



## Counselling at Castle Cary Primary School



## Information for Parents and Carers

## What is counselling?

Counselling provides an opportunity for children to talk in confidence, about things that are worrying them or affecting their day-to-day life. What children choose to talk about is completely up to them, but common issues are bullying, parental separation, stress, friendships, change, bereavement, distressing traumatic events and anger.

## What does a Counsellor do?

Counsellors are trained to listen without judging and to help children sort out their thoughts and feelings. Counsellors in primary schools often use creative activities such as drawing, art, sand trays and play to help a child express their concerns.



## Why do we have a Counsellor in school?

When children are experiencing difficulties at home or in school their concentration, and the way they behave can be adversely affected. These difficulties may be the result of an early life trauma or significant life changing event for eg, bereavement. A school-based service brings counselling to children in a place that is familiar, safe and secure. By providing emotional support and enabling children to 'off load' feelings and anxieties counselling can help a child to concentrate more in class, feel better about themselves and build their self-confidence. We are fortunate enough to be in receipt of a grant to fund this service for our children.

## How do I know it is safe for my child to see a Counsellor?

The counsellor we use at Castle Cary Primary is **Jenny Jones**, she is;

- BACP accredited

- Experienced in working with children

- DBS checked

- Insured

- In receipt of regular clinical and line management supervision

- In receipt of regular continuing professional training

- Familiar with Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures

## How long will it last?

Counselling will last for 10 sessions in the first instance with an opportunity to review for a further 10 sessions. However, the counsellor will regularly review the usefulness of counselling with a child and if the child no longer feels the need for counselling, the sessions will come to an end.



### Where and when does the counselling take place?

A small, private room is made available at school. Sessions last up to fifty minutes (depending on circumstances and age), and appointment times can be varied during the school day.

### Is it confidential?

A key feature of our service is that information discussed in the counselling session is treated confidentially. Counselling is a time when children need to feel able to talk about concerns without fear of them being discussed elsewhere. This includes not discussing the work with parents/carers, unless the child requests or gives consent for this. This can be hard for parents/carers to accept at times, but confidentiality is crucial in establishing trust and for enabling children to speak openly and freely about what is concerning them.

If a child appears to be at risk of significant harm it is the responsibility of the Counsellor to report this to one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads; Mrs Sarah Martin, Mrs Lavis or Mrs Brouard.

Whilst the sessions are confidential, children will be informed that they are free to talk to anyone about their counselling. All parents/carers will be offered an opportunity to meet with their child's counsellor at least twice a term. This will provide an opportunity for any concerns to be voiced and any questions answered.

Staff who work with your child may share observations of the child with the counsellor so that she has a rounded view of the child and understands any difficulties they have had in the week. The counsellor may be able to offer suggestions of ways to support the child in the classroom. She also works alongside our ELSAs (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants).

It is always our hope that talking with a counsellor will lead to greater openness with parents and families however you may need a little time for this to happen.



### How can I support the counselling?

The most helpful thing a parent/carer can do is show an acceptance of counselling as a normal and useful, activity. Show an interest if your son/daughter wishes to talk about it but not to press them if they don't. We acknowledge that this isn't an easy task, and it is quite natural for parents to feel anxious about what may be being said in sessions. The Counsellor will always arrange a meeting with parents before the sessions begin and you will be given Jenny's contact details should you need them.

We are always happy to talk with you about any concerns that you may have about the idea of counselling and feel the more you are able to support your child in this process the more effective the counselling is likely to be.

### What if s/he refuses to have counselling?

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

### 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 speak to those closest to us about things which are bothering us. Often this can be because we don't want to worry those we love best, or because we want help thinking things through with someone else outside the family. The counsellor will not be judging you or your child, but looking to help them find their way through whatever is troubling them.

Should you wish to find out more please contact Mrs Lavis via the school via the main office.

