

### Beecholme ELSA Policy

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***At ELSA we.... “Value each individual child and work with parents and schools to offer nurturing experiences and support for pupils and families in a caring and safe environment. We encourage and develop children’s self-esteem, to face learning challenges with more confidence, to be compassionate, respectful, and to have an enhanced sense of identity and belonging within their school community.***

***“Thinking of a child as behaving badly disposes you to think of punishment. Thinking of a child as struggling to handle something difficult encourages you to help them through their distress”.***

### What is ELSA?

ELSA is an initiative developed and supported by Educational Psychologists. The initiative identifies that students' make better progress, are happier, and achieve their potential if their emotional needs are understood and explored.

An ELSA is an Emotional Literacy Support Assistant. ELSAs are specially trained practitioners. ELSAs provide emotional support and help to students who struggle with their emotional development. Sessions are held in a calm, safe designated space.

### Aims & Objectives:

At Beecholme aim to enhance and support the emotional health and wellbeing of our students. We continue to aim to sustain a supportive and caring ethos whilst establishing a warm, respectful relationship with students giving them a safe place to explore their emotions and time to think about how they are feeling. The aim of an ELSA is to help students develop an understanding around their emotions and develop an understanding of the emotions of others and learn to respect these.

### Through the ELSA programme we intend:

- To help students to develop their understanding of their emotions and feelings
- To help students to feel comfortable and develop their confidence to share any concerns or worries
- To help students develop their ability to form and maintain relationships and friendships
- To help students to develop their self-esteem and ensure everyone knows that they are valued
- To help students develop their confidence and their own individuality
- To help students to understand their personal experiences and their feelings in a safe and trusted environment, where they can share honestly and learn strategies to manage these feelings

- To help students to develop their emotional resilience and to develop strategies to overcome any barriers or setbacks
- To help students feel happy and safe in school and reach their potential educationally by helping to remove barriers to learning
- To help students work through difficulties, for example, bereavement, breakdown of parents' relationship, changes at home or school, care system including adoption
- To work to specific programme aims that are realistic for each student
- To plan sessions with objectives that build towards the student's programme aims
- To deliver sessions in a caring, supportive and fun way

### **Identifying needs for a possible ELSA intervention:**

Possible warning signs could include:

- Changes in eating/sleeping habits
- Becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- An increase in absenteeism
- Change in their usual personality
- Changes in behaviour

### **Making Referrals:**

Classroom staff, senior leaders and the SENCO can all make referrals to the ELSA lead who will refer students for ELSA intervention. These students will then be discussed during an ELSA meeting at depth and prioritised according to their needs. The designated ELSA will then complete a classroom observation of that student prior to the programme starting. With the programme aims ELSAs will then plan sessions to support the students social and emotional demands more effectively.

Parents also have the opportunity to discuss the potential for their child to receive ELSA with the class teacher. This referral will then be passed onto the ELSA lead to follow the same process as above.

### **ELSA Sessions:**

ELSA sessions will run approximately for 6-8 weeks, on some occasions a student may need longer or to have regular contact/drops ins with the ELSA. ELSAs will have a set time each week to work with their students and this will remain a priority on the timetable. This will normally be one 30-minute session per week. Timings can vary depending on the child and their need. ELSAs then provide short term targeted provision supporting students' self-esteem, social skills, friendship skills, loss and bereavement, and anger management. Sessions are planned with objectives that build towards the programmes aims. ELSAs will have a clear plan of the student's lead objective for each session and ensure that resources are sourced before the session. ELSAs will then provide a recorded evaluation at the end of each session. The majority of ELSA work is delivered on an individual basis, but sometimes small group work is more appropriate, especially in the areas of social and friendship skills. Sessions will be interactive, nurturing, and fun. ELSAs will use a range of activities such as discussions around emotions, interactive games, role play, puppets, arts and craft. These sessions will take place in the ELSA room.

### **Parents and Carers:**

Permission from parents is sought but not necessary. We will encourage communication between school and home. Parents will be contacted either by letter or in person when their student is allocated a place. Working with parents gives the ELSA access to a valuable perspective but may also give parents a greater insight into the needs of their

son/daughter, leading to support at home that complements the work done in school.

**Confidentiality:**

Students who access ELSA sessions are entitled to an appropriate level of confidentiality. They are entitled to develop a trusting relationship with ELSA staff and therefore are permitted to privacy around them and their families. However, staff will follow the school's safeguarding policy and child protection procedures.

ELSAs may also feel at times it will be helpful for other members of staff to be aware of a concern or family situation. Sharing information will be done with sensitivity to the student and their families - ELSA's can, if appropriate, discuss with the student what they would like to be shared so that their trust is maintained.

**Lead members of staff Involved:**

- Donna Keenan - ELSA Lead/Additional Safeguarding Lead
- Hayley Lewis - Head of School/Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Faye Morris - Assistant Headteacher/Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Sue Brackenbury - SENCO/ Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

