

Who are the Counsellors?

There are two School Counsellors, Dolly McLaughlin and Lisa Lane and occasional qualified volunteer counsellors join us for year-long placements under full supervision.

Dolly McLaughlin BSc Hons, PGDip is a UKAHP accredited Psychotherapeutic Counsellor having completed a Tavistock accredited course in Observational Psychodynamic Work with Children, Young People and Families. Dolly sees individual students across all the year groups, runs mindfulness based stress reduction groups and talking groups as well as Staff Counselling skills Workshop as requested. She set up the counselling service at The Cherwell School and has been running it under senior management guidance since 2005.

Lisa Lane BA Hons, GPDip, Mst, has trained at the University of Oxford as a Psychodynamic therapist, her background is working with young people and has previously worked in a drug and alcohol service. Lisa joined us in 2012 to focus on counselling Key stage 4 & 5 and will be seeing young people for individual counselling sessions as well as running both Art therapy groups, therapeutic groups and workshops.

Both Dolly and Lisa are part of the school staff and work closely with other staff and outside agencies. They are supervised by external supervisors and work within a recognised code of ethics and practice, that of the British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists (BACP).



The Cherwell School Counselling Service

Information for Parents and Carers

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All parents have the responsibility of helping their children to grow and develop. Children may need help with their problems and worries. Sometimes, no matter how well they get on with their parents, they may find it hard to talk to them. Children often get help and support by talking to someone they trust. Maybe a friend, a teacher, a relative or neighbour can help. Often having a problem or concern can affect a child's behaviour and school work. The school counsellor may be able to help.

How can the School Counsellor help?

The School Counsellor has been carefully selected for their experience and qualifications. Counsellors are good at relating to children and are trained to listen without judging. They can help people sort out their thoughts and feelings about what is worrying them.

The counsellor can provide eight to ten sessions initially, on school premises, and usually in school time. The sessions can be 50 or 30 minutes long and may include play and art materials. Sometimes a child will be offered further sessions or group sessions. What is discussed during the sessions is confidential, but the child is told that the counsellor may discuss their problems with other people and agencies to get help from them if she thinks the child is at risk or in danger.

The counsellor is part of the school staff. She understands the school and works with teachers and other staff to help your child, while at the same time keeping to the agreed confidentiality.

How does my son or daughter get to see the school counsellor?

Your child may ask to see a counsellor or you or a teacher may recommend it. Alternatively your child can put a note in the counsellor's letterbox or pop along

to the counselling room. For practical reasons, senior members of staff have a list of who has seen the counsellor, though they are not told why.

Counselling needs to be a voluntary process. Children who ask for counselling and are capable of fully understanding what is involved may get counselling in their own right, without permission from a parent. However, if you have strong feelings about this, please let us know.

Sometimes the counsellor, with your child's knowledge and agreement, may refer your child to the school nurse or other in-school Counselling/mentoring services, who can give further help. Where Cruse bereavement or See-saw or pcamhs are used, parental permission is always sought.

What issues can the school counsellors help with?

There can be lots of pressures on young people growing up, for example friendships, teasing and bullying; exams and school work; family relationships, separation and changes as well as illness or loss of someone close. Young people also have to cope with adolescence and the strong feelings and physical changes that go with it. Children usually find that the time and space they get from counselling helps them feel better, and cope better at home and in school. Please ask to speak to Ms Barb Timms if you would like to know more about this.

How can a parent or carer support the counselling?

It will help your child if you accept counselling as a normal and useful activity, and show an interest if they want to talk to you about it, without pushing it if they prefer not to discuss it.