

SEND and Inclusion Newsletter



The summer term can be very different to the rest of the school year with special events such as Sports Day, trips and preparations for a new class or school. Some find this exciting while others find these changes challenging. Being anxious about change is to be expected but for some children this anxiety can significantly impact their daily life. Part of my role is supporting all children (and their parent carers) during these times of change.



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How do I know if my child is feeling anxious?

When younger children feel anxious, they cannot always understand or express what they are feeling. You may notice that they:

- become irritable, tearful or clingy
- have difficulty sleeping or have bad dreams
- wake in the night
- start wetting the bed

In older children you may notice that they:

- lack confidence to try new things or seem unable to face simple, everyday challenges
- find it hard to concentrate
- have problems with sleeping or eating
- have angry outbursts
- have a lot of negative thoughts, or keep thinking that bad things are going to happen
- start avoiding everyday activities, such as seeing friends, going out in public or going to school

How can I support my child if they feel anxious about times of change?

Validate: Talk to your child about their anxiety or worries. Reassure them and show them you understand how they feel. Avoid minimising their worries, instead recognise that their feelings are valid and understandable.

Identify the emotion: It may help to talk about what anxiety is and the physical effects it has on our bodies. Where in their body do they feel it? What do they feel? Some people describe anxiety as being like a wave that builds up and then ebbs away again.

Calming strategies: Encourage them to manage their anxiety and ask for help when they need it. Practice simple relaxation techniques with your child, such as taking 3 deep, slow breaths, breathing in for a count of 3 and out for 3.

Support them to find solutions: Younger children may need you to suggest solutions to help them, older children can build a plan with you. Often anxiety can stem from fearing the unknown. Showing websites and photographs can help reduce anxiety about new places, talking through a different routine can help them prepare for special events. When creating a plan, think carefully about the desired outcome: For example, if your child is worried about going on a residential trip, you may feel they want you to tell them not to go. However, this could mean your child feels that their anxiety will stop them from doing things. Instead, think of small steps towards the end goal, such as a 1-night sleepover.

How does Southbourne Junior School support my child's overall wellbeing during times of change?

Through our PSHE curriculum, pupils are encouraged to think about the ways that they can be healthy, including good mental health. At school we use the Zones of Regulations to support children to develop their emotional literacy and strategies to help them to regulate, including identifying and managing anxiety. On **Monday 22nd May at 3.30**, you are invited to a parent carer workshop on the Zones of Regulation, helping you to talk to your child about their emotions and the regulation strategies which work for them.

When a child is experiencing high levels of anxiety, additional support may be offered. Class staff are best placed to offer this support as they work daily with pupils. We also have our dedicated Learning Mentor, Ms George, who can offer bespoke support when it is identified it would be beneficial. If you are concerned about the level of anxiety your child is experiencing, please discuss this with a member of our school team so that we can support you and your child.

Where can Parents Carers get help and advice for supporting their child's mental wellbeing?

Come along to our Zones of Regulation Parent Carer workshop on Monday 22nd May 3.30 at Southbourne Junior School!

- **Anna Freud Centre** *Our Parents and Carers resources offer advice and guidance to help support the children and young people who may be struggling with poor mental health.* www.annafreud.org
- **Young Minds** www.youngminds.org.uk/ *We have lots of practical advice and tips on supporting your child - from how to encourage your child to open up about their feelings to dealing with mental health services. No matter what you and your child are going through, things can get better. We also have our Parents Helpline who can provide advice and support if you're worried about a child or young person.*
- **West Sussex Children and Young People Mental Health Line** *The service is free and is available to anyone of any age who is concerned about their own mental health or that of a relative or friend. An extension of the existing Sussex Mental Healthline, there are now mental health trained clinicians in the service to support calls from children, young people, parents and carers.* www.sussexpartnership.nhs.uk/your-mental-health/getting-help/sussex-mental-healthline 0800 0309 500.
- **Chichester Family Hub** *Hubs are open for you to drop in and speak to our staff Monday to Friday during opening times on a whole range of issues affecting you and your family. We also have public access computers to use, free of charge, as well as social spaces available to meet other parents.* WSCChildrenServices@westsussex.gov.uk Tel:01403 229900
Address: St James' Road, Chichester, PO19 7AB
- **Mind** www.mind.org.uk/for-young-people/ *We know that supporting a young person can feel really worrying. You might be feeling overwhelmed, scared or unsure what you should do. You're not alone – we're here to offer information to help you and the young person you're supporting.*
- **Reaching Families** www.reachingfamilies.org.uk *Reaching Families is a parent-carer led, grassroots charity which aims to support parents and families of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities in their daily lives, in particular through the delivery of information, training and peer support.*
- Parent Carers can text the **School Nursing Team** on 07480635424 for confidential advice and support on a wide range of issues including Emotional health and Self-harm.
- **NHS guidance** 'Anxiety in Children' www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults/advice-for-parents/anxiety-in-children

Look out for **June's SEND and Inclusion Update** which will contain year group specific information on how we support children in their transition to new classes or a new setting!