

Dear Parent/Carer

I am writing to provide you with some information about ELSA support and what you can expect from the sessions.

What is ELSA?

ELSA stands for **Emotional Literacy Support Assistant**. ELSA support is designed to help children develop their emotional wellbeing and learn skills that can support them both in school and at home.

ELSA sessions provide children with a safe, calm and supportive environment where they can talk about their feelings, explore any worries or difficulties they may be experiencing, and learn strategies to help them manage their emotions.

The aim is not to "fix" a child or make them talk about anything they are uncomfortable discussing. Instead, ELSA focuses on building a child's emotional understanding, confidence and resilience.

What happens during an ELSA session?

Sessions are usually delivered individually or in a small group and are planned around the individual needs of the child. Sessions may focus on areas such as:

- Understanding and identifying emotions
- Developing self-esteem and confidence
- Managing worries and anxiety
- Building friendships and social skills
- Understanding and managing anger
- Developing emotional regulation strategies
- Coping with change or difficult experiences
- Developing positive thinking and resilience
- Learning relaxation and calming techniques

Sessions are usually around **30 minutes** and take place at an agreed time during the school day. Activities may include talking, games, stories, drawing, practical activities and relaxation exercises. The sessions are designed to be engaging and age-appropriate so that children feel comfortable and supported.

How does ELSA work?

ELSA support usually takes place over a number of weeks, with sessions building on the skills introduced previously. Children are encouraged to practise the strategies they learn and use them in everyday situations.

The support is child-centred, meaning that sessions are adapted to the individual child and their needs. We will monitor how the child is progressing throughout the programme and consider what further support may be helpful.

It is important to understand that ELSA is **not counselling or therapy**. ELSAs work within their training and are supported by a supervising Educational Psychologist. If a child requires support beyond the scope of ELSA, this will be discussed with the appropriate school staff and, where necessary, with parents/carers.

Working together

Parents and carers play an important role in supporting children's emotional wellbeing. Where appropriate, we may share simple strategies or activities that can be used at home to reinforce the skills being developed during ELSA sessions.

Our aim is to help your child feel listened to, understood and supported, while giving them practical tools that they can use to manage their emotions and navigate challenges more confidently.

If you have any questions about ELSA or your child's sessions, please do not hesitate to get in touch with the school SENCO, Miss Wilcox or through the school office.

Kind regards,

The Hayes Inclusion Team