



Inspiring each other to achieve success

# Congerstone Primary School

## Emotional Literacy Support Assistant

### 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.

We are lucky enough to have a qualified Emotional Literacy Support Assistant at Congerstone Primary Mrs Vernon. 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, using a range of activities such as: games, role-play with puppets or arts and craft.

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

Recognising emotions  
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 on occasion the SENCo. 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

Remember, ELSAs are not there to fix children's problems. 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.

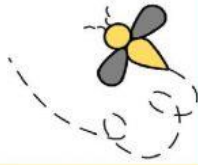
It needs to be appreciated change cannot necessarily be achieved rapidly and is dependent upon the context and complexity of the presenting issues. For children with complex or long-term needs it is unrealistic to expect ELSA intervention to resolve all their difficulties, however support will be designed 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.

There is a great website full of information and a parent section with resources suitable for parents to use:  
[www.elsa-support.co.uk](http://www.elsa-support.co.uk)

## What is an ELSA

An ELSA is a specialist teaching assistant with a wealth of experience of working with children. ELSAs are trained and regularly supervised by the Educational Psychologists in your Local education authority. An ELSA is a warm and caring person who wants to help your child feel happy in school and to reach their potential educationally. Their aim is to remove the barriers to learning and to have happy children in school and at home.

Please do talk to the ELSA in your school if you have any problems with your child.



## ELSAs can help with

- Loss and bereavement
- Self-esteem
- Social skills
- Emotions
- Friendship issues
- Relationships
- Anger management
- Behaviour
- Anxiety
- Bullying
- Conflict
- Relaxation techniques



## ELSA



**E**mo  
**L**iteracy  
**S**upport  
**A**ssistant

Miss Coombes



### Individual session



The ELSA will plan their sessions for your child very carefully. The session consists of several parts.

#### Emotional check in

This is an opportunity to talk about feelings.

#### Main activity

The ELSA will plan the activity to a learning objective. Something your child will be able to do at the end of the session that they cannot do now. This is usually a 'I can' statement such as 'I can tell you about my strengths' (A self-esteem objective). The ELSA will encourage your child to tell you about their talents or personal characteristics such as 'kind', 'caring', 'helpful' or 'brave'. The child will then make something to reinforce those strengths.

#### Relaxation

Your child will be taught a relaxation exercise to help get them ready to go back to class

Your child will now be able to answer the question 'I can tell you about my strengths'



### Group session

The ELSA will plan their sessions for your child very carefully. The session consists of several parts, the first two parts consists of a circle-time where children sit in a circle and take turns to speak.

#### Emotional check in

This is an opportunity to talk about feelings.

#### Warm up activity

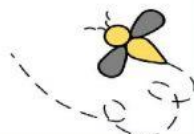
A fun game or activity to help relax your child.

#### Main activity

This is similar to the individual session but your child will be encouraged to work with other children. This helps with co-operation, social skills, friendship and gives a sense of belonging. A learning objective will be set for the group of children which they will all be able to answer at the end of the session.

#### Relaxation

Your child will be taught a relaxation exercise to help get them ready to go back to class



### Typical problems

#### A very angry child

The ELSA will take the child through an anger management intervention to help them recognise their anger triggers, techniques to avoid those triggers and calming down techniques.

#### A loved pet has died

ELSAs are trained in bereavement and understand that the loss of a pet is probably the first experience of death for your child. They will work with your child to help them feel supported in school.

