

# Supporting Children and Young People with Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs: A toolkit of strategies

Barnet Education and Learning Service

This toolkit has been developed by members of the  
Inclusion Advisory Team

*in consultation with the SEN support workstream, parent carer forum and an independent behavioural specialist*

## Good whole school practice involves....

Holding relationships at the centre

Parent and pupil voice

Creating the conditions for psychological safety through an environment that offers stability and security

Teaching and learning that is compassionate

Embedding whole school approaches such as 'Emotion coaching', 'Zones of regulation', 'Relationships policy'

Smooth transitions between key stages, year groups and other settings

**Relationships  
and  
connections**



**Sensory/  
environment**



**Language and  
communication**



**Areas of Impact**

**Self esteem**



**Emotional  
regulation**



**Behavioural  
regulation**

**SEMH in the classroom**

Range of **multisensory** approaches to engage their learning style e.g. objects, pictures, symbols.



Minimise **classroom and environment noise.**



Give regular planned, **legitimised learning/rest breaks** e.g. message taking, fiddle toys



Have **calming activities** that follow their interests.



Access to a **quiet space** that suits them when they need it.



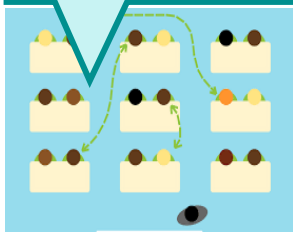
**Sensory profile** for the child and environment.



**Calm and safe setting.**

## Sensory and the environment

Think about **seating/organisation**—where is best for them?



Activities broken down into **small manageable chunks.**



Time for play and to practice skills.



Use **visuals prompts** and visual timetables.



**Sensory and environmental strategies**

Say the child's name first before an instruction.



Use literal language and be explicit.



Use specific praise.



Range of multisensory approaches used to support spoken language e.g. objects, pictures, symbols, role play



Keep questions/language to a minimum – concrete language.



## Language and Communication

Instructions given in small chunks with visual cues in order



Provide wait time to allow time for processing and response.



Keep language simple and stay on topic.



Reframe the instructions focussing on do rather than don't.



Language Matters

Use the language of choice.



## Language and communication strategies

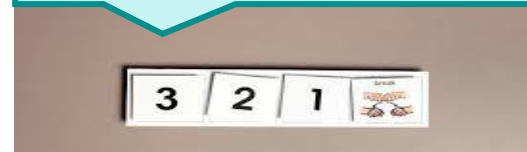
Brainstem calming activities.



Transition times are clearly taught, planned for and actively managed (visual timetables).



Visual approaches used to support **keeping on-task** and **finishing tasks**.



Give ample choice, time and count down for positive change.



Use of scripts.



Do all adults know the strategies?

Small specific challenges linked to a **reward system**.

## Behavioural regulation

Consequences are **same day and kept in school**.  
Natural consequences?



Rules of the classroom are displayed, taught and modelled.



Behaviour is a form of communication



**Know the child** – what are their triggers? What are interests/motivators?

**Wait time** is provided allowing time for processing response

Reinforce boundaries and make and **model** clear, explicit expectations.



Adults supporting – swap in and out if necessary (1 or 2 adults for the situation).

## Behaviour regulation strategies

Catch the pupil being good and emphasise positives, celebrate strengths.



Create an environment that values each individual and give opportunities for pupils to compliment each other.



Identify and build on the child or young person's strengths and interests so that they can have enjoyment and experience success.



Encourage the child to have classroom/school wide responsibility.



Remember that each day is a new day.



Communicate the successes with the parents/carers.



Embrace a growth mindset.



Help pupils to develop self-discipline and to take ownership of the classroom rules, and consequences.



How does the child like to receive praise?



## Developing self esteem strategies

Listen and give pupils give opportunities to explain their behaviours.



Develop a toolbox of strategies (e.g, breathing techniques, audio books)



Use of emotion coaching to guide and teach more effective responses.



Zones of regulation - giving the children a toolbox of strategies for when they feel different emotions.



## Emotional regulation

Providing emotion scaling to help understand and get control of feelings.



Children having access to a safe space/quiet area.



Using mindfulness to help children to focus, make good decisions and regulate their emotions.



Providing relaxation techniques – using a box of calming activities.

Using comic strip conversations/ social stories to support understanding of emotions and situations that have occurred.



Teaching children how to use deep pressure – hand massage, bear hugs.



Supporting children to understand and label the emotion/feeling.

# Emotional regulation strategies



Always work in partnership with families, share successes and ask questions



Get to know the children - know their triggers and know their motivators.



Non verbal messages from adult to child are crucial – consider eye contact, space, posture.



Ensure a key adult is able to spend some 1:1 time with the child a daily basis.

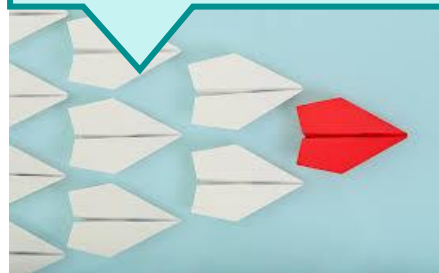


## Relationship and connections

Use of circle time to build trust and share information about each other and to discuss friendships.



Consistency is key. Be predictable and provide a routine.



Use of a buddy system and well considered learning partners.



Teach explicit friendship skills – sharing, turn taking, talking.



Assign roles during group work so everyone has a job.

Let the child know you are holding them in mind.



## Relationship and connections strategies

The children need to know that you care and that you are interested in them.

