



St Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Academy



With God's Guidance We Love, Learn, Respect and Forgive

Part of the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Academy Trust

ELSA Policy

Implementation	Whole School / All Staff
Monitoring	Mrs Clair Dedman
Written	01/03/23
Signed (Head Teacher)	
Signed (Chair of Governors)	
Review Date	March '24

ELSA POLICY

Policy Statement

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, we are committed to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of our pupils. We have a supportive and caring ethos, and our approach is respectful and kind, where each individual and contribution is valued. At our school we know that everyone at times can face difficulties and experience challenges that can make us vulnerable. We understand that anyone of us may need additional emotional support. 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. Some children may have experienced trauma or bereavement that means they are not able to operate effectively at school with their friendships or learning and need additional support with their mental health and well-being to help them face these challenges we have introduced the ELSA programme.

ELSA stands for Emotional Literacy Support Assistant, in our school Miss Maxwell is the trained ELSA to assist our children.

The aim:

- help children to understand their emotions and feelings better.
- help children to feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries.
- help children socially to form and maintain relationships.
- promote self-esteem and ensure everyone knows that they are valued.
- enable them to think about their situation without feeling judged or criticised.
- encourage children to be confident and respect individuality.
- help children to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks.

ELSA:

- relates to our school values- Be kind, Work Hard and Never Give up generating a sense of belonging.
- Involves recognising emotions, self-esteem, anxiety management, social skills, friendship skills, anger management, loss and bereavement.
- celebrates success and achievement in all areas of life.

- provides opportunities to develop a sense of self-worth through taking responsibility for themselves.
- provides opportunities to reflect.

We pursue our aims through:

- supporting pupils going through difficulties, for example, bereavement, breakdown of parents' relationship, changes at home or school, care system including adoption
- work to specific programme aims that are realistic for each child.
- planning sessions with objectives that build towards the child's programme aims.
- providing a reflective space where children are able to share honestly their thoughts and feelings, learn strategies to manage their needs and feel safe and secure within the school environment.
- helping children feel happy and safe in school and to reach their potential educationally.
- removing the barriers to learning in order to have happy children in school and at home.
- delivering sessions in a caring, supportive and fun way.
- finding ways to cope with their challenges by helping them build the skills that will help them be able to cope and work through the problems.
- giving the opportunity to talk about difficulties as they learn to apply with greater consistency the new coping strategies they have developed.

Lead Members of Staff

- Mrs Clair Dedman - Head Teacher Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Mrs Stack - Assistant Head Teacher, SENDCo, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Miss Maxwell - Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA), Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

Identifying Needs and Warning Signs

- Changes in eating / sleeping habits
- Becoming socially withdrawn

- Changes in activity and mood
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness, or loss of hope
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism
- Not having necessary school equipment with them (reading book etc)
- Change in their usual personality
- Changes in behaviour

How does a child enter the programme:

- Staff members / parents notify SENDco ELSA of children in their class who would benefit from this support. Once highlighted the lead members discuss which child would be suitable to gain the opportunity.
- Permission from parents is sought / referral form completed.
- A programme can last approximately a term however child with certain needs may require the sessions to continue.
- Half hour sessions take place once a week.
- 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.
- In some cases, a different kind of work may continue more informally, involving a lower level of contact. Some pupils may need to regularly 'touch base' with the ELSA to review their progress. They may need the opportunity to talk about difficulties as they learn to apply with greater consistency the new coping strategies they have developed.

The ELSA will make use of resources available including:

- ELSA Network on-line resources
 - Time to time activities
 - Art and craft
 - Games
 - Stories / Social Stories
 - Comic strip conversations

Creating a positive environment

A designated area has been allocated for the time the sessions take place providing;

- Calm and quiet
- A comfortable area to work a calm, sensory area indoors
- Books
- Games
- Posters

Keeping parents informed

Parents will be contacted either by letter or in person when their child is allocated a place. Working with parents gives the ELSA access to a valuable perspective but may also give parents greater insight into the needs of their child, leading to support at home that complements the work done in school. It gives us the opportunity to guide the parents towards organisations for further help should they need it.

Privacy

The following guidance does not apply to safeguarding issues, where the ELSA is obliged to share information out of concern for either the pupil's safety or the safety of others.

The ELSA will need to respect the privacy of pupils and their families. With the development of a trusting relationship, the ELSA may find that a pupil talks freely and in detail about incidents or situations that are troubling them. There may be times when the ELSA thinks it would be helpful for other members of staff to be aware of a child's concerns or a family situation. Sharing information will be done with sensitivity to the child and their families. It may sometimes be appropriate for an ELSA to talk with the pupil about what they would like to share and to secure their agreement so that their trust is maintained.

Training

- The school ELSA has completed the full training and continues to attend ELSA supervision session once a term with the SENCo.
- The school ELSA has the support of their line manager (the SENDCo) as there may be times, they need to consult following a challenging session, as not everything can wait until the next supervision meeting.

This policy should also be read in conjunction with policy for Mental Health and Wellbeing policy. It should also sit alongside child protection procedures.