



At St. Anne's we love, learn and grow together as part of God's family. We foster a growth mindset so our pupils have bold aspirations to live life in all its fullness. We let our light shine brightly - continually asking God to show us how best to shine so we can be beacons of His life.

St Anne's CE Primary SEND Newsletter

January issue – all behaviour is communication

Happy New Year to everyone - I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas!

As parents with children with SEND - your Christmas may have come with some ups and downs. This month, I'd like to discuss how all behaviour is communication and what we do as a school to help children recognise and deal with their emotions through something called The Zones of Regulation.



Everyone can experience a range of emotions each day and no zone is a bad zone! But it's how we deal with these emotions that may appear to be expected or unexpected behaviour.

Throughout this newsletter, I will share practical tips, advice, and local resources that can help you support your child's emotional literacy.

Contents

1. The Zones of Regulation
2. The importance of language
3. Creating a zones toolbox
4. The zones at St Anne's
5. Natural consequences

The Zones of Regulation is a curriculum designed to foster self-regulation and emotional control created by Occupational Therapist Leah M. Kuypers. Previously used at St Anne's with identified students to help with emotional regulation, post covid times saw us take the decision to roll out our use of The Zones of Regulation across the whole school! Seeing the impact that this had on those students and how it helped them to understand their emotions, we felt that these were relevant and valuable skills for all of our pupils to learn and develop. We have also found that it has helped us to develop a common language across the school through which to discuss emotions and behaviours.

What is self-regulation?

Self-regulation can be described as the ability to adjust your level of alertness (including your senses, emotions and impulses) to fit the situation you are in and express this through socially appropriate behaviours. For example, the level of alertness required to read a book in a library and that needed to compete in a netball match are very different, and the socially expected behaviours in each situation would also differ. It encompasses the skills of self-control, resilience, anger management, impulse control and sensory regulation. For example, let's say your child recognises they're angry because whenever they get mad, their heart races. So, they feel their heart race and the result is an angry outburst. Red zone. BUT fear also causes our heart to race. If your child isn't able to recognise the other sensations that happen when they're both afraid and angry, then they'll react angrily when they're actually scared and they won't understand what's happening or how to regulate that emotion. The Zones of Regulation can help teach children all of the physiological sensations they feel in response to different emotions.

When children fully understand what they're feeling, they can make sense of, and regulate their emotions much better.

ZONES OF REGULATION



The Blue Zone: a low energy state where the 'slow' feelings reside, e.g. sad, tired, bored, sick

The Green Zone: the optimum state for the classroom and includes feelings such as: happy, calm, focussed, proud

The Yellow Zone: a high energy state where the 'fizzy' feelings are found, e.g. excited, frustrated, anxious, silly

The Red Zone: an 'out of control' state including feelings such as: angry, aggressive, terrified

*There is no 'bad' Zone. All Zones are 'expected' at different times and in different circumstances. As adults, we will experience a range of zones in our usual working week and it is ok for children to experience these too.

**It is important to note that you can be in more than one Zone at a time and also that some emotions may fall into more than one Zone. We encourage the children to use their Zones both inside and outside of school, to identify their feelings and emotions and the best way to deal with them. It is completely normal to feel all four of the different zones from time to time.

Let's explore each zone in more detail...

Red Zone

What is the Red Zone ?

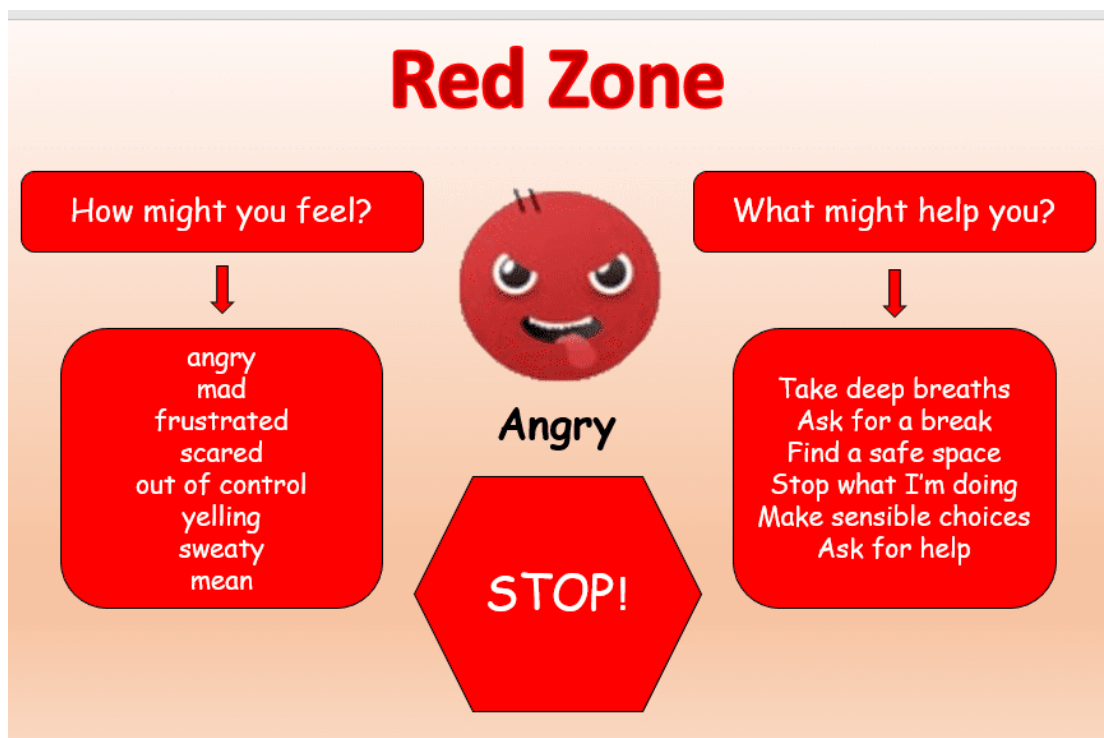
The red zone describes an extremely heightened state of intense emotions. When a person reaches the red zone, they're no longer able to control their emotions or reactions.

This is the zone children are in during meltdowns. Being in the red zone means you're feeling anger, rage, terror, or complete devastation and feel out of control.

How would your child behave in the Red Zone?

- Excessive outbursts
- Fighting
- Shouting
- Irritability
- Acting dangerously
- Lack of control
- Resentful

How might your child be feeling in the Red Zone?



What coping strategies do we implement in school?

- Take time out - maybe in another area of the school
- Use a stress ball
- Use the calm corner
- Time to talk through our thoughts, feelings and behaviours
- Breathing strategies
- Go for a walk

What strategies can you use at home?

- Talk to an adult
- Hug a teddy
- Pop bubble wrap
- Wrap your arms around yourself and squeeze
- Write down what's bothering you and rip it up
- Squeeze a stress ball
- Talk about it
- Scribble on paper and crumple it up
- Use breathing techniques
- Do stretches
- Listen to calming music
- Take time out
- Use sensory glitter jars

Stories to read at home



Blue Zone

What is the Blue Zone?

The blue zone is used when a person is feeling low states of alertness or arousal.

When you're in the blue zone you may be feeling down - sad, sick, tired, or bored. You're still in control, as you are in the yellow zone, but with low energy emotions.

How would your child behave in the Blue Zone?

- absence of feelings
- irritability
- lack of pleasure
- lack of motivation
- tearful
- withdrawn
- difficulty in concentrating

How might your child be feeling in the Blue Zone?



What coping strategies do we implement in school?

- Exercise
- Alerting sensory breaks
- Reflecting on what makes us happy
- Talking to our teachers and friends
- Sensory circuits

What strategies can you use at home?

- Listen to upbeat music
- Complete some cardio based exercise
- Get up, get showered and get dressed
- Jump on a trampoline
- Talk to a friend
- Do something creative
- Cuddle or play with pets.
- Go for a walk
- Plan a fun activity
- Look through old photographs or snap some new ones.
- Re-watch a funny or inspiring YouTube video.

Stories to read at home



Yellow Zone

What is the Yellow Zone?

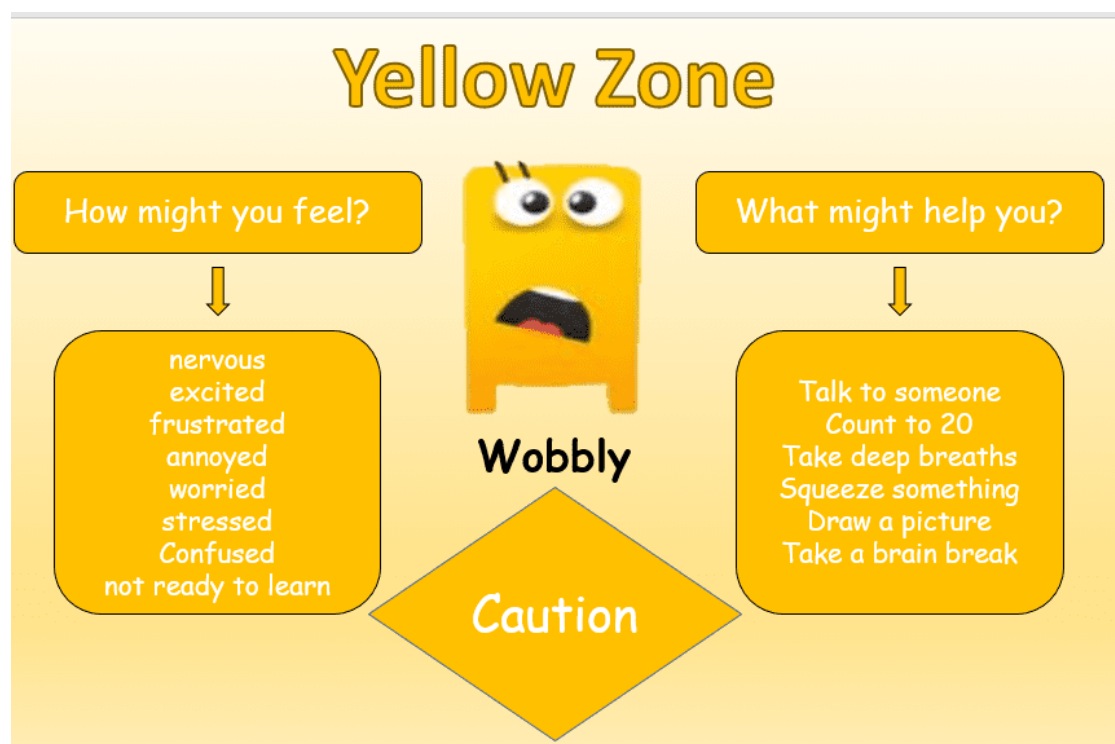
The yellow zone describes when you have a heightened sense of alertness.

This isn't always a bad thing, and you typically still have some control when you're in the yellow zone. Being in the yellow means you may feel frustrated, anxious or nervous. But, it could also mean you're feeling excited, silly, or hyper - which is okay in the right situations.

How would your child behave in the Yellow Zone?

- Avoiding situations
- Avoiding social settings
- Biting nails
- Sleeping issues
- Tearful
- Struggling to concentrate
- Hyper-vigilant

How might your child be feeling in the Yellow Zone?



What coping strategies do we implement in school?

- Breathing strategies
- Meditation
- Accessing the class toolbox

What strategies can you use at home?

- Breathing techniques
- Take time out
- Relaxing exercises e.g. yoga/ stretches
- Meditation
- Keep a journal
- Make a worry monster
- Listening to calming music

Stories to read at home



Green Zone

What is the Green Zone?

The green zone is used to describe when you're in a calm state of alertness.

Being in the green zone means you are calm, focused, happy, or ready to learn. This is predominantly the state you want your child to be in. It's also the state most needed in the classroom in order to learn.

How would your child behave in the Green Zone?

- Calm
- Focused
- Happy
- Content

How might your child be feeling in the Green Zone?



What strategies do we implement in school to keep children in the Green Zone?

- Implement daily sensory breaks
- Sensory areas on the playground
- Celebrate Mental Health focused days throughout the school year
- PSHE lessons
- Mindfulness activities
- Circle time
- Use a positive behaviour policy
- Encourage a healthy lifestyle
- Teach children how to keep fit

What strategies can you use at home?

- Self-care- treat yourself to a relaxing bath or night off homework
- Organise your clothes for school the night before to prevent stress
- Spend time with your friends and family
- Take time out to do something you love to do
- Eat healthy and nutritious food
- Drink plenty of water
- Get 8 hours+ sleep

Stories to read at home



The importance of language:

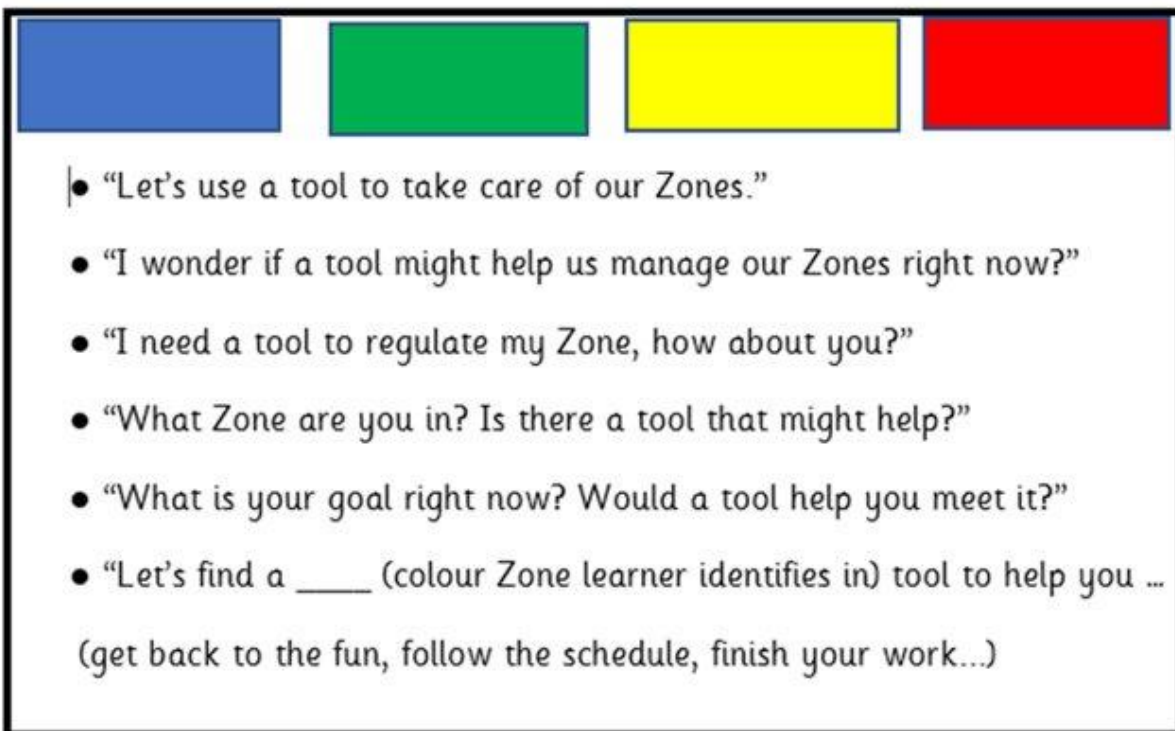
A critical aspect of this curriculum is that all staff (and family members) know and understand The Zones language. This creates a comfortable and supportive environment for the child to practice his or her self-regulation skills. It also helps the child to learn the skills more quickly and be more likely to apply them in many situations. All adults should aim to do the following when implementing the ZoR:

-Use the language and talk about the concepts of The Zones as they apply to you in a variety of environments.

-Make comments aloud so the student understands it is natural that we all experience the different zones and use strategies to control (or regulate) ourselves. For example, "This is really frustrating me and making me go into the Yellow Zone. I need to use a tool to calm down. I will take some deep breaths."

-Help the child gain awareness of his or her zones and feelings by pointing out your observations. For example, 'I can see you might be in the yellow zone...'

-Make a zones script for your family to use so that language is clear and consistent. Display it somewhere for the whole family to see!



• “Let’s use a tool to take care of our Zones.”

- “I wonder if a tool might help us manage our Zones right now?”
- “I need a tool to regulate my Zone, how about you?”
- “What Zone are you in? Is there a tool that might help?”
- “What is your goal right now? Would a tool help you meet it?”
- “Let’s find a ____ (colour Zone learner identifies in) tool to help you ...
(get back to the fun, follow the schedule, finish your work...)

- Read different books about feelings to your child and actively refer to which Zone the feelings in the book belong to
- When you're watching TV with your child, ask them to identify which zone their favourite characters are in throughout the show. This is a great way to turn your child's screen time into a learning experience and to show your child that the Zones can be found everywhere
- Check in and check out with your child on the way to and home from school. What zone are they in? What different zones have they experienced today? What tools helped?
- Engaging your child in discussion around Zones when they are in the Red Zone is unlikely to be effective. You need to be discussing the different Zones and tools they can use when they are more regulated / calm.
- Teach your child which tools they can use. (eg: "It's time for bed. Let's read a book together in the comfy chair to get you in the Blue Zone.")
- Regular Check-ins. "How are you feeling now?" and "How can you get back to Green?"
- Modelling It is important to remember to show the children how you use tools to get back to the green zones. You might say "I am going to make myself a cup of tea and do some breathing exercises because I am in the blue zone" and afterwards tell your child how using those tools helped you get back to the green zone.
- Share how their behaviour is affecting your Zone. For example, if they are in the Green Zone, you could comment that their behaviour is also helping you feel happy / go into the Green Zone.
- Put up and reference the Zones visuals and tools in your home.
- Praise and encourage your child when they share which Zone they are in.

If you would like to know more about the Zones, or download some visuals to support your child, please click on the links below.

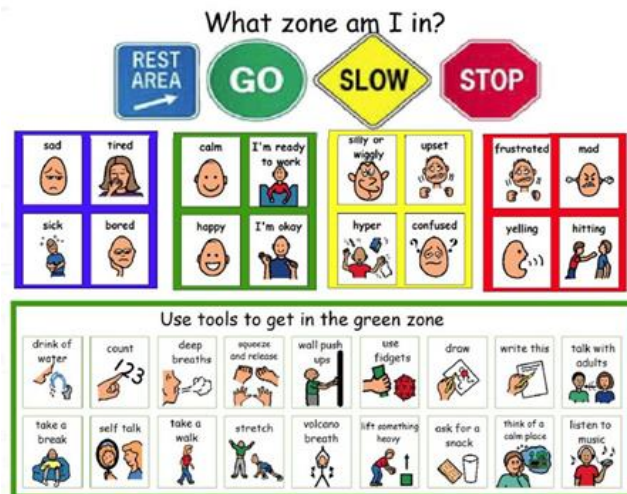
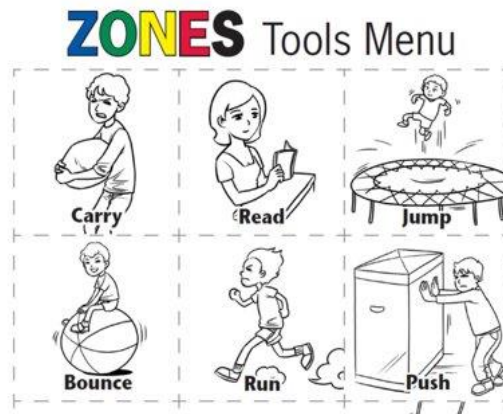
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Creating a zones toolbox:

Some children have extra time at school to learn about the ZoR but everyone can make their own toolbox filled with strategies to help them self or co-regulate. Explore a range of tools together as a family and discuss which zone they might need to use it in. For example, a book, mindful colouring, breathing exercises, jumping on a trampoline, going for a walk. It's important to discuss these tools when your child is in the green zone and plan ahead so that your child is confident which tools may help when they're in the red zone for example.



Each class has a ZoR tool box with a variety of tools that all children can access should they need to. In the box is a variety of items such as ear defenders, fidgets, lavender bags, mindful colouring, diaries and much more! Ask your child what tools are in their class box and which they prefer! This will help when creating their own box for home!

The Zones in the classroom

Teachers share some content of the curriculum flexibly with their classes in PSHE and stand-alone lessons. All classrooms have the Zones on display and many staff wear Zones cards on their lanyard. All children are encouraged to check in each morning, letting their teachers know which zone they are in. This is a really important start to the day so that staff can identify how children are feeling and gauge whether or not they are ready to learn.

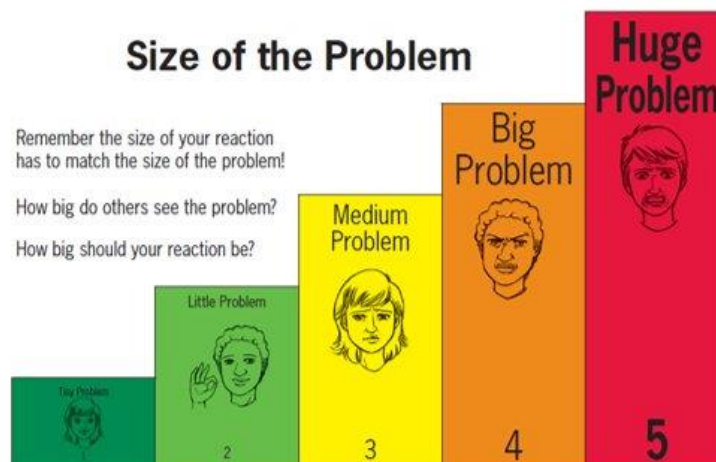


The incredible 5 point scale

Another approach we take at St Anne's to help children understand their emotions is the incredible 5 point scale. We discuss with the children the size of their reaction and whether or not it matches the size of the problem. Some children have very big reactions and need help to see that the problem isn't as big as they perceive it and with a little help and support, the problem can be solved together.

Size of the Problem Worksheet
Big vs. Little Problems

People see these as Big Problems	5	
	4	
People see these as Medium Problems	3	
	2	
People see these as Little Problems	1	

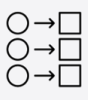


Consequences

Sometimes, children aren't able to manage their emotions in the way that we have discussed through zones of regulation, and they can be in the red zone, finding themselves not showing one of our school values. If this happens, children are supported in how they can get back to the green zone and, once they have regulated their emotions, a conversation is had between the pupil and staff member as to what their consequence may be. We have recently developed a consequence choice card to use as a visual when discussing this with the children.

Consequence Choices



Say sorry 	Make a sorry card 	Give a hug or a high-five 	Have a restorative meeting together 
Natural consequence (Fix something you broke, tidy up the mess, finish the work etc) 	Make a poster to educate others 	Be a secret friend 	Miss some break time 
Self-regulation time 	Contingency mapping 	Calm time in another space 	A different idea...

It's best for children to experience the natural consequences of being in the RED zone. If a child's actions/choices hurt someone or destroys property, they need to repair the relationship and take responsibility for the mess they created. Once the child has calmed down, use the experience as a learning opportunity to process what the child would do differently next time.

I hope you've found this month's newsletter useful and remember - all behaviour is communication - what is your child trying to communicate?