

# Orchard Primary School Well-being Newsletter

## Supporting the Emotional Well-being and Mental Health of Our School Community

Autumn Term B - 2023

At Orchard, we are committed to supporting children, staff and parents in their wellbeing and mental health. We know that wellbeing, physical and mental health are all vital to successful learning.

This term's Mental Health and Well-being newsletter focuses on 'The Zones of Regulation' – this is an emotional management scheme that we introduced this half term.

**The Zones of Regulation** is an intervention which helps children to manage difficult emotions, known as 'self-regulation'.

We've slowly introduced the intervention to the whole school over the last half term, through a series of assemblies and classroom sessions. The children have been brilliant, listening carefully, contributing to discussions and some even did some acting and demonstrating in assemblies! So did some of the staff!

So far, the feedback from the children has been very positive. Lots of pupils are referring to the Zones during their school day and using this to help them manage their feelings.

**You can find the resources we're using on our website from January if you would like to use them at home or reference them with your child.**

All classrooms now have a display which includes the characters from Inside Out. We all had a treat and got to watch the film at the start of the half term! This helped us to start our discussions about emotions.

			
<b>BLUE ZONE</b> Sad Sick Tired Bored Moving Slowly	<b>GREEN ZONE</b> Happy Calm Feeling Okay Focused Ready to Learn	<b>YELLOW ZONE</b> Frustrated Worried Silly/Wiggly Excited Loss of Some Control	<b>RED ZONE</b> Mad/Angry Terrified Yelling/Hitting Elated Out of Control

We've done lots of work on identifying different emotions, both in ourselves and in others. The children have broadened their vocabulary and understanding around emotions and the behaviours that they can cause.

The children are now working on creating their own 'toolboxes' full of strategies that they can use when they're in different zones. See if your child can tell you about their tools!



Some children have asked for the Zones resources to use at home, so we wanted to give parents a little more information about how you can support this.

## **If you wish to use the Zones at home, here are some tips:**

- Identify your own feelings using Zones language in front of your child e.g. I'm worried and in the yellow zone.
- Talk about what tool you will use to be in the appropriate Zone e.g.: "I need to take four deep breaths to help get me back to the Green Zone."
- At times, wonder which Zone your child is in. Or, discuss which Zone a character in a film / book might be in.
- Engaging your child in discussion around Zones when they are in the Red Zone is unlikely to be effective. Discuss this when they are more regulated or calm.
- Teach your child which tools they can use e.g.: "It's time for bed. Let's read a book to get you in the Blue Zone."
- Regular Check-ins. "How are you feeling now?" and "How can you get back to Green?"
- Modelling how you use tools to get back to the green zones. Afterwards tell your child how using those tools helped you get back to the green zone.
- Share how their behaviour is affecting your Zone.
- Use the Zones visuals and tools in your home.
- Praise and encourage your child when they share which Zone they are in, identify their emotions or use
- Know yourself and how you react in difficult situations before dealing with your child's behaviours.
- Know your child's sensory threshold. We all process sensory information differently and it impacts our reactivity to situations.
- Know your child's triggers.
- Be consistent in managing your child's behaviour and use the same language you use at home.
- Empathise with your child and validate what they are feeling.
- Have clear boundaries/routines and always follow through.
- Do not deal with an angry, upset child when you are not yet calm yourself.
- Discuss strategies for the next time when you are in a similar situation.
- Remember to ask your child how their choices made you feel (empathy).
- Praise your child for using strategies. Encourage your child to take a sensory break to help regulate their bodies.
- Create a 'calm' box full of things which help to keep your child calm and alert.

## **Common questions on the Zones of Regulation**

### **Can my child be in more than one zone at the same time?**

Yes. Your child may feel tired (blue zone) because they did not get enough sleep, and anxious (yellow zone) because they are worried about something. Listing more than one Zone reflects a good sense of personal feelings and alertness.

### **Should children be punished for being in the RED Zone?**

It's best for children to experience the natural consequences of being in the RED zone. If a child's actions/choices hurt someone or broken something, they need to repair this and take responsibility for the impact. Once the child has calmed down, use the experience as a learning opportunity to process what they would do differently.

### **Can you look like one Zone on the outside and feel like you are in another Zone on the inside?**

Yes. Many of us "disguise" our Zone to match social expectations. We use the expression "put on a happy face" or mask the emotion, so other people will have good thoughts about us. Parents often say that their children "lose it" and goes into the Red Zone as soon as they get home. This is because children are increasing their awareness of their peers and expectations when in the classroom. They make every effort to keep it together at school to stay in the Green Zone. Home is when they feel safe to let it all out.