises, the Designated Safeguarding Lead ensures the counsellors are promptly informed.
- Referrals from pastoral staff in the upper school are also submitted using the electronic form (see Appendix C), while students accessing the walk-in service do not require any formal referral documentation.

All referrals will be documented by the counsellor or relevant pastoral staff, reviewed, and assessed for suitability. These are discussed at weekly meetings with Senior Leadership. In both lower and upper school, counsellors may recommend additional external support based on their assessment. This may include collaboration with external professionals, therapists, or specialised services to provide comprehensive care tailored to the student's needs.

After an initial assessment, the counsellor will discuss the recommended actions with the relevant parties, including teachers, Heads of Year, and parents (when applicable), ensuring confidentiality is respected. Sessions will not be scheduled during core academic subjects unless necessary.

Consent for Counselling Services and Parental Engagement

Counselling services are embedded within the school's pastoral framework and are considered an integral part of the educational and wellbeing support provided.

For younger children:

Parents are normally informed and involved before ongoing counselling begins unless there is a safeguarding reason not to do so.

For older students:

Older students who are considered Gillick competent may access aspects of counselling independently where appropriate.

Consent is not formally required through the completion of a specific form. For the best outcome and support for the student, a collaborative approach is essential, ensuring that all relevant staff and parents are actively engaged in the process. Where counselling is offered without direct parental involvement, the following factors are carefully assessed by the counsellor to determine if it is appropriate for the student to proceed independently:

- The student's understanding of what counselling entails and the potential outcomes.
- The student's maturity and ability to engage meaningfully in the counselling process.
- The nature and severity of the issue being addressed.
- The student's developmental stage (physical, emotional, and intellectual).

Student Consent and student voice

Students have the right to:

- Ask questions about the counselling process.
- Decide what information they feel comfortable sharing.
- Give or withdraw consent for the sharing of information.
- Terminate counselling at any time, though the counsellor will explore this decision further to ensure the student's needs are met.

If safeguarding concerns arise during counselling, confidentiality cannot be maintained. In such cases, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is informed immediately, and safeguarding protocols are followed, which may include parental involvement.

Students are encouraged to contribute to decisions about their support and intervention wherever developmentally appropriate.

Duration of Scheduled Counselling Services

Scheduled sessions are held in the designated counselling rooms unless the counsellor chooses an alternative location for a particular reason or intervention. Some students may benefit from short-term, solution-focused scheduled interventions (6 sessions). After scheduled interventions, if more sessions are needed, external support will be recommended to parents.

Lower School:

- Counselling sessions usually run between 30-40 minutes, approximately, during times agreed upon by the teacher and counsellor.
- Individual sessions: 6 sessions per student, tailored to address age-appropriate challenges.
- Group sessions: 6 sessions, offered on a variety of topics.

Upper School:

- Counselling sessions usually run between 20-60 minutes or more depending on the case.
- Walk-in service: Students can access counselling services on a drop-in basis without needing a prior appointment and if the counsellor is available. This usually occurs during break (20 minutes) or during lunch break (60 minutes).
- Individual sessions: 6 Sessions offered per student. These sessions are agreed upon by the counsellor and student and in some instances by the head of year/key stage when a student needs to be pulled out of a certain class.
- Group sessions: 6 sessions are offered on a variety of topics usually at a predetermined time agreed upon by relevant staff.

As there is a growing demand for counselling services, consequently, there may be waiting lists. Thus, to accommodate all students in need of counselling services, we need to ensure that students keep appointments when scheduled and if they cannot make the appointment, the counsellor to be notified as soon as possible. In the case that an appointment is cancelled by the counsellor due to emergencies, the appointment will be re-scheduled as soon as possible.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a cornerstone of the counselling service, ensuring students feel comfortable and safe. However, confidentiality has limits:

- Information shared in counselling will be kept confidential unless there is a risk of harm to the student or others or someone is inflicting harm on the child (e.g., self-harm, harm to others, abuse/neglect).
- If necessary, the counsellor will inform designated safeguarding staff and external professionals, in line with safeguarding procedures.

The counsellor will explain the limits of confidentiality to students before beginning sessions, using age-appropriate language.

Safeguarding and Protection of Children

The safety and well-being of students are paramount. All counselling services operate according to the school's safeguarding policies, and the counsellor is obligated to report any concerns about a student's welfare to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL).

Safeguarding Procedures: If abuse or neglect is suspected, the counsellor will inform the DSL and follow safeguarding procedures. As counsellors are involved in safeguarding procedures and intervene when necessary, liaising with external professionals for holistic support is paramount.

Reporting Concerns: The counsellor works with the safeguarding team and external agencies to address concerns and ensure the student's safety. Referrals may be made to child protective services, healthcare providers, or law enforcement as necessary.

Where appropriate, counsellors complete dynamic risk assessments regarding self-harm, suicide risk or significant mental health concerns and work alongside safeguarding staff to ensure appropriate support.

Return to school after a Safeguarding Concern:

- In extreme cases, students may need a psychiatric evaluation and ongoing professional monitoring before returning to school.
- This is discussed with the pastoral team and external agencies to assess the safety of the child and other students, before the student can return to school.

School counselling provides short-term, solution-focused emotional support. It is not a substitute for specialist mental health assessment or long-term psychotherapy.

Record Keeping and Monitoring Counselling Practice

It is the counsellors' ethical obligation to keep records of all processes involved in the counselling services provided to students. Records such as case tracking are shared with relevant pastoral staff, however session notes are kept confidential unless needed for safeguarding matters. Counselling records are retained and disposed of in accordance with the school's Data Retention Policy.

Formal Recording of Sessions: The counsellors will keep confidential formal session notes of students attending counselling which will include name, referral process, level of priority, SOAP/DAP or any other counselling notes outlining main topic/issue, strategies implemented and any other additional information.

Case Tracking: Confidential case notes are maintained and overseen by relevant Heads of Year and Heads of School indicating only the name of the student, without providing any other additional information unless necessary.

Annual and Term Reporting: The counsellors compile a termly and yearly reports including anonymised data on usage trends, issues raised, and recommendations for school improvements. Trends and actions will be shared with staff during meetings, where appropriate. Counselling interventions are evidence-informed and outcomes are reviewed through agreed goals, student voice, staff feedback and wellbeing measures where appropriate.

Record Keeping and Data Protection

St. Catherine's British School adheres to the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018, and Greek data protection laws (in alignment with the EU General Data Protection Regulation). These regulations ensure the secure and responsible handling of student information.

Each student's records are stored electronically in a secure, password-protected system accessible only to the school counsellors. Session notes are maintained solely for the counsellors' use to protect confidentiality and ensure the integrity of the counselling process.

While specific details remain confidential, names of students are shared with relevant Heads of Year or Heads of Key Stage, when necessary, to enable effective pastoral care and ongoing monitoring of students under their supervision. This collaborative approach ensures that both the counsellors and school staff remain accountable, and it helps maintain a balanced and transparent management of the counsellors' caseloads.

Monitoring Counselling Practice

The counselling service is continuously monitored and evaluated to ensure high-quality performance, address any areas of concern, and guide ongoing service development. To maintain the highest ethical standards, the work of our school counsellors is regularly reviewed, and their performance is assessed to ensure that the best possible support is provided to our school community.

As part of this commitment, the school ensures that counsellors receive regular professional supervision, which is critical for maintaining their effectiveness and ethical

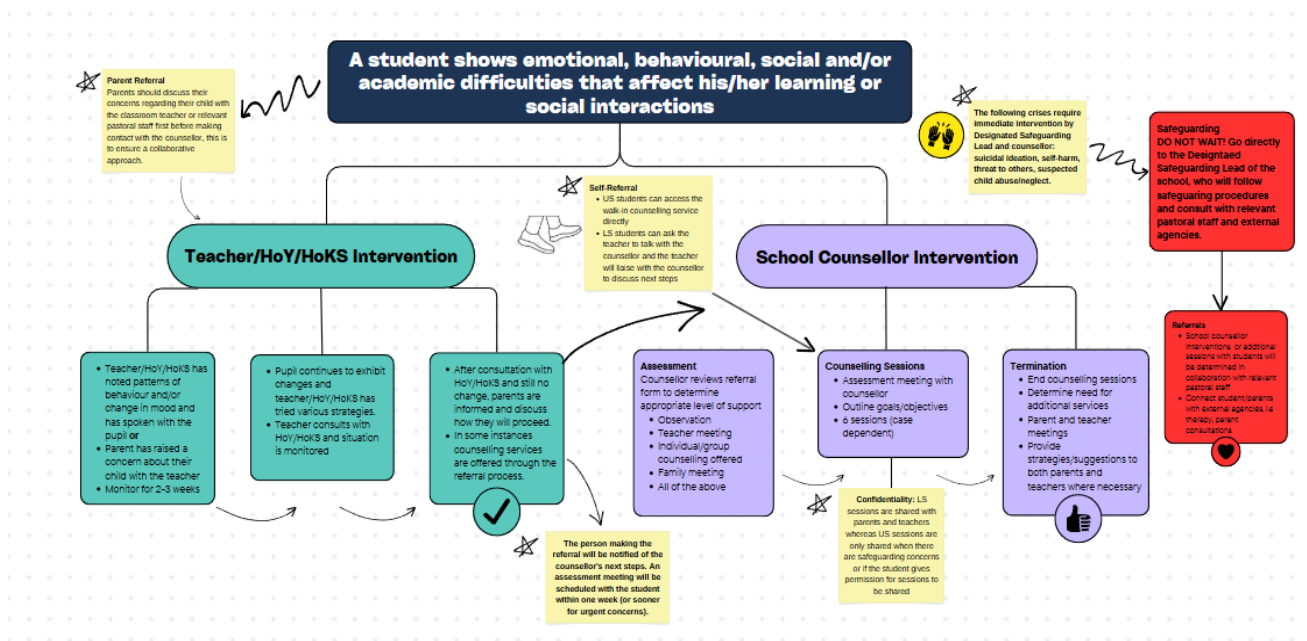
practice. Counsellors are also encouraged and supported to engage in continuous professional development throughout the year. This includes participating in webinars, workshops, conferences, and advanced studies to stay informed of the latest research and strategies in the field.

By prioritising professional growth and staying updated on best practices, the counselling department enhances its ability to support students on multiple levels, fostering their overall wellbeing and development.

Review: This Policy will be reviewed annually by the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) or sooner if required. The next review date is August 2027

Appendix A: Referral Process

Counselling Services



Appendix B: Lower School Referral Form

Lower School, School Welfare Counsellor Referral Form 2024-2025

Hi, Angelik. When you submit this form, the owner will see your name and email address.

1. Full Name & Surname 

Enter your answer

2. Today's Date 

Please input date (dd/MM/yyyy)



3. 1:1 Counselling Sessions-Student's Full Name and Surname 

Enter your answer

4. Group Counselling Sessions-Please list the full names of each student you would like in a group 

Enter your answer

5. Year Level 

- ☐ Nursery
- ☐ Reception
- ☐ Year 1
- ☐ Year 2
- ☐ Year 3
- ☐ Year 4
- ☐ Year 5
- ☐ Year 6

6. Domain of Request-You can choose more than one 

- ☐ Social, Emotional, Behavioural
- ☐ Academic-please state if you have made contact with LS under additional information
- ☐ Observation
- ☐ Classroom Management Tips
- ☐ Other

7. Have you contacted the parents regarding your concern/s? 

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

8. What steps have you taken prior to contacting the school counsellor/s? 

9. Additional Information (relevant information that you deem important). 

10. Thank you for submitting your referral 

Once this referral is received one of the school counsellors will be in touch, we look forward to meeting with you. If you have any questions, comments or concerns email us:

Angelik Grigoratos: angelik.grigoratos@stcatherines.gr

Serafim Zoukas: serafim.zoukas@stcatherines.gr

☐ Send me an email receipt of my responses

Appendix C: Upper School Referral Form

Upper School, School Counsellor Referral Form

Hello! Please complete this form if you wish to refer a pupil to us.

Hi, Angelik. When you submit this form, the owner will see your name and email address.

* Required

1. Name of Pupil (Name & Surname) * 

Enter your answer

2. Head of Year Name * 

Enter your answer

3. Name of Teacher who is referring pupil to you 

Enter your answer

4. Date of referral * 

Please input date (dd/MM/yyyy)



5. Pupil Year * 

☐ Year 7

☐ Year 8

☐ Year 9

☐ Year 10

☐ Year 11

☐ Year 12

☐ Year 13

- Other

Agression

Defiance

Repetitive Strikes

Disregard

Inappropriateness

Bullying

Social Skills

Behavioural Concern

Anxiety

Low Mood

Withdrawal

Anger

Self Esteem

Relationships

Regulating Emotions

Social Emotional

Decline in performance

Struggles to cope

Lack of motivation

Procrastination

Test anxiety

Time
management

Suspected Learning Difficulty

Academic

10. Are there any safeguarding concerns? 

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

11. What safeguarding concerns do you suspect? 

- ☐ Abuse
- ☐ Neglect
- ☐ Self harm
- ☐ Sexual exploitation
- ☐ Other

12. Additional concerns? 

Submit