

Mental Health Support Team (MHST) Darlington

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Mental Health Support Team Update

We hope all of our teachers and pupils had a good rest in the summer holidays and are ready for the term ahead. The MHST continued to work effortlessly offering face to face appointments at our base in the Mulberry Centre and also using modern technology to keep in touch with our families via video-links.

Top Tips for First Few Weeks of Returning to School

The transition of returning to school can be a very exciting time, but also can make us feel nervous or worried. These feelings are normal! Being prepared and organised can make you feel more in control. Following our top tips can help: -

- Check school uniform and stationery is ready
- Talk - discuss any worries or feelings with friends and family
- Stay connected and in touch with friends
- Get into a good sleep routine
- Have a good breakfast every morning

Our team can offer support for young people in years 4 to 8 who are struggling with feeling anxious or worried about the return to school—to request support speak to the school's Mental Health Lead who will then discuss this with us.

F.R.I.E.N.D.S PROGRAMME

FRIENDS is resilience intervention proven to reduce anxiety and depression and promote positive mental health for children and young people. Based on Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT), FRIENDS has been recognised by the World Health Organisation as the only evidence based programme effective in reducing anxiety as a universal and targeted intervention ([WHO, 2004](#)). FRIENDS has also been recommended by the UK Department of Education.

The FRIENDS intervention, originally developed in Australia by Professor Paula Barrett, Webster and Turner (2000) is a school-based, preventative programme. The name of the programme is an acronym for central components of the intervention: -

- F = Feelings**
- R = Remember to relax. Have quiet time.**
- I = I can do it! I can try my best!**
- E = Explore solutions and coping step plans.**
- N = Now reward yourself! You've done your best!**
- D = Don't forget to practise!**
- S = Smile! Stay calm, and talk to your support networks!**

Groups will be up and running in the near future.

Feedback

As children and families complete their work with our service we are keen to gain feedback to ensure we find out what has been helpful and what we can improve on. Positive feedback so far has included voices from our young people that "it has been really helpful to talk about worries of moving to a new school" / "I'm ready for it!" / "My friends had similar worries which made me feel better about mine" / "We like having a workbook to take away".

We are very excited about the next stages of development of the service and please do get in touch if you have any further feedback or require further information.



INITIAL HOST SCHOOLS

- 1 Holy Family RC Primary
- 2 Skerne Park Academy
- 3 Springfield Academy
- 4 Carmel College
- 5 Haughton Academy
- 6 Hummersknott Academy
- 7 Longfield Academy

3 ROLES OF THE MHST

1. To offer training, advice, support and consultations with school staff and other relevant practitioners
2. To build capacity – supporting Mental Health Leads in each setting to develop a whole school approach
3. To deliver individual and group-based evidence based interventions focusing on the mild to moderate mental health needs of CYP at the key transition point between primary and secondary education, covering **Years 4 to 8**



making a

difference

together