

## Mental Health Support Teams in Schools | Information for Parents

Schools play an important role in supporting the wellbeing of children and young people at a time when they are experiencing lots of physical, emotional and social changes. The introduction of Mental Health Support Teams (MHST) working within schools is a new approach, introduced as a pilot across the country, to provide an additional source of support.

MHST are working with 73 schools across Gloucestershire to tackle the challenges children and young people have told us they experience by helping them to feel more resilient, arming them with techniques to look after themselves and strategies to help them cope better with life's ups and downs. This includes support for things like mild-moderate anxiety, exam stress and friendship issues through low intensity Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (LI-CBT), counselling sessions, themed group work or information workshops. The teams will also support parents and teachers with information, advice and guidance about how best to help children and young people who are experiencing difficulties.

If you want any more information about mental health and other resources available within Gloucestershire, please go to the *On Your Mind* Gloucestershire website <https://www.onyourmindglos.nhs.uk/>.

You can contact your school if you are concerned about your child and would like some support. The school's Designated Mental Health Lead (DMHL) will be in touch with our teams regularly.

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| DMHL Name: Mrs Carolyn Ford | Contact Details: cf@ribstonhall.gloucs.sch.uk |
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For more information about **Mental Health Support Teams**, who they are and what they do, contact Mrs Ford.

There are three main ways children and young people can access support from the Mental Health Support Team:

- When a school staff member notices a child or young person is struggling with day-to-day worries
- When a parent informs a school staff member about their concerns
- When a young person asks for support themselves.

An initial discussion with the team will take place to ensure this form of support is the most appropriate way forward.

If you would prefer that your child was not discussed with our team, should they experience difficulties, you can opt out of this service by contacting your Mental Health School Lead above. Your child will still have access to all the usual statutory support within your school. Please note: if you choose to opt out of the school discussing concerns with the MHST we may still see secondary aged children asking for support themselves.

### Important information about consent, confidentiality and data protection

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If the young person is at **primary school**, their parents and/or carers will be contacted and asked for agreement to start any support with their child.

If the young person is at **secondary school**, the team may agree to see them on their own and contact them directly without first seeking parental agreement. These decisions will be based on the information provided by the referrer.

*We encourage all young people to involve others as part of building a support network. However, if a young person takes the important step to get in touch for help, we will respect their wishes for confidentiality so that they can feel safe talking to the team. We won't give out any information about them without talking to them first.*

During our sessions we may identify some children or young people who may benefit from specialist support. We will ensure that young people are aware that any recommendations for specialist support will be discussed with parents or a *responsible person* before making any onward referral.

In exceptional circumstances we may share information with appropriate authorities without your knowledge, such as if we believe a child, young person or someone else is at serious risk of harm, or if information is required by law (such as a court order). The MHST follow rigorous organisational policies and procedures to protect personal data and maintain confidentiality. Further information can be found on our organisation websites:

<https://ghc.nhs.uk/privacy-notice/> & <https://ticplus.org.uk/privacy-policy/>

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Chair: Ingrid Barker Chief Executive: Paul Roberts

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Please note: Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust is the new organisation name following the merger of 2gether NHS Foundation Trust with Gloucestershire Care Services NHS Trust on 1 October 2019.