

What is a Therapeutic Active Listening Assistant (TALA)?



TALAs are specially trained members of staff who can offer a young person a safe and supportive environment to talk about difficult issues in confidence. They listen to a young person's views, experiences and feelings without judgement in an atmosphere of respect and empathy based on a

secure and trusting working relationships. TALAs have regular professional supervision from Educational Psychologists to help them with their work. The TALA at Merdon Junior School is: Mrs Caine

How is TALA different to ELSA?

ELSA involves the identification of specific emotional literacy targets towards which the pupils work, guided by the ELSA through a carefully planned programme of support. Whilst ELSA deliver skill- based programmes, TALA sessions are more pupil- led. The TALA facilitates a helping conversation using counselling practices. Simply put, ELSA teaches skills and TALA offers a time to talk.

How can TALA intervention help my child?

TALA intervention offers a safe place to talk and enables the child to:

- Explore and deal with painful emotional issues
- Look at things differently
- Cope better with issues, concerns and situations
- Achieve some level of understanding with regard to thoughts, emotions and behaviours
- Feel better about themselves
- Accept their limitations and strengths and to feel OK about them
- Change behaviours which have negative consequences
- Maximize the opportunity to reach their full potential.



How are TALA intervention sessions structured?

Your child would a regular slot during the school week for 30 minutes to an hour, for a targeted period of time (usually 6 weeks, but can be longer). Sessions are confidential and offer you child an opportunity to talk about things that are of concern to them. Nothing will be shared with anyone without the child's

consent, unless there is a safeguarding concern. Sessions are one to one and pupil-led. Sessions may involve play based materials or activities.

What if my child's difficulties are not suitable for a TALA to support with?

It is important that TALAs only support with things they are trained to support with. 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 TALA support at Merdon?

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



Where do sessions take place?

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

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

Once your child has finished their sessions, you will be updated either by Mrs Caine, Miss Sambles or their class teacher. The TALA 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 a verbal overview of how your child has engaged if you request this.

