



Guidance

Curriculum and
Standards

Primary *National Strategy*

**Excellence and Enjoyment:
social and emotional aspects
of learning**

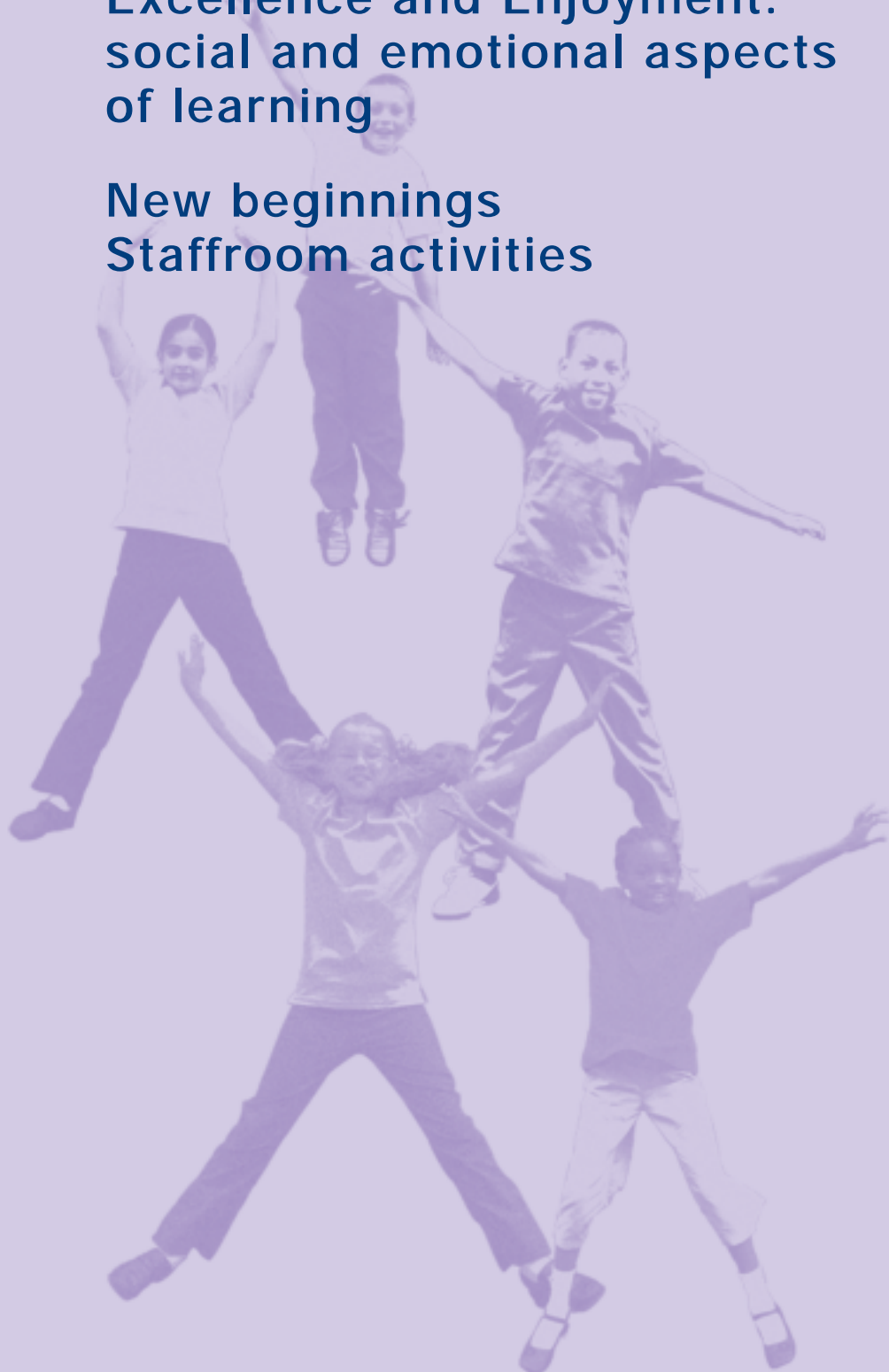
**New beginnings
Staffroom activities**

Headteachers, teachers
and practitioners in
primary schools,
middle schools, special
schools and Foundation
Stage settings

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Purple set

New beginnings – activities for the staff group

Introduction

The Purple sets provide ideas for use by staff (for example, in staff meetings or on in-service training days). They are designed to be fun, to encourage learning and reflection, and to support the building of an adult community that is based on trust, support and fairness. They also aim to equip staff with the confidence and knowledge they need to tackle the areas covered in the SEAL curricular materials, and to provide a forum for developing consistent approaches to work with children. Just like the other colour-coded sets, they provide starting points for discussion, learning and enquiry, individually, in groups or as a school community.

Each theme has its own Purple set that includes information about the social and emotional learning relevant to the theme and activities for use in staff meetings (individually or in a group). They will also encourage staff to go away and try out ideas, extend their thinking and provide a format for review and reflection. Some members of a staff group will feel they have the time and the motivation to follow all of them, and they should be enabled to do so independently of the staff session. Some school staff groups may just choose one activity to get them thinking.

The sets are designed for use with all the adults in the school, both teaching staff and support staff. Ideally, they will be used with everyone together, but we recognise that this might not be practical. For example, it might not be possible for midday supervisors to attend a staff meeting, but they might carry out the same activities within a midday supervisor meeting.

One member of the staff group should act as the facilitator in the staff meeting. Their role is to ensure that equipment is available, provide a structure for the activities, act as timekeeper, and make sure that everyone feels comfortable and included. They should also participate fully in the activities.

The Purple set for Theme 1 *New beginnings* has three parts. There are first some activities called 'Getting started' to introduce the SEAL materials in general. Next come some activities that focus on how children and adults need to work together if they are to benefit from the work to develop children's social, emotional and behavioural skills. Lastly, there is a specific set of activities that link to the children's work on the *New Beginnings* materials.

Introductory activities – getting started

The first Purple set is specifically designed to introduce the curriculum materials to staff. It provides a suggested framework for staff meetings or an in-service day that can be used flexibly to meet the needs of a particular school.

Some schools will want to use the introductory activities prior to a full launch of the curriculum materials across the school. Others might choose to use the activities over time, with opportunities for staff to dip into the materials and become familiar with them before a full launch.

Activity 1: why teach children about the social and emotional aspects of learning, and what are social, emotional and behavioural skills?

Time

30 minutes

Resources

Sticky notes (two colours – for example, blue and yellow)

Flipchart divided into six sections labelled ‘self-awareness’, ‘managing feelings’, ‘motivation’, ‘empathy’, ‘social skills’ and ‘others’

What to do

Ask participants, working in pairs, to spend a couple of minutes listing, on blue sticky notes (one per note) the behaviours that they are concerned about in school – particularly those that are a barrier to learning.

Ask participants to discuss and agree alternative, opposite behaviour to the behaviours of concern, and to write them on the yellow sticky notes (one per note).

Collect in the blue notes and make a big thing of throwing them away – these are the behaviours you don’t want in school. The behaviours on the yellow sticky notes are the behaviours that we do want to nurture.

Ask the participants to stick the yellow notes on the flipchart under the appropriate social and emotional aspect of learning. Any that don’t fit should be placed under the ‘other’ heading. Talk about the importance of any sticky notes that are placed in the ‘other’ category.

It is anticipated that the positive behaviours identified will fit within the five social and emotional aspects of learning, and will demonstrate why these aspects of learning are so important to develop within school.

It is worth reflecting on the skills and abilities the children need in their life beyond school, and whether these also fit the same five social and emotional aspects of learning.

Reflection

Explain that the SEAL materials are organised under the five social and emotional aspects of learning which are:

self-awareness;
managing feelings;
motivation;
empathy;
social skills.

Discuss – How far might the SEAL materials help you develop the skills, qualities and abilities that you value in your school?

Activity 2: how do we promote the development of social, emotional and behavioural skills?

Time

20 minutes

Resources

Four sheets of flipchart paper stuck up round the room and labelled:

Planned teaching;

School and classroom ethos and organisation – conditions for learning;

Whole-school initiatives;

Supporting children with difficulties

Copies of Appendix 1 from the *Guidance* booklet in the SEAL materials

Flipchart sheets from the last activity

Sticky notes

What to do

Members of staff should work in small groups. Remind them of the five social and emotional aspects of learning. They might like to read Appendix 1 from the SEAL *Guidance* booklet for a fuller picture of what these might entail.

Groups should discuss the following questions:

- Are these consistent with your views of what is important in your school?
- Do they match with your concerns and aspirations from the last activity?

Ask the staff to thought shower together all the ways that the school currently helps the children to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding described in the *Guidance* booklet. They should write these on sticky notes (one per note).

They should then stick their notes on to the appropriate labelled flipcharts – Planned teaching, School and classroom ethos and organisation, and so on.

Examples people come up with might include:

Work done in PSHE and Citizenship, circle time, drama and during all subject areas.
(*Planned teaching*)

'Golden rules', reward and consequence systems, classroom organisation, seating, collaborative group work, friendship stops, playground layout and organisation, etc. (*School and classroom ethos and organisation – conditions for learning*)

Assemblies, buddy schemes, school councils, peer mediation, reward systems, golden time, etc. (*Whole-school initiatives*)

Buddy schemes, small group work, individual support, 'behaviour books', sticker charts, etc. (*Supporting children with difficulties*)

Take some time to reflect on which of the flipcharts are most full and most empty, and to consider where additional work might be done. Write ideas on the board.

Reflection and applying learning

Ask staff to work in pairs and agree on one (or more) things that they could do in their work that would support children's social and emotional learning. They should write these on a different coloured sticky note and stick them on the relevant flipchart.

Leave the flipcharts displayed on the staff-room wall for later additions.

Distribute the year group booklets from the SEAL materials and leave the whole-school box in the staff room for staff to look at.

Over the week staff should try to spot the ways they have supported children in developing their social, emotional and behavioural skills. They should add these to the flipcharts.

Staff should each agree to try one new idea – it might be something that a colleague already does in their work, or it might be something completely new.

Activity 3: getting to know the materials – the themes

The facilitator should be familiar with the materials before they start this activity.

Time

30–40 minutes

Resources

SEAL materials – these might be left in the staff room for the staff to look at

Getting started poster from the materials

Sticky notes

What to do

Use the *Getting started* poster to talk through the key elements of the programme. Focus on the sections:

What is the SEAL resource? What is in it? and What's in this whole-school box?

Assembly materials on a clear SEAL theme

A spiral curriculum which revisits each theme (and the skills associated with that theme) offering new ideas yearly

Flexible lesson ideas at each developmental level

Explicit links and ideas for the theme to be developed across the curriculum

Guidance booklet

Assemblies and teaching ideas for six whole-school 'themes', each theme providing up to six weeks' work:

New beginnings

Getting on and falling out

Going for goals!

Good to be me

Relationships

Changes

An assembly and teaching ideas for a shorter (1–2 week) theme on Bullying

Ideas for follow-up work with small groups of children who need additional support

When you feel that staff are familiar with the overall structure, move on to looking at the materials in detail. Choose one of the seven themes for staff to investigate. This might be one that reflects a particular school priority or that fits in with the school's cycle of planning.

Staff should work in phase groups (Foundation Stage, Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4, Years 5 and 6). Distribute the booklets to the appropriate teaching staff (teaching assistants and support staff should be linked to a year group or phase team).

Staff might like to annotate the materials as they go, using sticky notes, and choose one activity from their set that they think looks interesting.

Reflection and applying learning

Staff should share their first impressions of the materials as a whole and outline the activity they have chosen that on first impression looks interesting.

They might choose an activity from the materials to try out with their class and report back to the next staff meeting.

Activity 4: understanding the materials – whole-school resource file

Time

30–40 minutes

Resources

Materials from the whole-school resource file

Photocards

Emotional barometer

Feelings fan

Feelings detective poster

Assertiveness poster

Problem-solving poster

Peaceful problem-solving poster

Are we ready for circle time? poster

Ways to calm down

Working together self-review checklists

What to do

Distribute copies of these whole-school resources so that each person has a copy of one of them. Ideally this would be done before the meeting. Members of staff should give a short summary of what the resource entails and should explain how they think they might use it. This might involve them trying the resource with their class in preparation.

Reflection and applying learning

The whole-staff group might like to choose one of the whole-school resources to focus on and introduce it to children. Staff should consider whether the resources are practical to use and whether the children are applying the ideas. They should feed back to the next staff meeting.

Activity 5: involving parents, carers and other members of the community

Time

10–15 minutes

Resources

The Gold sets

Flipchart

Guidance booklet pages about involving parents

What to do

Thought shower with the staff group any people who need to know about the work they are going to do with the SEAL materials.

For each group identified the staff should consider how the school might involve them.

Distribute copies of selected Gold set activities. Those who have children might like to choose one to use at home to try out.

Activity 6: next steps

Time

30–40 minutes

Resources

Paper and pens

Several copies of the handout *Social, emotional aspects of learning: our route*

What to do

Read out the following:

You will need to be sitting comfortably and to listen carefully. Close your eyes if you want to. Just imagine that in front of you there is a shiny, silver door. The door opens slowly and you walk inside. You look around. It is like the cockpit of an aeroplane with many dials and controls. You sit down in what looks like the pilot's seat. There are many dials and there is a button that says 'Press'. You press the button. The door shuts slowly and the display panel lights up with the time and date clearly visible. There is a gentle purring noise and a slight shuddering. The date starts to go forward – slowly to start with and then more quickly. The dates start to slow down and you can read them again. The purring noise stops and the date and time become visible again. It says (a date two years from now). The door opens and you step out into the staff room. The plans you made to use the SEAL resource are now up and running and the work is proving to be very successful in the school.

In groups discuss and record the answers to the questions on the handout sheet.

Share your ideas as a whole group and agree the next steps to take.

Applying learning

A group of staff should use the ideas generated in the activity to plan to introduce the SEAL approach in school. The group should include the headteacher and facilitator. Use the *Getting started* poster to help you.

Handout

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL ASPECTS OF LEARNING (SEAL)

OUR ROUTE

What is different at school now you are using the SEAL materials? (Remember to include all aspects of the materials including assemblies, whole-school resource and the lessons.)

What are you doing that is different?

How have the children changed?

What did you do to successfully introduce SEAL into the school? Describe the things you did and when you did them. Remember to keep talking as though you are looking back.

- *We had staff meetings so that all staff were familiar with the materials.*
-
-
-
-
-

How did you involve the parents, governors and other members of the community?

What went well?

What were the barriers that you overcame and how did you overcome them?

Share your ideas with the whole group.

Activities that focus on how children and adults need to work together if they are to benefit from using the SEAL resource

Activity 1: setting ground rules

Time

Approximately 10–15 minutes

Resources

Large piece of paper

What to do

This activity is very important if group members are to get the most out of the Purple set sessions in each theme. Even if you think the relationships in the staff room are excellent and there is an ethos of sharing and empathy, it might be worth revisiting, affirming and formalising the important aspects of what makes for an emotionally safe environment where it is OK to share your feelings, fears and worries, question current thinking, talk about mistakes and risk showing ignorance.

For each group of four to six people, write the following in the centre of a piece of paper:

To allow me to learn, think and talk about the social and emotional aspects of learning, I need to feel safe enough to:

share my thoughts, worries, fears, challenges and excitements;

take risks by showing I don't understand or explore new and difficult ideas;

find enjoyment in the activities and the relationships I develop;

be able to ask questions that challenge our school's thinking or current practice.

In groups, people should spend a little time considering what the rules and expectations should be to allow these things to happen for them. It is likely that they will include confidentiality and the right to opt out if someone finds an activity upsetting, difficult or threatening.

Draw links between the ground rules that have been suggested and the aim to develop in the school a learning community where social, emotional and behavioural skills can flourish.

The ground rules might be displayed in the staff room to remind participants in future sessions.

Reflection: ground rules for work in the classroom

Talk to a partner for a few minutes about how we ensure that we create an emotionally safe environment in the classroom that enables children to develop social, emotional and behavioural skills, bearing in mind the previous discussion about the needs and rules we have identified as a staff group.

Many of the activities in the materials include circle games and rounds. Go on to discuss, as a whole group, what children might be feeling when they take part in circle time and the sort of ground rules we should use in these activities to ensure an emotionally safe environment.

In most classes this is best negotiated with the class group themselves. For example, rules might be:

- to be kind and considerate to each other – don't use 'put downs';
- to listen to each other;
- you can pass if you want to;
- to keep the circle confidential.

Activity 2: listening skills

Time

30 minutes

Resources

None

What to do

The ability to be an active listener is fundamental to work in the area of social and emotional learning and emotional well-being. You might have already carried out work as a whole-school staff in this area, and some of you might have received training in counselling, but spending a little time honing your skills might still be useful.

Work in threes. Each threesome should appoint:

- an observer;
- a communicator;
- a listener.

The communicator should think of an incident or story that they are happy to share that has some emotional overtones. They should tell the listener about the incident.

The listener should avoid eye contact with the communicator, fidget and deliberately fail to listen.

The participants should then switch roles. The activity should be repeated but this time the listener should use non-verbal means to show they are listening. For example, they should make appropriate eye contact, sit in an 'attentive' way and nod or use facial expression to show they are interested.

The participants should switch roles again but this time the listener should use non-verbal and verbal means to encourage. This might include:

- encouragers – for example, 'I see', 'really', 'I understand';
- reflection – repeating important phrases to show that you understand and have listened;
- summarising – reflecting back the content of what has been said using different words to help clarification;
- paraphrasing – reflecting back the hidden meanings or feelings – for example, 'I guess when he did that it made you feel angry';
- questioning – asking questions for clarification – for example, 'How did that make you feel?', 'What happened then?'

Reflection

Ask the people who took the role of observers to suggest the key features of helpful listening.

What are the implications of this activity for our work with colleagues, children and their families?

How might the activity be used in class to help children develop the skills of helpful listening?

Activities specific to Theme 1 *New beginnings*

Theme 1 *New beginnings* supports the development of a learning community in each classroom where all members feel that they belong. The next activity explores the importance of belonging.

Activity 1: belonging

Time

2 minutes for individual reflection

5 minutes to write down the feeling words

5 minutes to write down the behaviours

10–15 minutes to consider the reflection questions as a whole group

Resources

Large pieces of paper (one for each group of four to six people)

Pens

What to do

Individually, consider a time when you have believed that you haven't belonged or been valued and think of the way it made you feel. You might want to share the situation with the group or you might want to keep your thoughts to yourself.

One person draws a circle in the centre of the paper. In your group take it in turns to write down (in the circle) any words to describe your **feelings** in the situation you were thinking of. Round the edge of the paper list the way you or others might **behave** when they have these feelings.

Underline any **negative behaviours** you have written.

Reflection and applying learning

- What are the links between our feelings of belonging and behaviour?
- What might we learn from this activity to apply to our school and/or classroom?

Note: If teachers are familiar with the concept of the Philosophy for Children approach, this activity might be used as a stimulus for a communities of enquiry. (For more information about communities of enquiry and Philosophy for Children, refer to Appendix 6 of the *Guidance* booklet in the whole-school resource box.)

Activity 2: the dream school

Staff should work in groups to complete the *Dream school challenge* from the Green set: Year 6. This will provide time for staff to consider what is important to make a school an effective learning community.

When you have finished the challenge you might like to complete a staff room charter, listing the rights of those who use the staff room (how we want our staff room to be) and the responsibilities (the things we will try to do, and the ways we will try to behave).

The midday supervisors could work with the school council and representatives of the teaching staff to make a playground charter.

Activity 3: being new

Resources

Flipchart and pens

Task

Staff should think back individually to a time when they were 'new' (in a new school, in a new job, in a new area), then discuss with a partner what they felt at that time, and what their needs were.

As a whole group, list what the school does to meet the needs of children new to a class or to the school.

You might also want to think about what the school does to meet the needs of new parents/carers, new members of staff, or supply teachers. You could, for example, interview new members of staff about what made them feel welcome and included.

Keep this list to review at the end of the school's work on Theme 1 *New beginnings*. Decide on any changes you want to make to school systems and practice in each classroom.

Related continuing professional development materials

Theme 1 *New beginnings* contains work with children on establishing classroom charters, rules and routines. To support this, you may find it useful to look at the activities in *Setting expectations and teaching positive behaviour* (DfES 0491-2004) and *Effective lessons and behaviour for learning* (DfES 0493-2004), two sessions in the Primary National Strategy behaviour and attendance professional development materials. These are available on the web at www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primary/wholeschool/banda

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