

# HESWALL PRIMARY SCHOOL



## Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) Policy

### **1. Introduction**

The Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) program is a school initiative designed to address the emotional needs of children and young people, with the aim of improving their learning experience and overall well-being. This policy outlines the procedures and guidelines for implementing the ELSA program at Heswall Primary.

### **2. ELSA Objectives**

The primary objectives of the ELSA program at Heswall Primary are:

- To provide support for a wide range of emotional needs, including recognizing emotions, self-esteem, social skills, friendship skills, anger management, and loss and bereavement.
- To foster a warm, respectful relationship with pupils, providing a reflective space for them to share their thoughts and feelings in a supportive environment.
- To facilitate the development of new skills and coping strategies that allow pupils to manage social and emotional demands more effectively.

### **3. Referral Process**

Children are usually referred for ELSA support by their class teacher, Senior Leaders, SENCO, or Mental Health Lead. The ELSA's role in this process is to provide information and observations about the child's emotional needs. Referral forms are reviewed every half term to identify and prioritize which children require a program for the next 6-8 weeks.

### **4. ELSA Sessions**

ELSA sessions, designed to be engaging and fun, are mainly delivered on an individual basis, with small group work utilized in the areas of social and friendship skills. Each session, lasting

from 30 to 45 minutes, is a weekly highlight during the school day. The sessions use activities such as games, role-play with puppets, or arts and crafts to make learning enjoyable. ELSA sessions take place in a designated 'ELSA room' to provide a calm, safe space for the child to feel supported and nurtured.

## **5. Training and Supervision**

ELSAs receive training and supervision support from Educational Psychologists and ELSA program leaders. It is essential to recognize when issues are beyond the level of expertise that could reasonably be expected of an ELSA. The Educational Psychologist working with our school can offer advice on the suitability or nature of ELSA involvement in complex cases.

## **6. Parent/Carers Permissions**

Before the commencement of any ELSA support, written permission from an adult with parental responsibility is required. Conversations between the ELSA and the child are treated with the utmost confidentiality. However, if there is concern for the child's well-being or safeguarding issues, this will be communicated to the parents and the class teacher or Senior Leadership Team if necessary, ensuring transparency and trust in the process.

## **7. Review and Monitoring**

The success of ELSA sessions may not be achieved rapidly and can depend on the context and complexity of the presenting issues. ELSA sessions may not be suitable for children with complex or long-term needs, and it is not realistic to expect ELSA intervention to resolve all their difficulties. The ELSA program will be reviewed and monitored regularly, with data collected on the children's progress and feedback from staff and parents, to ensure its effectiveness in meeting the emotional needs of the pupils.

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