

## ELSA – Information for parents/carers

### What is an ELSA?

ELSAs are emotional literacy support assistants. ELSAs are trained to plan and deliver programmes of support to pupils in their school who are experiencing social and emotional needs.

The majority of ELSA work will be delivered on an individual basis, but sometimes small group work will be appropriate, especially in the areas of social and friendship skills.

ELSAs help children and young people learn to understand their emotions and respect the feelings of those around them. They provide the time and space for pupils to think about their personal circumstances and how they manage them.

ELSAs receive supervision from educational psychologists but they are line managed from within their own schools.

### How does ELSA work?

Most ELSA programmes will last for 6 to 12 weeks, helping the pupil to learn some specific new skills or coping strategies. Clear programme aims (SMART targets) need to be set early on and each session has an objective - something the ELSA wants to help the pupil understand or achieve.

The ELSA isn't there to 'fix' the child. For pupils with complex or long-term needs, it's unrealistic to expect ELSA support to resolve all their difficulties. Change is a long-term process that needs everyone's help.

### What an ELSA intervention is not:

- × Long-term counselling
- × A nice chat
- × A reward for unacceptable behaviour
- × Behaviour management
- × An alternative to CAMHS
- × Family therapy
- × Self-harm nurse
- × A quick fix
- × Magical problem-solver!



For ELSA to be effective it is really important that the focus of the work is on something that is difficult in school. An ELSA intervention should not be used to target something that is only a problem at home. This is because the ELSA cannot monitor the effectiveness of the intervention.

### How do ELSAs work with parents and carers?

This will depend on the school your child attends. In some schools the ELSA will speak to you at the start of an intervention and/or at the end. You can expect to receive some information about the focus of the intervention and the broad targets. ELSA sessions are confidential though so you will not receive details of what is said during the sessions.

For more information see [www.elsanetwork.org](http://www.elsanetwork.org)

