



**ST. JOHN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL  
& AURORA  
COUNSELLING SERVICE**

**GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS**

*'Learn Together' and 'Grow Together.'*



## **Mission Statement**

At St. John's Catholic, Primary School (PS), we provide a happy, nurturing, inclusive, learning, environment which delivers high quality outcomes and life-enriching experiences. We embrace diversity and encourage all to respect the environment and develop the confidence and digital skillset required to contribute to society and the local and global economy. We work collaboratively with parents/carers and community partners to promote the social, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual well-being of each individual, thereby enabling our school family to 'Learn Together' and 'Grow Together.'

## **Rationale**

It is important for parents to understand that it is preferable for the child-counsellor relationship to be exclusive. Therefore, we tell parents that for counselling to be effective their child will need to feel safe/free to talk openly and confidentially with the counsellor. We acknowledge that parents/carers may be uncomfortable at not being kept fully informed of what their child is telling the counsellor, but we assure them that we will keep them informed with regards to the overall process. We also assure them that if information emerges which they as parents have a right to know we will support the child to tell them.

## **Key Objectives of Counselling for Children**

- Relationships
- Empathy
- Strengths/Weaknesses
- Inner confidence
- Responsibility
- Empowerment to make a difference
- Resilience



## **The Rights of the Child**

- The Education Authority and CCMS have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 175 Education Act 2002;
- The Education Authority is required to co-operate with social services in providing services for children in need under the Children's Acts 1989 and 2004;
- To have a say in decisions being made about him/her under article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF 1989);
- To confidentiality, if the child has sufficient understanding, (Gillick case 1986, confirmed by Axon 2006); and
- To therapeutic privacy under the Campbell case (2004).

## **It is important the child understands that:**

- They have a choice and a right to withdraw
- They know exactly why they are with you in counselling
- They know what will happen to their notes.

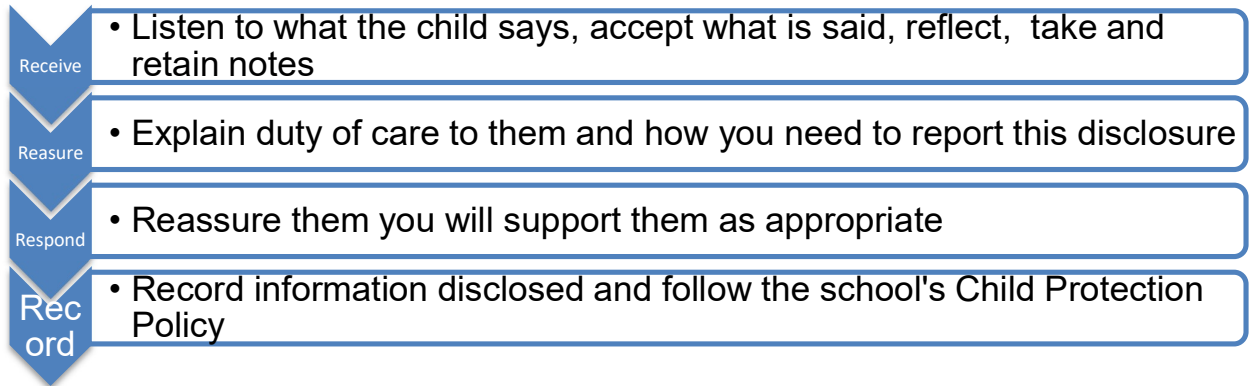
## **Questions a child may want to ask.**

- How long do you want to talk to me?
- Will you tell anyone what I say?
- Will you write down what I say?
- Will anyone reading the notes know me?
- Can I change my mind?



## Safeguarding

### Procedures for responding to any Child Protection issues which may arise:



### British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) Ethical Framework

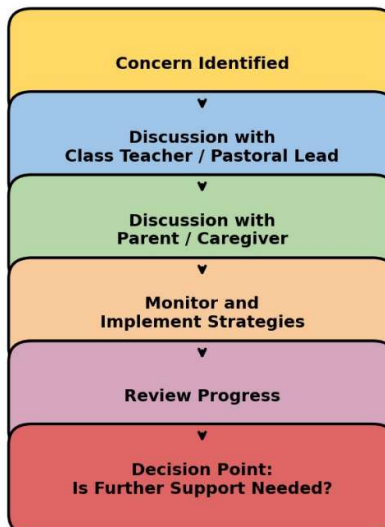
The BACP Ethical Framework sets out key principles, including respect for autonomy, i.e. 'a client's capacity to be self-directing within therapy and all aspects of life'.

However, this quality of autonomy may be radically compromised by the immaturity of a child or young person in the role of client.

Key areas for special attention in therapeutic work with children and young people (BACP 2016:b)

- Specific ethical awareness in therapeutic work with children and young people;
- Competence in therapeutic work with children and young people;
- Assessing the balance between a child or young person's dependence on adults and carers and their progressive development towards acting independently;
- The child or young person's capacity to give consent independently of adults with parental responsibilities; and
- The management of any confidences disclosed by the child or young person.

### Referral for Counselling Support:



## Parent Consultation

### Initial Assessment for Child Counselling Service

**Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Name:**

**Childs Name:**

**Contact Telephone:**

**Emergency Contact Number:**

**Class Teacher:**

**Year Group:**

#### Current Situation

Overview of presenting concerns as reported by the school. All communication was verbal, with no notes taken or retained.

Behaviour, appetite, sleeping, bed-wetting, angry out-bursts etc.

Significant emotions: Fearful, sad, anxious, tearful etc.

How long has child been experiencing the above?

Birth and pre-verbal history, including any pregnancy or birth complications and relevant trauma (where information is required and appropriate)

Any significant losses/bereavements?

Any issues regarding attendance at school?

Does parent also require additional support?

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This policy will be reviewed in 2029 or in line with new legislation/recommendations.

**Monitoring, Evaluating and Review**

This policy will be reviewed in 2029 or in line with new legislation/recommendations.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Kathleen McCallion

(Chairperson of the Board of Governors)

(Ratified at Board of Governors' Meeting)