

Cornwall & Isles of Scilly - Mental Health Support Team (MHST) in schools



17th April 2024

Hamish and Milo – My Friends and Me Workshops: Expression of Interest Form

By completing this form, you are consenting to your child being involved with the Mental Health Support Team (MHST) FREE 'Hamish and Milo' My Friends and Me small group happening in school this term. The Year One children are participating in this to complement their Jigsaw PSHE learning about relationships.

This will consist of your child attending a small group of approximately 4 children for 5 weeks. The group will involve doing creative activities and will focus on friendships and recognising how our connections with others are important for our wellbeing. The attached leaflet provides more information. Please be aware that we are condensing the ten sessions into five.

By signing this letter, you are consenting to a generic note being added to your child's clinical health record regarding their attendance at this small group.

Child's name.....

Parent's Name.....

Signature.....

Upon signing this letter please return it to your child's school.

Please return the signed letter by this Friday (19th April 2024).



My friends and me

Information for parents and carers

Hamish & Milo is a programme which gives children the opportunity to be involved in a range of activities about a particular theme of emotional wellbeing as part of a small group. We are delighted to be able to welcome your child to the group.

In this theme, we are focusing on understanding our friendships and recognising that friendships are important to us, but they can be difficult to navigate sometimes. We might fall out or feel left out or want to make up again.

There will be opportunities to share ways we can enjoy and celebrate our friendships as well as activities and ideas to help us understand why we fall out and how we might repair our friendships.

As part of the 'My friends and me' group, your child will be involved in 10 weekly sessions.

These sessions will help them to develop the skills to be able to say how they are feeling to their friends, to stand up for their own beliefs, to know what to say to help make friends after a fall out and how to celebrate friendship.

Helping your child

We understand that it can be hard as parents to help our children with their friendships and to give them the skills to communicate, say their feelings and resolve situations successfully.

Learning to navigate the ups and downs, the falling out and the making up is challenging for all of us and yet it is a part of life. Giving children the words to say, as well as the insight about what is underneath feelings, can help them to develop healthy relationships.

We aim to work alongside you. We recognise that you know your child best and invite you to talk with your child about their experiences of being in the group and about the activities they've been involved in.

We welcome your thoughts so that we can work together to best support your child.



We understand it can be hard sometimes to recognise how our children are feeling and to respond with empathy. If we can validate how they're feeling and give them opportunities to rehearse what to say and do, we can build their confidence and give them the communication skills they need.

They can then learn to say how they are feeling while hearing and responding to the views of others with empathy.

Sock puppets

An expressive, interactive and hands-on way to engage

For each of the sessions, we use sock puppets to help the children talk about and share their feelings. Your child will make their own sock puppet to use in each session as part of this group.

You may like to make one at home too as a way of helping your child to talk about their feelings or just for fun! Sometimes it's easier for them to tell you what they're thinking about through describing the puppet's feelings or situations.



The children will also receive their own journal to reflect on the sessions as they move through the programme, 'reward' stickers and a certificate!

As parents and carers we can easily fall into the habit of dismissing how our children are feeling or brush over it as something that will be 'okay tomorrow'. Children need to feel heard and to know that the adults around them, who they trust the most, will listen, notice and attune to them with empathy and support.

Some suggestions

Notice and recognise how children may be feeling:

I can see that...

I'm noticing that...

Listen and validate their feelings:

I'm listening.

Can you tell me about it?

I can see why you might be upset.

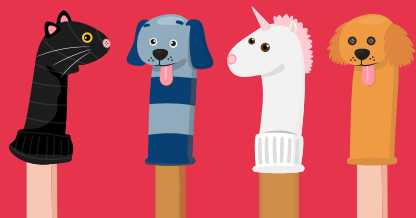
Try not to dismiss their stories of falling out with friends with comments like, "just ignore them", "play with someone else" or "I'm sure you will be friends tomorrow." Validate the feelings they have as real, perhaps saying:

I can see you are really hurt by that.

It really does hurt inside when our friends are mean or unkind.

I am so sorry to hear that.

Help them to think of ideas of what to do or say once they feel heard.



Here we outline all the programme activities, along with suggestions of what you might like to do or say to support your child at home.

Session and overview	Ways to help
<p>Session 1: Friendship is... A look at what friendship means to the children.</p>	<p>Talk together about friendship and what it means to have good friends.</p>
<p>Session 2: Friendship magic The qualities of friendship.</p>	<p>Talk about the qualities your child brings to friendship and what they value in a friend.</p>
<p>Session 3: When friendship hurts Exploring and creating an image of how friendship can hurt.</p>	<p>Think together about different feelings we feel in friendships and reassure your child that feelings pass and change even when we are hurt.</p>
<p>Session 4: I thought you were my friend! Exploring feeling let down by a friend.</p>	<p>Help your child practise phrases to say such as: "I didn't like it when..." "I felt... when you..." "I like it when we..."</p>
<p>Session 5: Falling out and making up Practising scripts to help say our feelings and find solutions to repair friendships.</p>	<p>Ask your child to tell you about the role play they tried in the session to help them to make friends again after a fall out.</p>
<p>Session 6: Changing friendships Using story stones to explore a change in one of our friendships.</p>	<p>Ask your child to tell you about their story stones and how a change in a significant friendship has affected them.</p>
<p>Session 7: Make my stand! Exploring how to stand up for ourselves and not give into peer pressure.</p>	<p>Talk about situations that might happen and help your child practise phrases to say like: "I don't want to do that." "I don't feel comfortable..."</p>
<p>Session 8: Trust and communication A blindfolded game to explore qualities of friendship.</p>	<p>Talk together about the value of trust. Why is it important and how do you know if you can trust a friend?</p>
<p>Session 9: Celebration of friendship Creating a wall hanging as a group to celebrate friendship.</p>	<p>See if your child would like to share what they think is the most important thing about friendship.</p>
<p>Session 10: Token of friendship Making a token to give to a friend to show appreciation.</p>	<p>Create friendship tokens at home to give to friends e.g. friendship bracelets, decorated pebbles or cards. Ask your child what they most enjoyed about being in the group.</p>

Children need statements they can use to stand up for themselves and communicate how they feel:

I feel...when you... Please be kind. I don't like it when...
I like it when... I would like to play with...today,
I need us to... please could we play together
another time?

If you feel concerned about your child's friendship issues, talk to someone at school so that you can share ideas.



Sensation & Emotion Cards

These cards are a great way to help children put language to sensations and emotions, to help regulate their feelings and increase self-confidence. Our unique cards consist of 60 different emotions, guidance and 20 activities.



Hamish & Milo Pals

Our Hamish and Milo Pals are precious cuddly friends that help children to feel comforted, cared about and listened to. Perfect to snuggle and they are great fun too.

Find out more at [hamishandmilo.org](https://www.hamishandmilo.org)

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