**KIDSMATTER PRIMARY**

Kids matter to families, to schools and to the community. These are the groups that KIDSMATTER Primary aims to bring together to improve children’s mental health.

Good mental health is vital for learning and life. Children who are mentally healthy are better able to meet life’s challenges. They also learn better and have stronger relationships with school staff, family members and peers.

**KIDSMATTER AT FOREST HILL STATE SCHOOL**

Every child is different, every family is different, and every school is different. At Forest Hill State School, we look at the mental health needs of our children and families and work on supporting those needs. We build on and promote children’s wellbeing.

All children need to feel that Forest Hill State School is a safe place where people will care about them, where their needs for support, respect and friendship will be met, and where they will be able to get help to work out problems. With the meeting of these needs, our children develop a sense of belonging at our school. Belonging is very important for mental health.

Children who feel that they belong at school are happier, more relaxed and have fewer behaviour problems than others. They also learn better, are more motivated and more successful with school work. Research into children’s mental health has found that a sense of belonging at school helps to protect children against mental health problems and improves their learning.

**THE FOUR COMPONENTS OF KIDSMATTER PRIMARY**

We can make a difference to our children’s mental health and wellbeing by addressing four key areas.

1. **A positive school community.** Positive relationships at school enable our children and families to feel that their school is a place where they feel welcome, where they will be listened to, and where they can contribute. A positive school community helps children feel that our school is a safe place where their needs can be met.

2. **Social and emotional learning for students.** Learning how to manage feelings and get on with others is an important part of children’s development that helps them to learn better and feel good about themselves. Teaching children social and emotional skills gives them tools for coping with emotions, solving problems and learning more effectively.

3. **Parenting support and education.** In order to promote children’s mental health and wellbeing, we need to work closely with families. We at Forest Hill State School support parents and carers in their central role of caring for children by making useful information and resources about parenting available, and by letting them know where they can get further assistance.

4. **Early intervention for students who are experiencing mental health difficulties.** When children and families are able to access effective mental health intervention early, it can make a significant difference to their lives. We at Forest Hill State School respond more effectively to children’s health difficulties by identifying when problems may need follow-up, provide information for families, and develop links with mental health services in our local area.

At Forest Hill State School, ‘kids matter’. 