



# INTERNAL PROCEDURE

**Title:** **Counselling Procedure**

**POLICY HOLDER:** Library and Wellbeing Team Leader

**SMT OWNER:** Assistant Principal Student Services

**VERSION NO:** 9 (2022)

**LAST REVIEWED:** August 2022

**Accessibility:** If you would like this information in an alternative format, e.g. Easy to Read, large print, Braille or audio tape, or if you would like the procedure explained to you in your language, please contact the College's marketing team on 01603 773 169.

**Further information:** If you have any queries about this policy or procedure, please contact the named policy holder.



## Amendments log

Revision no	Reason for Revision	Amendments originated by	Approved by
1	Annual update: Feb 12	Jock Downie	Helen R-H
2	Annual update: Feb 13	Jock Downie	Helen R-H
3	Annual update: Feb 15	Jock Downie	Helen R-H
4	Annual update: June 16	Jock Downie	Helen R-H
5	Annual update: Nov 17	Jock Downie	Helen R-H
6	Annual update: August 18	Jock Downie	Helen R-H
7	Annual update August 19	Alex Wallace	Helen R-H
8	Annual Update August 20	Alex Wallace	Helen R-H
9	Annual Update August 21	Alex Wallace	Helen R-H
9	No changes: August 22	Alex Wallace	Helen R-H

## **1. Counselling Statement of Service**

Counselling within the College is delivered by trained practitioners who work with students to help them bring about effective change or enhance their well-being.

The student counselling service, within the wider context of Student Services, exists to:

- 1) Respond to students with personal, social, emotional or educational concerns.
- 2) Promote a confidential caring and supportive environment where such concerns may be explored.
- 3) Promote thereby the mental health, emotional stability and emotional resilience of the college community.

The Counselling Service promotes the wider strategy of Student Services which is to support students so that they maximise their college experience.

## **2. Scope of Service**

The Counsellors work according to the college's Equality Statement and is available to all current students, free of charge. The Counsellors also work in accordance with the BACP Ethical Framework.

## **3. Confidentiality**

Counsellors operate a code of confidentiality, in line with the Ethical Framework of their chosen professional body. This means that all personal information about students is confidential within the counselling session and outside supervision. Information about students, other than anonymous statistical information, will not be relayed to other interested parties within or outside the college, without the agreement of the student unless requested by a court.

The Counsellor will not indicate whether or not a particular student has been for counselling to anyone other than the Wellbeing Advisers, The Mental Health Adviser, The Library and Wellbeing Team Leader or Safeguarding Officers and DSLs without the student's permission.

Basic student data i.e. Triage forms and the counselling waiting list are confidential within the Wellbeing Team and only accessible by the Counsellors, Wellbeing Advisors, Mental Health Adviser, Safeguarding Officers, The Library and Wellbeing Team Leader and the Assistant Principal Student Services.

All sessions will take place in private whether by Phone or face to face as agreed by the Counsellor and student at the outset. Any face to face sessions will take place within suitable private rooms at Paston College, Easton College, Ipswich Road and Norfolk House, only. Counsellors ensure that any phone or online sessions are pre-agreed and confidential for both parties involved as well as being responsible for any post sessions cleaning that will be needed.

In exceptional circumstances, when a Counsellor has good grounds to believe that a student might be in danger or will cause serious harm to others or to themselves, or have harm caused to them, the rules of confidentiality may be broken. Whenever possible the student will be consulted about this first. Where the student has disclosed treason, terrorism, money laundering or drug trafficking confidentiality will be broken without consultation with the student. If a student has taken an overdose, and remains within a danger period, or if the student is expressing a desire to commit suicide the Counsellor will follow the action plan for a suicide attempt. (Appendix 2).

If the counsellor is made aware of current and on-going sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, domestic violence, neglect or issues surrounding radicalization or extremism and the student is either under 18 or a vulnerable adult the counsellor will make an immediate referral to the College Safeguarding Officer in line with the college Safeguarding Procedure.

Where a student is over the age of 18 the same procedures apply. In this circumstance an adult student may refuse consent for personal information to be shared with their GP, Parent/Carer or other professional. Should a student or others be in a position of risk of significant harm the Counsellor will prioritise acting in accordance with CCN Safeguarding procedures, this may be against the express wishes of the student.

#### **4. Sessions**

Other people will only be allowed to sit in on sessions at the student's request and with the agreement of the Counsellor. This is an unusual practice and will not be encouraged.

All students are given and asked to sign a Student Counselling Contract before commencing the first counselling session (Appendix 1).

Sessions are available on a pre-booked appointment basis only.

The service seeks to provide up to six sessions, as appropriate. In exceptional cases after consultation with the Library and Wellbeing Team Leader a further six sessions can be provided. Decisions will be based on size of the waiting list, ability to access alternative external counselling services and, where relevant, any safeguarding information.

A normal counselling session last 50 minutes. The Counsellor is ultimately responsible for the session coming to an end on time. If, as the session comes to an end, the student is in distress the Counsellor will offer the student the use of a quiet area of the College to ground themselves.

The service aims to be accessible to all students and efforts will be made to provide appointments to fit in with the student's timetable and, thereby, cause the least disruption to studies.

The Counsellor will aim to contact students within two weeks of them completing a Triage appointment by way of introduction and then begin sessions as soon as an appropriate time becomes free.

If a student fails to attend two sessions in a row without first contacting the Counsellor or Wellbeing Advisor the offer of the sessions will be brought to an end and the student will have to reapply if they wish to continue. This is detailed in the counselling contract (Appendix 1). The Counsellor will notify the Wellbeing Advisors of the students disengagement and discuss possible follow up options.

Once the counsellor is aware that a student has withdrawn from their course or has been withdrawn, where appropriate, one additional session will be offered to offer a formal ending and to seek an external counselling organisation.

There may be some instances in which a counsellor may feel it inappropriate to continue counselling a student (e.g. habitual drunkenness or infatuation). In such cases the counsellor in liaison with the Library and Wellbeing Team Leader, may discuss alternative sources of help for the student and encourage the student to self-refer to another organisation. If a student attends a session and appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs the Alcohol and Drugs Procedure should be followed.

It is an indication of the competence of counsellors that they recognise their inability to counsel a student and make appropriate referrals where necessary. At all times the student's wishes are paramount and referral should not take place without the student's approval.

## **5. Responsibilities of Counsellor**

Counsellors have a responsibility to themselves and their students to maintain their own effectiveness and ability to help students and to monitor their own personal functioning. Counsellors are required to have membership of a relevant professional association e.g. British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy.

The Counsellor receives external personal supervision in line with their professional bodies standards. These are private sessions and The College is not party to details beyond confirmation of appointments.

Counsellors seek to further their continuous professional development through attendance at training workshops, lectures, seminars and conferences and through involvement with other professional associations.

Counsellors are further encouraged to maintain links with other student counsellors in order to promote an exchange of ideas. Attendance at the annual conference of the Association of University and College Counsellors (AUCC) is viewed as desirable.

The Counsellor may, on occasions, assume an advocacy role and speak or write on behalf of the student e.g. at disciplinary hearings or Fitness to Study Meetings. This would only be at the request of the student and at the discretion of the Counsellor.

## **6. Referrals In**

All referrals made into the counselling service must first go through the Triage system (Appendix 3) to determine if counselling is the best approach for that student.

The initial contact for Triage can be made via self referral via the student Sharepoint Wellbeing page, by email [wellbeing@ccn.ac.uk](mailto:wellbeing@ccn.ac.uk) or through a third person e.g. Tutorial Supervisor.

## **7. Referrals Out**

When counselling comes to a close the Counsellor, where appropriate, can refer the student back to Triage for assessment for support through other avenues.

The Counsellor will, where appropriate and with the student's consent, make any necessary referrals to other outside agencies e.g. medical services, psychiatrists or other voluntary bodies.

## Appendix 1 – an example of a Student Counselling Contract

What is Person Centered Counselling?

1. It is OK to take time to talk things through.
2. The counsellor will NOT provide solutions but will try to help you to find your own.
3. What you say will be in confidence but there may be limits to that confidentiality.
4. Coming to counselling is your choice, no one should make you attend.
5. You will have choice about what you want and do not want to do in the counselling process.
6. One session may be all you need or want, but if you wish to continue there are six 50 minute sessions available.
7. It is your responsibility to attend the sessions. If you are unable to attend a session you must contact the counsellor where possible. You can do this by emailing [counselling@ccn.ac.uk](mailto:counselling@ccn.ac.uk)
8. If you do not attend 2 sessions in a row, without contacting your counsellor, it will be assumed that you no longer require counselling and your space shall be offered to another client. To request further counselling you would have to reapply.
9. When you come to an end of your counselling sessions if you feel that you still require further support, your counsellor will help identify further places both internally and externally that you can gain help.

Everything you say to your counsellor will be kept confidential between yourself and the counsellor. The only occasions where your counsellor would have to break that confidentiality would be if you told your counsellor that you were experiencing significant harm or you told your counsellor about someone else experiencing or likely to experience significant harm. In these circumstances your counsellor would contact the College Safeguarding Officer.

To ensure that we provide the best possible service details of your name and appointments will be able to be accessed by the wellbeing staff. This will NOT include details of what you are talking to your counsellor about and we will never share your name with any other area of the college including your course tutor.

In cases of a medical emergency we may need to contact your doctor. Please can you provide details of your GP and any medication that you are currently on.

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**Signed (Student):**.....

**Print name (Student):**.....

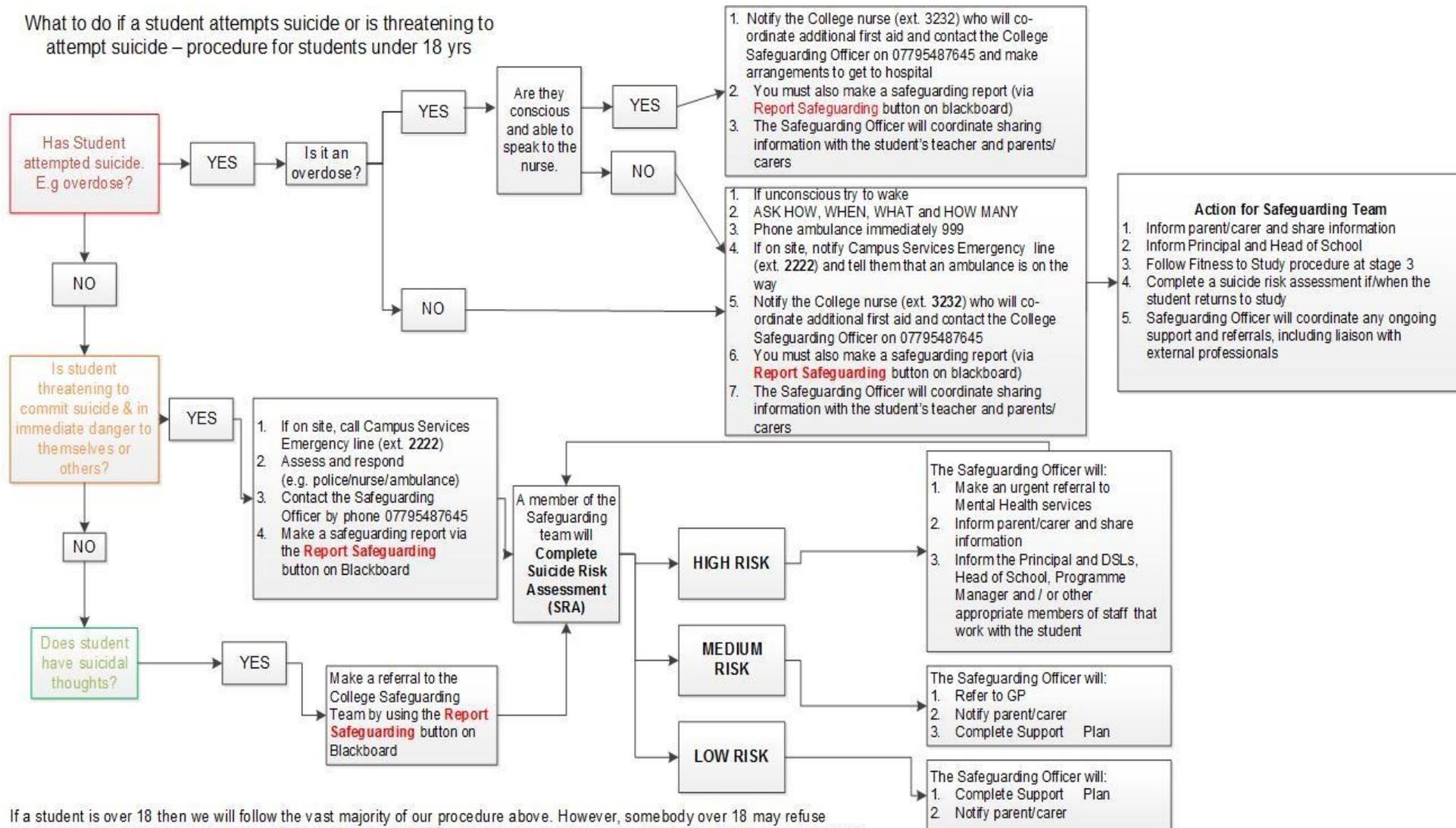
**Signed (Counsellor):**.....

**Date:**.....

<b>Doctor's Name:</b>
<b>Doctor's Surgery:</b>
<b>Please provide any details of medication you are currently on:</b>

## Appendix 2 – Action Plan for Staff in the event of students suicide or attempted suicide.

(Please note that this flowchart is updated in line with recommendation from our Safeguarding team when needed)



If a student is over 18 then we will follow the vast majority of our procedure above. However, somebody over 18 may refuse permission for us to share their personal information with their GP, parent/carer or other professional. If a student refuses to work with us to put together a risk assessment or to accept any external support then we may need to escalate to a the Fitness to Study procedure stage 3 to evaluate whether it is possible for the student to continue studying whilst they are in a suicidal state of health and not getting any help. We can and will call emergency services if we feel that the student is about to make a suicide attempt and / or they may be a risk to others.

### **Appendix 3 - Triage**

The purpose of Triage is to provide to any student, who requests support for issues of a personal nature that impacts on their studies; advice, guidance and signposting to services both internal and external which will help them bring about effective change or enhance their wellbeing.

A triage session is a one to one session where the following points will be established:

- Why the student has asked for help
- What the student sees a successful outcome to be
- What barriers the student maybe facing that might prevent them accessing support
- If the student is worried about their ability to cope with their current college workload
- If the student is currently receiving support in any other capacity
- If the student has received support in the past