

Supporting mental health and wellbeing at Emmanuel School

ZONES OF REGULATION

Understanding and managing emotions

At Emmanuel, we use the Zones of Regulation framework to help our children understand and explain how they feel. Every child from Nursery class onwards learns to recognise the feelings in each coloured zone, and ways to control and regulate how they are feeling so that they can make appropriate choices.

<p>BLUE ZONE</p>	<p>GREEN ZONE</p>	<p>YELLOW ZONE</p>	<p>RED ZONE</p>
<p>I'm too slow....</p> <p>I feel sick I feel tired I'm bored I feel sad I feel disappointed</p>	<p>I'm ready to learn or play....</p> <p>I am happy and content I am proud I am calm I am focussed</p>	<p>Caution: I'm starting to lose control....</p> <p>I am worried or nervous I am excited or silly I'm frustrated I am annoyed I am confused I am embarrassed</p>	<p>Stop: I've lost control...</p> <p>I am mad I am angry I am terrified I am hitting/shouting I am overwhelmed I am elated</p>

What is the Zones of Regulation?

This is a recognised framework used by Camden Educational Psychologists and OT service and aims to support children with:

- A vocabulary of emotional terms.
- How to recognise their own emotions.
- How to detect the emotions of others (e.g. read others' facial expressions) .
- To know what may trigger certain emotions; knowing the things that will send them into a different zone; or how to cope when something unexpected happens around them.
- How others may interpret their behaviour.

The ZONES of Regulation®

- Problem solving skills; using tools to support themselves.
- Understand how their behaviours influence others' thoughts and feelings .
- And ultimately...independent regulation.

The Zones

Being in any of these zones are ok and normal. There is no 'bad' zone. We may go into all zones in one day!

Red Zone: *Stop...I've lost control...*Extremely heightened states of alertness and intense emotions. A person may be elated or experiencing anger, rage, explosive behaviour, devastation, or terror.

Yellow Zone: *Caution...I'm starting to lose control....*A heightened state of alertness and elevated emotions, however one has more control when they are in the Yellow Zone. A person may be experiencing stress, frustration, anxiety, excitement, silliness, or nervousness.

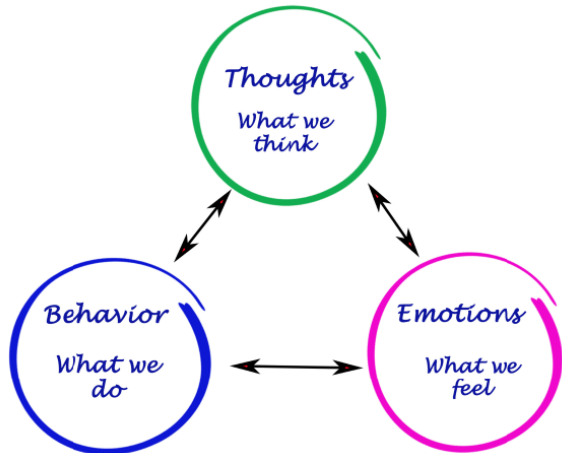
Green Zone: *I'm ready to learn or play....*Calm state of alertness. A person may be described as happy, focused, content, or ready to learn. This is the zone where optimal learning occurs.

Blue Zone: *I'm too slow...*Low states of alertness and down feelings such as when one feels sad, tired, sick, or bored.



How our thoughts, emotions and behaviours are interlinked

Our thoughts and the way we think about an experience has a profound effect on our emotions: whether it is something that we are expecting (e.g. going to the dentist or having the weekly spellings test) or something we are not expecting or out of our control (e.g. a fire alarm, somebody shouting on the bus on the way to school). The way we then cope or manage those emotions will determine our subsequent behaviours and actions. In time, this shapes our future thoughts and feelings, and so the cycle continues. It is important to remember that behaviours are a form of communication.



There are some things that we do not have control over. But our attitudes, emotions and behaviors...these are the things that we can influence.

- Susan Steinbrecher

Things that can also impact our emotions are:

- Uncertainty, change or transitions e.g. the end of term
- The behaviours of those around us
- Things out of our control
- Our senses e.g. hunger
- Changes in our physical health
- And ultimately...self regulation!

What is self regulation?

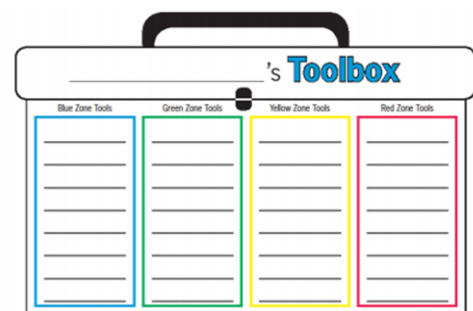
Self regulation is about having coping strategies when we are feeling big emotions such as feeling angry, stressed, anxious or sad. This helps us remain calm and organised in a stressful or challenging situation or to cheer ourselves up after a disappointment. Through our Zones lessons in school, we help the children to choose self regulation ideas for each zone, creating a tool box of strategies to support them - these can be a mix of sensory, calming and thinking strategies:

Blue Zone tools: help wake up our bodies, feel better and regain focus.

Green Zone tools: help us stay calm, focused and feeling good.

Yellow Zone tools: help us regain control and calm ourselves.

Red Zone tools: help us stay safe and start to calm down.



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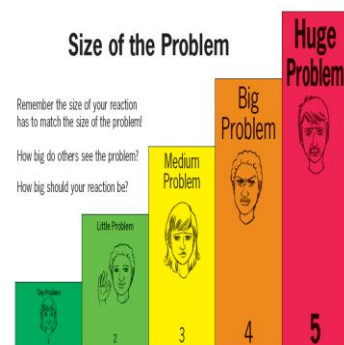


Tools and strategies to help regulate

There are 3 ways to self regulate: Sensory supports, thinking strategies and calming techniques

Thinking strategies

- What is the size of the problem? Is it a small thing that they can fix themselves, or is it much bigger that they need help with?
- Ask an adult for help, put a note in the worry box or go to the Bubble.
- Walk away to a quiet place, have some time out to think/calm down.
- Think about how the other children involved may be feeling.
- Quieten the inner voice which maybe critical - strengthen the inner coach to support instead.



Sensory supports



- Food/Taste e.g. hot drinks, eating ice cream, tasting bitter lemon, crunchy snacks such as pretzels or carrots.
- Movement e.g. heavy muscle work, training, yoga, singing and dancing to favourite song.
- Sounds e.g. Listening to the sound of the sea vs rock music.
- Tactile e.g. a soft blanket, putty, give yourself a hug.
- Splashing face with water.

Calming strategies

- Breathing exercises - big dragon breaths, pretending to blow on hot chocolate or soup, five finger breathing, blowing bubbles.
- Counting to 10.
- Taking a moment - drinking a glass of water, sitting down in a quiet place
- Reading.
- Picture a happy place, thinking of happy memories or positive things.
- Writing in a journal.
- Colouring in and drawing.



Helpful language to support - In school, we use Emotions Coaching (see leaflet on this) to support children with useful language to empathise, validate and help them to label their emotions. Once they have self regulated and are calm, you can talk them through the actions or behaviours they used, and set boundaries or limits as to what is appropriate ("It's ok to feel angry but it's not ok to hit or kick") and then help them to problem solve ("Let's think of what we could have done instead").