



Information and FAQs for parents

Who is the St Andrews Green Valley school counsellor?

Nathalie is an experienced counsellor, trained as a clinical psychologist and psychotherapist, qualified in Cognitive-behavioral therapy, psychodynamic therapy, systemic therapy, hypnotherapy, with more than 25 years of experience of counselling children and young people from 3 to 18 years of age and well as their parents in different primary and secondary schools in Europe, US and Thailand as well as in her own private psychotherapy practice.

What is counselling? Why is St Andrews GV offering counselling in school?

Counselling promotes emotional wellbeing by offering children and young people a non-judgmental, safe space where they can express their feelings and thoughts about any difficulties and challenges they might be experiencing. Counselling sessions are offered as short-term interventions or long-term, when necessary, once or twice a week for as long as necessary.

When children are experiencing difficulties at home or in school their ability to concentrate in class and the way they behave can be adversely affected.

By helping children understand and express their feelings, emotions, set boundaries and address worries, counselling can help them cope with challenges, feel better about themselves and develop their self-confidence, self-esteem, healthy self-image. This puts them in a better position to get the best out of their learning and social environment.

Research evidence shows that counselling can have a positive effect on children's resilience, confidence, friendships, family relationships and academic achievements.

Moreover, by helping children manage things they are struggling with now, it can prevent problems worsening later on.

How and why do students get referred to counselling?

Pastoral leaders, form tutors, subject teachers or parents may identify that a child is struggling with feelings or behaviours or that they are experiencing a difficult situation at home or at school and refer the student to the counsellor.

Teachers will discuss with parents how seeing the counsellor might help their child and get their permission for counselling sessions to be arranged. Parents can also contact the counsellor directly to discuss any concerns about their child.

Students can self-refer to the counsellor directly to talk about any issues that may be concerning them. In certain cases when we are concerned that the child is at risk of harm, the counsellor will see the student as soon as possible without parental permission to provide early support.

Confidentiality – Will I be told what my child says in counselling?

For counselling to be effective it is important that students feel able to talk freely without worrying that what they say will be shared with their teachers, family or friends. For this reason, counselling is confidential to a certain degree. It cannot be fully confidential as the counsellor is working within the Pastoral team

It is made clear to students that the counsellor may need to break confidentiality if they believe the young person or another person to be at risk of harm.

Teachers and families are vital in supporting a child's wellbeing. Part of the counselling process is to think through with the young person what their families and teachers might need to know in order to support them. All essential information that can help the teachers and parents understand what the child/young person is going through to better support them will be shared confidentially.

What if my child talks about my family?

The counsellor's role is to support the emotional wellbeing of the young person. It is not to make judgments about their family or anyone else the young person might talk about. What is said in counselling is kept confidential, unless the counsellor feels that there is a risk of harm and that help needs to be sought to keep the young person or someone else safe.

Does it mean there is something wrong with my child?

Not at all. It can be helpful for all of us to talk things through with a trusted other person when things are bothering us or we are not sure how to deal with a particular situation. Children often need help understanding and learning how to manage their feelings and psychological challenges.