

What is ELSA?

There will always be children and young people in schools facing life challenges that detract from their ability to engage with learning. Some will need more support than others to improve their emotional literacy. ELSA is an initiative developed and supported by Educational Psychologists. It recognises that children learn better and are happier in school if their emotional needs are met.

Some ELSA work is delivered on a 1:1 basis, but sometimes small group work is more appropriate especially in the areas of social and friendship skills. Sessions are fun and engaging and we use a range of activities such as: role play, puppets, games or therapeutic activities such as mindfulness, arts and crafts. ELSA sessions take part in a safe space, which provides a calm area for the child to feel supported and nurtured in.

In ELSA we aim to provide support for a wide range of emotional needs:

- *Recognising Emotions*
- *Anxiety*
- *Self-esteem*
- *Social skills*
- *Friendship skills*
- *Anger management*
- *Loss and bereavement*

How does ELSA work?

Children are usually referred for ELSA support by their class teacher, senior leaders or the SENCO. Programs usually run for 6-8 weeks and sessions are usually on a weekly basis. With the program aims in mind we plan support sessions to facilitate the pupil in developing new skills and coping strategies that allow them to manage social and emotional demands more effectively.

Supporting, not fixing

Remember ELSA is not here to fix children's difficulties. What we can do is provide emotional support. We aim to establish a warm, respectful relationship with a pupil and to provide a reflective space where they are able to share honestly their thoughts and feelings.

Training

Training and development of ELSAs is an ongoing process. An educational psychologist has regular supervision sessions with our team and is able to offer advice on suitability or nature of ELSA involvement in complex cases. If cases are beyond our level of expertise then we may refer to outside agencies such as: play therapist, specialist counselling or CAMHS.

Parent help and support:

My child appears anxious...

What to do when you worry too much (A kid's guide to overcoming anxiety) by Dawn Huebner

This is an interactive self-help book designed to guide children between the ages of 6-12 and their parents through the cognitive behavioural techniques most used to treat generalised anxiety.

For younger children...

Ruby's Worries by Tom Percival

A huge bag of worries by Virginia Ironside

The Colour Monster by Anna Llenas

My child has low self-esteem...

You Are Awesome by Matthew Syed

This has activities to provide children with ways to develop their self-worth and self-esteem. Best for Key Stage 2.

The Lion Inside by Rachel Bright and Jim Field

Have you filled your bucket today? by Carol McCloud

My child is angry...

Volcano In My Tummy

This has a clear and effective approach to helping children and adults alike to understand and deal constructively with children's anger. Through activities, stories, articles, and games designed to allow a multi-subject, developmental approach to the topic at home.

Rory Red by Luke Baker