



Mental Health Support Team (in Education)

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Dear Parents and Carers,

For those of you who don't know me, I'm Ellie from the Mental Health Support Team. I have been working at Summerhill Infant School for the past year, and am based here every Tuesday afternoon. My role involves working with the children (e.g. in assemblies and class sessions), school staff, and parents/carers.

Parent/carer work includes one-off, group sessions focused on various themes around children's wellbeing, as well as targeted, 1:1 interventions to support with children's emotional and behavioural difficulties. The reason this work is with parents/carers, rather than children directly, is because research shows this is more impactful.

It is very normal for all children to feel overwhelmed by their emotions. However, you may want to consider accessing support if this is severe and frequent, and is creating significant challenges in your child's life, for example:

- Often feeling worried or scared about coming to school and finding it very difficult to say goodbye to main caregiver(s).
- Feeling scared to answer questions in class or speak to/play with other children.
- Worrying about lots of different things throughout the day and/or at bedtime.
- A phobia, e.g. of dogs (unfortunately we cannot support with complex phobias like blood, vomit, or needles).
- Having frequent 'temper tantrums' (e.g. screaming, hitting, kicking, throwing things).

Interventions are spread over 6-8 sessions. These are weekly and last up to an hour, and can be either face-to-face, on the phone, or online via Microsoft Teams. Together, we unpick the child's difficult thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, and discuss different strategies and tools to understand and manage these. We set goals and review progress towards them each week. We also set weekly home practice tasks to 'have a go' at the techniques that we've covered in the session.

If you are interested in accessing 1:1 sessions, please speak to your child's teacher or to Jane Edwards (SENCO & Mental Health Lead), who can discuss this with you to see if this is the right sort of support for you and your child.

To help with planning for one-off parent/carer sessions, if you haven't already, please use the QR code below to let me know your preferences of topics and timings. Thanks to those of you who have completed this already – your responses have been really helpful.

Best wishes,

Ellie Bloom
Education Mental Health Practitioner
East & Central Mental Health Support Team

