



## The Impact of Counselling at St Laurence School

We face, like all schools, an increasingly high demand for services that offer students one to one support at times of need. We always have a waiting list for the counselling service in school and have to prioritise the resource according to our judgement about need. Even with the resource we have currently, we are not able to meet the high levels of demand. We know that counselling has a positive impact on those students who access the support and have provided some examples of students who have recently completed a series of counselling sessions.

### Student 1: Year 11 Girl

This girl was experiencing suicidal thoughts linked to her gender identity and so, after initially meeting with the school nurse, was referred for counselling. Beforehand her attendance was low (below 90%), however, following a number of sessions with the counsellor, I have been pleased to see an improvement in her attendance and consequently her attainment. She now no longer feels the need to see the counsellor, and is successfully managing her own mental health with the strategies she has learnt.

### Student 2: Year 8 Boy

S was struggling with behaviour as home life was a little challenging which was affecting his school life, attendance and behaviour, which then resulted in S not reaching his full potential. Initially S was reluctant to meet with the counsellor as believed that it would not be possible for 'talking' to make any difference.

I introduced S to the school counsellor and he was given an initial assessment, which then persuaded S to agree to more sessions. S never missed any sessions and always arrived early for his appointment. It was noticeable that slowly S's behaviour started to improve, as did his attendance. S became less guarded and more confident, able to speak with teachers if he was having difficulties, both academically and socially. Eventually S began to talk about his home life, accepted further support, and agreed for school to contact home to build on relationships etc. This shift in S's behaviour was noticed and acknowledged by his teachers. Positive phone calls were made home, which in turn improved relationships.

I believe that the counsellor helped S in many ways and this has stuck with him as this year he has made a fantastic start. S is currently at 97% (1 day absent and 2 x medical appointments) and still in single figures for behaviour points which is an enormous improvement on last year. These huge improvements are without doubt having a positive effect on his learning. I firmly believe without the counselling S would be a very different student.



### **Student 3: Year 11 Student**

This student suffers with extreme anxiety that affected attendance at school and lessons, used study support and had a time out card. The student was often absent when assessments were planned in lessons. Student had six sessions with our counsellor. Now, they have taken all of their mock examinations, and the student is feeling very positive about school and future plans. Both student and parent have expressed their gratitude for the counselling and advice received. The student feels that they now have coping strategies, which they can use now and in the future.

### **Student 4: Y11 Student**

This student had counselling in the period before a gender transition. It had an impact in identifying his needs and the way forward with regards talking to parents and talking through the issues that he would face. The student has successfully transitioned, is attending well and performing above expectations academically after a very challenging period in his personal life. Without counselling, all of this would have been much more challenging and difficult to overcome.

### **Student 5: Y11 Boy**

This student had counselling earlier on in the year. He has been struggling with a physical health condition and has been recommended for open-heart surgery. This news was having a dramatic impact on his behaviour both in and outside of school. He attended 4 sessions of counselling. Following these sessions, he appears more relaxed, is attending well and is making more positive behaviour choices.

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