

Telephone Counselling Provision during COVID-19 Enabled School Closures

Service for young people aged 10+ in East Dunbartonshire Council Schools

A telephone based counselling service is now available for young people in East Dunbartonshire aged 10+. Counselling is one of a range of supports available to improve young people's mental health and wellbeing. The counselling service is run by qualified, experienced counsellors.

Who should use this service? Any school aged young person on the roll of an East Dunbartonshire Council School aged 10 or older who is experiencing emotional and wellbeing difficulties. The service can support young people with a wide range of difficulties including grief and loss, anxiety, low mood, anger and relationship and family issues.

How can it be accessed? Young people self-refer to this service initially by phoning the helpline number. This is the first point of contact with the counselling provider and during this call the counsellor will:

- provide immediate emotional support and signposting where appropriate
- help to de-escalate problems and reduce stress
- provide advice on practical approaches to managing emotions
- work with the young person to establish whether or not they would benefit from further telephone counselling
- take contact information from the young people: their name, date of birth, school, and a contact telephone number

If it is jointly agreed that further telephone counselling would be beneficial then arrangements will be made directly with the young person for a further telephone call. The numbers (detailed below) are free to call from landlines and mobile phones. The telephone counselling service is available Monday to Friday from 09.00 to 16.00. Young people should call directly. If parents or professionals feel that a young person would benefit from the service, then they can signpost the young person to the helpline. Some young people might want a parent or professional to support them to make the call and others will find privacy more supportive.

Who is providing this service? Across East Dunbartonshire the service is being provided by two well established organisations who are highly experienced in supporting children and young people.

Young people in the catchment of **Bishopbriggs Academy, Kirkintilloch High School, Lenzie Academy and St Ninian's High School should contact the helpline provided by The Spark on 0808 802 0044.**

Is parental consent required? Parental consent is required for any young person aged 10 and 11. Young people aged 12 or above are able to provide their own consent.

Will the counsellor share information with parents or professionals? Counsellors will pass on contact details of the young people who make contact with their service to their school. Helpline discussions will remain confidential unless there is anything discussed that raises a concern about child or adult protection and safeguarding. If the counsellor feels the young person or someone else is at immediate risk of harm they would then require to break that confidentiality but would inform the young person of that before they did so. If the young person was considered to be unable to make appropriate decisions or lacking in understanding, this information would require to be shared. The counsellor would make them aware of this before involving anyone else.

What other supports are available? There are lots of other supports available for young people: some are available here: <https://reach.scot/get-help/>

How long will this service be available? It is planned that this service will be available until August 2020.

****Contact Numbers****

Young people who live in the catchment areas for Bishopbriggs Academy, Kirkintilloch High School, St Ninian's High School or Lenzie Academy (including associated primary schools) should use the following number for **The Spark helpline: 0808 802 0044.**