

May 2022

Dear Parents

## **Counselling Services at Oxford High School GDST**

We know that all students will have problems, difficulties, and worries from time to time as part of normal life – and the counsellors are here to help. Emotional support for students has always been important but never more so than in our present age. Nowadays, young people can feel under more pressure than ever before, both socially and academically, so support in school as well as at home is vital.

Oxford High's pastoral care system supports girls throughout their time in school and form tutors, Heads of Year or the School Nurse can usually deal with most matters of concern. The Head and Deputy Head - Pastoral also make themselves easily accessible as a further port of call for advice and assistance.

However, we recognise that there may occasionally be circumstances when it might be preferable to talk to someone who is independent of school and home and who is a specialist in listening and helping find solutions. Our School Counsellors, Hannah Fenton and Lucy Healey, are very experienced in their field and students find it very easy to talk to them. They meet students in the Health Centre in the Senior School and in the Sunflower Room in the Prep School and can be contacted via a form tutor or the School Nurse, or emailed directly. Counselling in school is a free service.

By offering counselling in school, often students have been able to talk through their worries and find ways of coping and dealing with them. We offer a term of counselling and usually this is enough for a student to learn and implement strategies to cope. However, if the counsellor feels that further support is necessary, then we will contact parents and recommend continuing counselling out of school. Hannah Fenton and Lucy Healey have worked successfully with students at Oxford High School for several years and their services form a really important resource in the pastoral care and support we give to students. Their qualifications and details are on our counselling leaflet.

We always encourage a student in the Senior School to let her parents know that she is asking for counselling support or give us permission to inform parents. However, we would not wish this to be a barrier to any Senior School student accessing support. Having listened to School Council, fully consulted with GDST, and in accordance with best practice guidance (*'Good Practice Guidance for Counselling in Schools'* published by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy), we are guided by the wishes of the student as to whether parents are informed of her request for counselling. We do not obtain the express permission of parents in advance. A student may refer herself, or a member of the pastoral team may suggest it, and all referrals will go via the School Nurse or Deputy Head Pastoral who will have an overview. I appreciate that some parents may feel uncomfortable about this. However, we are required to prioritise the safeguarding needs and wellbeing of the students in our care and the GDST are fully supportive of our approach. In the case of Prep School students, we will always liaise with parents and ask for permission for counselling to take place.

Mrs Marina Gardiner Legge, MEd, MA (Oxon), Headmistress

### **Senior School**

Belbroughton Road | Oxford | OX2 6XA  
Tel: 01865 559888  
[oxfordhigh@oxf.gdst.net](mailto:oxfordhigh@oxf.gdst.net)

[www.oxfordhigh.gdst.net](http://www.oxfordhigh.gdst.net)  
Admissions: 01865 318500

### **Preparatory School**

1 Bardwell Road | Oxford | OX2 6SU  
Tel: 01865 515647  
[prep@oxf.gdst.net](mailto:prep@oxf.gdst.net)

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### **Pre-prep School**

90 Woodstock Road | Oxford | OX2 7ND  
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Of course, the provision for girls to talk in confidence to the School Nurse or other members of staff remains in place and we regularly remind girls (through form time, assemblies, School Council and PSHCE) about the various forms of support available in school.

Please contact me if you require further information.

Yours sincerely

Ms Laura Knowles

Deputy Head – Pastoral

Mrs Marina Gardiner Legge, MEd, MA (Oxon), Headmistress

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