

The Zones of Regulation

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 Two Mile Ash with identified students to help with emotional regulation, September 2020 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, especially in these difficult times. We have also found that it has helped us to develop a common language across the school through which to discuss emotions and behaviours.

Teachers share some content of the curriculum flexibly with their classes in line with their age in Personal Development lessons. Year 3 had the opportunity to learn about the Zones and Tools in weekly sessions with our Wellbeing Coach, Mrs Phillips and some individuals and small groups work more intensively with her, using more specific materials to support their particular needs. All classrooms have the Zones on display and many staff wear Zones cards on their lanyard.

To help develop the children's emotional literacy, awareness and understanding, we have an 'Emotion of the Fortnight' which is shared across the school. The children learn about the emotion, what it looks like, how it feels and how it might be useful. They also look at what Zone it falls in to and what they can do if they experience it.

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.

What is 'The Zones of Regulation?'

- A framework to simplify how we think about and manage our feelings and state of emotion
- A supportive teaching tool
- A tool to categorise complex feelings and states into four coloured 'Zones'
- A way to improve the ability to recognise and communicate feelings in a safe, non-judgemental way
- It helps develop 'tools' to move between Zones
- It gives a collection of calming and alerting strategies a child can draw upon (can be a literal toolbox or a collection of known strategies)

It is not:

- A discipline model or behaviour approach
- Punitive or shaming of negative behaviours



The Zones

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, elated

There is **no** 'bad' Zone. **All** Zones are 'expected' at different times and in different circumstances.



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.

Some parents may be invited to attend Zones workshops with Mrs Phillips to enhance their child's understanding of the Zones and enable them to use them together in the home setting.

Tips for everyone to help at home:

- 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

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

https://www.zonesofregulation.com/uploads/3/4/1/7/34178767/english_reproducible_a.pdf

https://www.zonesofregulation.com/uploads/3/4/1/7/34178767/english_reproducible_b.pdf

https://www.zonesofregulation.com/uploads/3/4/1/7/34178767/supplementary_zones_of_reg_emotions_visual.pdf

