

Orchard Primary School Well-being Newsletter

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

Autumn Term A - 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 a new intervention we are launching after half term called 'The Zones of Regulation'.

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

Self-regulation can go by many names such as 'self-control', 'impulse management' and 'self-management'. Self-regulation is best described as the best state of alertness for a situation. For example, when your child takes part in a sports match, they would need to have a higher state of alertness than when, for example, they were reading in a library. From time to time, all of us find it hard to manage strong feelings, such as worry, anger, fear or tiredness, and this stops us from getting on with our day effectively.

Children who feel these emotions often find it hard to learn and concentrate in school.

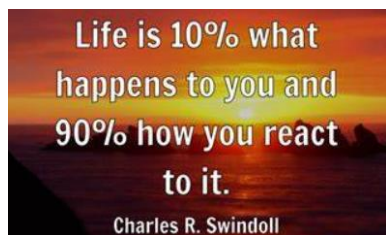
The Zones of Regulation aims to teach children strategies to help them cope with their feelings, so they can get back to feeling calm and ready to learn. These coping strategies are called 'self-regulation'. At Orchard, we want to teach all of our children good coping and regulation strategies, so they can help themselves when they experience anxiety and stress.

In the classroom, sometimes children panic when faced with a tricky learning problem or challenge. Teaching them how to manage these feelings might make them better at tackling learning challenges and build better resilience. We want the children at Orchard to grow into successful teenagers, and adults, giving them strategies to support them in later life, so that they don't turn to negative coping methods which affect their mental and physical wellbeing.



Through using the Zones of Regulation, we aim to help children to:

- Recognise when they are in the different Zones and learn how to change or stay in the Zone they are in.
- Increase their emotional vocabulary so they can explain how they are feeling.
- Recognise when other people are in different Zones, thus developing better empathy.
- Develop an insight into what might make them move into the different Zones.
- Understand that emotions, sensory experiences (such as lack of sleep or hunger) and their environment may influence which Zone they are in.
- Develop problem-solving skills and resilience
- Identify a range of calming and alerting strategies that support them - known as their personal 'toolkit' or 'toolbox'.



What are the different Zones?

Blue Zone: low level of arousal; not ready to learn; feels sad, sick, tired, bored, moving slowly.

Green Zone: calm state of alertness; optimal level to learn; feels happy, calm, feeling okay, focused.

Yellow Zone: heightened state of alertness; elevated emotions; has some control; feels frustrated, worried, silly, excited, loss of some control.

Red Zone: heightened state of alertness and intense emotions; not an optimal level for learning; out of control; feels mad/angry, terrified, yelling/hitting, elated, out of control.

We will teach the children that everyone experiences all of the Zones and none of them are 'bad' or 'naughty'. All of the Zones are expected at one time or another. We will show them that the Blue Zone, for example, is helpful when you are trying to fall asleep.

We will be using the characters from the film 'Inside Out' to help children to understand each Zone. To help us launch the intervention, all of the children will get to watch the film in their classes!

What Zone Are You In?			
Blue	Green	Yellow	Red
			
Sick Sad Tired Bored Moving Slowly	Happy Calm Feeling Okay Focused Ready to Learn	Frustrated Worried Silly/Wiggly Excited Loss of Some Control	Mad/Angry Mean Yelling/Hitting Disgusted Out of Control

We will be introducing the Zones through a series of assemblies and some teaching sessions. We will also be using the Zones language as part of daily school life, so all staff will be referring to them.

We will be sending home further information next half term. However, if you wish to find out more information over the next few weeks, you can visit:

www.zonesofregulation.com

www.weareteachers.com/zones-of-regulation-activities

<https://hes-extraordinary.com/zones-of-regulation-activities>

We believe that the Zones of Regulation is a simple, but effective, system that can also be replicated at home.

This would further support the children in their self-regulation, as consistency between home and school reinforces key messages and helps children to feel confident and secure in what they are doing. **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 frustrated. I think I am 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. (e.g.: "You look sleepy. Are you in the Blue Zone?")
- Engage your child in discussion around Zones when they are in the Red Zone is unlikely to be effective. You need to be discussing the different Zones and tools they can use when they are more regulated / calm.
- Teach your child which tools they can use. (eg: "It's time for bed. Let's read a book together in the comfy chair to get you in the Blue Zone.")
- Regular Check-ins. "How are you feeling now?" and "How can you get back to Green?"
- Modelling. Show the children how you use tools to get back to the green zones. You might say "I am going to get a drink and do some breathing exercises, because I am in the blue zone." Afterwards tell your child how using those tools helped you get back to the green zone.
- Share how their behaviour is affecting your Zone. For example, if they are in the Green Zone, you could comment that their behaviour is also helping you feel happy / go into the Green Zone.
- Put up and reference the Zones visuals and tools in your home.
- Praise and encourage your child when they share which Zone they are in. Make a 'big deal' over them identifying emotions or strategies from the toolkit.

We think this could benefit children and adults alike, and are very excited to get started next half term!