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Addressing Learning Outcomes Using the FRIENDS for Children Program in Australian Primary Schools

FRIENDS is a scientifically validated and internationally recognised program that builds skills for managing feelings and coping with challenges with a positive, resilient attitude. In addition to teaching skills that will enhance their students' emotional wellbeing, teachers implementing FRIENDS programs in their classrooms are developing student competencies related to a range of learning outcomes across state and territory curriculum frameworks.

The following pages provide an overview of the relevant learning outcomes in selected key learning areas that relate to the materials and activities in the FRIENDS program. Some of these outcomes are comprehensively addressed, with several activities in different sessions of the program teaching and reviewing the skills involved. Other outcomes are more briefly touched on, with only one or two activities focusing on related skill development.

The outcomes listed are not exhaustive and not in any way prescriptive. They are intended simply as a guide for teachers who wish to be more aware of the relevant educational outcomes associated with implementation of the FRIENDS program, in addition to its established positive mental health outcomes.

NEW SOUTH WALES

The New South Wales Board of Studies produces K–6 syllabus documents for the seven areas of learning. Along with a defined aim, each syllabus has a set of objectives and outcomes expressed in terms of knowledge and understandings, skills, values and attitudes. The FRIENDS program has specific links with Stages 1, 2 and 3 of the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education objectives and outcomes, and some links with English, Creative Arts, and Human Society and Its Environment.

Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE)

This curriculum area aims to develop knowledge and understanding, skills, values and attitudes that will help students adopt active, healthy and fulfilling lifestyles. Content and activities provided by the FRIENDS program will assist teachers to achieve outcomes in four of the five essential skills (communicating, decision-making, interacting and problem-solving) and in the Growth and Development, and Interpersonal Relationships strands.

PDHPE — Essential Skills

<i>Communicating</i>	COS1.1 Communicates appropriately in a variety of ways.	COS2.1 Uses a variety of ways to communicate with and within groups.	COS3.1 Communicates confidently in a variety of situations.
<i>Decision-making</i>	DMS1.2 Recalls past experiences in making decisions.	DMS2.2 Makes decisions as an individual and as a group member.	DMS3.2 Makes informed decisions and accepts responsibility for consequences.
<i>Interacting</i>	INS1.3 Develops positive relationships with peers and other people.	INS2.3 Makes positive contributions in group activities.	INS3.3 Acts in ways that enhance the contribution of self and others in a range of cooperative situations.
<i>Problem-solving</i>	PSS1.5 Draws on past experiences to solve familiar problems.	PSS2.5 Uses a range of problem-solving strategies.	PSS3.5 Suggests, considers and selects appropriate alternatives when resolving problems.

PDHPE — Growth and Development

<i>Growth and Development</i>	GDS1.9 Describes the characteristics that make them both similar to others and unique.	GDS2.9 Describes life changes and associated feelings.	GDS3.9 Explains and demonstrates strategies for dealing with life changes.
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NEW SOUTH WALES (cont.)

PDHPE — Interpersonal Relationships

<i>Interpersonal Relationships</i>	IRS1.11 Identifies the ways in which they communicate, cooperate and care for others.	IRS2.11 Describes how relationships with a range of people enhance well-being.	IRS3.11 Describes roles and responsibilities in developing and maintaining positive relationships.
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Human Society and Its Environment

In this learning area, a small selection of outcomes from the Change and Continuity, and Social Systems and Structures strands can be related to the activities undertaken during FRIENDS program sessions.

Human Society and Its Environment — Change and Continuity

<i>Time and Change</i>	CCS1.2 Identifies changes and continuities in their own life and in the local community.	CCS2.2 Explains changes in the community and family life and evaluates the effects of these on different individuals, groups and environments.	CCS3.2 Explains the development of the principles of Australian democracy.
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Human Society and Its Environment — Social Systems and Structures

<i>Roles, Rights and Responsibilities</i>	SSS1.8 Identifies roles and responsibilities within families, schools and the local community, and determines ways in which they should interact with others.	SSS2.8 Investigates rights, responsibilities, and decision-making processes in the school and community and demonstrates how participation can contribute to the quality of their school and community life.	SSS3.8 Explains the structures, roles, responsibilities and decision-making processes of State and federal governments and explains why Australians value fairness and socially just principles.
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Creative Arts

Activities in the FRIENDS program include drawing, drama and role-play related to guided and imagined situations. These activities may contribute to the achievement of some of the outcomes in the Visual Arts and Drama Artforms.

NEW SOUTH WALES (cont.)

Creative Arts — Visual Arts

<i>Making</i>	VAS1.1 Makes artworks in a particular way about experiences of real and imaginary things.	VAS2.1 Represents the qualities of experiences and things that are interesting or beautiful by choosing among aspects of subject matter.	VAS3.1 Investigates subject matter in an attempt to represent likenesses of things in the world.
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Creative Arts — Drama

<i>Making</i>	DRAS1.1 Takes on roles in drama to explore familiar and imagined situations.	DRAS2.1 Takes on and sustains roles in a variety of drama forms to express meaning in a wide range of imagined situations.	DRAS3.1 Develops a range of in-depth and sustained roles.
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English

The FRIENDS program employs a range of strategies that involve thinking, talking, reading and writing. By implementing the FRIENDS program to minimise childhood anxiety and depression, teachers are providing learning opportunities that will contribute to curriculum outcomes in the Talking and Listening, Reading, and Writing strands of the English curriculum.

English — Talking and Listening

<i>Talking and Listening</i>	TS1.1 Communicates with an increasing range of people for a variety of purposes on both familiar and introduced topics in spontaneous and structured classroom activities.	TS2.1 Communicates in informal and formal classroom activities in school and social situations for an increasing range of purposes on a variety of topics across the curriculum.	TS3.1 Communicates effectively for a range of purposes and with a variety of audiences to express well-developed, well-organised ideas dealing with more challenging topics.
<i>Skills and Strategies</i>	TS1.2 Interacts in more extended ways with less teacher intervention, makes increasingly confident oral presentations and generally listens attentively.	TS2.2 Interacts effectively in groups and pairs, adopting a range of roles, uses a variety of media and uses various listening strategies for different situations.	TS3.2 Interacts productively and with autonomy in pairs and groups of various sizes and composition, uses effective oral presentation skills and strategies and listens attentively.

NEW SOUTH WALES (cont.)

English — Reading

<i>Reading and Viewing Texts</i>	RS1.5 Reads a wider range of texts on less familiar topics with increasing independence and understanding, making connections between own knowledge and experience and information in texts.	RS2.5 Reads independently a wide range of texts on increasingly challenging topics and justifies own interpretation of ideas, information and events.	RS3.5 Reads independently an extensive range of texts with increasing content demands and responds to themes and issues.
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English — Writing

<i>Producing Texts</i>	WS1.9 Plans, reviews and produces a small range of simple literary and factual texts for a variety of purposes on familiar topics for known readers.	WS2.9 Drafts, revises, proofreads and publishes well-structured texts that are more demanding in terms of topic, audience and written language features.	WS3.9 Produces a wide range of well-structured and well-presented literary and factual texts for a wide variety of purposes and audiences using increasingly challenging topics, ideas, issues and written language features.
<i>Context and Text</i>	WS1.13 Identifies how own texts differ according to their purpose, audience and subject matter.	WS2.13 Discusses how own texts are adjusted to relate to different readers, how they develop the subject matter and how they serve a wide variety of purposes.	WS3.13 Critically analyses own texts in terms of how well they have been written, how effectively they present the subject matter and how they influence the reader.