



JOHN F KENNEDY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

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School Counsellor Information for applicants



Diocese of Westminster

Headteacher Mr Paul Neves BSc (Hons), MA, PGCE, NPQH
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Job Title: School Counsellor
Responsible to: Assistant Headteacher (Safeguarding and Student Welfare)
Grade: H7 (SCP 19-23) (£2154 - £2310)
Hours: 3 hours per week, term time only
Date: September 2025

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in this exciting post at John F Kennedy Catholic School (JFK).

The Governors and I are seeking to appoint a well-qualified and experienced Counsellor to work with individual students and to join the school's established support service for students. The ideal person will be passionate about young people's social and emotional welfare, and have an understanding of counselling within a school context.

John F Kennedy Catholic School

JFK is a mixed 11-18 comprehensive, part of All Saints Catholic Academy Trust, located in the suburban environment of Hemel Hempstead. It is a voluntary academy with approximately 1100 students on roll. The school enjoys an excellent reputation and is always over-subscribed; for the 2024-25 intake of 180 places there were 530 applicants, with 206 putting JFK as first choice. The intake has, in recent years, been almost entirely Catholic - currently 83% of students. JFK serves the Catholic communities of Hemel Hempstead and a very wide surrounding area, including parts of Hertfordshire, Luton and Bedfordshire; in addition to seven main feeder primary schools, it regularly takes children from over twenty other schools. Unsurprisingly, its students come from a diverse socio-economic background, ranging from a very affluent commuter town to an area with high social deprivation. Overall, however, the school deprivation factor is just below the national average. Currently 15% of students are eligible for Free School Meals. The number of students from minority ethnic backgrounds has increased over the past ten years and is now above the national average. The prior attainment of students is significantly higher than the national average. Additionally the profile of current cohorts is generally skewed towards the 'middle' and 'high' prior attainment categories. The local parish church, St Mark's, is on the school site and the Parish Priest of the Hemel West Parish supports the liturgical life of the school.

JFK's most recent inspections were: Section 8 in March 2017 and Section 48 in February 2024. The headline outcomes for these inspections were all judgements of 'good'. In terms of results our most recent Progress 8 scores were: 0.09 in 2017, 0.25 in 2018, 0.05 in 2019, 0.01 in 2022, 0.15 in 2023 and 0.15 in 2024.

At A level, our results have been stable in recent years, and have been broadly average compared with national figures. Our most recent L3VA scores were -0.05 in 2017, -0.17 in 2018, -0.07 in 2019, -0.69 in 2023 and -0.27 in 2024.

Visitors to the school frequently comment on the ethos and atmosphere they sense as they come to the school for the first time. This friendliness and sense of community is part of something wider; it is rooted in the fact that we are a Catholic school. As such everything that we do is based on our Mission Statement, summarised by words: Inspire • Achieve •

Serve. We are an inclusive school that values the uniqueness of each member of our community. In this way we uphold the Gospel values and ensure that everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

Outside the formal curriculum there are numerous opportunities for students to take part in a very wide range of activities. These include drama, sport, music, retreats, trips at home and abroad and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.

JFK, now and in the future: ASCAT

JFK was opened in 1967, so it is over 50 years old. There is a great tradition here of several generations from families attending the school. Many teachers and support staff over the years were students at the school and currently one of the students in the first intake is working on the support staff. I believe there are many features that make JFK a great school but I also recognise there are areas needing development. We must never be complacent and we must embrace new ideas that will benefit the educational opportunities of the students in our care. We made a bold decision seven years ago to become a 'Google school', introducing Chromebooks for use in and out of school. This has been phased in, one year at a time, and is complete in the main school - all students in Years 7 to 11 have their own device. Google Classroom has been embraced by staff as well as students and is now an integral part of school life.

JFK joined All Saints Catholic Academy Trust (ASCAT) on 1st June 2023. The trust currently comprises 11 schools and JFK is one of only two secondary school members. Within the trust, JFK sits in a regional hub, with other Dacorum Catholic schools: 'St Mark's Hub'. Joining ASCAT has opened up many opportunities for cross-school and cross-phase developments, making this a very exciting time for JFK's future development.

Next steps

I hope that having read this letter and the information about the school that you will choose to apply for this position via the ETeach platform. Please use the Supporting Statement section (in the online application) to detail your reasons for applying, what makes you suitable and any key experience you have that fits the job description/person specification. In this, you should also outline your personal educational philosophy, your vision and the contribution that you can make to John F Kennedy Catholic School.

I am always happy to welcome visitors to the school and I would strongly encourage you to come and visit us to see the school for yourself. If you would like more information about the school please visit our website www.jfk.herts.sch.uk where you will find our online prospectus and other information. If you would like to know more about the post itself or to arrange a visit, please do not hesitate to contact my PA, Ms Eva Final (email: efinal@jfk.herts.sch.uk), who will be very happy to help you.

Yours faithfully,



Mr Paul Neves
Headteacher

Core Role

- To offer students individual counselling and occasional group support.
- To work with a diverse range of issues including bereavement and loss, transition, eating disorders and self-harm, depression, anger management and erratic behaviour, family conflicts, anxiety and fears.

Safeguarding, confidentiality and record keeping

- To manage disclosures and safeguarding issues ethically to ensure students' well-being and safety.
- To be familiar with and part of the child protection process, up-to-date with the Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance, and to work in line with school policy.
- To adhere to the school Code of Conduct.
- To maintain records and write reports as requested.
- To keep suitable case records on the counselling in a secure place.

CPD, Support and Communication

- To work together with the Assistant Headteacher, the Pastoral Support Coordinator and whole school staff to promote an environment which enables the school community to flourish individually and collectively.
- To provide support and guidance for other staff members in order to promote and extend the impact of in-school counselling.
- To provide information on the counselling service, the role of the counsellor and the boundaries of confidentiality to students, staff and parents.
- To provide consultation to staff whose role it is to support students in distress.

Responsibilities associated with professional obligations

- To perform duties within the codes of practice and ethics recommended by the BACP, UKCP or equivalent organisation.
- To engage actively in CPD.

General Responsibilities

- To work within school policies and procedures with an up-to-date understanding of Keeping Children Safe in Education and related Safeguarding, Child Protection and Code of Conduct requirements.
- To contribute to the provision of a supportive, aspirational and effective environment for learning.
- To support the promotion of positive relationships with parents and outside agencies.
- To attend skill training and participate in personal/performance development as required.
- To take care of our own and other people's health and safety.

In addition, other duties at no higher level of responsibility may be interchanged with/added to this list as required.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Personal Attributes required (on the basis of the job description)	Essential (E) or Desirable (D)	To be identified by: (eg application form, interview, reference etc)
Qualifications Post-graduate Diploma or Masters level in Psychodynamic Counselling or Psychotherapy BACP accreditation, UKCP registration or BPC Further therapeutic training or qualification in working with children and young people	E D D	AF / Quals AF / Quals AF / Ref
Experience Minimum of 2 years' post-qualification experience Minimum of 1 year's experience of working with children and young people Experience of assessing emotional and mental health and making recommendations and/or referrals Experience of working in a school Experience of facilitating groups Experience of working as part of a multi-disciplinary team Work as an autonomous professional	E E E D D D E	AF / Ref / Int AF / Ref / Int AF / Ref / Int AF / Ref / Int AF / Ref / Int AF / Ref / Int AF/Ref/Int
Knowledge/Skills/Abilities An understanding of the developmental, emotional, social and educational issues of children and young people An awareness of range of needs of people from diverse ethnic, cultural and social backgrounds Knowledge of local mental health and CAMHS service Knowledge of the Children's Act and legislation pertaining to children Good written and verbal communication skills Ability to work independently, manage own caseload and use initiative A willingness to pursue ongoing professional development Positive communication and listening skills Patience, tolerance and sensitivity The ability to self-care, and encourage this in others Enthusiasm and high levels of self-motivation	E E E D E E E E E E E	AF / Ref / Int Ref / Int Ref / Int Int AF / Int Int AF / Ref / Int Ref / Int Ref / Int AF / Ref / Int Ref / Int
Other Maintain regular supervision by a qualified supervisor - evidence of external supervision Experience of personal therapy	E E	AF / Ref / Int Int
Professional Values for all Staff Strong commitment to the school's safeguarding and child protection policies and practice Wholehearted commitment to supporting the school's culture, values and ethos High levels of professionalism Strong commitment to ensuring high standards in own work and the work of others	E E E E	Int Int/Ref Int/Ref

Unshakeable belief in the ability of all children and young people to achieve and to overcome obstacles to their learning	E	Int/ref
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Note:

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.
An enhanced DBS check is required for this post.