



## **ELSA – Emotional Literacy Support Assistant**

### **What is an ELSA?**

**ELSA support in schools is a project designed to help schools support the emotional needs of their students.** ELSA's are Emotional Literacy Support Assistants. They are a specialist teaching assistant who has had a particular training from educational psychologists to support the emotional development of children and young people in school. ELSA's have regular professional supervision to help them in their work.

ELSA acknowledges that children and young people learn best when they feel happier and their emotional needs are being addressed. The aim is to build your child's emotional development and help them with life's difficulties. The ELSA will try and help your child to find solutions to any problems that may arise.

### **Individual Sessions**

Students will be offered 6-12 session. They can vary according to the age of the student. Each session can last for 20-40 minutes. The ELSA will plan their sessions for a student very carefully. The sessions will consist of several parts.

- **Welcome**
- **Emotional check-in**
- **Core Activity – activity that the student will be able to do at the end of the session**
- **Reflection – the student will be able to reflect and think about incorporating strategies into the classroom environment**
- **Mindfulness/Relaxation.**

A student will work towards one **SMART TARGET** which we hope will be achievable. This is discussed between an adult who knows the student well, a learning mentor (if applicable) and between parent/carer. The target will also be discussed with the student to make sure they feel comfortable with it. Mini targets will be put in place for each session.

### **Reflection/Relaxation**

At the end of the session time is spent reflecting what has been discussed and a student may be taught a relaxation exercise to help get them ready to go back to class.

Feedback on how the student is progressing will take place half-way through the sessions. We encourage parent/carer to talk about the support their student is receiving. ELSA sessions are not compulsory and it is hoped that students and ELSA can work together effectively. If a parent/carer or student does not feel the sessions are working they can decide to withdraw.

**Quote from a student at TMS**  
**“I have struggled with managing my emotions and spent a lot of time missing lessons. After completing these sessions, I became more aware of my triggers, what impact I was having on myself and people around me and then began working on ways that would help calm myself down”.**

## **Areas of Support:**

**Self-esteem**

**Managing strong emotions**

**Anxiety**

**Emotional regulation**

**Loss and bereavement**

**Emotional literacy**

**Friendship**