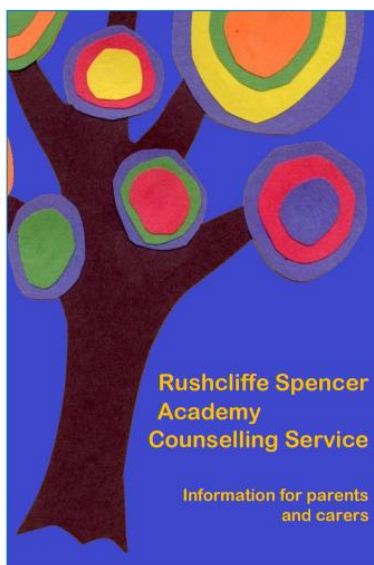




# Information for Parents and Carers

As part of our wellbeing provision, Rushcliffe Spencer Academy offer a school counselling service which can be accessed by all pupils. Students can refer themselves to the service by contacting the counsellors directly or through a member of staff in school (such as staff in the Pupil Support Unit). School staff may suggest counselling as an option that might be helpful to a student. Parents and carers can also request counselling for their child. Counselling is always voluntary for the young person concerned and it will be their decision if they want to attend or not.

## What is counselling and how can it help?

Counselling is a chance for students to explore problems or worries they have in a confidential setting. They may choose to do this through talking or by using creative media (e.g. painting, drawing). Counselling can help young people gain a better understanding of their thoughts and feelings, recognise patterns in the way they relate to others and develop new perspectives. It can also help students to make decisions and choices and find ways of dealing with new or difficult circumstances.

Counselling aims to facilitate personal growth in young people by helping them develop their ability to express themselves, increasing their self-esteem and their own understanding of who they are. The student forms a partnership with the counsellor and they will decide together how to use the time, meaning that the work they do together proceeds in the direction, and at the pace, that is right for the young person.

## Who are the counsellors at Rushcliffe?

Our two counsellors are Ines Knezevic and David Cook. Ines and David are both fully qualified counsellors who are experienced in, and passionate about, working with young people. They work within the schools Child Protection and Safeguarding policies and procedures. They are also both members of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and work in accordance with the BACP Ethical Framework. Both engage in regular continuing professional development and have regular clinical supervision to support the quality of their work.

Contact David or Ines on; [Counselling@rushcliffespencer.org.uk](mailto:Counselling@rushcliffespencer.org.uk)

## Is the counselling confidential?

Yes. The fact that counselling sessions are treated as confidential is an important part of the service that allows young people to talk openly without worrying that what they say will be shared beyond the counselling room. This includes not discussing the work with parents/carers unless the young person requests this or gives their consent. We understand this can sometimes be difficult for parents but confidentiality is vital for establishing the trust that enables young people to speak about the things that most concern them.

In cases where we are concerned that someone's safety or welfare is at risk; if a child is suffering significant harm or abuse, or has done in the past; or information is requested in a legal court case

or police investigation, then we will speak to the schools safeguarding team who will decide what action is needed.

**Do I need to give my consent for my child to have counselling?**

Not in all cases. We will usually seek parental consent and would always prefer that parents/carers are aware and happy that their child is having counselling. However, we work within legal and ethical guidelines and respect that if young people understand what is involved in counselling then they have a right to access the service without the knowledge of their parents/carers if that is what they want. We are always happy to talk to you about any concerns you have about the idea of counselling.

**How long will counselling last?**

Counselling can be on a regular basis or one-off 'drop-in' sessions. Students usually attend up to 6 regular sessions. The counsellor and young person will review this as they work together. More sessions may be offered where it is felt this would be beneficial and where the service has capacity for this.

**When and where will the sessions take place?**

Sessions take place in school, in our dedicated counselling rooms and last for up to one lesson period. Appointment times are varied so that the same lesson is not missed repeatedly. For Sixth Formers, sessions generally take place in free periods.

**If my child comes for counselling, does that mean I've done something wrong as a parent?**

Not at all. We all have times when it feels hard to speak to those who are closest to us. This is particularly true for young people during adolescence. Young people often say the reason they feel able to talk to a counsellor is because the counsellor has no other involvement in their life whereas they do not want to worry or stress the people who they see every day. Seeking help through counselling can be a very healthy and mature choice for a young person to make. The counsellor will not be judging you or your child but seeking to help them find their way through the things that are troubling them.

**Can I support the counselling?**

Absolutely! This is really welcome. The most helpful thing you can do is to show acceptance of counselling as a normal and useful thing to engage in; to be supportive/interested if your child wants to talk to you about it and equally not press them if they do not. It is very normal to feel anxious about what your child is saying in sessions and even hurt that they may not be sharing things with you. It is our experience that speaking to a counsellor can often lead to young people feeling more able to be open with their families and others. But this can take time to happen.

**Privacy notice:**

All records retained in relation to counselling are treated as confidential. Confidential session notes are made to support the counsellors work. All records are stored securely in locked filing cabinets or securely on school's computer systems.

Records are only accessed or shared on a need to know basis in line with the schools safeguarding & data protection policies.

When pupils are able to consent to counselling for themselves (usually age 13 but may be older), they can request to see any records about their counselling, or they can ask someone else to make

this request for them. If they are not yet able to consent for themselves, a parent can make this request for them.

If a request is made to see these records, they will only be shared if we feel that it would not be harmful to the pupil.

Requests to see records need to go to Kate Godfrey (Spencer Academy Trust Data Protection Officer) [k.godfrey@satrust.com](mailto:k.godfrey@satrust.com).

More information about how the school handles data can be found on the schools website in the data protection policy.