



## **Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA)**

The ELSA project is a national initiative developed by Sheila Burton, Educational Psychologist, to build the capacity of schools to support the emotional needs of their pupils from within their own resources. It recognises that social, emotional and mental health underpins learning and pupil well-being and that children learn better and are happier in school if their emotional needs are also addressed.

Educational Psychologists train teaching assistants to become ELSAs and provide them with ongoing supervision from educational psychologists.

### **Who are ELSAs?**

An ELSA is a specialist teaching assistant who has been trained to work with children who are showing a wide range of emotional or social difficulties for example; anxiety, low self esteem, problems with anger etc.

ELSA's have been chosen for their ability to build good relationships with children.

### **What do ELSAs do?**

ELSA's work closely with teachers to set clear objectives for individual children. The ELSA will then work on these objectives with the child individually or in a small group. Activities which target the needs of the child will be planned carefully by the ELSA's.

ELSA's have to complete a recognised training course designed specifically for assistants working in schools that covers a wide range of areas including: social skills, emotions, bereavement, social stories and therapeutic stories, anger management, self-esteem, counselling skills such as solution focus and friendship.

### **Will my child enjoy the ELSA sessions?**

Yes Of Course!!

ELSA sessions are planned in advance and tailor made to suit the needs of the children. The sessions are designed to be fun and interactive to engage and motivate the child.

The ELSA may use a range of activities throughout the sessions which could include games, puppets, role play, making things, talking and listening etc. For example puppets can be a great way of modelling social situations or getting children to talk about how they feel in different circumstances.

### **What will be covered during the sessions?**

- RELATIONSHIPS
- RECOGNISING EMOTIONS
- SOCIAL SKILLS
- FRIENDSHIP ISSUES
- SELF ESTEEM
- UNDERSTANDING ANGER
- LOSS & BEREAVEMENT
- ANXIETY
- COPING STRATEGIES
- BUILDING RESILIENCE
- BULLYING ISSUES

### **What if my child needs further help?**

Your child's progress will be monitored closely during the ELSA programme. If the school or parent feels that the child needs further support the school has access to a range of external support services. ELSA's have close links with the school's Educational Psychologist.

### **What are the benefits of ELSA?**

Children learn better and are happier if their emotional needs are addressed.

They learn to:

- Develop coping strategies and talk about difficulties.
- Interact more successfully with others.
- Develop greater self-awareness manage school better and feel better about themselves.
- Pupils with an ELSA feel they have been listened to and supported.

### **What can a parent or carer do to support at home?**

- Find time to listen to your child
- Do lots of fun things together
- Encourage your child to see the positives in every situation
- Encourage problem solving to find peaceful solutions
- Help your child to see things from the view of other people
- Discuss any problems or concerns you have with your child's teacher/ SENCo

**Who to contact to get ELSA support for your child.**

Please contact Mrs Scott, Mrs Rogers or Mr Clayton if you feel like your child requires support with any of the above.