ELSA

Emotional Literacy Support Assistant

What does an ELSA do?

They are teaching assistants who have received training from educational psychologists to support the emotional development of children and young people in school.

How does it work?

Most ELSA programmes will last for 6 to 12 weeks, helping the pupil to learn some specific new skills or coping strategies. Targets are set early on and each session has an objective - something the ELSA wants to help the pupil understand or achieve.

Not a 'quick fix'

For pupils with complex or long-term needs, it is unrealistic to expect ELSA support to resolve all their difficulties. Change is a long-term process that needs everyone's help. Likewise, the ELSAs role is not to be confused with behaviour management.

Rest assured

Sessions are held in a private space with no interruptions, where pupils feel at ease. Information received from parents and notes made by the ELSA are confidential, with any documentation kept in a secure place. Pupils are helped to find their own solutions rather than ELSAs telling them what to do. Activities are designed to be fun and relaxed, with any ideas from pupils welcomed.

Topics covered

Building resilience and self-esteem, managing emotions including anger and anxiety, social and friendship skills, loss, bereavement and family break up.

References:

elsanetwork.org, elsa-support.co.uk, tradingwithschools.org