



ELSA Training

Training to be an Emotional Literacy Support Assistant



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What is ELSA?

The ELSA project aims to help schools to build the capacity to meet the needs of a wide range of emotionally vulnerable pupils. When children have emotional, social or psychological difficulties, their capacity to learn is affected and there is a knock-on effect on the learning of other pupils. The ELSA project was developed to provide an additional level of attention, care and intervention that will enable children to feel better about themselves and their time at school.

What does an ELSA do?

- Through their training ELSAs learn how to deliver individualised and sometimes small group programmes of support on aspects of emotional literacy including emotional awareness, self-esteem, anger management, social and friendship skills and therapeutic approaches e.g., mindfulness, Lego therapy
- ELSAs plan and deliver individualised (and sometimes small group) programmes of support for children.
- An ELSA liaises with teachers and other support assistants about the needs and progress of children receiving intervention.
- ELSAs meet regularly with their line manager in school to review their work

How will an ELSA benefit your school?

Research has shown that key benefits include:

- positive changes in the wellbeing and behaviour of pupils with social, emotional and/or mental health difficulties
- pupils are helped to build more positive relationships, both with peers and adults, leading to improved self-esteem and greater success in learning
- reduced disruption in the classroom improves the learning environment for fellow pupils and teachers
- other staff benefit from the new insights and skills that ELSAs bring to school
- schools find themselves better able to understand and manage pupil difficulties without having to involve external professionals

Who can train as an ELSA?

- The training is open to learning support assistants identified as having the necessary prerequisite skills to train as an ELSA (see below)

What qualities does an ELSA need?

The ideal potential ELSA:

- Has a warm personality and can stay calm under pressure
- Can build relationships with children who are behaviourally challenging or socially withdrawn
- Demonstrates good interpersonal skills with children and adults

- Enjoys learning
- Can work independently and show initiative
- Has good time management skills and organisational skills
- Can plan individualised programmes of support
- Keeps accurate records of involvements and evaluates the effectiveness of programmes

What does the training involve?

- 6 initial training days
- Attending all training days and the four subsequent supervision sessions to gain certification – these must be attended ‘face-to-face’, unless otherwise specified by the EP trainer/supervisor
- Once certification is given, ELSAs need to commit to ongoing supervision sessions in order to maintain the role in school. This is to ensure ELSAs are given the necessary professional and ethical support to carry out their work to an appropriate standard
- In some cases a school may have more than one ELSA; whether ELSAs join the same supervision group is decided on a number of factors and in some cases ELSAs will join individual supervision groups

What is the school commitment?

- Release ELSA trainee for all six training days and supervision sessions
- Release ELSA line manager for twilight session 1-2 hours. It is essential line managers understand the purpose and practicalities related to ELSA in order for the ELSA to be most successful
- Allow ring fenced time for adequate planning, delivery and evaluation of sessions so that ELSA time with pupils is protected
- Provide a suitable space for the ELSA to work with pupils
- Provide a budget for resources and protect finance to maintain the ELSA role

TRAINING DATES AND INFORMATION

SESSION	DATES	CONTENT
Day 1	Thurs 15 th January 9:30am- 3:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to emotional literacy and the work of an ELSA. • Active listening and reflective conversations
Line manager twilight session	Wed 21 st January 4-5pm	Information for line managers on how to support your ELSA
Day 2	Thurs 29 th January 9:30am- 3:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional awareness & attachment • Emotional regulation
Day 3	Thurs 12 th February 9:30am- 3:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal-based targets • Q&A with experienced ELSA



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Day 4	Thurs 26 th February 9:30am- 3:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-esteem
Day 5	Thurs 12 th March 9:30am- 3:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss, bereavement, and family break-up • Social and friendship skills
Day 6	Thurs 26 th March 9:30am- 3:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of puppets and stories • Planning session

4x group supervision sessions:

Once per half term; 2 hours per session, beginning from **April 2026**.

Opportunities to discuss the work, seek support for complex and challenging casework and share resources

- Cost of course, four supervision sessions and provision of resources including handbook **£750**
- Ongoing supervision (following the training year) is expected in order to ensure ELSAs are supported to maintain ethical and professional practice, provide opportunities to meet with other ELSAs and receive psychological support with complex casework. Cost **£264** per year
- Venue: **The Park Centre Kingswood**, BS15 4AR
- Bookings should be made via the South Gloucestershire Council Learning and Development Hub www.southglos.gov.uk/learning, by the delegate attending or your schools' nominated CPD Leader (who can book in the delegates' name). **Please include the name and email address of your Line Manager in the 'Delegate training and dietary requirements' section as you make your booking, so they can be invited to the Line Managers' Meeting.** For help with booking please contact the Integra Team at ststraining@southglos.gov.uk

For further information please contact:

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