

---

## Counselling @ Godalming College: A Parents' Guide

Godalming College offers a counselling service to students as part of the Student Guidance Department. We have on staff two professional counsellors who are well-qualified to work with young people with a range of concerns. We understand that sometimes as a parent you have concerns about your child and would like to support them and do what's best for them. In light of that, we have compiled answers to some frequently asked questions from parents:

**Q. I am concerned about my son/daughter. Can I make an appointment for them to come see you?**

A. It is much better if the student is able to make an appointment for his or herself. We find that when students have to be pushed to come to counselling, they are less likely to make use of it. Students who are self-motivated come to counselling when they are ready and therefore are able to make much better use of the process.

**Q. My son/daughter wants to get some counselling but isn't comfortable seeing someone in college. Where else can he/she go?**

A. We understand that sometimes coming to counselling in college is difficult, whether due to schedule limitations, concerns about confidentiality in the waiting area, or having to return to classes immediately following a difficult discussion. As an alternative, the college offers confidential e-counselling, which is short-term counselling via email. Students can contact one of the counsellors for more information or read about it on Godalming Online. There are local private counsellors in the area which can be found through [www.bacp.co.uk](http://www.bacp.co.uk) or [www.ukcp.org.uk](http://www.ukcp.org.uk). If cost is a concern, Open House Counselling in Guildford offers low-cost counselling to young people and they are available on 07932-047778 or [www.guildfordymca.org.uk](http://www.guildfordymca.org.uk). The NHS offers time-limited counselling, but there are often waiting lists of up to six months.

**Q. Can I come with my daughter/son to their counselling session?**

A. If you feel the need to be involved in your son or daughter's counselling, it may be that family therapy is a more appropriate source of help. You can search for family therapists online or visit [www.aft.org.uk](http://www.aft.org.uk) for a list of member therapists.

**Q. I have a serious concern about my daughter/son. Can I call you to speak with you about this?**

A. Yes, if your child has a serious concern such about the immediate safety of your child such as drug or alcohol misuse, unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted disease, or signs of suicidal behaviour, then please get in touch first with your GP or other health service, and then with the counselling service.

**Q. Is the counselling confidential?**

A. Yes, counselling is fully confidential and we are bound by a code of ethics in this regard. Therefore, if your son/daughter is in counselling, their counsellor is unable to disclose any information about this to any party, without the student's permission. The only exceptions that can be made to this are if the counsellor believes your son or daughter is a safety risk to themselves or someone else, or if they were to bring to counselling information about drug trafficking or terrorism.

**Q. How can I encourage my daughter/son to come and see you?**

A. There is a good amount of information on Godalming Online under 'Getting Help' that might make the counselling service feel more accessible. It might help to direct your child to this information but it can be counter-productive to push them. Giving them time and space to consider the idea for themselves often brings the best result.

---