



What is Elsa? (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant)

Elsa is an initiative developed to support children to learn better when their emotional needs are addressed. Young people face life challenges that can affect their ability to engage in their learning, and Elsa sessions are planned in order to help them cope with a wide range of emotional needs.

Some examples of needs might be:

- Recognising emotions
- Building self esteem
- Developing social skills
- How to make and keep friends
- Anger management
- Coping with loss and bereavement

Elsa is not there to fix children's problems but to 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.

The ELSA process

Children are usually referred for ELSA support by their class teacher, Senior Leaders or the Senco. There are regular update sessions to discuss progress and to discuss referral forms and to identify and prioritise which children require ELSA input.

An ELSA is a specialist Teaching Assistant who works with the children. We have chosen staff who relate well to the children and are able to build up the sort of close bonds that allow the children to feel safe and nurtured.

What happens in an Elsa session?

When a child begins the sessions, entry data is taken in the form of a feelings questionnaire and when the sessions are completed the same questionnaire

will try to gauge improvement or changes in the particular child's feelings and behaviour.

The ELSA will have close contact with the class teacher and other staff if needed, and any strategies given to the child will be shared, so that the work done is not in isolation, and is seen outside the ELSA sessions, for example around the school, in the playground and in the classroom.

Typically Elsa work takes place over 4 – 8 weekly sessions, but can be extended if needed. The sessions are designed to be fun and either 1:1 or in a group setting. The activities are designed to motivate and engage the child.

Each session is planned in advance by the ELSA, and may include a range of activities such as games, puppets, making something, talking and listening, role play etc.

It needs to be appreciated that change cannot necessarily be achieved rapidly and is dependent upon the context and complexity of the presenting issues.

How can I help my child?

- ✓ Find time to listen to them
- ✓ Regularly have fun together
- ✓ Help your child to see things from the other person's point of view
- ✓ Encourage your child to develop a 'glass half full' approach i.e. look for the positive
- ✓ Encourage peaceful problem solving

If you have concerns about the wellbeing of your child, please contact the class teacher or Senco.

