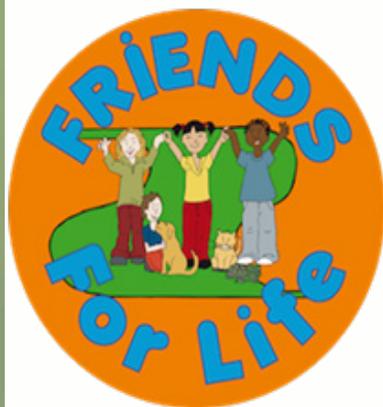


# School eNews



## Friends For Life

**Friends For Life** is a social skills and resilience building programme for children. Through participating, children develop their emotional intelligence, and learn invaluable skills to enable them to cope with the many demands of 21st Century life. Friends for Life improves social skills, ability to focus, confidence, communication skills, and the ability to relax and regulate emotions. It is proven to reduce anxiety and give children the tools they need to cope in stressful and challenging situations.



We ran this programme with a few classes last year and the feedback from the children and their parents has been extremely positive. This term we are starting with our fifth classes and the children in the reading classes. In order for the children to really benefit and get the best from the programme, it is essential that it is encouraged and supported by the family.

FRIENDS is the only childhood anxiety prevention programme acknowledged by the World Health Organization for its 12 years of comprehensive validation in schools and health clinics across several countries and languages.

The findings from the research project give a strong indication that the 'FRIENDS' programmes could make a significant contribution to building resilience and improving the emotional wellbeing and educational outcomes for young people in Irish schools.

The 'FRIENDS for Life' programme is a school-based positive health and

wellness programme. The World Health Organisation cites 'FRIENDS for Life' as the only evidence-based programme effective at all levels of intervention for anxiety in children (WHO 2004). The programme helps students to develop effective strategies to deal with worry, stress and change and teaches the skills required to reduce anxiety and promote resilience. It is beneficial for all students, irrespective of their anxiety level. Teachers can run the programme as a whole school anxiety prevention programme, as a whole class or small group intervention or with an individual student.



For further information on the programme, please follow the link <http://www.pathwayshrc.com.au/friends-life-8-11-years/>

As part of the 'FRIENDS' programme pupils develop a coping step plan.

The Name 'FRIENDS' is an acronym to help children remember the coping steps to follow:

- F - Feeling Worried?
- R - Relax and feel good
- I - I can do it!
- E - Explore solutions and coping plans
- N - Now reward yourself
- D - Don't forget to practice
- S - Stay cool!

