

What is an ELSA?

An ELSA is a specialist Teaching Assistant who has a wealth of experience working with children. ELSAs are trained and regularly supervised by the Educational Psychologists in your local Education Authority, or School Academy. ELSAs help children learn to understand their emotions and respect the feelings of those around them. They provide the time and space for children to think about their personal circumstances and how they manage them. Their aim is to remove barriers to learning and to have children feel happier.

Impartial, the ELSA liaises with the Class Teacher but sessions are confidential unless the child wishes to share or it is felt the child could benefit more from an external healthcare professional.

Here, at St Polycarp's, our ELSAs are Mrs Logan & Mrs Blagden

Talk to your child's Class Teacher if you would like to know more or if you feel your child may benefit from having some ELSA time.



ELSAs can help with...



- Loss and bereavement
- Self-esteem
- Social Skills
- Emotions
- Friendship Issues
- Relationships
- Anger Management
- Behaviour
- Anxiety
- Bullying
- Conflict
- Relaxation Techniques

Empathises/**L**istens/**S**upports/**A**ssists



St. Polycarp's Catholic Primary

Emotional Literacy Support Assistant



St Polycarp's Catholic Primary

Individual Sessions

The ELSA will plan their sessions for your child very carefully. The session consists of several parts.

Emotional Check-in...

This is an opportunity to talk about feelings.

Main Activity...

Activities are planned to a learning objective; something your child will be able to do at the end of the session - something they struggle with now. This is usually an "I can" statement such as "I can tell you about my strengths" (if self-esteem is a struggle). The ELSA will encourage your child to talk about their talents or personal characteristics such as 'kind', 'caring', 'helpful', 'brave', working together on ways of reinforcing their strengths.

Relaxation, and transition...

Your child will be taught a relaxation exercise to help get them ready to go back to class.

Group Sessions

Sometimes, for many reasons, the ELSA will bring groups of children together to work on a topic. For Groups, the ELSA will add a piece, for example 'circle time' where the children sit in a circle and take it in turns to speak.

Emotional Check-in...

This is an opportunity to talk about feelings.

Warm-up Activity...

A fun game or activity to help relax your child.

Main Activity...

Similar to the Individual Session but your child will be encouraged to work with other children. This helps with co-operation, negotiation, independence, interdependence, social skills, friendship and aims to build a sense of belonging.

Relaxation, and transition...

Your child will be taught a relaxation exercise to help get them ready to go back to class.

Problem Examples

A very angry child...

The ELSA will take the child through the emotion, a process to help them recognise their anger and the triggers. They will build calming strategies and more constructive ways to express frustration.

A loved pet has died...

ELSAs are trained in bereavement and understand that the loss of a pet could be the first experience of death for your child. They will work with your child to help them feel supported in school.

A negative school experience...

For example, working on self-esteem and anxiety, the ELSA can teach your child relative vocabulary and perspective, giving them a voice and confidence to express their worries with balance.

Using structured games, art, craft, social stories, puppets and therapeutic story writing your ELSA continually looks at techniques best suited to help your child make sense of their emotions and feelings.