

## Guidelines for ELSA line managers

The information in this handout has been taken and adapted from ELSA training materials as well as information from [www.elsanetwork.org](http://www.elsanetwork.org). As an ELSA Network accredited service there are quality standards that we have to adhere to, alongside monitoring the practice and implementation of ELSA across Sutton schools in line with the points below. We hope that these guidelines will help schools to use ELSAs most effectively to support the children and young people who will benefit from their input.

### The role of the ELSA

ELSAs are trained to plan and deliver programmes of support to pupils in their school who have social and emotional needs or are experiencing social and emotional difficulties. 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, as will supporting initiatives for larger groups of students.

The four key roles of an ELSA can be understood as someone who:

1. Helps children to learn and practise social and emotional skills
2. Provides additional individual time and space to develop a supportive relationship within which the child feels accepted and valued
3. Helps all staff to understand and support the child
4. Supports the development of emotional literacy across the school

### ELSA intervention

It is important that ELSAs work to support social and emotional needs in line with the topics covered by the initial training. This predominantly will include:

- ✓ **Emotional awareness:** Ability to recognise how you feel and the ability to say how you feel.
- ✓ **Social skills:** Making eye contact, taking turns, speaking in an appropriate tone of voice, sharing, asking for help and paying attention.
- ✓ **Friendship skills:** Ability to initiate friendships, ability to maintain friendships and understanding what friends do and do not do.
- ✓ **Self-esteem:** Ability to identify own strengths, ability to accept praise, ability to accept criticism, perseverance and the ability to cope with new experiences/change.
- ✓ **Anger and anxiety regulation:** Ability to recognize when feeling angry or worried, knowledge and use of strategies to help calm down and the ability to seek help from others.
- ✓ **Loss, bereavement and resilience:** Helping pupils develop resilience and cope with challenges, including change, loss and bereavement, when appropriate.

### What an ELSA intervention is not:

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



### Role of the line manager:

ELSAs receive psychological supervision from educational psychologists but they also need line management from within their own schools. The following list details key areas of responsibility for ELSA line managers:

#### Workload

- The ELSA needs a timetable for their work which includes time for planning as well as intervention (it is recommended that ELSAs have at least one day a week for ELSA work)
- Planning time will be greater for ELSAs who are new to role, but for established ELSAs should be around 10-15% of the time they have allocated for ELSA work
- There needs to be a clear referral system in place (with appropriate paperwork) so that the line manager and ELSA can identify and prioritise etc.
- The ELSA has protected time to attend half-termly supervision provided by the EPS
- ELSAs are working with pupils who they can support towards achieving SMART targets during an intervention of 8-12 weeks

#### Practical arrangements

- ELSA work occurs at a consistent time each week, and other responsibilities must not cut into this time or be prioritised over ELSA time
- A quiet area is protected for ELSA sessions, and the ELSA has space to store resources in this space or nearby
- ELSAs work on a confidential basis with pupils, unless there are safeguarding concerns, and ELSAs will explain this to all the pupils they work with
- There is an agreement about the level of contact ELSAs will have with parents. It is generally recommended that this is minimal, to protect the confidentiality of the pupil, and liaison with parents is instead undertaken by another member of staff e.g., pastoral lead, SENCO

#### Wider school support

- It is expected that ELSAs will feed back suggestions and strategies to classroom staff so that interventions can be supported within the classroom and new skills transferred
- All staff understand the process for seeking ELSA support for a pupil, and do not seek ad-hoc support for pupils who are being challenging in class
- Other members of staff are supported to understand the roles of an ELSA, how to request support, and situations that would fall outside of the ELSA remit
- School systems will be put in place to evaluate the ELSA intervention

### A final thought

Settings are understandably eager to make use of the expertise of their ELSAs, especially when they are able to witness the skill and knowledge ELSAs demonstrate in their work. As a consequence, the role of ELSA is sometimes misjudged, and work suggested which exceeds the level of training an ELSA has received. It is important for line managers to protect ELSAs, who sometimes feel they do not have the status to speak out, and more generally for the whole school community to be clear on the role and remit of ELSAs.

If you have any further questions, please email [Sutton.elsa@cognus.org.uk](mailto:Sutton.elsa@cognus.org.uk)

