



MANCHESTER  
ISLAMIC  
GRAMMAR SCHOOL  
FOR GIRLS  
FAITH • LEARNING • LIFE

## COUNSELLING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

### Document Control

<b>This policy has been approved for operation within:</b>	<b>Manchester Islamic Grammar School for Girls</b>
<b>Date created:</b>	November 2025
<b>Date of next review:</b>	November 2028
<b>Review period:</b>	3 Years
<b>Owner</b>	MIGSG

## **Statement**

Manchester Islamic Grammar School for Girl Counselling Service is designed to complement the existing pastoral, PSHEE, mental health and emotional wellbeing offer to our students.

The Counselling Service aims to promote autonomy and, as far as possible, provide enough guidance and information for students to make their own choices and decisions regarding counselling.

Students have the right to confidentiality in counselling, which is essential for maintaining trust with the counsellor, however counsellors accept that confidentiality is not absolute and safeguarding all students must always be at the forefront of their work.

In line with nationally agreed standards, the School Counsellor has an enhanced DBS check and are also bound by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) Ethical Framework for Good Practice.

You can view this here: [http://www.bacp.co.uk/ethical\\_framework/](http://www.bacp.co.uk/ethical_framework/)

## **What is counselling?**

Counselling and Psychotherapy are umbrella terms that cover a range of talking therapies. They are delivered by trained practitioners who work with people over a short or long term to help them bring effective change or enhance their wellbeing. The counselling offered adheres to the Good Practice for Counselling in Schools (4th edition) produced by the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP).

## **Purpose of Counselling**

Young people face many challenges whilst growing up and may find at times that they need someone to talk to external to either home or school. Counselling is a process which offers support and guidance when things feel particularly difficult. The counsellor will provide a safe and confidential space for a young person to explore thoughts and feelings which perhaps are overwhelming and upsetting, in a drive to enable change.

## **Referrals**

All referrals for counselling would normally come via the Heads of Year. Members of staff who have concerns about a student are to email details of concerns to HOY. This acts as a primary link to understanding the issues that the student is facing and provides some useful background information. If it is deemed that school counselling is the most appropriate course of support, students will be introduced to the school counsellor following the referral and advised that drop in sessions are available. Appointments will be allocated in order of priority. The young person may have needs that are not appropriate for counselling and require alternative intervention by specialist Psychiatric services to whom young people and their families can be referred.

to from school. The counsellor can assist in signposting to other relevant services. Counselling should not to be used as a behavioural corrector or punishment, nor should a student be sent to counselling because, crucially, it is a choice-led service.

### **Parental Involvement**

Using the Gillick Competency principle young people aged 16 and under have the right to access counselling confidentially, without parental consent, provided they are capable of understanding the process of counselling. If a student is thought not to be Gillick competent, written consent will be sought from their parent/guardian and the student will be kept informed throughout this process. Either parent may request counselling services for their child. The parent making the request is responsible for informing the other parent. In addition, the school counsellor will not contact parents or provide updates unless a safeguarding concern arises.

### **Assessment and Evaluation**

Counselling support is reviewed at session 5, which helps guide if continued support is required beyond session 6 or if an external agency referral is required.

The sessions will run weekly for **30-40 minutes** and will alternate on a given day so as to ensure that a student does not regularly miss the same lesson with the counsellor aiming to be sensitive to the timetabling of core subjects.

students may still visit the School Counsellor during break or lunchtime to discuss any concerns. If a further referral is submitted for the same student, it will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, with priority given to students who have not yet accessed the counselling service.

### **Student access**

Students can self-refer by speaking to their Head of Year.

Details of how to access counselling can be found on posters in various 'hot spot' areas around the school.

Additionally, teachers or parents can refer by emailing the Head of Year and their details can be found on the school website and on the fortnightly newsletter.

Once a referral has been received, the counsellor will meet with the student and through an initial meeting, will ascertain if school counselling is the best provision of support.

### **Other Professionals**

Counselling from the School Counsellor will not be given to students accessing therapeutic support from any other provision, so as to reduce potential conflicts of therapeutic effort, for example, CAMHS or private practice.

## **Safeguarding**

It is important that students understand the meaning of confidentiality and that whatever has been discussed with the counsellor will be kept confidential except in very specific circumstances. These circumstances are explained to students in the Counselling Contract -see Appendix 2, and reiterated during the first session to check understanding. Students should therefore be made aware that a disclosure of abuse or 'at risk' concerns will be shared with the safeguarding team, parents/guardians and potentially local authorities.

## **Endings**

All students have the right to withdraw from counselling at any time and it is the responsibility of all involved adults to make this explicit to them. However, if a student has not attended 3 consecutive counselling sessions the counsellor will contact them to gain their wishes and feelings about continued participation. Nonetheless, Students may still visit the School Counsellor during break or lunchtime to discuss any concerns. Any further referral for the same student will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, with priority given to students who have not yet accessed the counselling service.

## **Access to records**

In the event of any court case involving a student, the Judge has power to subpoena counselling notes, or request that a counselling report is provided as evidence for the case.

## **Counselling agreement – Appendix 1**

A counselling relationship is a unique connection that relies solely on acceptance, honesty and trust. a counsellor is employed specifically to provide a confidential service, which means that whatever you tell the counsellor is not shared with anyone else unless a safeguarding concern is raised. As part of you accessing counselling at MIGSG we wish to make you aware of some of the responsibilities that we both hold in relation to us successfully working together.

### **Who needs to know:**

1. You do not need to seek permission from your parent/guardian to access counselling at school.
2. For attendance purposes, your counsellor will give you an appointment card which you can show to your teacher before leaving a lesson.
3. Counsellors have external clinical supervision and discuss aspects of their work, which supports their best practice and aspects of your process might be discussed confidentially during supervision.

### **What to expect from the counsellor**

4. Counsellors will help you to find your own ways of coming to terms with your situation or identify any difficulties that you are experiencing.
5. Sessions will run weekly for 30-40 minutes, and will alternate throughout the term, so that you are not missing the same lesson routinely.
6. Counsellors will review how the sessions are going in session 5, with a maximum number of sessions offered being 12. If further work is required; and allocations are

### **Where are the notes kept?**

7. A record of our sessions will be kept securely on a password protected database, which can only be access by your counsellor.

### **Safeguarding**

8. If you tell a counsellor that you, or someone else, is at risk of harm, confidentiality would have to be broken and what has been said shared with the relevant safeguarding team. At this stage the counsellor would keep you informed of the necessary steps thereafter, which may include the involvement of agencies such as children's services, CAMHS, Police and your parent/carer.

### **If you have to cancel?**

9. If you wish to cancel an appointment, please give at least 24 hours' notice by informing your HOY or in their absence, a member of the safeguarding team.
10. If you miss 3 sessions, unless due to mitigating circumstances, we will be unable to continue supporting you.

## **Complaints and compliments**

11. If you wish to make a complaint and you don't feel that you can discuss it with your counsellor, please follow the steps of the Complaints Policy, which can be found on the school website, under Policies.
12. If you would like to give positive feedback about your experience, in addition to the evaluation paperwork, you can document your experience via email to [a.suleiman@migsg.miet.uk](mailto:a.suleiman@migsg.miet.uk) or [madiha.ashraf@migsg.miet.uk](mailto:madiha.ashraf@migsg.miet.uk) or any member of the safeguarding team

## **Working hours of the Counsellor**

Monday 9:30am – 1:30pm

Please print and sign your name below to confirm that you have understood the agreement and that you give consent for our work to start.

Client name (please print) .....

Client signature.....

Date.....