

## Parents Leaflet – Primary

### What is counselling?

Counselling provides the opportunity to explore and talk about things that are of concern, to a child, 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, traumatic events.

### What does a Counsellor do?

Counsellors are trained to listen without judging and to help students sort out their thoughts and feelings about whatever is concerning them. For primary age children, counsellors often use creative activities such as drawing, art, play and writing to help a child express their concerns.

### Who are the Counsellors?

The school counsellors are Ms. Aine and Mr. Omar. Both are qualified and have experience working with children and young people.

### Why have a Counsellor in school?

A school based service brings counselling to children and young people in a place that is familiar, safe and secure. If children and young people are able to receive emotional support from a qualified professional they will have greater opportunity to fulfil their potential.

### If my child wants to see a Counsellor does that mean I am failing as a parent?

Absolutely not! We all experience occasions when it feels hard to explain to those closest to us about things which are bothering us. The counsellor will not be judging you or your child, but looking to help them find their way through whatever is troubling them.

### How long will counselling last?

Counselling may be for a few sessions, or longer term. Sessions generally last up to 40 minutes for primary age children and appointment times can be varied so that time is not lost from any one part of the timetable.

### Where and when does it take place?

It takes place in the counsellor's office or in another private office in school.

### What if s/he refuses Counselling?

The decision about whether or not to take up the offer of counselling is entirely voluntary for children just as it would be for an adult.

### **Is it confidential?**

Counselling is a time when it's O.K. to talk about concerns without fear of them being discussed elsewhere. However, in primary school we may liaise with parents and discuss any issues with them if we have concerns about the students well being. The student will be told that information may be shared with their parents.

Counselling work is reviewed regularly between counsellor, the student and parents/carers. This will provide an opportunity for any concerns to be voiced and any questions to be answered. Accordingly only partial confidentiality in individual counselling can be offered. If a child appears to be at risk of significant harm it may be appropriate to seek help to keep them safe. The counsellor would aim to discuss this first with the child concerned and will seek to involve all appropriate parties. The counsellor receives supervision of their work from external practitioners to guarantee the quality of the service provided.

### **Can I support the Counselling work?**

Yes, and this is welcomed. It will help your child if you accept counselling as a normal and useful activity, and show an interest if they want to talk to you about it. If your child is in the primary school, the counsellor will contact you at the start, to explain the process, and how you can keep in touch with them if you have any questions.

### **How are appointments made to the Counselling Service?**

Your child's class teacher might suggest counselling for your child or you might feel it would be helpful. Once you have decided counselling is something that might benefit your child, you can make an appointment to meet with the school counsellor. You can either do this by phoning or emailing the counsellors.

### **How I know if counselling has worked ?**

Counselling is not a magic solution, and sometimes it takes a while to feel the benefit. After the counselling has finished, your child will be given a feedback form that they can complete anonymously and return. This lets the school know how well the counselling service is helping the children and young people it sees. If there is any cause for complaint, you or your child is welcome to contact the counsellor or the Senior Leadership Team who will aim to resolve any issues of concern.

### **Data Protection Procedure and Evaluation**

All information about counselling work undertaken by the counsellor is kept securely by the school.