

Zones of Regulation – a guide for parents

What are the Zones of Regulation?

An approach designed in the USA by Leah Kuypers, an occupational therapist, to help individuals recognise their feelings and use strategies to regulate them. This approach is comprised of lessons and activities used to gain skills in the area of self-regulation and emotional control for children from as young as 4 years old up to adulthood.

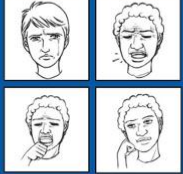



Why are we introducing this in school?

- To help children to understand the link between their emotions and their behaviours, as well as recognising these in others.
- To create a common language for children to use to think about and describe their emotions and behaviours, thus developing emotional literacy skills.
- To give children strategies to know how to manage when their behaviours can impact on their relationships and their learning, supporting them to have the best possible chance of success.
- To help children learn how to self-regulate.

How does this work?

Children are taught that emotions can be grouped into 4 simple colour categories:

The ZONES of Regulation®

| | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |
| BLUE ZONE Sad Sick Tired Bored Moving Slowly | GREEN ZONE Happy Calm Feeling Okay Focused Ready to Learn | YELLOW ZONE Frustrated Worried Silly/Wiggly Excited Loss of Some Control | RED ZONE Mad/Angry Terrified Yelling/Hitting Elated Out of Control |





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They learn that we all experience feelings in each of the zones but that when in school we need to try and remain in the green zone as this will help us to learn. Once children are familiar with concept of the zones, they are then taught to recognise how they personally

feel when in each. For example, by identifying the feelings they experience when in the red zone, they then begin to develop greater self awareness of their personal emotional responses.

This then leads to children identifying the strategies that work best to help them to move to the green zone. This may be different for each child.

How can you help yourself?

| The BLUE zone | The GREEN zone | The YELLOW zone | The RED zone |
|---|---|--|---|
|  |  |  |  |
| How might you feel? | How might you feel? | How might you feel? | How might you feel? |
| sad tired bored moving slowly | happy okay focussed ready to learn | nervous confused silly not ready to learn | angry frustrated scared out of control |
| What might help you? | What might help you? | What might help you? | What might help you? |
| Talk to someone Stretch Take a brain break Stand Take a walk Close my eyes | The goal of this exercise is to get to the GREEN zone. What can you do to be happy, calm and ready to learn? | Talk to someone Count to 20 Take deep breaths Squeeze something Draw a picture Take a brain break | Stop what I'm doing Make sensible choices Take deep breaths Ask for a break Find a safe space Ask for help |

Children will learn that there will be times when they will be in the blue, yellow or red zones. They will be reassured that we all feel like this and it is ok to feel that way. They will understand that our emotions are not 'fixed' and that we experience many different emotions throughout the day. They will also learn that these emotions can sometimes be helpful, for example feeling yellow ahead of a sports competition or music exam, as their body prepares them for a challenge. By becoming more self-aware they can then use this knowledge to recognise what strategies they can put in place to manage their emotions and therefore begin to self-regulate.

Why are we introducing this now?

Over the last 3 years children have experienced disruption both socially and academically. We believe that it is more important than ever to equip children with the tools they need to be able to self-regulate. By using a recognised framework with a common language across

our whole school, we hope to support the children and provide them with the skills to manage their emotions.

The Zones of Regulation are used widely in the UK within both primary and secondary settings and are highly regarded by the Kent and Medway Specialist Teaching and Learning Service as well as other specialist provisions.

Zones of Regulation helps children to understand both their own emotions and those of others, supporting the work we are doing on mental health.

Zones of Regulation are suitable for all children and young people.

How can you help?

Try using this at home. Reports from other schools suggest that when parents also use this framework at home, their children enjoy the consistency of the shared approach and parents report success in helping their children.

By modelling this at home, using the colours to discuss how you are feeling and talking about how you will help yourself to move to the green zone, your child will be supported to follow your lead.

Further Information

There will be a parent information session in September/October 2022, please watch out for the date and time in Miers Court Matters.

For extra information, please email Ms Munns (AEN Lead) via the school office (office@mcps.school).