

March 2023

Dear Parent/Carer,

We are writing to inform you about a local project that our school is part of.

As a group of schools in Farnborough we have been awarded some funding to enable us to develop our skills and practice in order to support families and pupils who experience difficulties with social, emotional and mental health issues (SEMH). The project will centre on both in school and cross phase transition for pupils aged 4 to 16.

All children in the schools should see the benefits of this project. There is also evidence to suggest that the benefits of work in this field may extend to teachers and to the school environment, including a less disruptive and more positive classroom climate.

With this project we aim to achieve a range of outcomes, including:

- Improved social and emotional skills
- improved academic performance
- improved attitudes, behaviour and relationships with peers;
- reduced emotional distress (student depression, anxiety, stress and social withdrawal);
- reduced conduct problems; and
- improved school connection.

As well as aiming to achieve the above outcomes, a large part of the project will be focused upon children's transitions. The transition from one teacher to the next or one school to the next can be an intimidating experience for many children and can be a source of worry and anxiety for many children particularly those transitioning into year 7. This move can be significantly challenging for children who have Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs.

Transitions between key stages and within educational settings are key points of social and academic change which can have a negative impact on children. They may become angry, have an increased need for affection, regress (go backwards) in behaviour, or develop low self-confidence. Children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs are especially vulnerable at these points.

It is noticeable that there is very little research around transitions – most of which is based on the move from KS2 to KS3. The research suggests that effective learning behaviours during transition can best be supported when the correct strand of support is offered to children. For schools to produce young people who can leave school confident and interested in the world, we must seriously consider how we support children with SEMH needs, particularly through key points in their school life.

We are sure that you will be as excited about the possibilities of this project as we are.

Regards

Head teachers from

Manor Junior, Cove Infant, Cove Junior, Cove Secondary, Cherrywood, Grange Junior, Tower Hill Schools

