

A BRILLIANT ME IN ACTION ONE PAGE GUIDE TO...

ALLEN MENDLER'S 2X10 STRATEGY

Allen Mendler is an American author and educator. His work focuses on positive behaviour management. Mendler suggests this relational approach to get to know pupils who are struggling / challenging.

WHAT?

Mendler suggests: spend 2 minutes a day for 10 consecutive school days having a conversation with the child. A conversation that is about them – their hobbies, interests, favourite games or pets et al. It is important that the conversations are not about school work and / or behaviour.

The goal is to get to know the child outside of school in an authentic manner.

Mendler suggests acknowledges this may seem impossible given the pressures of time. It is important to make this commitment (or as close as possible) so that there is time to overcome any initial awkwardness or wariness.

WHY?

For a child (and the rest of us) being known is crucial for creating a sense of safety and belonging.

Regular positive interactions boost self-esteem, create a sense of belonging, and encourage engagement. From a neuroscience perspective, these positive foster secure attachment, lower stress, and promote oxytocin release, leading to better self-regulation and readiness to learn.

SEL?

Connecting with pupils is 'SEL in the everyday'. It is modelling skills, creating safety and building trust.

FIND OUT MORE

- **Mendler, A. Connecting with Students, ASCD, 2001** – '2 x 10' is one of the strategies suggested in the book.
- **Article: 2x10 Relationship Building: How to Do It (and Why It Works!)**, Nick Woolf, Panorama Education. (*Good summary of the 'what?' and 'how?'*)
- **Jean Gross – Creating the We: Ideas for building pupils' belonging in school**
- **Henze, E.E.C., Burley, T., Coon, T. et al. Validating the 2x10 Intervention. Contemp School Psychol 29, 575–589 (2025).**

SEE ALSO

- **Professor Tim Brighthouse - 20 things that teachers do**
- **Conversation Starters / Getting to Know you Questions**



A BRILLIANT ME IN ACTION ONE PAGE GUIDE TO...

APPLIED EDUCATIONAL NEUROSCIENCE (DR. LORI DESAUTELS)

Dr. Lori Desautels is an educator, author, and researcher whose work focuses on **Applied Educational Neuroscience**—the use of brain science to inform trauma-informed, relationship-centered teaching practices. Her work supports the emotional regulation and wellbeing of both students and educators.

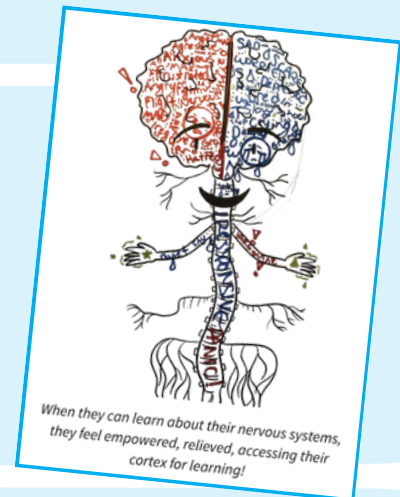
WHAT?

She describes **four key pillars** for creating these environments:

- **Regulated Adults:** Adults (teachers, staff) must be regulated themselves to help regulate students. (Staff wellbeing and morale are essential prerequisites for regulation)
- **Explicit Co-Regulation Strategies:** Teaching and practicing strategies for adults and students to help each other regulate emotions.
- **Positive and Proactive Relationship Building:** Cultivating strong, trust-based relationships within the school community.
- **Neuro-Education:** Teaching students and adults about how their brains work, particularly in relation to stress, emotions, and learning.

WHY?

- Neuroscience shows that stress, trauma, and adversity affect how children behave and learn.
- Dr. Desautels bridges this science with classroom practice, helping educators understand the **brain-body connection** and how emotional dysregulation impacts learning.
- Her work emphasises that **co-regulation, connection, and predictability** are essential for children's readiness to learn.
- Regulation strategies support inclusion, behaviour, and engagement—especially for children who have experienced adversity.



SEL?

- **Introduce daily regulation routines** using short, body-based activities from *Body and Brain Brilliance* (e.g., breathwork, movement, sensory breaks).
- **Use brain-aligned language** to help children understand their stress responses (e.g., "Your downstairs brain is trying to protect you—let's help it feel safe").
- **Create co-regulation spaces** like calm corners with tools that support nervous system regulation.
- Embed strategies into **transitions, morning meetings, or PSHE/SEL lessons.**
- Help staff understand how behaviour is linked to brain states, shifting from "What's wrong with you?" to "**What's happened to you?**" and "**What do you need?**"

FIND OUT MORE

- **Revelations in Education** – Lori Desautels website – More information about AEN, detail of her books, resources and a FREE stuff to download.
- **YouTube Channel - Lori Desautels**
- **Edutopia website** - a number of articles / blogs by Dr Desautels - worth a look
- **Social media** - Dr. D often shares insightful thoughts / snippets of her work on social media.
- **Book**
 - *Body and Brain Brilliance: A Toolkit for Creating Regulation and Resilience in the Classroom* (2023)

SEE ALSO Brain Breaks / FoAPs / Neuroplasticity

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ATTUNEMENT

Attunement means noticing what a child might be feeling, and responding in a way that helps them feel seen, safe and understood.

WHAT?

In the day-to-day classroom, it looks like:

- noticing changes in body language, tone, energy, facial expression
- being curious about what is driving behaviour (not just reacting to the behaviour)
- using your voice, presence and relationship to help a child settle
- helping a child move from “I’m not OK” back to “I can cope”

WHY?

“Children need attunement to feel secure and to develop well” (Dr Dan Siegal)

Attunement helps regulate the nervous system and builds strong, secure relationships. It’s the foundation of felt safety and co-regulation. Children learn best when their nervous system feels safe enough for thinking, language and learning.

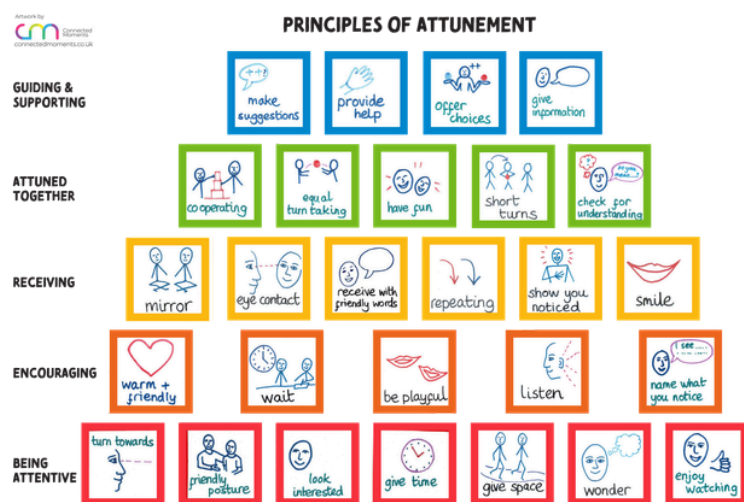
IN PRIMARY SEL?

Attunement helps create felt safety in the classroom by enabling us to, for example:

- Notice subtle signs of stress or disconnection.
- Prioritise relational repair when things go wrong.
- Use facial expressions, tone, and body language to match children’s emotions i.e. co-regulation.

All of which contribute to supporting pupils to develop SEL skills.

Attuned practice is one of the building blocks of ‘everyday SEL’.



FIND OUT MORE

- **Carnegie Education** [Article: Attuned Teaching. A framework build on relationships for learning](#)
- **Education Scotland:** [How to be attuned to support engagement](#) (PowerPoint)
- [Top 10 Attunement Ideas](#)

SEE ALSO

- PACE
- Empathy
- Window of Tolerance
- Regulate, Relate, Reason

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THE BOINGBOING RESILIENCE FRAMEWORK

The Boingboing Resilience Framework* is a practical tool developed by Professor Angie Hart and colleagues to support schools, other professionals and families to support children and young people’s resilience.

WHAT?

The framework outlines 42 “resilient moves” that support children’s ability to cope and thrive. It’s structured under 5 headings:

Basics * **Belonging** * **Learning** * **Coping** * **Core Self**

The framework can be used flexibly with individuals, small groups, or across whole-school approaches.

* ‘Resilience Framework (Children and Young People) Oct 2012 – Boingboing, adapted from Hart and Blincow with Thomas 2007’.

Supporting children to develop resilience helps them handle difficulties, feel more confident, and stay engaged in learning.

WHY?

The Resilience Framework promotes relational, inclusive, and rights-based ways to build resilience, especially for children facing adversity or disadvantage. It is practical tool enabling C&YP and those supporting them to **“Beat the odds whilst also changing the odds”**.

This means that resilience is not seen as a personal characteristic or about an individual finding ways to bounce forward when things are tough (beating the odds). The Boingboing approach also recognises inequality plays a big part in making things tougher in the first place, and so resilience is also about challenging inequalities too (changing the odds).

The Boingboing Resilience Framework promotes inclusion and equity, supporting all children—but especially those facing disadvantage—by helping adults in their lives respond to their needs in consistent, relational, and strengths-based ways.

BOINGBOING/ CASEL

Boingboing	Core Focus	Aligned CASEL Competency
1. Basics	Addressing fundamental needs (e.g., safety, shelter, health, sleep).	Social Awareness / Responsible Decision-Making (Understanding environmental factors & making safer, healthier choices).
2. Belonging	Establishing and maintaining supportive relationships and feeling accepted.	Relationship Skills (Essential for building and maintaining healthy connections).
3. Learning	Acquiring academic, social, and life skills; being motivated and open to growth.	Self-Management / Responsible Decision-Making (Relates to goal setting, planning, organisation, and problem-solving).
4. Coping	Developing skills to manage challenges, problem-solve, and manage emotions.	Self-Management (Specifically managing stress, controlling impulses, and goal setting).
5. Core Self	Understanding oneself, one’s values, strengths, and taking responsibility.	Self-Awareness (Crucial for recognising one’s own emotions, strengths, and values).

IN SEL?

- Explore the 42 “resilient moves” with staff to build a shared understanding of how they may support pupils / families.
- Use as a needs assessment tool for supporting individual children and young people
- Help children recognise the ‘resilient moves’ they are already making and areas that need support.
- Involve families and communities—resilience is built in context.

FIND OUT MORE

- <https://www.boingboing.org.uk/what-we-do/#resilience-framework>
- The [Academic Resilience Approach](#) (Boingboing / YM)
- **Local resources** (for schools and pupils)
 - <https://www.headstartkernow.org.uk/resilience/>

SEE ALSO

- Parent Engagement Framework
- Ordinary Magic
- Bronfenbrenner



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BRAIN BREAKS

Brain breaks are short, structured periods of physical activity or calming activities integrated throughout the school day. A 2025 study demonstrated the impact of 'micro-breaks' in improving attention / performance.

WHAT?

They are designed to re-energise the brain, refresh thinking, restore focus, and break up routine. They enable the brain activity to switch different networks allow the brain pathways to rest and the brain chemical messengers – neurotransmitters – to be topped up.

Brain breaks can be calming or energising and improve concentration, reduce stress, and enhance self-regulation. They can be used by individuals and whole groups. Examples might include a quick game, a physical activity, or a mental challenge.

Brain breaks do not require disruption in the flow of learning. Simply stretching, moving to a different part of the room, or singing a song can revitalise the brain.

The Neuroscience of Brain Breaks

WHY?

The amygdala has an important role to play in learning and creating memory.

When students' brains become anxious, highly confused, or overwhelmed or, even if students are not stressed by the pace or content of new learning, a point arises when the amygdala (required to help turn information into memory) gets overloaded and stops working effectively. Brain breaks can help the amygdala to refresh.

Benefits of Brain Breaks

IN PRIMARY SET?

- Improve memory and focus to help children think more clearly and boost learning.
- Decrease stress and support emotional regulation.
- Energise or calm – depending on activity chosen.
- Help create routines and ease transitions.

Brain breaks work best when

- Children understand the purpose and have opportunities to practice
- Children have choice and agency – so that activities feel comfortable / beneficial.
- They are used consistently.

A quick online search will provide any number of brain break ideas / resources.

FIND OUT MORE

Edutopia have some [excellent articles](#) and a short video '[The Science Behind Brain Breaks](#)'.

Lori Desautels has many examples of brain breaks (alongside what she calls **FoAPs** (Focused Attention Practices) as part of [Applied Educational Neuroscience](#), which are freely available to download.

SEE ALSO

- FoAPs
- Applied Educational Neuroscience
- Executive Functions
- EASEL Kernels



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BRAIN CHEMICALS / DOSE

WHAT?

DOSE stands for four brain chemicals that are good to know about. The brain and body release these natural "happy chemicals" that influence mood, behaviour, and wellbeing:

- **Dopamine** – reward/motivation
- **Oxytocin** – trust and connection
- **Serotonin** – mood booster
- **Endorphins** – pain relief / de-stress



Supporting healthy regulation of these chemicals (e.g. through **The 5 Ways to Wellbeing**) can help children feel calmer, more connected, and more resilient.

When these chemicals are balanced, children recharge more easily and manage challenges with greater ease.

WHY?

Teaching children about **DOSE** chemicals as part of an understanding how their brain works strengthens their understanding of the biological basis for their feelings.

Showing children how the **DOSE** chemicals can be boosted in everyday actions / interactions (like using the **5 Ways to Wellbeing**) gives them agency and effective strategies.

IN SEL?

Teaching children about **DOSE** as part of understanding our brains contributes to **self-awareness, self-management** and **responsible decision-making**.

The accessibility and effectiveness of The 5 Ways to Wellbeing in helping to boost **DOSE** make a positive contribution to 'everyday' SEL

FIND OUT MORE

[My Brilliant Place to be ME!](#)

The resources in the '**Brain Box**' have more about DOSE and the **5 Ways to Wellbeing**. Our [Start Now young people's website](#) has a section on brain science and the DOSE chemicals. And helps children and young people to explore the 5 Ways.

TISUK '[What every child professional needs to know about key brain chemicals](#)' (pdf). A more detailed exploration.

An infographic titled "GET YOUR DAILY 'D.O.S.E.'" in a bubbly font. It lists activities for four brain chemicals: Dopamine, Oxytocin, Serotonin, and Endorphins. In the center, there is a yellow smiley face with a lightbulb above it, and a beaker below it containing colorful dots representing the chemicals. The background is light yellow with a blue border.

Chemical	Activities
Dopamine	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• completing a task• achieving small goals• self-care activities• celebrating the little wins each day• trying new things
Oxytocin	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• playing with a pet• playing with a baby• giving a compliment• hugs• kindness and helping others
Serotonin	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• exercise• being out in nature• being in the sun• spending time with others
Endorphins	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• laughter• dark chocolate• get active - run, dance, cycle• listen to music

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BRITISH VALUES

WHAT?

As part of their work to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils' schools are expected to actively promote British Values — Democracy, Rule of Law, Individual Liberty, Mutual Respect, and Tolerance.

KS1/2 Citizenship is due to become a statutory requirement under the DfE Curriculum Review.

WHY?

“British Values / SMSC and SEL work together: British Values / SMSC provides the values and context (who we are and what we value); SEL teaches children the skills to act on those values — to reflect, regulate, relate and make fair decisions.”

BRITISH VALUES / CASEL

British Value	CASEL SEL Competency	Notes
Democracy	Responsible Decision-Making & Relationship Skills	Fostering democracy requires individuals to make informed choices that consider the well-being of the wider community (Responsible Decision-Making) and to engage in constructive dialogue and collaboration (Relationship Skills).
The Rule of Law	Responsible Decision-Making & Self-Management	Upholding the rule of law involves understanding and adhering to rules and ethical standards, which relies on personal responsibility and self-control (Self-Management, Responsible Decision-Making).
Individual Liberty	Self-Awareness & Self-Management	Valuing individual freedom is linked to developing self-knowledge, self-esteem, and confidence in one's own abilities (Self-Awareness) while also understanding responsibilities as well as rights (Self-Management).
Mutual Respect	Social Awareness & Relationship Skills	Respecting others is a direct application of social awareness, which involves empathy and understanding diverse perspectives. It is a core component of building and maintaining healthy relationships (Relationship Skills).
Tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs	Social Awareness & Relationship Skills	Tolerance is linked to social awareness, requiring individuals to appreciate and respect diverse cultures, faiths, and backgrounds. This understanding helps to foster community and positive interactions (Relationship Skills) within a diverse society.

FIND OUT MORE

- [DfE Guidance](#)
- [PSHE Association Programme of Study](#)
- [Curriculum Review \(KS1/2 Citizenship\)](#)

SEE ALSO

- Children's Rights
- Empathy
- SMSC
- PSHE
- UN Rights Respecting Schools

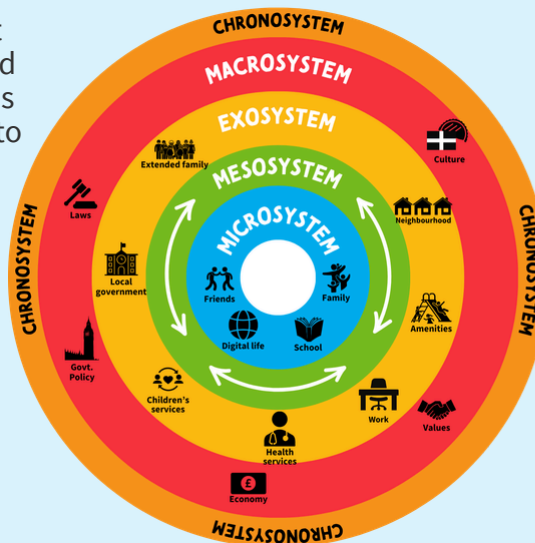


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BRONFENBRENNER'S ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS MODEL

Bronfenbrenner's model explains how a child's development doesn't happen in a vacuum. It is influenced by multiple interconnected systems—from their family and classroom to broader cultural and political contexts. It considers how these systems interact and shape outcomes over time.

WHAT? It highlights how education is not something that belongs to the school alone, but to a network of relationships, structures and institutions. A child's learning is best shaped when these multiple systems act together.



MICRO The child's day-to-day contexts - e.g. home and school. Where children experience direct interactions which could impact on, e.g., engagement, belonging, attendance

MESO Different parts of the child's microsystem interacting together, e.g. meaningful communication between parents and school

EXO People & places that have an indirect impact on the child's life & learning e.g. MAT policies or parental (un)employment

MACRO The cultural values, policies and norms that shape expectations about education. E.g. the 'Every Child Achieving and Thriving' white paper / new Ofsted EIF

CHRONO This captures how changes (or continuity) over time influence development e.g. puberty, transitions, moving, family break up

This is reflected in the *Every Child Achieving and Thriving* white paper*. There is an emphasis not just on schools' role as educators but also as 'anchors' within the community and therefore a powerful setting to help families access support and services through strong collaboration between schools and other partners. I.e. the quality of the interactions at the *microsystem* and the *mesosystem* levels.

WHY? Bronfenbrenner helps remind us that children's development is shaped by the relationships and systems around them. Schools are a vital part of this ecology, but children thrive best when families, schools, communities and services work together.

It reminds schools that SEL isn't just individual — it's systemic. We must understand and support the contexts that shape children's lives.

- SEL?**
- Strengthen school-home partnerships.
 - Build safe, inclusive micro-systems within the classroom.
 - Consider wider barriers to participation and wellbeing.
 - Plan SEL at whole-school, classroom, and family levels.

- FIND OUT MORE**
- [Bronfenbrenner on the HSK website](#)
 - [An introduction to resilience: background / research](#)
 - [Boingboing approach to resilience](#)
 - [CASEL approach to SEL](#) (introduction in the BMinA resource)



- SEE ALSO**
- Boingboing Resilience Framework
 - Parent Engagement Framework
 - CASEL

Bronfenbrenner informs the Boingboing approach to resilience and is a foundation for the CASEL approach to SEL
 *'Every Child Achieving and Thriving', DfE, February 2026

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CASEL (COLLABORATIVE FOR ACADEMIC, SOCIAL, & EMOTIONAL LEARNING)

CASEL is a leading organisation in the field of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). They are widely recognised for their comprehensive framework that defines SEL and identifies five core competencies:

WHAT?

- Self-Awareness:** The ability to understand one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behaviour across contexts.
- Self-Management:** The ability to manage one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviours effectively in different situations and to achieve¹ goals and aspirations.
- Social Awareness:** The ability to understand the perspectives of and empathise with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts.
- Relationship Skills:** The ability to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships and to navigate diverse social settings effectively.
- Responsible Decision-Making:** The ability to make caring and constructive choices about personal behaviour and social interactions across diverse situations.

The **Brilliant ME! in Action** resource, alongside the Education Endowment Foundation uses the CASEL definition and the CASEL Framework as the underpinning approach.

The **CASEL approach** has a strong and constantly evolving evidence base. There are many quality resources and tools drawing on CASEL. CASEL is consistent with other aspects of wellbeing work in Cornwall including:

WHY?

- A Whole School Approach
- Boingboing Resilience Framework
- Relational practice
- Trauma aware / informed approaches

PRIMARY SEL?

- The **CASEL approach** offers flexibility and opportunities in everyday practice, including:
 - explicit teaching (through PSHE and opportunities in the wider curriculum);
 - Modelling SEL skills & coping strategies;
 - Creating a whole school ethos underpinned with a shared language supportive of safety, connectedness and belonging.



FIND OUT MORE

- [CASEL website](#)
- [Education Endowment Foundation website](#)
- [CASEL has a useful webinar introducing SEL on their website \(60 mins\)](#)

SEE ALSO

- EASEL / KERNALS
- Bronfenbrenner
- SEAL

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CHILDREN'S RIGHTS APPROACH IN CORNWALL

Everyone has human rights, but children and young people are entitled to additional rights to give them the protection they need while they grow towards adulthood and independence.

WHAT?

Children's rights are set out in the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**.

In Cornwall, the council has developed a Children's Rights approach to meet their commitment to integrate children's rights into everything the council does. In January 2026 the Council formerly adopted the UNCRC to help create a better future for our C&YP.

The approach is supported by the Council Children's Rights Team.

CR & SEL

A rights-based approach to education fosters a sense of dignity, respect, and agency in children. When children understand their rights and feel heard and valued, it positively impacts their self-esteem, felt safety, sense of belonging, and ability to participate effectively.

CASEL Competency	Relevant UNCRC Articles	Children's Rights Summary	How SEL Brings This to Life in UK Primary Schools
Self-Awareness	Article 12 – Respect for the views of the child Article 29 – Education should develop the child's personality and talents	Every child has the right to express their views and develop confidence in who they are.	SEL helps children recognise and express emotions, strengths, and values, promoting voice, agency, and confidence in expressing opinions respectfully.
Self-Management	Article 6 – Right to life, survival, and development Article 24 – Right to health and wellbeing	Children have the right to grow, develop, and learn how to look after their emotional and physical wellbeing.	SEL supports regulation, resilience, and healthy coping skills, helping children manage stress, make safe choices, and build lifelong wellbeing habits.
Social Awareness	Article 2 – Non-discrimination Article 14 – Freedom of thought, belief, and religion Article 30 – Rights of minority or indigenous children	All children should be treated equally and learn to respect differences in others.	SEL fosters empathy, respect, and perspective-taking — building inclusive classrooms where diversity is valued and everyone feels they belong.
Relationship Skills	Article 15 – Right to meet with others and form groups Article 19 – Protection from all forms of violence	Children have the right to safe, positive relationships and protection from harm.	SEL develops communication, cooperation, and conflict-resolution skills, helping children build friendships and recognise unsafe or disrespectful behaviour.
Responsible Decision-Making	Article 3 – Best interests of the child Article 28 – Right to education Article 29 – Education should prepare children for life in a free society	Children have the right to quality education that supports good judgement and moral development.	SEL teaches problem-solving, ethical thinking, and understanding consequences — preparing children to make thoughtful, responsible choices in school and life.

FIND OUT MORE

- [Children's Rights in Cornwall](#)



SEE ALSO

- Rights Respecting Schools

A BRILLIANT ME IN ACTION ONE PAGE GUIDE TO...

CLANGERS (EXTENDED 5 WAYS TO WELLBEING)

CLANGERS expands the more familiar 5 Ways to Wellbeing by adding Healthy Eating and Sleep:

WHAT?

- Connect
- Learn
- Active
- Notice
- Give
- Eat well
- Relax / Sleep



(The extension of the 5 Ways to become CLANGERS is credited to Dr Phil Hammond)

While the 5 Ways address cognitive, emotional, and social aspects of well-being, healthy eating and adequate sleep are foundational for physical and mental health.

WHY?

From a neuroscience perspective, a balanced diet provides the necessary nutrients for brain function and neurotransmitter production (directly impacting mood and cognitive performance).

Quality sleep is essential for memory consolidation, emotional regulation, and overall brain restoration.

SEL?

Being aware of and regularly using the 5 ways to wellbeing / CLANGERS can support self-awareness, self-management and responsible decision making.

The 5 ways to wellbeing / CLANGERS are an accessible, family friendly (and effective) approach.

FIND OUT MORE

- [CLANGERS for All, Every Day \(Blogpost by Doctor Phil Hammond\)](#).
- [Cameley School does CLANGERS \(Video by the Boys in Mind charity\)](#).
- [CLANGERS on The Start Now Young People's website](#)

SEE ALSO

- 5 Ways to Wellbeing
- DOSE

A BRILLIANT ME IN ACTION ONE PAGE GUIDE TO...

COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING (CPS)*

This guide refers to the Think:Kids Approach (Dr Stuart Ablon) which is based on Collaborative Proactive Solutions (Lives in the Balance Approach) of Dr Ross Greene (the originator of CPS). They fell out over IP rights **BUT both approaches share the same core philosophy and method.*

The core belief behind CPS is **'Kids do well if they can'**. When they struggle it is usually because:

- Lagging skills (not lack of motivation)
- Unsolved problems (not deliberate defiance)

WHAT?

It's about recognising that the child **'can't'** rather than **'won't'**

CPS aims to shift focus from behaviour (control, consequences) to understanding what's needed and finding ways for adults & children to work together to strengthen skills and problem solve. This process is used with recurring and predictable issues the child faces (e.g. coping with transitions / change) and is a structured conversation:

Step 1 - The adult tries to understand what's happening for the child

Step 2 - The adult explains their worry about what is happening

Step 3 - The adult and child think of a plan to try and solve it together

WHY?

Research shows that CPS:

- Reduces challenging behaviour
- Builds regulation and flexibility
- Improves adult-child relationships
- Develops executive functioning
- Increases pupil voice and agency

CPS:

- Is trauma-informed
- Builds regulation and flexibility
- Improves adult-child relationships
- Develops executive functioning
- Increases pupil voice and agency

IN PRIMARY SEL?

CPS strongly supports SEL in the classroom:

- **Self-awareness** – child reflects on difficulty
- **Self-management** – builds regulation and flexibility
- **Social awareness** – considers adult perspective
- **Relationship skills** – collaborative dialogue
- **Responsible decision making** – shared problem solving leading to positive choices

FIND OUT MORE

Collaborative Problem Solving (Stuart Ablon)

www.thinkkids.org

Ablon, S. 'Changeable' (2018)

Collaborative Proactive Solutions (Ross Greene)

<https://livesinthebalance.org>

Greene, R.W. 'Lost at School' (2014)

HOW CASEL AND THINK:KIDS CPS OVERLAP



See THINK:KIDS Thinking Skills Guide

SEE ALSO

- Executive Functioning
- Bruce Perry's 3Rs
- Neuroplasticity

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EASEL / SEL KERNELS

EASEL (Ecological Approaches to Social & Emotional Learning) Kernals are bite-sized, evidence-based SEL practices (routines, games, strategies) developed by Harvard's EASEL Lab. The activities are aligned with the CASEL SEL competencies.

WHAT?

Examples of kernels

- A deep-breathing exercise to help students calm down.
- "Brain Games" that help students practice executive function skills like focus and attention.
- A peer-to-peer activity where students share written praise for one another to promote prosocial behaviour and positive relationships.
- Simple debriefing questions after a social activity to help students reflect on their feelings.

WHY?

Kernels are simple, low-cost, and easy to embed into daily routines and practices. They are intended to be flexible and adaptable to allow teachers to use in ways that meet the needs of their pupils.

IN PRIMARY SEL?

Benefits

- Can be effective for a range of outcomes, including classroom behaviour, executive function, and self-regulation.
- Coincide with improvements in social-emotional skills and a reduction in disciplinary issues.
- Can be used for whole classes, small groups, or even individual students.

FIND OUT MORE

- [Good overview](#) of Kernels
- [Excellent description / background](#)
Including links to:
 - [Kernels collections](#) (downloadable Kernels activities)

SEE ALSO

- CASEL
- Focussed Attention Practices (FoAPs)



SEL KERNELS

Building Skills for Learning and Life

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EFT (TAPPING) AND SELF-REGULATION

Tapping is a self-regulation technique for C&YP. More formally known as *Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT)*, it involves tapping gently on acupressure points to calm the nervous system. Often accompanied with affirmations or deep breathing.

The book **Gorilla Thumps and Bear Hugs** introduces this technique to children using fun animal imagery. (There are many other books / websites along the same lines).

WHAT?

It is offered as a safe, simple, child-friendly activity that requires little preparation or time commitment.

Some, small scale, studies have been carried out relevant to tapping in the primary classroom and have been positive about the potential effects

It is gaining some recognition as suitable for use in schools as a calming / soothing strategy. Many pupils enjoy using it and find it useful. **As with all self-regulation activities it is most successful if:**

- Pupils feel comfortable doing it and have a choice to do so.
- It is taught well, and pupils understand how it works (within the context of learning about the brain and central nervous system) and why it can be effective.
- It is used consistently and is seen as part of wellbeing / SEL and not as an add-on.

SEL?

It may be helpful for children to choose to use as part of available coping / regulation strategies.

Self-awareness and **Self-management**.



FIND OUT MORE

<https://childtherapyservice.org.uk/interventions/emotional-freedom-technique/>

The Tapping Solution Foundation are very positive about and promote tapping. Including the resources to support the children's book "*Gorilla Thumps and Bear Hugs: A Tapping Book for Kids*" by Alex Ortner).

- <https://thetappingsolution.com/gorilla-thumps/details.php>
- <https://www.tappingsolutionfoundation.org/tapping-teachers-students/>

SEE ALSO

- Focused Attention Practices (FoAPs)
- Regulate, Relate, Reason

A BRILLIANT ME IN ACTION ONE PAGE GUIDE TO...

EMOTION COACHING (EMOTION COACHING UK)

Emotion Coaching was developed by Dr. **John Gottmann**. It is a relational approach that helps children understand their different emotions and how to manage them. It involves listening with empathy and validating feelings, then helping the child label their emotions, and finally, guiding them towards problem-solving or constructive ways to cope. It's built on five key steps:

WHAT?

- Become aware of the child's emotion.
- Recognise the emotion as an opportunity for connection and teaching.
- Listen with empathy and attunement and validate the child's feelings.
- Help the child to find the words to label the emotions.
- Set limits or guide the child in problem-solving (if needed).

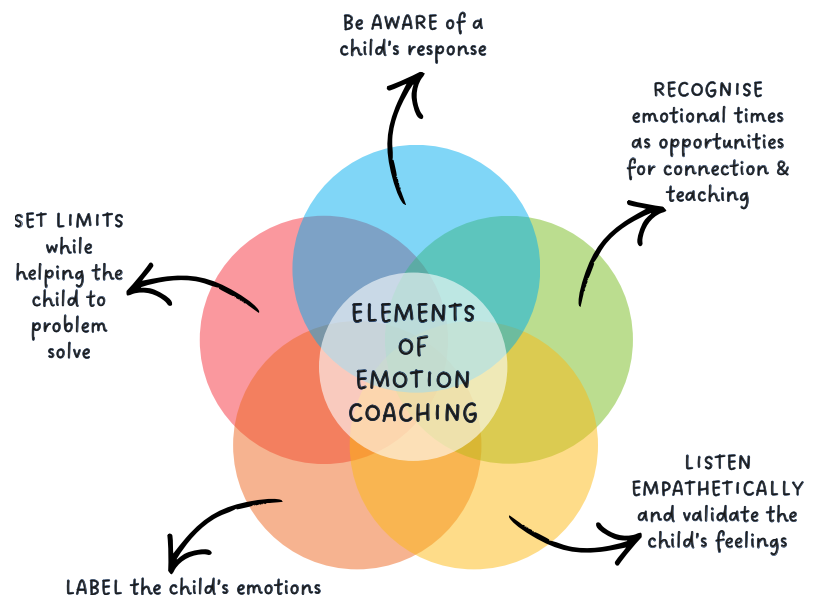
Emotion Coaching is a powerful strategy for developing emotional literacy and self-regulation, core components of SEL.

WHY?

Emotion Coaching supports core SEL skills like emotional literacy, regulation, empathy, and positive relationships. Neuroscience shows that naming emotions calms the brain (especially the amygdala), helping children move from dysregulation to reflection and learning. It's particularly powerful with children who have experienced trauma, anxiety, or behavioural difficulties.

SEL?

Emotion coaching skills support self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making.



FIND OUT MORE

- <https://www.emotioncoachinguk.com>
- <https://www.emotioncoachinguk.com/resources>
- **Book**
 - Emotion Coaching with Children and Young People in Schools by Gilbert et al (see the [Headstart wellbeing book club](#) for more information / review)
- The Cornwall Education Psychology Service has Emotion Coaching training for schools and a series of [short videos for parents and carers](#) explaining the approach.

SEE ALSO

- Attunement
- RULER
- Self-Reg
- Zones of Regulation

A BRILLIANT ME IN ACTION ONE PAGE GUIDE TO...

EMPATHY

Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another. It includes both cognitive empathy (understanding someone else's perspective) and affective empathy (emotionally resonating with their experience). Empathy is a core competency within most SEL frameworks and supports compassionate, respectful relationships.

WHAT?

It is made up of 3 elements:

- **Feeling** – where we resonate with other people's feelings
- **Thinking** – where we use reason and imagination to work out how someone else feels
- **Acting** – where we are inspired to help others.

WHY?

Empathy strengthens relationships, increases safety and belonging, reduces conflict, and promotes inclusion. It's essential for kindness, compassion, and responsible decision-making.

SEL?

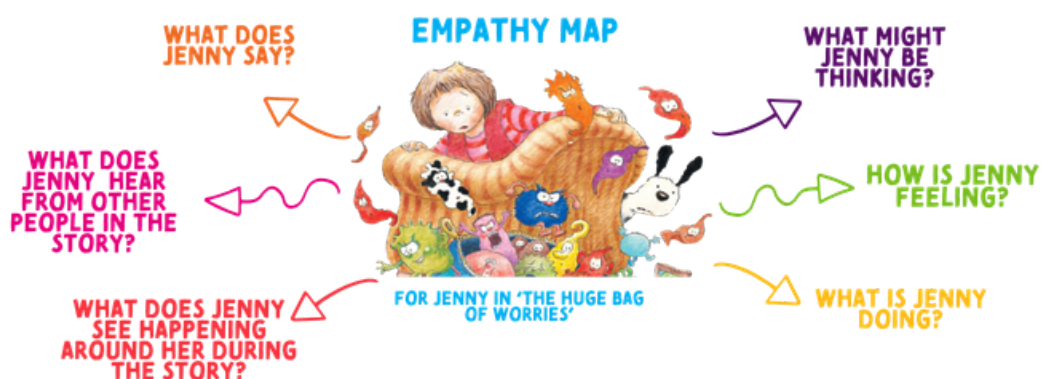
Empathy is an essential part of **social awareness, relationship skills,** and **responsible decision-making.**

FIND OUT MORE

- <https://www.empathylab.uk>
- <https://www.cam.ac.uk/research/news/one-term-of-empathy-training-measurably-improved-classroom-behaviour>
- <https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/whole-school-or-college-resources/empathy-based-classrooms/>
- <https://www.teachfirst.org.uk/stories/how-we-taught-empathy-140000-students-worldwide>
- [Brene Brown on Empathy](#) You Tube Short Film - great for sharing with C&YP too!

SEE ALSO

- Attunement
- CASEL
- Children's Rights
- SMSC
- VIA Strengths



A BRILLIANT ME IN ACTION ONE PAGE GUIDE TO...

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS

A set of mental skills that help with planning, focusing attention, remembering instructions, and managing multiple tasks. These are like the brain's management system, enabling us to organise, prioritise, and make effective decisions.

Core functions:

WHAT?

Working Memory: The ability to hold and manipulate information in our minds over short periods

Mental Flexibility: The ability to adapt to changing situations, shift thinking, and see things from different perspectives

Self-control: The ability to regulate attention, behaviour, and emotions, allowing us to stay on task and avoid distractions

We are not born with EF skills but need to develop them. Through experiences, we develop EF **thinking skills** (e.g. planning, organisation) and **EF doing skills** (e.g., emotional control, sustained attention).

WHY?

Executive functioning is not just about organisation or learning skills — it is deeply connected to regulation, safety and relationships.

Executive functioning skills significantly impact pupils' academic performance and classroom behaviour.

SEL?

Strong EF skills contribute directly to self-regulation, problem-solving, and social competence, all core components of SEL including the **self-management** and **responsible decision-making** core competencies



FIND OUT MORE

- [Harvard Centre on the Developing Child - A guide to Executive Function](#)
- [Harvard Centre on the Developing Child Activities 7 - 12 year olds](#)
- [The Oxford Brain Story - for families](#) (short animations about how experiences shape our brains)
- [Start Now](#) Interactive Guide to EF
- **Book:**
 - Dawson, Peg, and Richard Guare. *Executive Skills in Children and Adolescents*, Third Edition: A Practical Guide to Assessment and Intervention. 3rd ed, Guilford Publications, 2018.
- **Pooky Knightsmith** has created some practical, accessible [EF guides](#).

SEE ALSO

- Collaborative Problem Solving
- Regulate, Relate, Reason
- Window of Tolerance

A BRILLIANT ME IN ACTION ONE PAGE GUIDE TO...

FIVE WAYS TO WELLBEING (START NOW)

WHAT?

A slightly reworded version of the original New Economics Foundation model, using young people friendly language as part of the work of Start Now (the website created by young people in Cornwall: for young people in Cornwall) and the My Brilliant Place to be ME! journal.

- Connect
- Get moving
- Take time for you
- Stop and take notice
- Give to others

WHY?

These simple evidence-based actions support mental health and regulation in daily life.

Each action has been shown to support brain health and wellbeing e.g.:

- **Connect** → Oxytocin
- **Get moving** → Dopamine and endorphins
- **Take time for you** → Reduces stress and boosts resilience
- **Stop and take notice** → Supports mindfulness and interoception
- **Give to others** → Increases serotonin and purpose

SEL?

Can support **self-awareness**, **self-management** and **relationship skills** core competencies. The 5 ways are a well known, effective and accessible way to include as part of everyday SEL

FIND OUT MORE

- <https://www.startnowcornwall.org.uk>
- [Charlie Waller Charity](#) have 5 Ways posters / book marks
- www.headstartkernow.org.uk/brilliant-me
- <https://neweconomics.org/2008/10/five-ways-to-wellbeing>

SEE ALSO

- Clangers



A BRILLIANT ME IN ACTION ONE PAGE GUIDE TO...

FOCUSED ATTENTION PRACTICES (FOAPS)

Focused Attention Practices (FoAPs) are **short, intentional activities that ask children to deliberately place and hold their attention on one thing** — for example, their breath, a sound, a movement, or a sensory experience.

The aim is not relaxation alone, but **training the brain's capacity to notice, sustain, and gently return attention** when it drifts.

WHAT?

In child-friendly terms, FoAPs help children practise:

- noticing where their attention is
- bringing it back when it wanders
- doing this without judgement or pressure

They are typically:

- brief (30 seconds to 3 minutes)
- predictable and repeatable
- calm but alert (not “switching off”)

A **Focused Attention Practice** is different from a **brain break**. While brain breaks change up the routine, FoAPs specifically aim to quiet the thousands of thoughts that distract and frustrate us each day, allowing the mind to become present with a specific sound, sight, or taste.

FoAPs directly support skills that underpin learning, behaviour and wellbeing — particularly for children whose nervous systems are under frequent stress.

WHY?

They help children:

- practise pausing before reacting
- build awareness of body and emotional signals
- strengthen attention “muscles” needed for learning
- experience success with self-regulation (not just be told to regulate)

For staff, FoAPs:

- are low-prep and time-efficient
- support calm transitions without control or shaming
- work well as whole-class routines (not targeted interventions)
- can be used proactively, not only after dysregulation

“Something we practise together to help our brains grow stronger.”



IN PRIMARY SEL?

FoAPs align strongly with core SEL competencies:

- **Self-awareness**
 - Children learn to notice internal states (busy, calm, wobbly, steady).
- **Self-management**
 - They practise strategies that influence attention and regulation.
- **Relationship skills**
 - Shared calm, predictable routines support co-regulation and trust.
- **Responsible decision-making**
 - Pausing attention supports impulse control and thoughtful responses.

FIND MORE

Lori Desautels has played a key role in adapting and popularising FoAPs for schools as part of [Applied Educational Neuroscience](#).

Dr Desautels has some excellent examples of FoAPs **free** to download from her Revelations in Education [website](#).

SEE ALSO

- Brain Breaks
- Applied Educational Neuroscience
- Executive Functioning Skills
- EASEL Kernels

A BRILLIANT ME IN ACTION ONE PAGE GUIDE TO...

INCREDIBLE 5 POINT SCALE

The Incredible 5 Point Scale is a visual and cognitive-behavioural tool created by Kari Dunn Buron. It helps children understand social situations, manage their emotions, and regulate their behaviour by breaking feelings or responses down into five clearly defined levels.

WHAT?

This scale can provide a concrete way for children, especially those with autism or learning differences, to understand and self-regulate their behaviour and emotional reactions by offering a predictable structure. It may help build emotional awareness, independence, and a sense of control.

Different strategies work for different needs and this scale may be a useful tool to help some children.

Many children—especially those with autism, ADHD, or sensory processing differences—benefit from structured, predictable ways to interpret and express emotions. The 5 Point Scale offers a concrete, personalised framework for emotional understanding and self-regulation, supporting core SEL skills like self-awareness and responsible decision-making.

WHY?

- It is a visual strategy and many children benefit from learning with visuals
- May support social understanding and social communication
- May work as a tool for children to identify and manage their own feelings and emotions
- Can be used a tool by others to anticipate when strategies need to be put in to place
- Can help management of emotions and responses within real life situations
- It's a flexible tool that can work across a range of environments and social situations
- Can be used by parents and carers as well as in the classroom.

Can support **self-awareness**, **self-management** and **responsible decision-making** core competencies. It could be used to support everyday SEL for some pupils. E.g.:

SEL?

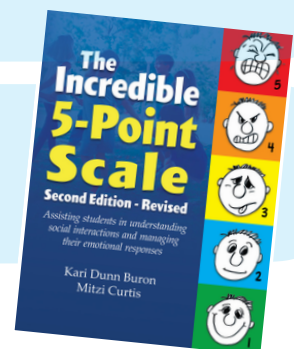
- Use it to support pupils with self-monitoring during transitions, high-stress moments, or unstructured times (like lunch or break).
- Embed it in visual timetables or calm corners.
- Link scales to coping strategies (e.g. "If I'm at a 4, I can...").

FIND OUT MORE

- <https://www.5pointscale.com>
- **Book**
 - Buron, Kari Dunn, and Mitzi Curtis. *The Incredible 5-Point Scale: Assisting Students in Understanding Social Interactions and Controlling Their Emotional Responses. Second edition, Revised.*, 5 Point Scale Publishing, 2022.

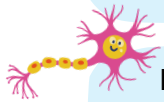
SEE ALSO

- Zones of Regulation
- Collaborative Problem Solving
- RULER



A BRILLIANT ME IN ACTION ONE PAGE GUIDE TO...

NEUROPLASTICITY: THE BRAIN'S AMAZING ABILITY TO CHANGE

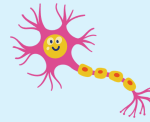


Neuroplasticity refers to the brain's incredible ability to change, adapt, and reorganise itself throughout life. When we learn something new, practise a skill, or have new experiences, the brain strengthens or creates new neural connections.

WHAT?

Neuroplasticity occurs when children:

- learn new knowledge or skills
- practise something repeatedly
- solve problems
- experience emotions or relationships
- recover from difficulties or injury



This means that repeated experiences strengthen neural pathways, making behaviours, thoughts, or skills easier over time.

WHY?

- Teaching children about neuroplasticity—the brain's ability to change and adapt—can foster a growth mindset, enhancing motivation and resilience. It can help pupils believe that their intelligence and abilities can grow and develop. (*'growth mindset'*).
- Research has found that teaching children about neuroplasticity positively affected their motivation, academic achievement, and brain activity. The effects were particularly significant for at-risk students.

Neuroplasticity does not only apply to academic learning.

When children repeatedly practise regulation strategies (such as breathing, movement, or calming routines), the brain strengthens the neural circuits involved in:

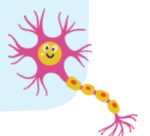
SEL?

- prefrontal cortex regulation
- attention control
- calming the stress response

Contributing to **self-awareness**, **self-management** and **responsible decision-making** core competencies.

FIND OUT MORE

- [The Oxford Brain Story - for families](#) (short animations about how experiences shape our brains)
- [The SEEN \(Secondary Education around Early Neurodevelopment\) Programme \(KS2 Pack\)](#)
- **Books**
 - Deak, JoAnn. ***Your Fantastic Elastic Brain: Stretch It, Shape It***. With Sarah Ackerley, 1st ed, Sourcebooks, Incorporated, 2010.
 - Dweck, Carol. ***Mindset - Updated Edition: Changing the Way You Think to Fulfil Your Potential***. Robinson, 2017.



A BRILLIANT ME IN ACTION ONE PAGE GUIDE TO...

ORACY

Oracy is the ability to communicate effectively through spoken language. It includes speaking and listening skills and supports both cognitive and social-emotional development.

WHAT?

“It is also a route to social mobility, empowering all students, not just some, to find their voice to succeed in school and life.” (Voice21)

The government’s 2025 curriculum review has recommended the inclusion of an Oracy Framework for all schools.

WHY?

- Strong oracy helps children express themselves, connect with others, and process emotions. It underpins SEL skills like empathy, self-awareness, and social problem-solving.
- The Oracy Framework highlights the social and emotional skills that enable successful discussion, inspiring speech and effective communication.

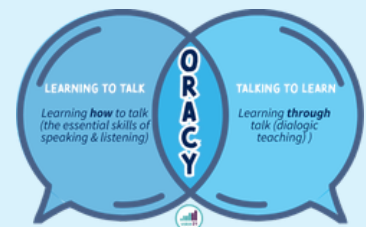
CASEL 5 × Cambridge Oracy Framework (SEL Skills)

SEL?

CASEL Competency	Relevant Cambridge Oracy Framework Skills (SEL-related)	Notes
Self-Awareness	Social and Emotional: Self-regulation in talk, confidence in speaking, awareness of audience and purpose.	Understanding feelings, strengths, emotions; noticing how they affect communication.
Self-Management	Social and Emotional: Managing turn-taking, staying on task in dialogue. Physical: Control of voice, posture, and breathing.	Managing behaviour and emotions during communication; using physical skills to stay calm and focused.
Social Awareness	Social and Emotional: Showing empathy, active listening, recognising others' viewpoints. Cognitive: Understanding social norms in discussion.	Understanding perspectives and responding sensitively in dialogue.
Relationship Skills	Social and Emotional: Collaboration, turn-taking, negotiating, resolving disagreements. Linguistic: Using language to include others, build on ideas, clarify.	Strong overlap—relationship skills are explicitly built through collaborative talk.
Responsible Decision-Making	Social and Emotional: Considering the impact of words on others. Articulating decisions / choices in face of, for example, peer pressure. Cognitive: Reasoning, evaluating information, weighing evidence, making justified decisions.	Thinking skills used in thoughtful discussion and making considered choices in group talk.

FIND OUT MORE

- [Brilliant ME! in Action resource](#) - Appendix D
- <https://voice21.org>
- <https://oracycambridge.org>



A BRILLIANT ME IN ACTION ONE PAGE GUIDE TO...

'ORDINARY MAGIC'

“Resilience is not a trait that children have or don't have — it's built through everyday experiences, relationships, and opportunities.”

Ann Masten, 'Ordinary Magic'

'Ordinary Magic' is a term coined by psychologist Dr Ann Masten. By 'Ordinary Magic' she meant that the factors that help children thrive despite adversity are not rare or extraordinary, but common, everyday systems of support and strength found in most children's lives.

WHAT?

Resilience comes from everyday things that help us grow, like having a healthy brain, strong relationships with caring adults, supportive families, good schools and communities, chances to do well, and believing in ourselves, which is built through positive experiences with others.

These systems, Masten argued, develop through **ordinary human experiences** — such as being loved, learning, playing, and belonging — rather than extraordinary interventions.

Resilience is not about being impervious to stress, but about the ability to adapt successfully to adversity and challenging life circumstances.

Masten's '**Ordinary Magic**' perspective is incredibly empowering for SEL in primary schools.

'Ordinary Magic' recognises that every child can be resilient if they experience supportive relationships and chances to develop coping skills.

WHY?

'Ordinary Magic' reminds us that we can all help identify the good things and coping strategies already present in the children's lives. In the same way we can nurture children's innate resilience through strengthening SEL, supporting connections and creating a sense of belonging. Without being a therapist or a mental specialist...

Through the idea of **'Ordinary Magic'** we can now see a Whole School Approach can be 'Everybody's Business'

SEL?

The idea of **'Ordinary Magic'** and the power of the 'everyday' is threaded throughout all of the SEL competencies.

FIND OUT MORE

- [Ordinary Magic on the Headstart Kernow website](#)
- [How Resilience is Built](#) (Centre on the Developing Child at Harvard - short video series).
- **Book**
 - Ordinary Magic: Resilience in Development by Ann Masten, 2014

SEE ALSO

- The Boingboing Resilience Framework
- Bronfenbrenner
- Oracy



A BRILLIANT ME IN ACTION ONE PAGE GUIDE TO...

PACE

Developed by Dr. Dan Hughes, **PACE** is a way of being with children that builds trust and felt safety.

PACE is a way of thinking, feeling, communicating and behaving that aims to help a child feel safe.

PACE stands for:

WHAT?

- Playfulness – bringing lightness and joy to interactions
- Acceptance – unconditional care, separating the child from the behaviour
- Curiosity – wondering gently about the child's inner world ("I wonder if...")
- Empathy – showing deep understanding and compassion

It's helpful for all children and can be especially powerful for children with trauma, attachment disruption, or high anxiety.

PACE creates emotional safety and helps build trust. It encourages children to feel seen and supported, which is essential for regulation and learning:

WHY?

- **Emotional Regulation:** Helps pupils move out of a "survival" (fight/flight) state into a calm state where they are receptive to learning.
- **Trust Building:** Provides a consistent, compassionate language for staff, which is especially vital for children with attachment difficulties or history of trauma.
- **Reduced Conflict:** By focusing on the emotion behind a behaviour rather than just the behaviour itself, schools can decrease the frequency of outbursts and shut-downs.

SEL?

PACE is about co-regulation and supporting children towards self-regulation. Supporting **self-awareness, self-management, relationship skills** and **responsible decision-making**.

FIND OUT MORE

- [A bitesize introduction to PACE](#) (HSK on demand, interactive online module)
- <https://ddpnetwork.org/about-ddp/meant-pace/>
- Dr Lynette Rentoul - An Introduction to the Foundation of Resilience and Prosocial Development in Young Children ([webinar](#)) and ([Guide](#))

SEE ALSO

- Attunement
- Regulate, Relate, Reason
- Window of Tolerance



A BRILLIANT ME IN ACTION ONE PAGE GUIDE TO...

POSITIVE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

The **7 Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs)** come from a landmark 2019 study led by Dr. Christina Bethell and colleagues (Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health).

The research identified **seven key positive relational and environmental experiences in childhood** that are strongly associated with improved adult mental health and wellbeing.

The 7 PCEs are:

- Being able to talk with family about feelings
- Feeling that family stood by you during difficult times
- Enjoying participation in community traditions
- Feeling a sense of belonging at school
- Feeling supported by friends
- Having at least two non-parent adults who took a genuine interest in you
- Feeling safe and protected by an adult at home



WHAT?

Key findings:

- PCEs show a **dose-response relationship**: the more positive experiences, the better adult outcomes.
- Adults with higher PCEs had **significantly lower rates of depression and poor mental health**.
- They were also **more likely to report strong social and emotional support in adulthood**.
- Crucially, PCEs can **buffer the impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)**.

WHY?

Positive Childhood Experiences remind us that small, everyday moments of connection, safety and belonging are powerful enough to change lifelong outcomes.

Prioritise relationships

- Ensure every child has at least one trusted adult in school.
- Build consistent, warm, attuned interactions (PACE, Emotion Coaching).

Strengthen belonging

- Create a strong sense of class and school belonging and mattering
- Use inclusive routines, shared language, and pupil voice.

Build peer connection

- Structured opportunities for friendship, cooperation, and support.
- Buddy systems, group work, and relational play.

Engage families

- Support families to feel confident talking about emotions.
- Share simple strategies (e.g. 5 Ways).

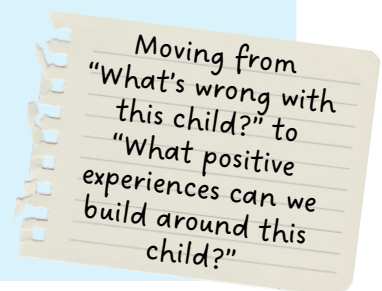
Connect to community

- Celebrate traditions, local identity
- Involve community members and role models.

Focus on safety and predictability

- Trauma-informed environments that promote felt safety.
- Clear routines, consistent adults, emotionally safe classrooms.

SEL?



FIND OUT MORE

- Bethell, C. D., Jones, J., Gombojav, N., Linkenbach, J., & Sege, R. (2019). Positive Childhood Experiences and Adult Mental and Relational Health in a Statewide Sample. *JAMA Pediatrics*, *173*(11).
- [Research summary](#).

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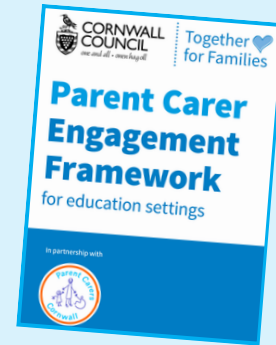
PARENT ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Cornwall's Parent Carer Engagement Framework supports education settings in building strong, equitable, and inclusive partnerships with families. It is structured around seven core principles, each with criteria, descriptors, and a toolkit of practical resources. The aim is to embed meaningful, two-way engagement that improves outcomes for all children—especially those most at risk of educational disadvantage.

WHAT?

The seven principles are:

1. A whole school approach
2. A welcoming school: culture, attitudes and approach
3. Communication
4. Support for learning
5. Community matters
6. Raising and realising aspiration
7. Addressing barriers to engagement



Research consistently shows that parental engagement is one of the most powerful levers for school improvement and pupil success (Goodall, EEF). Strong engagement supports:

WHY?

- Academic achievement (especially in literacy and maths)
- Emotional wellbeing and attendance
- Equity for disadvantaged and SEND pupils
- Inclusion and children's rights (UNCRC Articles 2, 3, 6, 12, 18, 28, 29)

In Cornwall, addressing regional attainment gaps, persistent absence, and disadvantage are key educational priorities. This framework provides a structured, sustainable, and rights-based approach to tackling these.

SEL?

- Embed family engagement into your whole-school improvement plan.
- Use the audit tools to assess and develop your current practice.
- Foster a culture of trust, respect, and inclusion with families.
- Create collaborative routines like “learning at home” partnerships and accessible parent events.
- Build staff capacity through training, reflection tools, and development opportunities.
- Ensure emotional safety and co-regulation extend beyond the classroom into the school-home relationship.
- Align your practice with principles from trauma-informed education, SEL, and equity frameworks.

FIND OUT MORE

- [Cornwall Parent Engagement Framework](#)
- **Book**
 - **The Four Pillars of Parental Engagement:** Empowering schools to connect better with parents and pupils by Justin Robbins and Karen Dempster. Shares practical solutions relating to school-parent engagement and communication based on insights gathered from some of the hardest-to-reach parents.
- **Article**
 - **[A whole-school approach to parental engagement: Two case studies](#)**, Headteacher Update, 3rd September 2024

SEE ALSO

- Children's Rights
- Right Respecting Schools

A BRILLIANT ME IN ACTION ONE PAGE GUIDE TO...

PATHS PROGRAMME – UK VERSION (BARNARDO'S UK)

WHAT?

PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) is a universal, evidence-based Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programme for primary-aged children (approx. 4–11). It teaches emotional understanding, self-regulation, empathy, and social problem-solving through structured lessons and daily classroom practice.

The UK version has been adapted for British schools (supported by Barnardo's) and evaluated in UK trials, including by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF).

PATHS aims to help children understand feelings, manage behaviour, and make thoughtful choices, supporting both wellbeing and readiness to learn.

WHY?

- Strong focus on emotional literacy and regulation
- Clear structure and teacher guidance
- Preventative and inclusive
- Supports behaviour, relationships, and learning readiness
- Aligns well with:
 - CASEL SEL competencies
 - PSHE outcomes
 - Trauma-informed and relational practice
 - Executive functioning development

SEL?

It is a planned whole school programme based on CASEL competencies with a suite of tools / training (at cost). It offers a structured curriculum and opportunities to reinforce across the school day. There are detailed teaching materials and classroom resources

Therein lies both its strengths & limitations. It requires training, 2 of 3 lessons of curriculum time per week, works best when delivered across the whole school and requires consistency and commitment in delivery.

FIND OUT MORE

- www.pathseducation.co.uk (UK version offered by Barnardo's)
- [PATHS UK Trial](#) - Education Endowment Foundation
- [PATHS CASEL Programme Guide](#)



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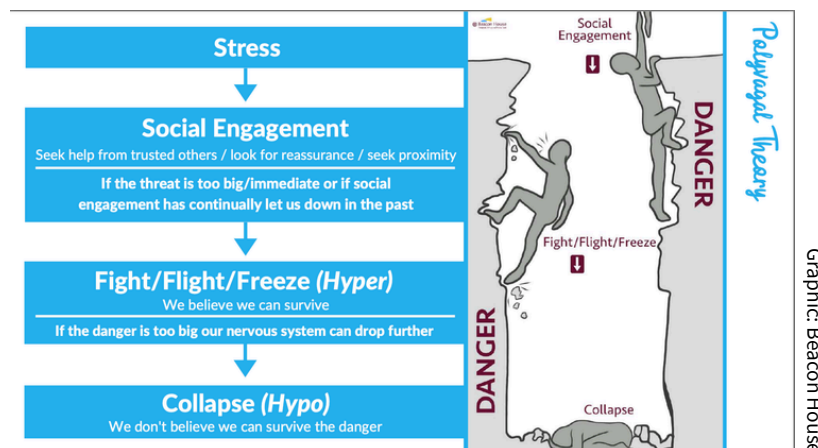
POLYVAGAL THEORY

Dr. Stephen Porges' Polyvagal Theory explains how our nervous system responds to stress and safety. When we face stress, our nervous system responds in a sequence based on three states:

WHAT?

- Social engagement (regulated, connected)
- Fight/flight (mobilised, anxious)
- Freeze (shutdown, disconnected)

Co-regulation and felt safety are key to helping children return to a calm, connected state.



An understanding of how the nervous system works is a powerful tool for both adults and children to help understand behaviour and threat responses.

WHY?

Understanding **Polyvagal Theory** helps educators recognise that children's behaviour is often a stress response—not deliberate misbehaviour. It supports trauma-informed practice, emotional safety, and helps staff respond with empathy and regulation strategies. It links closely to self-regulation, emotional awareness, and creating calm, connected learning environments.

Developing understanding of the brain & nervous system and learning self-regulation skills alongside co-regulation can support children towards **self-awareness** and self-management, improve **social awareness & relationship skills** and lead to responsible **decision-making**.

SEL?

[What is Polyvagal Theory \(Polyvagal Institute\)](#)

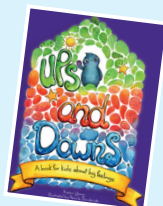
[Brilliant ME in Action \(Brain science p 50ff\)](#)

[Video: The Window of Tolerance \(Beacon House\)](#)

FIND OUT MORE

**Ups and Downs:
A Book about Big Feelings**

by Karen Young -
Polyvagal Theory in a
brilliant picture book!



SEE ALSO

- Window of Tolerance
- AEN
- Regulate, Relate, Reason

A BRILLIANT ME IN ACTION ONE PAGE GUIDE TO...

PROTECTIVE BEHAVIOURS

The Protective Behaviours Process (PBs) is a practical approach to personal safety and resilience. It's based on two key messages:

1. We all have the right to feel safe all the time.
2. We can talk with someone about anything, even if it feels awful.

WHAT?

PBs helps children understand early warning signs, build trusted relationships, and develop the confidence to seek help.

A PBs approach (*Strategies for Safety and Wellbeing*) is identified by Anna Freud (in the Education for Wellbeing research project) as a potentially effective curriculum resource to increase skills in personal safety and managing mental health. The latest DfE PHSE guidance has added an increased focus on safety alongside a mental health focus).

WHY?

PBs promotes emotional literacy, self-awareness and problem-solving.

PBs supports the development of internal and external supportive strategies.

	Protective Behaviours Themes	Related CASEL Competencies	How they complement each other
SEL?	Theme 1: We all have the right to feel safe, all the time.	Self-Awareness & Social Awareness	Helps children notice feelings and bodily cues when they don't feel safe; connects with understanding their emotions and others'. Encourages empathy and recognition of different comfort levels.
	Early Warning Signs (EWS)	Self-Awareness & Self-Management	Supports children to recognise internal signals (e.g. "butterflies in my tummy") and practise calming or grounding strategies. This builds emotional regulation and confidence in managing stress.
	Safety Continuum (Safe / Fun-to-Feel-Scared / Risking-on-Purpose / Unsafe)	Responsible Decision-Making	Encourages reflection before action — assessing what feels safe, when to take healthy risks (e.g. trying something new), and when to seek help. Strengthens decision-making and risk assessment.
	Networks of Support	Relationship Skills	Reinforces identifying trusted adults and peers, improving help-seeking behaviour and communication. Promotes connection and belonging — key to emotional safety in schools.
	Theme 2: We can talk with someone about anything even if it feels awful or small.	Relationship Skills & Social Awareness	Builds a classroom culture of trust, empathy, and openness. Normalises talking about worries or mistakes, aligning with SEL's emphasis on emotional expression and healthy communication.
	Problem-Solving and Safety Planning	Responsible Decision-Making & Self-Management	Encourages proactive thinking, considering consequences, and managing emotions when resolving conflicts or facing difficulties.

FIND OUT MORE

- <https://www.headstartkernow.org.uk/protective-behaviours-training/>
- See our short, online interactive introduction to PBs
- <https://www.protectivebehaviours.org>
- <https://www.protectivebehavioursconsortium.co.uk/>
- **Book:** *Helping Vulnerable Children and Adolescents to Stay Safe: Creative Ideas and Activities for Building Protective Behaviours* by Katie Wrench



A BRILLIANT ME IN ACTION ONE PAGE GUIDE TO...

REGULATE, RELATE, REASON

Dr. Bruce Perry's 'neurosequential' model helps adults respond to children who are dysregulated. The three steps reflect the order in which the brain processes information when under stress:

WHAT?

- **Regulate** the body and nervous system (using rhythm, breath, sensory tools)
- **Relate** through connection, empathy, and attunement
- **Reason** by engaging in problem-solving, reflection, or learning

This sequence must be followed in order—children must feel safe and connected before they are ready to talk, think, or learn.

WHY?

The brain cannot learn or reason when in survival mode. The model is grounded in neuroscience and promotes a compassionate, developmentally sensitive response to behaviour. It helps adults understand that teaching, reasoning, or discipline is ineffective (and possibly harmful) when a child is dysregulated.

SEL?

The 3Rs is a universal model that supports SEL by strengthening co-regulation, emotional literacy, and relationship-based learning. They are an important way that adults can help children develop **self-awareness** and **self-management** skills and strategies. Co-regulation is a key step towards self-regulation.

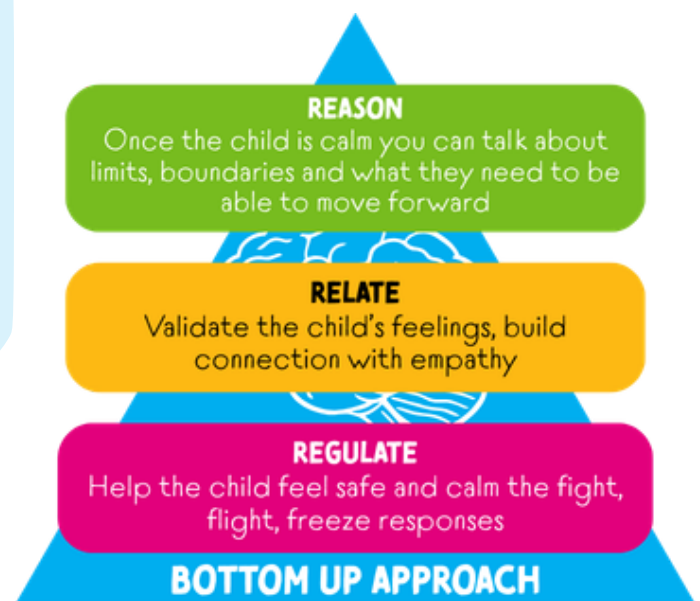
- Prioritise calming strategies (e.g. movement, breathing, sensory breaks) before addressing behaviour.
- Build strong, trusting relationships between staff and pupils.
- Model co-regulation by staying calm and emotionally available in times of stress.
- Teach reasoning skills like reflection, problem-solving, and perspective-taking after regulation.
- Use the three steps as a shared language across the school.

FIND OUT MORE

- www.neurosequential.com (Dr Perry's website)
- [Beacon House Resources The Three R's](#)
- [Lynburn Primary School Family Wellbeing Resource](#)
- [Bruce Perry speaking about the Model](#) (part of an excellent series of short films with Dr Perry)
- **Book**
 - *Know Me to Teach Me*, Louise Bombèr, Worth Publishing 2020

SEE ALSO

- PACE
- Window of Tolerance
- Self-Reg
- The Polyvagal Theory



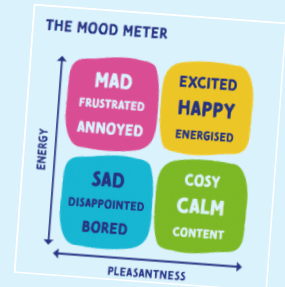
A BRILLIANT ME IN ACTION ONE PAGE GUIDE TO...

RULER

RULER is an evidence-based SEL approach developed Professor Marc Brackett at Yale university, named after five emotional skills:

WHAT?

- Recognising
- Understanding
- Labelling
- Expressing
- Regulating emotions



Supported by **RULER tools**: Mood Meter, Meta-Moment, and Class Charter

WHY?

RULER improves school climate, emotional literacy, and academic performance. It helps children manage emotions and relate positively to others. The CASEL 5 describes what competencies children need to thrive socially and emotionally. The RULER approach provides how to teach, practise, and embed those competencies — through emotional literacy, daily routines, and reflective tools.

SEL?

RULER Skill	Related CASEL Competencies	How They Work Together in the Primary Classroom
Recognising Emotions	Self-Awareness & Social Awareness	Encourages children to notice emotions in themselves and others. Using the Mood Meter deepens vocabulary and helps link feelings with triggers, which enhances empathy and awareness.
Understanding Emotions	Self-Awareness, Social Awareness, Responsible Decision-Making	Promotes curiosity about why feelings happen and how they influence behaviour. This supports reflective thinking and helps children make thoughtful choices.
Labelling Emotions	Self-Awareness	Builds emotional literacy. Accurately naming emotions helps children talk about feelings confidently, reducing frustration and improving communication.
Expressing Emotions	Relationship Skills & Self-Management	Encourages appropriate sharing of feelings—respectfully and safely. Builds classroom trust, belonging, and open communication.
Regulating Emotions	Self-Management & Responsible Decision-Making	Provides concrete tools (e.g., the Meta-Moment) to calm down, reflect, and act with care rather than react impulsively. Strengthens impulse control and resilience.

FIND OUT MORE

- [Brilliant ME! in Action Appendices](#)
- <https://www.rulerapproach.org>
- <https://www.rulerapproach.org/about/tools/>
- **Book**
 - Permission to Feel - Marc Brackett

SEE ALSO

- PATHS
- CPS
- Zones of Regulation
- Emotion Coaching
- Self-Reg

A BRILLIANT ME IN ACTION ONE PAGE GUIDE TO...

SEAL (SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL ASPECTS OF LEARNING)

SEAL was a national programme introduced in England in the early 2000s to support children's social and emotional development across the whole school. It combined curriculum resources, assemblies, staff training, and a whole-school ethos approach.

WHAT?

It focused on five key areas: self-awareness, managing feelings, motivation, empathy, and social skills.

Today the [SEAL Community](https://www.sealcommunity.org), created by Jean Gross, continues to provide access to the original SEAL resources and is home to the latest research in the field and shares articles, reports and additional resources.

SEAL was a comprehensive SEL curriculum / resource and can inform SEL today. Although language has evolved the SEAL Domains and the CASEL competencies are aligned (see below)

WHY?

Both approaches are similar in that they recommend explicit teaching opportunities alongside developing whole school ethos and environment and relational approaches.

The range of SEAL materials can provide a useful starting point for planning and delivering SEL (some updating needed).

SEL?

SEAL Domain	CASEL 5 Equivalent	Focus
Self-awareness	Self-Awareness	Knowing oneself; recognising feelings, strengths, values
Managing feelings	Self-Management	Handling emotions; coping, calming, adapting
Motivation	Self-Management & Responsible Decision-Making	Goal-setting, effort, optimism, persistence
Empathy	Social Awareness	Understanding others, perspective-taking
Social skills	Relationship Skills	Communication, teamwork, resolving conflict

FIND OUT MORE

- <https://www.sealcommunity.org>

SEE ALSO

- CASEL
- RULER

There are five social and emotional aspects of learning :



self-awareness



managing feelings



motivation



empathy



social skills

A BRILLIANT ME IN ACTION ONE PAGE GUIDE TO...

'SELF-REG' – DR. STUART SHANKER

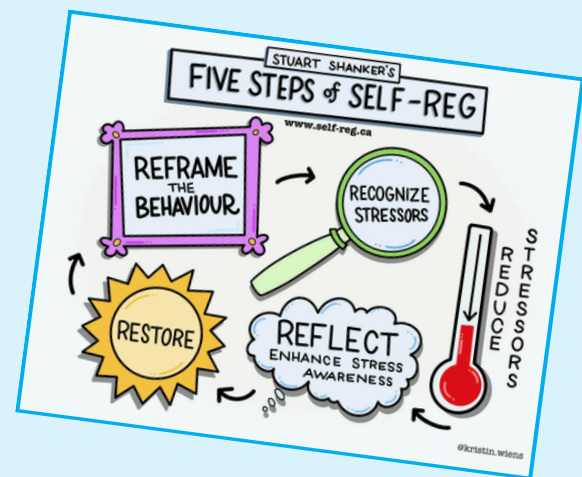
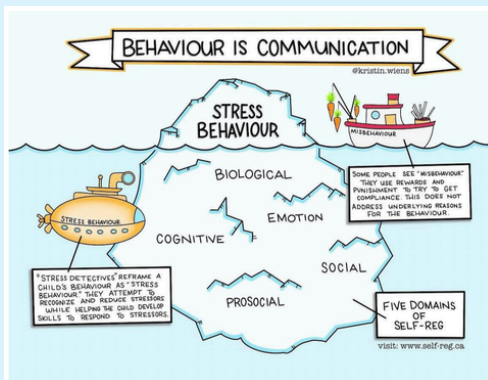
Self-Reg is a five-step framework developed by Dr. Stuart Shanker, that helps children (and adults) understand and manage stress and self-regulation. It shifts the focus from “self-control” (stopping behaviour) to understanding and responding to the causes of behaviour. Self-Reg teaches that behaviour is often the result of stress overload across five domains:

The **five steps of the framework** are:

1. Reframe behaviour
2. Recognise stressors
3. Reduce stress
4. Reflect on stress responses
5. Restore energy and resilience

WHAT?

**Biological * Emotional * Cognitive
* Social * Prosocial**



WHY?

Self-Reg supports a compassionate, **neuroscience-informed** approach to children’s behaviour. It helps adults and pupils move away from blame and punishment and towards curiosity and understanding. It aligns well with trauma-informed and inclusive practice, and supports emotional regulation, resilience, and executive functioning—core SEL components.

SEL?

The approach can support the self-awareness and self-management SEL competencies alongside co-regulation / regulation skills and strategies.

FIND OUT MORE

- <https://self-reg.ca> (Stuart Shanker’s website)
- [Self-Reg in 60 Seconds](#): (a series of short videos introducing Self-Reg)
- **Books:**
 - *Help Your Child Deal with Stress and Thrive: The Transformative Power of Self-Reg.* Stuart Shanker. Yellow Kite, 2018.
 - *Applied Self-Reg for Education Assistants.* Kristin Weins and Susan Hopkins, The MEHRIT Centre, 2026.

“We need to make the dramatic change in our thinking that makes self regulation - not self-control- the focus of our efforts”.

Stuart Shanker

A BRILLIANT ME IN ACTION ONE PAGE GUIDE TO...

SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL, AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

SMSC is a mandatory requirement for all schools in England to ensure pupils develop holistically. It is a thread that runs through the curriculum, ethos, and daily life of the school.

WHAT?

- **Spiritual** – sense of self, identity, wonder, creativity, and reflection.
- **Moral** – understanding of right and wrong, fairness, and empathy.
- **Social** – relationships, cooperation, and contribution to community life.
- **Cultural** – appreciation of diversity, belonging, and respect for others’ values and traditions.

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and **SMSC** are naturally interconnected: both aim to develop well-rounded, reflective, and compassionate individuals who can thrive personally and contribute positively to society. **SMSC** is central in the new Ofsted EIF.

Embedding **SMSC** through SEL supports:

WHY?

- Emotional literacy and ethical decision-making.
- Respectful relationships and a sense of belonging.
- Empathy, kindness, and inclusion across differences.
- The moral and cultural awareness needed for life in modern Britain.
- The broader school mission to promote wellbeing, equality, and positive citizenship.

SMSC and SEL together create the foundation for British Values, character education, and whole-child development.

SEL?

- Plan **SMSC** objectives alongside SEL competencies in curriculum design / everyday ethos.
- Use circle time, PSHE, assemblies, and reflective practices to explore values and emotions.
- Celebrate diversity through stories, art, music, and community projects.
- Create opportunities for empathy and perspective-taking (e.g., charity work, peer mentoring).
- Link moral and cultural reflection with emotional awareness (“How might that feel?”).
- Encourage spiritual moments of stillness, gratitude, and awe as part of emotional regulation.
- Use shared language across staff for social and moral learning (e.g., compassion, fairness, respect).

Self-Awareness	Self-Management	Social Awareness	Relationship Skills	Responsible Decision-Making
Spiritual	Spiritual + Moral	Social + Cultural	Social + Moral	Moral + Cultural
Spiritual development supports a child’s sense of self, identity, reflection and meaning — core elements of self-awareness.	Spiritual grounding (reflection, calm) plus moral understanding (knowing right/wrong) support self-control, regulation and persistence.	Social awareness is about perspective-taking and empathy; cultural development broadens understanding of difference and belonging.	Relationship skills (communication, cooperation, conflict resolution) sit naturally with social competence and moral conduct (respect, fairness).	Understanding values and cultural context informs ethical choices and responsible civic behaviour.

FIND OUT MORE

- [DfE Guidance: Promoting fundamental British values through SMSC. 2014](#)
- [Ofsted Inspection Toolkit \(Nov 2025\)](#)
- [SMSC in Education \(Votes for Schools\)](#)
- [Expanded SEL / SMSC Mapping](#)

SEE ALSO

- British Values
- Empathy
- Values in Action
- Children’s Rights
- Rights Respecting Schools

A BRILLIANT ME IN ACTION ONE PAGE GUIDE TO...

UN RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOLS AWARD

The **UN Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA)** is a programme that enables schools to embed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into their ethos and curriculum.

Schools work towards recognition that they have put children's rights at the heart of their planning, policies, and practice.

WHAT?

- **Equality and dignity**
- **Respect and non-discrimination**
- **Participation and voice**
- **Responsibility towards others**

In a Rights Respecting School, children's rights are learned, taught, practised, respected and promoted across all aspects of school life.



“Rights Respecting Schools helps children learn about fairness, respect and responsibility – key foundations for social and emotional learning and a positive school community.”

WHY?

RRSA provides:

- A clear ethical framework for behaviour and relationships
- A structure for pupil voice and participation
- A strong foundation for belonging, inclusion and wellbeing
- Aligns well with PSHE, SMSC, citizenship education and Ofsted's Personal Development judgement area.

Becoming a Rights Respecting School significantly enhances the SEL of pupils. It directly develops empathy, social responsibility, self-esteem, and a sense of belonging.

SEL?

RRSA Principle / Practice	CASEL SEL Competencies
Learning about children's rights (UNCRC) – understanding fairness, dignity and equality	Social Awareness – recognising the perspectives and rights of others
Class charters linking rights and responsibilities	Responsible Decision-Making – understanding consequences and ethical behaviour
Respectful relationships between pupils and staff	Relationship Skills – communication, cooperation and resolving conflict
Pupil voice and participation (school councils, consultations)	Self-Awareness & Responsible Decision-Making – recognising personal views and making contributions
Focus on equality, inclusion and anti-bullying	Social Awareness – empathy and respect for diversity
Global citizenship and understanding wider issues	Social Awareness & Responsible Decision-Making
Rights-respecting behaviour culture	Self-Management & Relationship Skills – managing emotions and behaviour in social situations
Whole-school ethos of respect and belonging	All five CASEL competencies

FIND OUT MORE

- www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/
- [Cornwall Children's Rights Team](#)

SEE ALSO

- British Values
- Children's Rights
- Citizenship
- SMSC

A BRILLIANT ME IN ACTION ONE PAGE GUIDE TO...

VIA CLASSIFICATION OF STRENGTHS

WHAT?

'Strengths' or 'Character Education' have been around in education for a while. Often somewhere in the background of PSHE or SMSC although sometimes ill-defined and vague. There is strong evidence to show that done well (as part of the ethos of the school, in the curriculum or in targeted individual / group work) can make a significant impact on pupil wellbeing and social emotional learning.

Character Education is now a key part of what Ofsted looks for under Personal Development and Wellbeing.

The Values in Action (VIA) Classification of Character Strengths is a framework based on research in 'positive psychology' by Martin Seligman, Christopher Peterson and others. The framework identifies 24 universal positive traits that are valued across cultures, such as curiosity, kindness, perseverance, and gratitude. It provides a common language for understanding and developing these strengths.

WHY?

A strengths-based approach to education, helps students focus on what they do well rather than just their weaknesses. This boosts their self-esteem and confidence, encouraging them to believe in their ability to grow and handle challenges. It also supports resilience, allowing students to cope better with setbacks and maintain a positive attitude. By highlighting strengths, teachers create a more positive and supportive learning environment that benefits students' social-emotional development and well-being.

SEL?

Self-Awareness	Self-Management	Social Awareness	Relationship Skills	Responsible Decision-Making
<p>VIA strengths such as curiosity, perspective, and self-regulation help children learn to notice and name their emotions, thoughts, and actions.</p> <p>Activities like a "Strengths Spotting Journal" or "My Superpower" help children recognise what they're good at and what matters to them.</p> <p>Helps build a positive self-concept and encourages a growth mindset.</p>	<p>Children can reflect on strengths like perseverance, self-regulation, and hope to manage emotions and behaviours.</p> <p>Using strengths in real scenarios (e.g., "What strength could help you calm down when you're frustrated?") builds emotional literacy and coping skills.</p>	<p>Strengths like kindness, fairness, and empathy (social intelligence) teach children to respect others' feelings and perspectives.</p> <p>Class discussions and stories can be framed around noticing these strengths in others.</p>	<p>Teamwork, gratitude, forgiveness, and humour are key relational strengths.</p> <p>Peer activities (e.g., strength-based compliments, group projects) help students appreciate others' strengths and build trust.</p>	<p>Strengths like judgment (critical thinking), prudence, and honesty guide children to make thoughtful, ethical decisions.</p> <p>Using strength cards or scenarios, children can explore: "Which strengths do we use when making a difficult choice?"</p>

"Developing pupils' character so that they reflect wisely, learn eagerly, behave with integrity and cooperate consistently well with others" (Ofsted, 2025).

FIND OUT MORE

- [DfE 'Character Education Framework Guidance'](#) (2019)
- [VIA Institute website](#) (including free to access VIA Youth Survey)
- [Martin Seligman](#) (Positive Psychology website)
- [Strengths Gym](#) (introduction to the Strengths Gym Teachers' Manual based on the VIA framework (cost involved))
- [Worth-It Positive Education](#) has the VIA Character Strengths as a key part of their (paid for) offer. They do have FREE blog articles and resources worth exploring.
- **Brilliant ME! in Action [Strength Spotters Toolkit](#)**
- **Books**
 - Fox Eades, J M. *Celebrating Strengths (Building Strengths-based Schools)* 2008
 - Proctor, C. & Fox Eades, J M. *Strengths Gym Teachers' Manual* (2007)



A BRILLIANT ME IN ACTION ONE PAGE GUIDE TO...

WINDOW OF TOLERANCE

The **Window of Tolerance** is a model developed by Dr. Dan Siegel to describe the optimal zone of arousal in which a person can function, learn, and relate well to others.

WHAT?

- Within the window, we feel calm, alert, and regulated.
- Outside the window, we may experience:
 - Hyperarousal (fight/flight: anxious, angry, overwhelmed)
 - Hypoarousal (freeze/shutdown: withdrawn, numb, “zoned out”)

Everyone’s window is different—and it can shrink or grow depending on stress, trauma, or support.

Children need to be within their window to engage with learning and relationships. Understanding this helps staff to identify students who are struggling and support regulation.

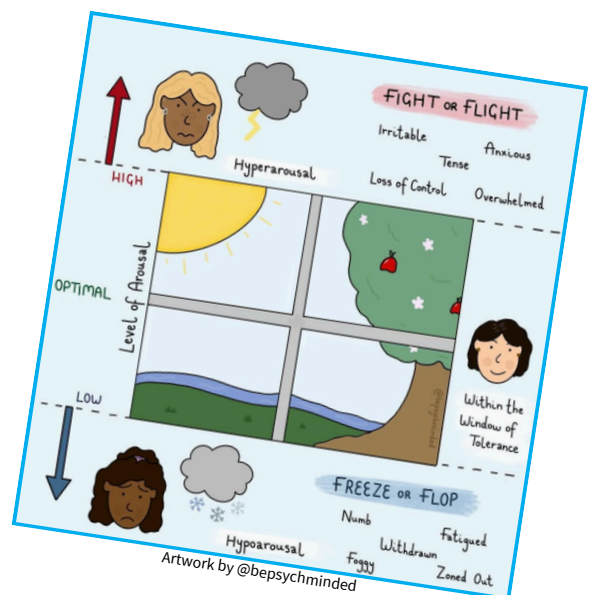
WHY?

This model helps staff and pupils understand that behaviour is often a sign of being outside their “window,” not a choice to misbehave. It supports regulation, resilience, and compassionate responses. The language of “*being in or out of your window*” can empower children to notice and manage their own states, strengthening emotional literacy and self-regulation.

The Window of Tolerance is perfectly aligned with helping children develop **self-awareness** and learning **to self-manage**.

SEL?

- Introduce a simple version with child-friendly visuals (e.g. green/yellow/blue zones).
- Help pupils identify what it feels like when they’re “in” or “out” of their window.
- Co-create calming and energising strategies to return to the window (e.g. breathing, sensory tools, movement breaks).
- Train staff to recognise dysregulation and respond supportively and consistently.



FIND OUT MORE

- [Video: The Window of Tolerance \(Beacon House\)](#) and [flier \(pdf\)](#)
- [Video: The Window of Tolerance Explained](#). (Dr Pooky Knightsmith)
- [Dr Lori Desautels has some useful resources on the Window of Tolerance](#)
- [Brain Box resources](#)

Book

- The Whole-Brain Child by Dr Daniel J Siegel & Dr Tina Payne Bryson (good introduction)

SEE ALSO

- Regulate, Relate, Reason
- PACE
- Polyvagal Theory

A BRILLIANT ME IN ACTION ONE PAGE GUIDE TO...

WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO WELLBEING

WHAT?

An effective, evidence-based framework by Public Health England and the DfE, focusing on eight key principles meant to help schools embed emotional wellbeing into every part of school life and to make wellbeing for all members of the school community **'Everybody's Business'**.

The PHE WSA formed the foundation of the DfE School Mental Health Lead training / support and it has been adopted by the Mental Health in Schools Teams as part of their offer to schools.



WHY?

Schools that embed wellbeing across their policies, practices, and curriculum see better outcomes for pupils and staff. A true WSA supports children's learning, reduces behavioural challenges, promotes inclusion, and strengthens the wider school community.

It also helps staff feel more confident, connected, and equipped to deal with wellbeing and mental health concerns.

The Framework provides clarity and consistency for pupils, enhancing felt safety and engagement

SEL?

The PHE Whole School Approach provides the structure to help ensure 'everyday SEL' can flourish and be effective. At the same time SEL is a 'golden thread' running through everything the PHE WSA is trying to achieve...

FIND OUT MORE

- [Promoting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing A whole school or college approach](#) - PHE/DfE
- [Headstart Kernow - WSA](#) - Our guide to a WSA with information / resources / best practice and audit tools.
- **Book**
 - *The Mentally Healthy Schools Workbook* by Dr Pooky Knightsmith (Alongside the PHE 8 Principles we are particularly impressed by the simplicity and depth of Pooky Knightsmith's 6 Litmus Tests outlined in her book).

A BRILLIANT ME IN ACTION ONE PAGE GUIDE TO...

ZONES OF REGULATION

The **Zones of Regulation** is a framework developed by Leah Kuypers that teaches children to identify their emotions and levels of alertness using four colour-coded “zones.” It is intended to help build emotional vocabulary, awareness, and self-regulation strategies.

WHAT?

ZOR aims to help individuals recognise and manage their emotions, sensory needs, and impulses in different contexts.

- Blue Zone: Low states of alertness, such as feeling sad, tired, sick, or bored.
- Green Zone: Ideal state of alertness, feeling calm, happy, focused, and ready to learn.
- Yellow Zone: Heightened state of alertness, but with some control, such as feeling stressed, anxious, excited, or nervous.
- Red Zone: Extremely heightened state of alertness and intense emotions, such as anger, rage, panic, or terror.

WHY?

Understanding and managing emotions is a key aspect of SEL. The Zones provide a simple, visual way for children to reflect on how they feel, recognise changes in their state, and choose helpful strategies to return to a regulated state. ZOR can support emotional literacy, self-awareness, and executive functioning.

The ZOR are primarily intended for children and therefore provide a structured, straight forward approach to identifying and communicating emotions visually.

The ZOR can support self-awareness and self-management.

SEL?

- Use visuals in classrooms to help children check in with how they feel.
- Integrate daily “check-ins” and use group discussions to normalise all zones.
- Link zones to specific strategies (e.g. breathing exercises, movement breaks).
- Embed in PSHE, circle time, and across transitions (e.g. after lunch/playtime).
- Support staff in modelling the language of the Zones in everyday interactions.

FIND OUT MORE

- <https://www.zonesofregulation.com>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3yXlvkpov1c>
- <https://www.zonesofregulation.com/resources.html>

SEE ALSO

- Regulate, Relate, Reason
- Self-Reg
- RULER
- The Incredible 5 Point Scale

