

Job Description

Role	School Counsellor (Secondary)
Reports To	Headteacher / Designated Senior Leader for Pastoral, Inclusion and Safeguarding
Location	Heron Hall Academy, with potential to support across North Star Community Trust by agreement
Working Pattern	Monday to Friday - 36 hours per week
Contract Type	Permanent Term Time 39 weeks per year
Salary	Support staff NSCT Pay Range: 35 to 38 FTE Salary: £41,776 to £44,679 Actual Salary: £35,946.47 - £38,445.04 Depending on experience and in line with Trust Pay Policy NSCT Health Cash Plan + Generous Pension
Annual Leave	26 days + 8 Bank Holidays Holiday year runs from 1 September - 31 August. Annual leave entitlements are calculated in your salary. No additional paid leave is provided and leave is taken during school closures.

Job Purpose

The School Counsellor will provide a safe, ethical and professionally supervised counselling service for secondary-aged pupils across Key Stages 3, 4 and 5. The role supports pupils' emotional wellbeing, mental health, attendance, inclusion and readiness to learn, while operating within the Trust's safeguarding, pastoral and inclusion systems.

The postholder will provide assessment, one-to-one counselling, time-limited therapeutic support, group interventions and advice to staff, while maintaining appropriate confidentiality and clear safeguarding boundaries. The role must complement, and not replace, the statutory responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead, SENDCo, pastoral leaders, external health professionals or children's social care.

Employees will be expected to comply with any reasonable request from their line manager and senior leadership team to undertake work of a similar level and grade that is not specified in this job description. Following consultation, this job description may be changed by management to reflect or anticipate changes in the job which are commensurate with the salary and job title.

Professional registration and qualification requirement

The Trust requires a counsellor qualified to work with children and young people in a secondary school context. The essential

requirement is a CPCAB Level 4 Diploma in Therapeutic Counselling or above, or a related degree plus counselling training recognised/approved by BACP at Level 4 or above, together with current professional registration such as MBACP or an equivalent PSA-accredited counselling/psychotherapy register.

The term "MCPCAB" has not been used because CPCAB is an awarding organisation rather than a professional membership register. The professional membership requirement is therefore set out through BACP or equivalent professional registration.

Key Responsibilities

Counselling practice and pupil support

- Provide a confidential, safe, accessible and non-judgemental counselling service for students across Key Stages 3, 4 and 5, with clear limits to confidentiality where safeguarding or risk concerns arise.
- Complete initial assessments of pupils referred to counselling, including presenting need, suitability for counselling, consent, risk, safeguarding considerations and onward referral needs.
- Provide one-to-one counselling sessions for pupils experiencing emotional, behavioural, social or mental health difficulties.
- Offer short-term, solution-focused and/or therapeutic support tailored to individual need, developmental stage, culture, identity and communication profile.
- Support pupils experiencing anxiety, low mood, stress, bereavement, trauma, family or social difficulties, self-esteem issues, identity concerns, friendship difficulties, exam stress and transition concerns.
- Agree appropriate goals with pupils, review progress, plan endings carefully and maintain clear referral pathways where longer-term or specialist support is required.
- Deliver targeted group interventions, workshops or wellbeing sessions where appropriate and within professional competence.

Safeguarding, risk and clinical governance

- Act promptly on safeguarding concerns, disclosures or indicators of risk, following Trust safeguarding procedures and informing the DSL or deputy DSL without delay.
- Assess and respond appropriately to clinical risk, including self-harm, suicidal ideation, eating difficulties, trauma indicators, exploitation, peer-on-peer abuse, online harm and mental health concerns that may become safeguarding risks.
- Create, review and communicate proportionate safety plans in partnership with the pupil, DSL, pastoral team, parents/carers and external agencies where appropriate.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries and ensure pupils understand the counselling contract, confidentiality, consent, record keeping and the circumstances in which information must be shared.
- Work within the BACP Ethical Framework, the BACP competence framework for counselling children and young people, Trust safeguarding policies and Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- Ensure all counselling practice is supported by regular clinical supervision with a suitably qualified supervisor experienced in child and adolescent counselling or school-based counselling.
- Maintain professional indemnity arrangements where required by the relevant professional body and ensure professional registration remains current.

Partnership working and whole-school contribution

- Work closely with pastoral leaders, the SENDCo, safeguarding team, attendance team, Educational Psychologist, Mental Health Lead and senior leaders to support pupils' wellbeing, inclusion and engagement in school.
- Liaise appropriately with parents and carers, while maintaining professional confidentiality and safeguarding responsibilities.
- Liaise with CAMHS, Early Help, social care, school nursing, GPs, voluntary sector agencies and other external services where appropriate.
- Contribute to Team Around the Child/Family meetings, early help processes, risk planning, reintegration planning and statutory meetings where emotional wellbeing is a relevant factor.
- Provide anonymised themes and insights to leaders to support the Trust's whole-school approach to mental health, safeguarding, attendance, inclusion and personal development.

- Support staff understanding of pupil emotional wellbeing through advice, training and consultation, without disclosing confidential therapeutic content unless safeguarding requires it.
- Contribute to PSHE, enrichment, transition and wellbeing programmes where appropriate.

Records, data protection and quality assurance

- Maintain accurate, proportionate and confidential counselling records in line with GDPR, UK data protection law, BACP expectations and Trust policy.
- Record safeguarding concerns on the Trust's safeguarding system in accordance with local procedures and agreed thresholds.
- Use appropriate outcome measures, pupil voice and anonymised data to monitor the impact of counselling provision.
- Contribute to quality assurance, internal review, inspection preparation and evaluation of mental health and wellbeing provision.
- Ensure records, referrals, consent forms, information-sharing decisions and risk decisions are stored securely and are accessible only to those with a legitimate professional need.

Trust Expectations Framework

Ethos:

- Support the Trust's vision, mission and strategic priorities, contributing to the achievement of "Stronger Together".
- Act as a professional ambassador for the Trust, representing its values within your role and wider community.
- Demonstrate and uphold the Trust's values of inclusion, ambition, support, kindness and integrity in all aspects of practice.
- Build and maintain positive, respectful and professional relationships with colleagues, parents, carers, stakeholders and the wider community.
- Actively contribute to Trust-wide initiatives, events and community engagement, reflecting the Trust's commitment to Education, Community and Opportunity (ECO).
- Work collaboratively with colleagues across the Trust to support high standards and continuous improvement for all pupils.

Professional development and collaboration:

- Engage fully in professional development activities and performance management processes, demonstrating a commitment to continuous professional growth.
- Maintain current professional registration, CPD records and clinical supervision records relevant to counselling practice with children and young people.
- Collaborate effectively with colleagues across the Trust to share good practice and contribute to sustained improvement in pupil support, inclusion and wellbeing.
- Remain open to new ideas, evidence-informed approaches, technologies and strategies in line with Trust priorities and educational developments.
- Contribute constructively to quality assurance and internal review processes, working with senior leaders to support professional learning and improvement.

Safeguarding and well-being:

- Promote and uphold a culture where safeguarding and the welfare of children and young people is everyone's responsibility.
- Comply fully with statutory safeguarding requirements, including Keeping Children Safe in Education, Working Together to Safeguard Children, Prevent Duty and all Trust safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Act promptly on any safeguarding concerns or disclosures, following Trust reporting procedures without delay.
- Contribute to the creation of a safe, secure and supportive environment for pupils and staff, both physically and emotionally.
- Engage in all mandatory safeguarding training and ensure knowledge is kept up to date in line with role requirements.
- Promote inclusion, mental health awareness and well-being, recognising their importance in supporting positive outcomes for pupils and staff.

Professional conduct and compliance:

- Adhere to all Trust and academy policies, procedures and codes of conduct, ensuring consistency with organisational expectations.
- Comply with health and safety requirements to maintain a safe working environment for pupils, staff and visitors.
- Promote equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of practice, ensuring a culture free from discrimination or harassment.
- Uphold British Values and comply with the Prevent Duty in line with statutory guidance.
- Contribute to the Trust's strategic priorities through professional behaviour, attitude and practice.
- Engage positively with audits, inspections and quality assurance processes to support accountability and continuous improvement.
- Maintain high standards of professionalism in conduct, communication and appearance, acting as a role model at all times.
- Build and maintain positive relationships with parents, carers, stakeholders and the wider community in support of Trust objectives.

Job Specification

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications and professional registration		
Grade 4/C or above in GCSE English and Mathematics, or equivalent.	☒	☐
Degree or equivalent Level 6 qualification.	☒	☐
CPCAB Level 4 Diploma in Therapeutic Counselling or above, or equivalent recognised counselling/psychotherapy qualification.	☒	☐
Related degree in counselling, psychotherapy, psychology, social work or youth mental health plus counselling training recognised/approved by BACP at Level 4 or above.	☒	☐
Current Registered Member of BACP (MBACP) or registered/accredited member of another PSA-accredited counselling or psychotherapy professional register.	☒	☐
Evidence of competence/training in counselling children and young people aged 11-18, including adolescent development and safeguarding.	☒	☐
Evidence of regular clinical supervision with a suitably qualified supervisor.	☒	☐
Level 5 or above specialist qualification in counselling children and young people, adolescent psychotherapy, CBT, trauma-informed practice or equivalent.	☐	☒
BACP accreditation or equivalent senior/accredited professional status.	☐	☒
Professional experience		
Minimum three years post-qualification counselling experience.	☒	☐
Minimum two years experience working therapeutically with children and young people aged 11-18.	☒	☐
Experience of working in a school, college or similar education setting.	☒	☐
Experience assessing and managing risk, including self-harm, suicidal ideation and safeguarding concerns.	☒	☐
Experience working collaboratively with DSLs, pastoral teams, SENDCos and external agencies.	☒	☐
Experience contributing to early help, CAMHS referrals, reintegration plans or multi-agency meetings.	☐	☒
Experience supporting pupils with SEND, EHCPs, trauma, anxiety-based school avoidance or other complex needs.	☐	☒
Skills and knowledge		
Secure understanding of the BACP Ethical Framework and the limits of confidentiality when working with children.	☒	☐
Secure understanding of Keeping Children Safe in Education, child-on-child abuse, contextual safeguarding, online safety, Prevent and information sharing.	☒	☐
Strong knowledge of adolescent development and common mental health presentations in secondary-aged pupils.	☒	☐
Ability to build trusting therapeutic relationships while maintaining professional boundaries.	☒	☐
Ability to communicate clearly and sensitively with pupils, parents/carers, staff and external professionals.	☒	☐
Ability to keep accurate, concise and confidential records in line with GDPR and Trust policy.	☒	☐
Ability to analyse themes and impact data to support whole-school wellbeing strategy.	☒	☐
Knowledge of UK education policy, Ofsted expectations, attendance guidance and whole-school mental health approaches.	☒	☐
Ability to work under pressure, prioritise risk and manage a caseload safely.	☒	☐
Ability to use digital safeguarding, recording and case management systems securely.	☒	☐
Safeguarding and compliance		
Commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.	☒	☐

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Commitment to completing all required in-person and online safeguarding, KCSIE, Prevent and data protection training.	☒	☐
Enhanced DBS with children's barred list check, satisfactory references and all safer recruitment checks.	☒	☐
Willingness to follow Trust whistleblowing, low-level concerns, code of conduct and allegations procedures.	☒	☐
Understanding of equality, diversity, inclusion and the needs of pupils with SEND, disadvantage, EAL, care experience or other vulnerabilities.	☒	☐
Attributes		
Genuine passion and belief in the potential of every pupil.	☒	☐
Helpful, positive, calm, emotionally resilient and caring nature.	☒	☐
High levels of integrity, discretion and professional judgement.	☒	☐
Able to establish good working relationships while maintaining appropriate boundaries.	☒	☐
Reflective practitioner who engages in supervision, CPD and continuous improvement.	☒	☐
Aligned with Trust values and able to act as a professional role model.	☒	☐

Professional Standards and Clinical Governance

- The postholder must work within the ethical framework of their professional body and must be able to evidence current professional registration.
- The postholder must receive regular clinical supervision proportionate to caseload and risk level, normally at least monthly and more frequently where risk or case complexity requires it.
- The postholder must keep CPD up to date, including safeguarding, adolescent mental health, suicide and self-harm, trauma-informed practice, SEND and equality/diversity.
- The postholder must practise only within their competence and must refer pupils to specialist services where need or risk exceeds the scope of school-based counselling.
- The postholder must maintain a clear counselling contract, including consent, confidentiality, record keeping, safeguarding limits, data protection and endings.
- The postholder must maintain professional boundaries with pupils, families and staff, including online and social media boundaries.

Acknowledgment and Agreement

I acknowledge that I have read and understood the job description and the Trust Expectations Framework. I agree to carry out the duties of the role to the best of my ability and in accordance with the Trust's policies and procedures.

Employee Name:	Employee Signature:	Date:
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