



St Simon's Catholic Primary School
'Whatever we do, we do it for the glory of God.'



ELSA

We are pleased to be able to share information with parents about Emotional Literacy Support on the school website. On this page we aim to post ideas and helpful advice on how you can help your child; for example in areas such as empathy, self-esteem or perhaps to pick up some tips about calming techniques. Parents and carers will be able to find out about recommended books which may be useful and links to other websites for some self-help at home

Mrs Clarke (ELSA)

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 require greater support to increase their emotional literacy than others. 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 also addressed.

The majority of ELSA work is delivered on an individual basis, but sometimes small group work is more appropriate, especially in the areas of social and friendship skills. Sessions are fun, we use a range of activities such as: games, role-play with puppets or therapeutic activities such as mindfulness or arts and craft. ELSA sessions take place in our very own 'ELSA room' which provides a calm, safe space for the child to feel supported and nurtured.

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 teachers and Senior Leaders. When a referral is made we discuss the child's needs and to identify and prioritise which children require a weekly programme for the next 6-8 weeks. With the programme aims in mind we then 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

An ELSA is not there to fix children's problems.

They can provide emotional support.

The aim is 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.

It needs to be appreciated that change cannot necessarily be achieved rapidly and is dependent upon the context and complexity of the presenting issues. For children with complex or long-term needs it is unrealistic to expect ELSA intervention to resolve all their difficulties, however support will be designed to target specific aspects of a child's need. Training and development of ELSAs is an ongoing process and wisdom is required to recognise when issues are beyond the level of expertise that could reasonably be expected of an ELSA. In these cases, school supports parents with referrals for specialist counselling, play therapy or to CAMHS. An Educational Psychologist has regular supervision sessions with our ELSA, and is able to offer advice on suitability or nature of ELSA involvement in complex cases.