



# EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

## Reintegreat School Toolkit

### Developing Emotional Intelligence in Pupils

#### 1. Introduction

Emotional intelligence (EI) is the ability to recognise, understand, express, and manage emotions appropriately, while respecting the feelings of others. It is a vital life skill linked to:

- Positive behaviour and relationships.
- Improved self-regulation and resilience.
- Greater academic success and problem-solving ability.
- Long-term wellbeing and employability.

Children can learn emotional intelligence skills at any age, but they need **consistent modelling, vocabulary, and opportunities to practise**.

#### 2. Core Skills of Emotional Intelligence

Based on evidence-informed approaches, EI is built on five key areas:

1. **Self-awareness** – recognising one's emotions and their impact.
2. **Self-regulation** – managing emotions constructively.
3. **Social awareness** – understanding others' feelings and perspectives.
4. **Relationship skills** – building healthy, respectful connections.
5. **Responsible decision-making** – making constructive choices.

#### 3. Building Blocks for Emotional Literacy

##### A. Labelling Emotions

- Use emotional words daily ("angry", "disappointed", "proud", "excited").
- Model identifying emotions: *"It looks like you feel sad – am I right?"*
- Build a broad emotion vocabulary: help children distinguish between *sad, disappointed, upset*.
- Use visual supports: emotion fans, posters, photo boards.

##### B. Showing Empathy

- Draw attention to kindness and how it made them feel.
- Use books, films, and real-life examples to explore how characters feel.
- Validate feelings – avoid dismissing: *"I understand you're upset we can't go*

*out yet – it's hard when things don't go our way.”*

- Use WIN prompts: *I Wonder... I'm Imagining... I'm Noticing...*

### **C. Modelling Appropriate Expression**

- Adults should narrate their own emotions appropriately: *“I feel frustrated when I lose something, but I take a deep breath to calm down.”*
- Encourage children to use “I statements”: *“I feel upset when you shout at me.”*
- Offer alternatives to aggression: drawing, talking, using calm spaces.

### **D. Teaching Coping Skills**

- Breathing strategies (bubble breaths, 5-finger breathing).
- Calm Boxes with sensory items (stress toys, blankets, colouring, cards).
- Movement breaks or mindfulness exercises.
- Reflection strategies: *“What could we do differently next time?”*

### **E. Problem-Solving**

- Guide children to brainstorm multiple solutions.
- Weigh up pros and cons before choosing.
- Coach, don't solve: build independence in resolving conflicts.

### **F. Everyday Practice**

- Discuss feelings in books, films, and class experiences.
- Use reflection times: *“How do you think that made them feel?”*
- Celebrate kindness and empathy alongside academic achievements.

## **4. Classroom Strategies**

### **Positive Environment**

- Use calm, non-confrontational tones (no finger pointing, wagging, or intimidating postures).
- Demonstrate the difference between being *complimentary* and being *patronising*.
- Create classroom displays with emotive words and images.

### **Tools & Activities**

- **Emotion Fans** – allow pupils to show feelings non-verbally.
- **Emotions Alphabet Game** – think of emotional words for each letter.
- **Kind & Caring Jar** – children write acts of kindness/emotion words and add them. Review as a class.
- **Photo Wall of Emotions** – pupils act out emotions for visual prompts.
- **Daily Check-in** – start the day with the emotions jar or quick mood check.

## Empathy Development

- Encourage children to notice changes in peers: “*Have you seen James looks quiet today – what could that mean?*”
- Highlight when children use emotive language: “*I like how you explained you were ‘frustrated’ instead of just saying ‘mad’.*”
- Use “I understand” phrases to show empathy.

## 5. Staff Guidance

- Label emotions explicitly in everyday routines.
- Model emotional expression and regulation.
- Validate and empathise with children’s feelings.
- Use visuals and tools for children who struggle verbally.
- Provide structured opportunities for kindness and empathy.
- Teach and rehearse coping skills in calm moments, not just crises.
- Praise emotional literacy as much as academic progress.

## 6. Useful Frameworks & Resources

- **CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning)** – SEL Competency Framework.
- **DfE Mental Health & Behaviour Guidance.**
- **YoungMinds** – strategies for supporting emotional wellbeing in schools.
- **Anna Freud Centre** – Emotionally Based School Avoidance Toolkit.

