



**Scantabout Primary School**  
**What to do if your child is unhappy in School**  
**A short guide for parents**

**Introduction**

One of our main aims at Scantabout Primary School is for your children to enjoy being here and to want to come to school. From time to time, however, your child may be unhappy for any number of reasons and this guide has been written to help you through this difficult period.

**Talk to your child**

If your child appears to be unhappy, the first important step is to talk to them and try to find out what the problem is. Children can be reluctant to talk about whatever is bothering them and sometimes they are not even sure what it is that they are unhappy about. It is worth persevering and this can be done by asking questions about different aspects of the school day, such as play time, lunch time or a particular lesson. It is always important to also ask what makes your child happy at school. Often when your child realizes that there are many things that make them happy, they become more positive overall.

**Talk to us**

Whether or not you have got to the bottom of whatever is wrong, please come into school to share your concerns. We are available on most days before and after school and we do want to know when your child is not happy. Often a quick discussion with the class teacher at an early stage can stop the problem, whatever it is, from becoming bigger. Please remember, we can't help if we don't know there is a problem. If, having talked to your child, you think the problem is really too small to share, you may decide not to come in. We suggest you mention the problem on the next occasion you meet with the class teacher so we are aware of it or write a short note in the home/school book. We might also use the home/school book to let you know if there has been a problem in school which we have sorted out.

**Tell your child to talk to us**

It is very important that children tell the adults in school when there is a problem. Children can sort some issues out for themselves, but even if that is so, it is important that an adult in school knows that a child has had a problem. Children are encouraged to talk to their class teacher, teaching assistant or any other adult they feel comfortable talking to. At lunch time they are encouraged to talk to the midday supervisors, who in turn are asked to report incidents to the class teacher. Please remind your children that we can't help if we don't know there is a problem.

**What your child can do if someone is bothering them**

Adults usually tell children to try and **ignore** the person who is bothering them. This is good advice as children tend to continue to behave inappropriately only if they get attention. Other sound advice is to tell your child to **play with someone else**. It is also important for children to **tell** whoever is upsetting them that they don't like what is being done. Possible phrases to use are:

- "Please stop – I don't like that."
- "You are hurting/upsetting me."
- "Please don't do that, I don't like it."

It is surprising how many children genuinely don't realize their actions are hurting or upsetting someone. You can rehearse saying these phrases with your child at home.

Children should still tell an adult if they have been hurt or upset by someone in school.

### **Was it an accident? Was it on purpose?**

Young children in particular can find it hard to tell if an action was accidental or deliberate. They know they have been hurt, but don't realize that the person who hurt them might have done so accidentally, maybe by knocking them on the way past. Young children do not always have good spacial awareness and can also be unaware of their own strength. When you talk to your child about any incident, do always try to find out what happened beforehand. Quite often the problems stem from an accident which was misinterpreted.

### **Will telling someone make the problem worse?**

The simple answer to this is "No." We cannot make any situation better if we don't know about it. We can only begin to find solutions if we have the full picture about what is happening.

### **How can we help your child once we know there is a problem?**

In school we have many different ways of helping children overcome their problems:

#### **Time to talk**

We offer children opportunities to talk to the adults in school. This can be their class teacher, teaching assistant or a particular person they relate to. We also have a trained counsellor, Mrs. Osgood, who helps children overcome issues such as friendship problems, anger management or low self- esteem. Before involving Mrs. Osgood we always seek your permission and keep you informed of progress. Mrs. Osgood is also available to talk with parents about her work with your child.

### **Personal, Social and Health Education**

We have a comprehensive programme of PSHE education and this provides many opportunities for children to talk about and sort out their day to day problems. We tailor the programme to the needs of the class and even to individual children if we feel it will help the current situation.

### **Circle Time**

From time to time we offer circle time for a group or even the whole class. This is an opportunity for children to say what they think and feel about a particular issue. When we know a child is having a particular problem we can use circle time to raise the issue and find joint solutions.

### **Further Information**

Our Behaviour Policy is available on the school website. It outlines our code of conduct, rewards and sanctions as well as what we do if a child is being bullied. It also explains our "no blame" approach which blames the behaviour, not the child.

### **And finally...**

The most important things to remember if there is a problem are:

- Talk to your child
- Tell your child to
  - Talk to an adult in school
  - Tell the person who is upsetting them to stop
- Talk to us