



## What is an ELSA?

An ELSA in a school is an **Emotional Literacy Support Assistant** who has completed a recognised training course. ELSAs are specialists with a wealth of experience and are trained and regularly supervised by Educational Psychologists.

### What is an ELSA's role

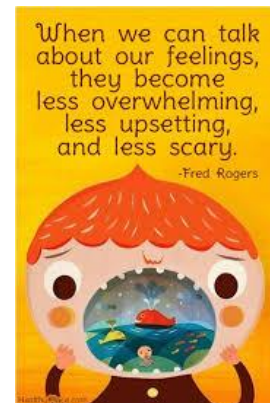
ELSAs are warm, kind and caring people who want to make children and young people feel happy in school and to reach their potential socially, emotionally and academically. They understand the barriers to learning that some children and young people might have and can help them with this.

An ELSA is not there to fix problems but to help them find their own solutions and offer that important support to a child or young person.

Our ELSA at Merdon Junior is Mrs Stroud.

### What areas can an ELSA help with?

- Loss and bereavement
- Emotional Literacy
- Self-esteem
- Social Skills
- Friendship issues
- Managing strong feelings, including anxiety and worries
- Bullying and conflict
- Emotional Regulation
- Growth Mindset



### What if my child's difficulties are not suitable for an ELSA to support with?

It is important that ELSAs only cover things they are trained to cover. Any concerns out of their scope of practice should be discussed with their Educational Psychologist and potentially referred on to outside agencies.

### How are children or young people referred for ELSA support at Merdon?

Children can be referred by the class teacher, the Sendco (Miss Sambles) or through a parent referral.

### How is an ELSA intervention structured?



An ELSA intervention should be a short-term focus intervention with clear aims. It will usually last for half a term to a full term in length. It should begin with a pre-assessment, and end with a post-assessment. Once the target has been set, our ELSA can plan a series of sessions for your child to help them achieve their target. This might be a one-to-one session or a group session. The usual intervention is 6 sessions (half a term) but it could be a little longer if necessary. It is important your child doesn't become too attached and reliant on the ELSA because the aim for most children is to cope independently with any challenges that they face.

### What does a typical ELSA session look like?



There would be a welcome for your child along with an emotional check in - How do they feel today?

A warm up or icebreaker game or activity would be played. This part is important because it helps your child to feel relaxed and it's fun!

The main activity would follow where the ELSA would be teaching something to help your child with their target. The ELSA would also review what was learnt last time to see if your child has remembered and if

they used the skill taught.

There would be a relaxation exercise to help your child be ready for class and a quick review on what they have learnt that session. At this point the ELSA may ask your child to do something for next time. E.g. practise star breathing when feeling angry.

### Is there opportunity for ELSA reactive support at Merdon?

Sometimes things happen in life such as a death, divorce, illness, a hospital stay, and so on. Our ELSA can help your child reactively which means they can support them immediately when things like this happen. It is child led and there aren't any targets. It would usually take the form of short check ins, rather than taught sessions.

### Where do sessions take place?

We have an allocated room at Merdon for sessions to take place in.

### Do I need to give permission for my child to have an ELSA intervention?

Permission isn't needed to run a school-based intervention with children, but we feel it is important to work with you and keep you well informed. Therefore, we will always write to you to gain your views before starting ELSA work you're your child. Children can make so much more progress when the parent and ELSA work together, and you may be able to support the learning outside of the session e.g. practising coping strategies when the child has big emotions.

### How will I know the progress my child has made from their ELSA intervention?

Once your child has finished their sessions, you will be updated either by Mrs Stroud, Miss Sambles or their class teacher. This will likely be verbally, but you may also be given some resources to follow up with at home. ELSA sessions are confidential so that children feel they can engage freely. The only exception to this would be if we feel there is a safeguarding issue. Therefore, you will not receive specific session feedback, but we can give you an overview of what was covered and information on how your child has progressed against their target.

