Park Academy West London
an Aspirations Academy

COUNSELLING POLICY AND CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

Date of last review:	May 2023	**Review period:**	2 year
Date of next review:	May 2025	**Owner:**	Principal
Type of policy:	Non statutory	**Approval level:**	Academy

1. Introduction

1.1 The British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy requires that counsellors offer the highest possible levels of confidentiality in order to respect client privacy and create the trust necessary for the counselling relationship.

1.2 Park Academy West London complies, within the bounds of its own safeguarding and information sharing procedures, with the principles set out in the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) Ethical Framework for Good practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy.

2. Aims

2.1 Park Academy West London aims to provide a confidential counselling service which is available to any student enrolled at Park Academy West London.

2.2 Through the provision of impartial, confidential and informed support the Counselling Service aims to help students to manage their emotional issues to support them to succeed at Park Academy West London.

3. Objectives

3.1 To provide one-to-one counselling sessions with a qualified counsellor who will listen without prejudice in a confidential and private setting.

3.2 To support students to explore and work with their difficult issues and emotions effectively.

3.3 To refer to other services, safeguarding officers, or outside agencies where appropriate.

4. Student Entitlement

4.1 Students are referred to the School Counsellor through the Assistant Principals, the DSL or Deputy DSL, parents or through self-referral. The Pastoral Lead is responsible for allocating students for counselling, although any member of staff may make a referral for Pastoral Support.

4.2 Permission will be sought by those with parental responsibility for the student before counselling support begins. In cases where a parent declines support but a student wishes to access support the student's ability to consent will be assessed on the basis of whether the child (if under 16) is deemed to be Gillick Competent (see details here: https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing- abuse/child-protection-system/legal-definition- child-rights-law/gillick- competency-fraser-guidelines/)

4.3 Any Park Academy West London student making use of the Counselling Service may expect to receive one-to-one counselling, occasional support or a one off support session if appropriate, with a qualified counsellor during term time and within school hours.

4.4 Provision will be offered on a 6 session basis to begin with, at the end of this time the student and counsellor will review the sessions and agree whether further sessions are appropriate. This decision may also be discussed with the DSL or Deputy DSL.

5. Confidentiality

5.1 Counselling sessions are confidential to both the student and counsellor.

5.2 Unless they have the prior consent of the student, the counsellor will not pass on to a third party any information regarding the client's presenting issues or anything discussed within the counselling session unless this information constitutes risk to the student or falls under Park Academy West London's policies regarding sharing information.

5.3. In the following instances the counsellor may take direct action to break confidentiality with or without the student's consent if necessary where, in the counsellor's professional judgement:

- There is a risk of harm to the client and/or others. The client is below 18 years of age and is being harmed or abused as defined by the Children's' Act 1989
- There is perceived risk as defined by the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003
- The client is believed to represent a threat under the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2000
- The client is believed to be involved in an offence which falls under the Drug Trafficking Act 1994

In these instances, direct action will involve the sharing of information with appropriate individuals. This may include the Designated Safeguarding Lead at Park Academy West London, external agencies with safeguarding responsibility such as Social Care or the Police and those with Parental Responsibility for the student (providing this disclosure does not put the student at risk).

5.4 Permission will be sought from both the student and parent / carer for any

referrals on to external services such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) or Targeted Youth Services.

5.5 A Counsellor can be required by a court of law to provide information, if this is the case the student and where appropriate, the parent / carer's permission will be sought where possible.

6. Record Keeping

6.1 Security and confidentiality are ensured by storing hand written records in a room that is locked whenever unattended.

6.2 Student names and contact details are kept separately from other records and hand written notes are coded to avoid any identification of each student.

6.3 Computerised records are password protected and only the School Counsellor and DSL and Deputy DSL have access.

6.4 The policy on confidentiality and the purpose of record keeping will be explained to all students using the Counselling Service.

6.5 If records relating to counselling both written and electronic are retained for a period of 5 years after a student has left the service. All records held are the property of Park Academy West London and are managed by the School Counsellor.

7. Data Protection Act

7.1 Park Academy West London operates under the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

7.2 Park Academy West London reserves the right to redact any third party details in student notes if these do not refer to the student, i.e. third party names.

8. Supervision

8.1 The School Counsellor receives supervision in accordance with BACP guidelines and current recommendations.

8.2 Supervisors adhere to the confidentiality policy and counsellors discuss their caseloads using first names only to preserve anonymity of the students.