

Dear Parents

Welcome to this half term's SEND & Safeguarding flyer to help guide you towards support and information that you may need for yourself or your children. We hope you find the links and advice useful. This term's flyer focuses on helping your child understand and manage anxiety.



How to support a child with UNDERSTANDING ANXIETY

Useful Apps:

Unless stated otherwise, apps are not supplied by the NHS and the NHS is not liable for their use.

- MindShift
- FearTools
- The Worry Box

Children and adults of all ages experience anxiety from time to time. It is important to normalise worry as being part of the range of human emotions. Some young people will be able to vocalise their worries which will allow you to support them. For others, even being able to identify that they are feeling anxious is hard and so being able to express and communicate this to others can be a real challenge. Below are some signs and symptoms that a child or young person may be experiencing anxiety. This information (from Hampshire CAMHS) is not exhaustive and should not be used to make a diagnosis; it should be used as a guide only.

Signs and symptoms that a young child may be experiencing anxiety

- Not wanting to go to school or being left alone (even in a different room at home)
- Complaints of physical symptoms such as headaches, stomach aches, upset stomach or feeling sick
- Appearing distressed, agitated and/or irritable
- Not sleeping well; trouble getting to sleep, staying asleep or waking early in the morning
- Nightmares or night terrors
- Regressive behaviour such as wetting themselves
- Becoming more clingy or needing a lot of reassurance or encouragement
- Not wanting to be separated from a parent/carer
- Requiring 'safety' items such as cuddly toys, dummies, soothers and pacifiers which are inappropriate for the age of the child or environment
- Refusal to speak, particularly if they previously communicated without difficulty
- Aggressive behaviour, both physical and verbal, towards others or "tantrum" behaviour
- Difficulties concentrating and appearing fidgety or restless
- Avoidance of certain situations or refusing to participate
- Asking a lot of "what if" questions and repeating them without apparent satisfaction of the answer
- Developing rituals or routines and becoming distressed if these are interrupted or stopped

Top tips on how best to support an anxious young person

- 1) Remain calm yourself. Try to remember that young people often look to the adults around them for guidance. Your behaviour will reassure them that they are safe and do not need to panic.
- 2) Give them opportunities to explore and express how they feel. Children may not use the words 'anxiety' and 'worry' but their own descriptive words such as 'fizzy' or 'wobbly'. If a child cannot describe how they feel, encourage them to draw or paint how they feel or point to where in their body they are experiencing discomfort.
- 3) Explain that everyone worries from time to time and that although the physical sensations are not pleasant, they will pass. Using distraction techniques and activities, such as playing games, seeing friends, reading or watching TV, may help them to manage distressing thoughts and feelings.
- 4) Acknowledge how they feel rather than minimising or dismissing their worries, whilst providing a clear message that they can and will cope.
- 5) It is important that they do not avoid the situations that make them feel anxious. The more a situation is avoided, the greater the anxiety becomes. Help them to break down their fears into smaller steps and take each one at a time. Find motivators and rewards to encourage them to take small steps to achieve each goal. Keep persevering as the more they face their fear, the easier it will become.
- 6) Try to identify the source of anxiety. Some young people become particularly concerned when they hear or witness worrying things. For example, ensure they are only accessing age appropriate material on TV.
- 7) Let your child's school or college know about the difficulties being experienced so that they can support them using the same strategies and techniques for a consistent approach.
- 8) Remember that anxiety is a problem when it is extreme, excessive and interferes with everyday life. Please see your GP or school nurse for support in this instance and they can refer you to appropriate services. You can also self-refer to child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) by calling 0300 304 0050.
- 9) Access the resources below for details of anxiety management techniques that you can use with your child to help them to manage and overcome their worries.



Useful Resources

There are a number of useful resources available which can help increase someone's understanding of mental health difficulties and how best to support young people who may be experiencing difficulties. A number of these resources are free to access and available on the web. The resources also provide helpful techniques and activities that can be used to help reduce anxiety. The below list provides the most commonly used material by the Hampshire Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service:

Websites	Books (may be available in local libraries)	Apps
<p><i>For Young People</i></p> <p>www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk www.youth.anxietybc.com www.getselfhelp.co.uk www.youngminds.org.uk www.hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk</p> <p><i>For Parents/Carers</i></p> <p>www.worrywisekids.org/ www.childrenwithanxiety.com/ www.youngminds.org.uk/ http://minded.e-lfh.org.uk/families/index.html www.hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk</p>	<p><i>For Children</i></p> <p>Morris and the Bundle of Worries, by Jill Seoney What to do When You Worry Too Much, by Dawn Heubner Up and Down the Worry Hill, by Aureen Wagner</p> <p><i>For Teenagers</i></p> <p>Overcoming Anxiety: A Five Areas Approach, by Chis Williams Getting through Anxiety with CBT: A Young Persons Guide, by Ben Gurney-Smith</p> <p><i>For Parents/Carers</i></p> <p>Helping Your Anxious Child: A Step by Step Guide for Parents, by Ronald Rapee Overcoming Your Childs Fears and Worries, by Cathy Creswell and Lucy Willetts Overcoming Your Childs Shyness and Social Anxiety, by Cathy Creswell and Lucy Willetts Worried No More: Help and Hope for Anxious Children, by Aureen Pinto Wagner</p>	<p>Apps:</p> <p>Self-help Anxiety Management (SAM) - offers a range of self-help methods for people wanting to learn how to manage their anxiety BoosterBuddy - your sidekick guides you through a series of daily quest to help establish positive habits and improve mental health Memory Star - allows you to record uplifting thoughts, memories, and photos CBT-i Coach - helps to improve sleep habits Colourfly Coloring Book - a colouring app which you may find relaxing Stop Breath & Think- provides mood tracking and provides meditations based on your current mood Headspace- meditation practices</p>

If you need any further help or advice please contact Mrs Cahill (SENCO and Inclusion Lead) or Ms Newman (Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead) via the school office.
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