Zones of Regulation

We are very excited to be launching the 'Zones of Regulation' across the school. We hope that this will help our children to learn how to manage their difficult emotions, which may be particularly tricky for them following the Coronavirus lockdown with such a lot of time spent out of their usual routine.

What are the 'Zones of Regulation?'



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

Even adults often find it hard to manage strong feelings such as worry, anger or fear, and this can stop us from getting on with our day to day jobs.

Children who feel these emotions often find it hard to learn and concentrate in school. The Zones of Regulation aims to teach children strategies to help them cope with these feelings so they can get back to feeling calm and ready to learn. These coping strategies are called 'self-regulation'.

At St Paul's Primary School, we are launching the Zones of Regulation throughout the whole school. We want to teach **all** of our children good coping and regulation strategies so they can help themselves when they experience anxiety and stress. In the classroom, sometimes children panic when faced with a new concept or challenge.

By being able to explain how they are feeling and giving children tools to manage these feelings, helps to make them better at approaching difficult tasks and build better resilience so they don't give up so easily when faced with difficulty.

We want children at St Paul's to grow into confident, resourceful teenagers then adults and by teaching the children at a young age about self-regulation, we aim to give them lifelong coping strategies.

What are the different Zones?

Our Penguin class designed and made these posters to help to understand each Zone.



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

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

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

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

Children will be taught that everyone experiences all of the Zones. The Red and Yellow zones are not ‘bad’ or ‘naughty’ Zones. All of the Zones are expected at one time or another. We will show them that the Blue Zone, for example, is helpful when you are trying to fall asleep.



How will my child learn about the Zones of Regulation?

We will be introducing the Zones through discrete lessons and through our PSHE curriculum. We will also be using the Zones language as part of daily school life so all staff will be referring to them, not just their class teacher.

In Key Stage One, children will be introduced to characters to help them to understand the Zones.

Children in EYFS will learn about the Zones when they are introduced to the story ‘Colour Monster’



Further up school, the characters may change. Many classes use the Zone monsters below:







How can you help your child use The Zones of Regulation at home?

- Try and identify with the Zones yourself (e.g. I am really cross, my washing machine has broken again!)
- Talk about what tool you will use to be in the appropriate Zone (e.g.: “I need to take four deep breaths to help get me back to the Green Zone.”)
- Identify with characters in films, story books – which zone do you think they are in? Why?
- Teach your child which tools they can use. (eg: “It’s time for bed. Let’s read a book together to get you in the Blue Zone.”)
- Ensure that you are in the right Zone to deal with your child. Do not attempt to deal with an angry or upset child, if you are also angry and upset. Instead practise calming methods until you are both ready.
- Watch out for things that may trigger a change in your child’s behaviour and be prepared for it
- Be consistent in managing your child’s behaviour and use the same language you use at home.
- Listen to your child – don’t belittle their feelings or jump in too quickly
- Have clear boundaries/routines and always follow them through.

Common questions about the Zones of Regulation

Can my child be in more than one zone at the same time?

Yes. Your child may feel tired (blue zone) because they did not get enough sleep, and anxious (yellow zone) because they are worried about an activity at school. Listing more than one Zone reflects a good sense of personal feelings and alertness levels.

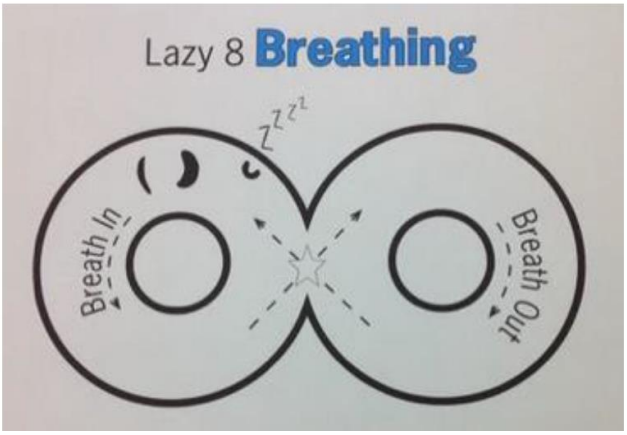
Should children be punished for being in the RED Zone?

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 create. Once the child has calmed down, use the experience as a learning opportunity to process what the child would do differently next time.

Can you look like one Zone on the outside and feel like you are in another Zone on the inside?

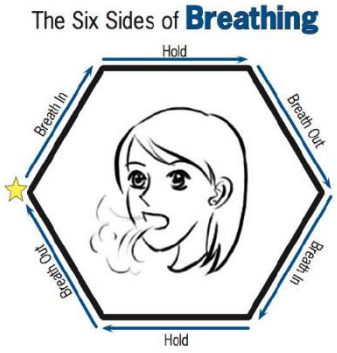
Yes. Many of us "disguise" our Zone to match social expectations. We use the expression "put on a happy face" or mask the emotion so other people will have good thoughts about us. Parents often say that their children "lose it" and goes into the Red Zone as soon as they get home. This is because children are increasing their awareness of their peers and expectations when in the classroom. They make every effort to keep it together at school to stay in the Green Zone. Home is when they feel safe to let it all out.

Tools for Developing Calming Skills



Lazy 8 Breathing

Start with an 8 on its side. Starting in the middle, go up to the left and trace the left part of the 8 with your finger while you breathe in. When you get to the middle of the 8 again, breathe out while you trace the right part of the 8 with your finger.



Calming Activities

- Puzzles
- Listen to Music
- Draw/Paint
- Origami
- Play-Doh/clay
- Read
- Stack Rocks
- Fit Bit calming or watch pulse

Colour Grounding

Sit in a comfortable chair that lets your feet touch the floor. Sit right back so you can feel the whole length of your back against the back of the chair.

Press your feet into the floor. If the chair you're sitting in has arms, press your arms into the arms of the chair. Alternatively, you could rest your palms on your thighs.

Imagine all your stressed out, anxious, or overwhelmed feelings and thoughts as a colour that fills your body.

Now imagine that colour draining out of your body. Starting at your head, it flows down until it leaves through the soles of your feet.

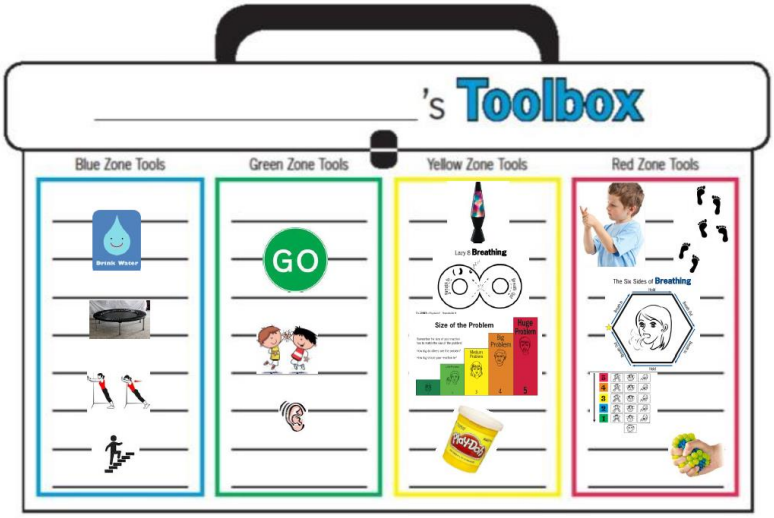
As the colour drains from each part of your body, feel how relaxed each body part becomes; your head, your chest, your arms, your stomach and your legs.

My Calming Sequence Visual

Activity: Try this calming sequence. Does it feel good and calming? How can you change it so it works for you?

This calming sequence goes like this: Squeeze your hands together; close your eyes and rub your head; then rub your legs. Repeat the sequence five times, bringing your stress down.





Example of a toolbox that may be used.

Use the links below to explore lots of ideas for helping your child to regulate their emotions including:

- Sensory tools
- Breathing techniques
- Grounding techniques
- Calming activities
- Thinking techniques

https://www.theottoolbox.com/?s=zones+of+regulation

Find out more:

The Zones of Regulation – An Overview of The Zones for Parents (hes-extraordinary.com)