



Prime Minister's Youth Mental Health Project

IMPROVING YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

FACT SHEET

School based initiatives

Schools provide an effective way to reach young people who may experience mental health problems during their adolescence. As part of the Prime Minister's Youth Mental Health Project, several initiatives will be implemented through schools.

Nurses in decile 3 secondary schools

- Over the next four years extra nurses will be embedded in all decile 3 secondary schools, expanding the nurse-led School Based Health Service (SBHS) to a further 18,000 potentially at-risk young people.
- SBHS is already funded for 38,000 young people in all decile 1 and 2 secondary schools, alternative education and teen parent units. This initiative will mean 56,000 young people will have access to this service.
- The nurses will improve students' access to primary health services, provide youth development checks, and refer students presenting with mental health problems for intervention and treatment.
- Nurses will use the HEADSS wellness check which the Ministry of Health will promote to all primary care practitioners. HEADSS is an abbreviation for an assessment process which measures youth wellbeing. The assessment has a series of questions relating to: **H**ome and environment, **E**ducation/employment, **A**ctivities, **D**rugs, **S**exuality, and **S**uicide/depression.

Youth workers in low decile schools

- Youth workers trained in mental health issues will be put into selected low decile schools to work alongside nurses, further strengthening support available to young people.
- This initiative builds on the Multi-Agency Support Services in Secondary Schools (MASSiSS) service currently provided in 17 schools in South Auckland, Porirua and Flaxmere, with the additional requirement that the workforce has training in working with young people with mental health issues.
- The youth workers will be contracted by existing community NGO providers through funding by Child, Youth and Family. The service will be available to students and their families and whanau, at no cost to them. The youth workers will work closely with existing school-based services and will link to community-based services.
- The youth workers will be introduced in selected low decile schools over two years, and will cover an estimated 20,000 students in 27 schools by year three.

Check & Connect

- Check & Connect targets young people who have disengaged – or are at risk of disengaging – from school.
 - It was developed by researchers, parents, students, educators and community members working together. This process of engagement has a positive effect on the attendance at school of students with anxiety, depression and behavioural disorders.
 - Check & Connect provides mentoring and monitoring for truants. Youth workers build close relationships with the families of young people in the programme to encourage attendance at school.
 - The Check & Connect programme will be trialled and evaluated in 17 schools in South Auckland, Porirua and Flaxmere through support staff and youth workers currently working in these schools.
 - Preliminary pilot results in New Zealand show immediate effects for some students' wellbeing and engagement in school. Some students benefit from longer involvement depending on their needs and those of their families.
- More information can be found at:
<http://www.checkandconnect.org/>

Making schools more responsible for student wellbeing

- Schools will be expected to take more responsibility for their students' wellbeing.
- Currently, the Ministry of Education provides school boards with indicators that help them decide what to focus on. These indicators help schools measure their success. The indicators now available relate to raising student achievement and including students with special education needs. These indicators will be expanded to include student wellbeing.
- The Education Review Office (ERO) will look at how school boards currently promote wellbeing and provide safe emotional environments for their students. Using this information, ERO will develop indicators of student wellbeing. These indicators are likely to include things such as student presence and participation in the classroom, positive student behaviours, and referral to specialist services.
- Once the indicators have been developed, ERO will include them in its regular review cycle. Each year school boards are legally required to produce a school charter setting out their goals and how they will achieve them. Charters include how they will respond to government objectives such as providing a safe physical and emotional environment for students.
- Over time, school boards should be able to use the indicators to show how the health and safety of the school environment has improved, for example by showing a decrease in bullying behaviour.

Encouraging a positive culture in schools

- Positive Behaviour School Wide is a universal approach to tackling problem behaviour in schools. It will be rolled out to all secondary schools.
- It focuses on teaching positive behaviour, communicating clear behaviour expectations and creating a school culture that supports responsibility for behaviour.
- Research shows that instances of poor behaviour can be reduced when schools operate well-managed and effective school-wide behaviour programmes.
- Training will be provided to help secondary schools implement Positive Behaviour School Wide. The Ministry of Education will provide ongoing coaching and link schools to a local coaching network for additional support.
- Positive Behaviour School Wide enables teachers to be more confident and spend more time teaching and less time reacting to problems. The programme enables students to spend more time learning, resulting in an increase in their academic achievement and social skills.

FRIENDS for Life

- FRIENDS for Life is designed to help build students' self-esteem and resilience to help them cope with depression and anxiety. Both depression and anxiety are key risk factors for suicide. The FRIENDS programme will be piloted in 10 secondary schools.
- The FRIENDS programme is delivered as part of the curriculum by teachers.
- FRIENDS promotes important personal development concepts such as self-esteem, problem-solving, self-expression, and helps young people build positive relationships with peers and adults. It helps them cope with feelings of fear, worry and depression.
- It was developed in Australia and is used in schools in 20 countries. It has been adapted for New Zealand's culture and curriculum.
- Teaching young people skills through the FRIENDS programme has been shown to reduce their risk of developing mental health difficulties. Every child and young person benefits by acquiring resilience to emotional stress.

Secondary schools interested in FRIENDS for Life should contact their local Ministry of Education office.

Improving the school guidance system

- Guidance counsellors are well placed to ensure that young people and their families are appropriately referred to support services when they need them. However, the school guidance system can be improved to better equip schools to identify and deal with mental health issues.
- The Education Review Office (ERO) will review the school guidance system to see how the current system is operating. ERO will look at schools' perception of pastoral care, the role of the guidance counsellor and the quality, coverage and management of this resource in secondary schools.
- The review will help establish which practices best support youth wellbeing. It will inform advice to the Government on further action to enhance the quality, coverage and management of this resource in secondary schools.
- The Ministry of Education currently provides around \$55 million per year to schools for guidance. It is intended that this funding will remain with schools but be better used.



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Q & A

School based initiatives

Nurses in decile 3 secondary schools

Why are nurses being put into secondary schools?

Having nurses in decile 3 schools will make it easier for young people to access health services, and the nurses will be able to pick up mental health issues. The nurses will make youth development checks, and refer students presenting with mental health problems for intervention and treatment.

Do any schools have these nurses now?

Yes, a number of schools already operate the nurse-led School Based Health Service (SBHS), which is funded to operate out of 135 decile 1-2 secondary schools, alternative education and teen parent units. This covers around 38,000 potentially at-risk pupils, but from next year SBHS will also begin to expand into decile 3 secondary schools. This initiative expands the service to a further 18,000 pupils.

Why are they being put into decile 3 schools?

Decile 3 schools have been selected so funding is targeted where it is most needed. A school's decile indicates the extent to which the school draws its students from lower socio-economic communities. Students from more economically-deprived areas usually have higher rates of mental health problems, and may have more difficulties accessing health care.

What school-based health services do decile 4 and above schools have?

Some of these schools also have their own SBHS, which are locally-funded.

How much will this cost and how is it being funded?

Expansion of SBHS to decile 3 secondary schools will cost \$10 million over four years.

When will SBHS in decile 3 schools start?

The phased expansion of School Based Health Services into decile 3 schools will start in 2013 and is expected to be completed by 2016.

Why use the HEADSS assessment in young people?

HEADSS is a tool used to assess young people's psychosocial wellbeing, covering a range of topic areas. Best practice guidelines developed by New Zealand clinicians recommend that the mental wellbeing of all youth should be routinely assessed, using a tool such as HEADSS. This recommendation is supported by international expert opinion.

Youth workers in low decile schools

What is the role of youth workers in schools?

Youth workers bring a specific set of skills to their role, enabling them to engage with young people to build resilience, emotional skills and self-esteem. There are already social workers in some decile 1-3 secondary schools as part of the Multi Agency Support Services in Secondary Schools (MASSiSS). We are building on this service with new youth workers who will be trained to work with young people with mental health issues.

How many schools will be given youth worker support?

There are currently 17 schools that have MASSiSS in them. By 2014 when this initiative is fully implemented, there will be an additional 10 schools with a school-based youth worker. This means 20,000 students will be covered.

How will schools and providers be selected?

Youth workers will be placed in schools in South Auckland, Porirua and Flaxmere that don't already have MASSiSS. Youth workers will be employed by Child, Youth and Family preferred providers who will be required to go through a tendering and contracting process.

How much will this cost?

The youth worker support service that is being introduced in addition to existing services will cost \$8.65 million over the next four years.

When will this start?

The first new youth workers will be in place by the beginning of 2013, starting work in the school year. There will be nine new youth workers in 2012/2013, and 10 more in 2013/2014.

Check & Connect

What is Check & Connect?

Check & Connect is an evidence-based programme that targets young people who have disengaged, or who are at risk of disengaging from school. Pilot results in New Zealand show immediate effects for some students' wellbeing and engagement in school.

What does the programme involve?

Check & Connect is implemented by trained mentors whose goal is to keep disengaged students involved in education by working with them, their schools and families. The mentor works with a caseload of students and families over time. If the student changes schools the mentor will remain with them.

What schools have been chosen?

This programme will be trialled in secondary schools in South Auckland, Porirua and Flaxmere. The schools chosen to trial the programme will have MASSiSS staff or established networks of youth workers or social workers.

How many young people will go through the programme?

This will be determined by community need and the number of support staff and youth workers available. Piloting of this programme in New Zealand has found that the programme is effective when each youth worker has a maximum of 30 students over a year.

When will the programme start?

Check & Connect will be trialled from early 2013.

How do schools get involved?

Schools interested in implementing and trialling Check & Connect, should contact their local Ministry of Education office. Priority will be given to decile 1-3 secondary schools that have youth workers or social workers who can be trained to deliver Check & Connect.

Making schools more responsible for student wellbeing

How will schools be made more responsible for student wellbeing?

The Education Review Office (ERO) will begin measuring how well schools are doing when it comes to the wellbeing of their students. ERO will be contracted to develop indicators that will help school boards improve wellbeing – for example, through a decrease in bullying.

How will this be different from what schools already do?

Some schools are already very active in promoting

wellbeing. However, we do not currently require schools to report specifically on measures to improve wellbeing. The development of these indicators will make it easier for schools to do that.

When will this work start and when will the new indicators be available?

Work on this will start immediately. Indicators will be available to schools in mid 2013.

Encouraging a positive culture in schools

What is Positive Behaviour School Wide?

Positive Behaviour School Wide is a universal approach that focuses on teaching positive behaviour, communicating clear behaviour expectations and creating a school culture that supports responsibility for behaviour.

Is Positive Behaviour School Wide in any schools now?

Since 2010, 288 schools have adopted this initiative. Of these, 85 are secondary schools.

What changes have been seen in schools with Positive Behaviour School Wide?

Early results show a decline in major behaviour problems. Schools are also reporting that their environment is

calmer and more settled, which means more time for students to focus on learning and less teacher time taken up in managing disruptive behaviour. Students have said they think the programme is changing the behaviour of all students.

When will Positive Behaviour School Wide be introduced to all secondary schools?

The programme will be rolled out nationwide over the next four years.

How much will this cost?

This will cost \$11.96 million over four years.

FRIENDS for Life

What is FRIENDS for Life?

FRIENDS for Life is an evidence-based early intervention and prevention programme that promotes important personal development concepts such as self-esteem, problem-solving, and self-expression. This has been shown, over the long term, to assist young people to build positive relationships with peers and adults and help them cope with feelings of fear, worry and depression. Both depression and anxiety are key risk factors for suicide.

FRIENDS does not require specialist staff and can be run

by teachers in the classroom as part of the curriculum. It will be trialled in 10 secondary schools as part of the Prime Minister's Youth Mental Health Project.

What skills do young people learn through this programme?

As an example, students might learn how to resolve conflict, remain calm and listen and develop solutions.

Is FRIENDS a New Zealand programme?

FRIENDS is an Australian programme which has been adapted for the New Zealand context by New Zealand teachers and the Christchurch College of Education.

How will the 10 schools be chosen?

A diverse range of secondary schools will be involved in the trial, such as rural, city, low and high socioeconomic area schools.

How can a school register interest in being involved?

Schools interested in trialling FRIENDS should contact their local Ministry of Education office. Priority will be given to secondary schools that are implementing Positive Behaviour School Wide.

How long will the pilot run and what will it cost?

The pilot will run for one year and cost just under \$500,000. The results will then be evaluated and if successful, the programme may be made available to all secondary schools.

Improving the school guidance system

Why does the school guidance system need to be improved?

The Ministry of Education currently provides around \$55 million a year to schools for guidance support, but the quality of support varies a lot across schools and there is little focus on mental health. The system needs to be improved to better equip schools to identify and deal with mental health issues.

How will the school guidance system be improved?

The Education Review Office (ERO) will review the school guidance system to see how it is operating. ERO will look at schools' perception of pastoral care, the role of the guidance counsellor and the quality, coverage and management of this resource in secondary schools. ERO will then develop a work programme to address issues raised in the review. The intention is for the current level of funding to remain, but be better used.

Hasn't the guidance counselling system just been reviewed?

No the guidance counselling system has not been reviewed recently. Guidance counsellors have regularly approached ERO seeking an evaluation of the effectiveness of the guidance counselling system.

How can schools/students/parents provide input into the review?

ERO will develop processes that allow schools, students and parents to provide input.

What is the timeframe for the review?

The review is likely to start in September 2012.