

What information about me is stored and shared?

The counsellor will need to keep some records in order to provide you with support. The counsellor will take brief notes about your meetings and will record the broad topics that you discuss. If you are meeting with the counsellor regularly, they will ask you to complete a short questionnaire to allow the counsellor to provide you with the right help. This information will be stored very securely (either in a locked filing cabinet or in a password-protected document).

To allow us to improve our school counselling service, and to report to the Scottish Government, the counsellors will share some information with the Stirling Council about the young people that they are supporting (e.g. gender, age, Additional Support Needs, etc.), the broad topics that are discussed, their completed questionnaires, and the views of young people, teachers and parents/carers (with the young person's consent). All of this will be anonymous, meaning that your name will not appear on any of this information.



STIRLING COUNCIL

SCHOOL COUNSELLING

FAQs for Children & Young People

What is school counselling?

Counselling is when you talk to a trained counsellor about something that is on your mind. Talking things through with a counsellor can often help young people gain new and different perspectives. This can lead to changes in how they feel about themselves, their relationships with others, their thinking and their behaviour – both in and out of school. Counsellors do not give advice or tell people what to do, instead they help people to make their own choices and become more self-aware.

Some of the feelings that young people address in counselling are:

- Anger
- Sadness
- Hurt
- Confusion
- Loneliness
- Fear
- Pain
- Frustration
- Loss
- Stress



What is Time to Talk?

If you have something on your mind and think it would be helpful to have a chat with your school counsellor, you can request a 15-20-minute Time to Talk appointment. These appointments usually take place during lunchtime, but they sometimes take place before or after school too. You might



only want one appointment to talk something through with the school counsellor or you might choose to request further appointments in the future. You can also bring a friend along if you think that would be helpful.

What is therapeutic counselling?

The school counsellors also provide longer counselling sessions for young people (around 45-minutes) and these sessions are likely to take place over a number of weeks. In these sessions you can look at how you're feeling in lots of different ways; by talking, drawing and being creative – whatever feels comfortable for you.

Will the counsellor tell anyone about what I say?

The counsellor will not tell anyone else what you discuss – counselling is confidential. However, if the counsellor thinks that you, or someone else, is at significant risk of harm, then this confidentiality will be broken. If this happens, the counsellor will speak to a designated teacher at the school to agree the next steps, together with the young person (wherever possible). During your first session, the counsellor will explain this and will check that you understand.

Will I need to wait for an appointment?

The counsellor will aim to see you as soon as possible, however you may be placed on a waiting list.



How do I arrange to meet with the counsellor?

If you would like to have a chat with the counsellor about something that's on your mind, you can request a Time to Talk appointment by posting a completed Time to talk request form in the postbox outside room 002 (next to the school office). Blank forms can be found next to the postbox.

If you're struggling and would like to request to meet regularly with the counsellor, please speak with your Pupil Support teacher.

Will my parents/carers need to be informed?

Parents/carers are usually very supportive of their child seeking and accessing support from a school counsellor. Schools usually check-in with parents/carers as part of this process, and your Pupil Support teacher will confirm with you whether you're happy for your parents/carers to be contacted about this. Parents/carers must give consent to counselling take place if you're under 12-years old, however, if you are 12-15-years old, you may be able to provide consent without your parents/carers involvement (if the school and counsellor believe that you have a sufficient understanding of what you are consenting to). If you are 16-years old or over, you do not require the consent of your parents/carers.

How will I be told about appointments?

Ideally, the counsellor would prefer to let you know the date and time of your appointment through text/email. You will be asked to provide your mobile number and/or email address when you request a Time to Talk or therapeutic counselling appointment. Please let us know if do not wish to be told about your appointments in this way.



What happens on my first visit?

On your first visit, you will meet and get to know the counsellor. You will talk about what you need and how the counsellor can help you.

What if I don't want to go to my appointment?

If you are absent or need to reschedule your appointment, please text/email the school counsellor as soon as you can (24 hours before your appointment, if possible). If you reschedule multiple appointments, the counsellor or your Pupil Support teacher may have a discussion with you about whether counselling is the right support for you at this time.

If you no longer want to meet with the counsellor, that's no problem at all. Please just let the counsellor or your Pupil Support teacher know – the counsellor won't be offended.