

The Meadows Emotional Literacy Support Policy

What is ELSA?

ELSA is an initiative developed and supported by Educational Psychologists. The initiative identifies that students' make better progress, are happier, and achieve their potential if their emotional needs are understood and explored.

An ELSA is an Emotional Literacy Support Assistant. ELSAs are specially trained practitioners who have been trained by local Educational Psychologists. ELSAs provide emotional support and help to students who struggle with their emotional development. Sessions are held in a calm, safe designated space.

Aims & Objectives:

At The Meadows we aim to enhance and support the emotional health and wellbeing of our students. We continue to aim to sustain a supportive and caring ethos whilst establishing a warm, respectful relationship with students giving them a safe place to explore their emotions and time to think about how they are feeling. The aim of an ELSA is to help students develop an understanding around their emotions and develop an understanding of the emotions of others and learn to respect these.

Through KS3, KS4 and KS5 we intend:

- To help students to develop their understanding of their emotions and feelings
- To help students to feel comfortable and develop their confidence to share any concerns or worries
- To help students develop their ability to form and maintain relationships and friendships
- To help students to develop their self-esteem and ensure everyone knows that they are valued
- To help students develop their confidence and their own individuality
- To help students to understand their personal experiences and their feelings in a safe and trusted environment, where they can share honestly and learn strategies to manage these feelings
- To help students to develop their emotional resilience and to develop strategies to overcome any barriers or setbacks
- To help students feel happy and safe in school and reach their potential educationally by helping to remove barriers to learning
- To help students work through difficulties, for example, bereavement, breakdown of parents' relationship, changes at home or school, care system including adoption
- To work to specific programme aims that are realistic for each student
- To plan sessions with objectives that build towards the students programme aims
- To help students feel happy and safe in school and to reach their potential educationally removing barriers to learning.
- To deliver sessions in a caring, supportive and fun way
- To find ways to cope with their challenges by helping them build the skills that will help

them be able to cope and work through their problems

- To give students the opportunity to talk about difficulties as they learn to apply the new coping strategies they have developed with greater consistency
- To support students with known family breakdown or bereavement

Making Referrals:

Classroom staff will refer students for ELSA intervention. Staff will need to complete an online referral to the DSL and Lead Teacher. These students will then be discussed at half termly meetings in depth and prioritised according to their needs. The designated ELSA will then complete a classroom observation of that student prior to the programme starting. With the programme aims ELSAs will then plan sessions to support the students social and emotional demands more effectively.

Identifying needs and Warning Signs

Possible warning signs could include:

- 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 absenteeism
- Change in their usual personality
- Changes in behaviour

ELSA Sessions:

ELSA sessions will run approximately for 6-8 weeks, on some occasions a student may need longer or to have regular contact/drops ins with the ELSA. ELSAs will have a set time each week to work with their students and this will remain a priority on the timetable. This will normally be one 30-minute session per week.

ELSAs then provide short term targeted provision supporting students' self-esteem, social skills, friendship skills, loss and bereavement, and anger management. Sessions are planned with objectives that build towards the programmes aims. ELSAs will have a clear plan of the student's lead objective for each session and ensure that resources are sourced before the session. ELSAs will then provide a recorded evaluation at the end of each session. 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 will be interactive, nurturing, and fun. ELSAs will use a range of activities such as discussions around emotions, interactive games, role play, puppets, arts and craft. These sessions will take place in the ELSA and Nurture room.

Parents and Carers:

Permission from parents is sought but not necessary however we will encourage communication between school and home. Parents will be contacted either by letter or in person when their student is allocated a place. Working with parents gives the ELSA access to a valuable perspective but may also give parents a greater insight into the needs of their

son/daughter, leading to support at home that complements the work done in school.

Confidentiality:

Students who access ELSA sessions are entitled to an appropriate level of confidentiality. They are entitled to develop a trusting relationship with ELSA staff and therefore are permitted to privacy around them and their families. However, staff will follow the school's safeguarding policy and child protection procedures.

ELSAs may also feel at times it will be helpful for other members of staff to be aware of a concern or family situation. Sharing information will be done with sensitivity to the student and their families - ELSA's can, if appropriate, discuss with the student what they would like to be shared so that their trust is maintained.

Training:

All ELSA staff have completed the full training which is provided by educational psychologists. The ELSAs will continue to attend ELSA supervision sessions once a term with an Educational Psychologist who is a qualified ELSA Trainer. ELSAs also have the support of their line managers as there may be times that they need to consult following a challenging session, as not everything can wait until the next supervision meeting with the educational psychologist.

Resources:

The ELSA will make use of resources available including:

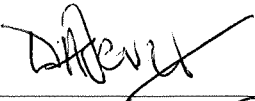
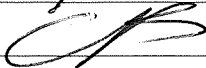
- ELSA Network online resources
- Time to time activities
- Arts and crafts
- Games
- Stories
- Comic strip conversations
- Books
- Posters

A Supporting Role

ELSA intervention is a supporting role and is not to be viewed as a quick fix. It is an unrealistic expectation to expect rapid changes and immediate progress. Students with complex or long-term needs may require further/different levels of expertise. The Educational Psychologist that works with our school would be able to offer advice on suitability or nature of ELSA involvement in complex cases.

Lead Members of Staff:

- Sarah Rubanski - Designated Safeguarding Lead and Senior Mental Health Lead
- Amy Chappell - Lead Nurture and ELSA Teacher
- Jane Jadczyk - Emotional Literacy Support Assistant Lead
- Sally Wilkes - Emotional Literacy Support Assistant

Policy produced: January 2023	Policy agreed:
Signed: 	Chair of Teaching, Learning & Outcomes Committee
Signed: 	Headteacher
Review date:	(2 years)

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