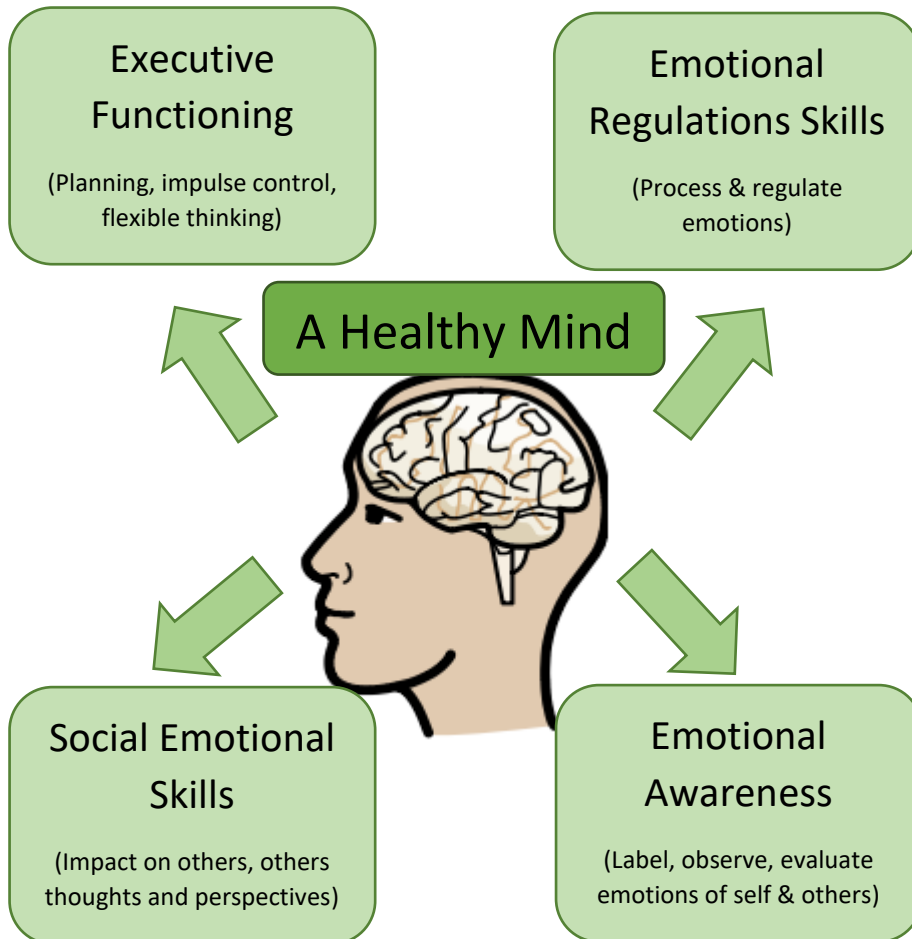




Oaklands School AOL Overviews:

Emotional Regulation & Wellbeing Curriculum Overview by Pathway (ER&W) 2026-2027



For children to thrive they need to have their basic needs met. At the heart of this is their emotional wellbeing, achieved through developing a *Healthy Mind*. Behaviour for learning is at the centre of everything that children do in school, from classroom learning to trips into the community. At Oaklands, Emotional Regulation and Wellbeing (ER&W) is both embedded in the structure of the day and the fabric of the curriculum and taught explicitly throughout the day. By focussing on Emotional Regulation and Wellbeing, children can develop positive effective behaviours for learning, living, and healthy relationships that will build foundations for fulfilling futures.

From how we greet children from transport at the start of the day, to how the day is structured and signalled through objects and symbols of reference, to explicit ER&W focused taught sessions, children are supported to thrive in a learning culture where there is high challenge and low threat. Our Oaklands Learning Powers are also a tool to support wellbeing as **TRY** teaches pupils to persevere in a supportive environment where it's okay to make mistakes and recognise them as an essential part of learning. Regular 'check ins' with children enable to staff to support them to self-regulate and provide the right tools for them to make informed choices about what they need to succeed. All children have a pupil profile that is regularly updated by their teaching team and provides all those that work with them an insight into what is needed for them to access all aspects of school life, this includes motivators, sensory needs and how they communicate. When a child is emotionally regulated, they can engage in and enjoy learning, leading to better outcomes.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Emotional Regulation & Wellbeing handbook which sets out the rationale & intent of the ER&W curriculum, as well as the ER&W OPAL ladder.

Emotional Awareness: Emotional awareness is the ability to recognise and make sense of not just your own emotions, but also those of others.			
Nurture Pathway	Willow Pathway	Elm Pathway	Cherry Pathway
- Recognise opposite emotions, such as happy, not happy (through adult modelling and labelling) - Begin to understand their own emotions - Accept a range of objects as potential motivators	- Recognise basic emotions such as happy, sad, angry (through adult modelling and labelling) - Understand their own emotions (and those of others) - Begin to recognise motivators	- Recognise a range of emotions such as happy, sad, angry, excited, silly (through adult modelling and children commenting) - Understand their own emotions and those of others - Begin to understand the Zones Approach to ER - Understand what motivates them	- Recognise and name a range of emotions linked to the Zones Approach - Understand and describe own emotions and those of others - Understand that all emotions have a purpose - Understand how their behaviour and choices can affect others - Use their understanding of the Zones Approach to support their own wellbeing - Understand who they are and what motivates them
Social-Emotional Skills: Social-emotional skills are essential for connecting with others. They help manage emotions, build healthy relationships, and feel empathy.			
Nurture Pathway	Willow Pathway	Elm Pathway	Cherry Pathway
- Begin to develop relationships with staff - Greet staff using body language and facial expressions - Safely share space with others - Pupil shifts their gaze between objects and people	- Develop positive relationships with staff - Greeting and connecting with staff using body language, facial expressions, sounds or AAC. - Play and learn alongside peers, sharing space and resources - Pupil shifts their gaze between objects and people, engages in interaction with staff	- Develop positive relationships with staff and peers - Initiating connections with others using body language, facial expressions, sounds, AAC or words - Be aware of other people's behaviour - Pupil shifts their gaze between objects and people, engages in interaction with peers and staff and initiates games, routines or interactions.	- Develop positive peer relationships with sustained play and interactions - Initiating and maintaining connections with others using body language, facial expressions, sounds, AAC or words - Accept other people's point of view or behaviour - Pupil shares experiences, comments on events or actions and can use words to express their emotions

Executive Functioning Skills: Executive functioning Skills are a set of mental skills that include working memory, flexible thinking, and self-control. Executive Function is responsible for many skills including paying attention, organising, planning, and prioritizing, starting tasks and staying focused

Nurture Pathway	Willow Pathway	Elm Pathway	Cherry Pathway
- Develop an enjoyment of school and acceptance of daily routines (visuals hierarchy) - Develop their tolerance for change, using objects of reference to support transitions - Attract adults' attention when needs support - Access different areas of the school, including sensory rooms and soft play	- Accept and understand changes to daily routines - Follow simple instructions (visual/verbal) - Access different areas of the school, including sensory rooms and soft play	- Understand and adapt to changes to daily routines - Follows a simple visual system - Uses a wide range of areas of the school for different activities, such as cooking room, hall for dinner time & PD	- Anticipate changes to daily routines, including streaming for Phonics - Ask for support with change - Follows a visual system - Use a wide range of areas of the school for different activities, such as cooking room, hall for dinner time & PD

Emotional Regulation: Emotional regulation (ER) is a person's ability to effectively manage and respond to an emotional experience in order to meet their goal (See **Hierarchy of ER** at the end of this document). This includes sensory processing, sensory diet and the Zones Approach.

ERW was developed using a range of research-based curriculums and strategies, including The Alert Program, SCERTS (Social Communication, Emotional Regulation and Transactional Support) and The Zones of Regulation. ER&W helps pupils to understand what support they need to feel regulated. It supports children to make better choices, thinking about what they could do differently, whilst practicing the skills in a safe and supportive environment. In order for children to develop self-regulation skills, they first need to understand how different levels of alertness feel and what sensory supports are calming or alerting. Supporting a child's sensory needs helps them to self-regulate, transition, organise themselves, cope with sensory challenges and improve attention. Once a child has mastered these skills, The Zones Approach can be used to teach pupils how different emotions and thinking patterns impact their level of alertness and what sensory supports and strategies can be used as tools to regulate. Much of ER&W is embedded within our practice, similar to positive behaviour support. In all pathways, there is explicit teaching of ER skills and tools either through whole class or individualised work.

Nurture Pathway	Willow Pathway	Elm Pathway	Cherry Pathway
ER including Sensory processing, interoception & diet	ER including Sensory processing, interoception & diet	ER + The Zones Approach	ER + The Zones Approach

Skills - Accept stimuli from different inputs, including auditory and visual - Accept intense input, being offered by an adult, in order to regulate - Begin to accept support when dysregulated - Communicate intentionally using gestures and/or vocalisations to make their needs known	Skills - Begin to filter out stimuli from different inputs, including auditory and visual - Begin to seek intense input in order to regulate - Accept support when dysregulated - Begin to seek for support when needed - Communicate for a purpose using gestures, symbols, signs and/or vocalisations/words, may include communication systems such as PECS	Skills - Filter out stimuli from different inputs, including auditory and visual - Seek intense input in order to regulate - Recognise emotions - Control Impulses or emotional reactions - Begin to ask for support when needed - Engage in and use a range of mutual regulation skills - Communicate for a purpose using symbols, signs and/or words, including AAC or device	Skills - Seek and understand intense input in order to regulate - Filter out stimuli from different inputs, including auditory and visual - Recognise and name emotions - Control impulses or emotional reactions - Begins to think about others - Develop an understanding the social expectations in any given setting - Ask for support when needed - Develop a range of mutual and self-regulation skills - Use helpful ER behaviours to manage their feelings - Develop an understanding of how to use communication to express themselves and work out the feelings and thoughts of others
Embedded Structures and Strategies to support ERW:			
Transitions & Visual Systems Preparing children for transitions using objects of reference and timetable, now and next. Children are introduced to spaces gradually and transitioned with favoured items or activities to soft play, sensory rooms, studio, middle yard, millennium grove, climbing frame, spinney etc	Transitions & Visual Systems Preparing children for transitions using timetable, now and next. Children are transitioned with favoured items or activities (if needed) to soft play, sensory rooms, studio, middle yard, millennium grove, climbing frame, spinney etc	Transitions & Visual Systems Children are prepared for transitions using now, next and then timetables, understanding who will be supporting them and which children are moving to that space. Individual children use visuals 'now work then motivator', alongside a timer in order to prepare them for the change.	Transitions & Visual Systems Big Days, ASH Fridays, Phonics streaming, hall at lunchtime Preparing for surprise elements of the day when things can suddenly change by using the surprise visuals. Children given ownership of their routine and self-management skills by setting up their individual timetables at the start of the day.
Oakey Boost – staff interact with children using equipment that motivates them or that gets them active after their journey to school. Language is used by the adult to	Oakey Boost – staff play with and alongside children, sharing objects and space and turn taking. Language is used by the adult to share emotions, e.g. I'm sad, let's squeeze the play dough.	Oakey Boost – children check in with an adult by placing their photo on zones board. Language is modelled by adult to regulate. Staff play with children, sharing objects and space and turn taking.	Oakey Boost - children check in with an adult by placing their photo on zones board. Language is modelled by staff to regulate. Staff play with children and encourage peer to peer play, sharing and turn taking, creating small group games and

share the emotions, e.g. I am tired, let's do some jumping. Opportunities are created to help soothe or alert the child. Pupil profiles are used to inform planning.	Opportunities are created to help soothe or alert the child. Pupil profiles are used to inform planning. After Lunchtime: Children are offered a variety of activities to refocus, ready for the afternoon learning. For example: TACPAC, story time, yoga, grounding techniques.	Opportunities are created to help soothe or alert the child. Pupil profiles are used to inform planning. After Lunchtime: Children are offered a variety of activities to refocus, ready for the afternoon learning. For example: TACPAC, story time, yoga, grounding techniques.	imaginative play. Opportunities are created to help soothe or alert the child. Pupil profiles are used to inform planning. After Lunchtime: Children are offered a variety of activities to refocus, ready for the afternoon learning. For example: TACPAC, story time, yoga, grounding techniques.
ER tools: Offering children different tools to change their state of alertness	ER tools Access to personal regulation tools, such as a preferred item (for instance a teddy) or sensory reinforcement tools such as body sock, stretch bands, exercise ball	ER tools Choose personal regulation tools from 'grab bag' or select from a choice board. Tools include, chew toys, weighted blankets, fidgets, balloons, bubbles	ER tools Use words or symbols to express emotions and which regulation tool would support. Asking for help, a break or a coping strategy from an adult. Independently selecting an ER tool when needed and using it to self-regulate
Sensory Breaks Specific to each individual child. Please see document outlining what sensory breaks are and what they look like.	Sensory Breaks Specific to each individual child. Please see document outlining what sensory breaks are and what they look like.	Sensory Breaks Specific to each individual child. Please see document outlining what sensory breaks are and what they look like.	Sensory Breaks Specific to each individual child. Please see document outlining what sensory breaks are and what they look like.
Outdoor Learning All children have access to outdoor learning at different times throughout the day. Areas are rotated to support children in managing change of environment.	Outdoor Learning All children have access to outdoor learning at different times throughout the day. Areas are rotated to support children in managing change of environment.	Outdoor Learning All children have access to outdoor learning at different times throughout the day. Areas are rotated to support children in managing change of environment.	Outdoor Learning All children have access to outdoor learning at different times throughout the day. Areas are rotated to support children in managing change of environment.

Restorative approaches:	Restorative approaches:	Restorative approaches:	Restorative approaches: Discrete teaching of the causes and effects of emotions and behaviours and how this relates to the individual and others. Using visuals and modelling language around emotions, events, outcomes and the recovery period. Creating more opportunities for positive interactions when there has been a conflict.
Explicit teaching of ER skills and tools:			
Intensive Interaction - a 1:1 session to develop early communication skills through mirroring by a staff member to encourage responses and interactions through positive feedback to a child.	Intensive Interaction - a 1:1 session to develop early communication skills through mirroring by a staff member to encourage responses and interactions through positive feedback to a child.	Play interaction - structured 1:1 or in a small group. Through play children learn how to interact with the world and with others, focussing on how to manage their own behaviour and emotions.	Play interaction - structured 1:1 or in a small group. Through play children learn how to interact with the world and with others, focussing on how to manage their own behaviour and emotions.
Reflections – Learning powers are shared at the end of sessions and children’s progress is celebrated	Reflections - Learning powers are shared at the end of sessions and children’s progress is celebrated	Reflections – End of sessions, asking children if they like and dislike an activity. Learning powers are shared at the end of sessions and children’s progress is celebrated	Reflections – End of sessions, asking children if they like and dislike an activity and how they understood the learning. Learning powers are shared at the end of sessions and children’s progress is celebrated, with children commenting on their own learning.
Interoception – a 1:1 session to develop pupils understanding of how external factors make different parts of the body feel	Interoception – a 1:1 session or small group session to develop pupils understanding of how external factors make different parts of the body feel, encouraging pupils to comment on how their body parts feel	Interoception – a small group session to develop pupils understanding of how external factors make different parts of the body feel, encouraging pupils to comment on how their body parts feel, their emotions and what they need	Interoception – An intervention used with pupils that have been identified to having low interoception awareness. A small group session to develop pupils understanding of how external factors make different parts of the body feel, encouraging pupils to comment on how their body parts feel, their emotions and what they need

The Zones Approach - Not explicitly taught; staff are modelling language of emotions whilst observing what motivates children and what their interests might be.	The Zones Approach - Not explicitly taught; staff are modelling language of emotions whilst observing what motivates children and what their interests might be.	The Zones Approach - Increasing language around a variety of emotions, labelling different emotions and beginning to recognise own emotions and others' emotions. ZoR lessons adapted and delivered in 10-15 minutes sessions. Focussing on lessons 1-4 from ZoR curriculum	The Zones Approach lessons – ZoR adapted curriculum begins with naming emotions and the zones, leading to impact of behaviour on others and regulation tools. Delivered in short sessions, between 10- and 20-minutes whole class sessions, twice a week. If a more bespoke approach is needed it can be adapted and delivered 1:1.
Communication: Objects of reference are used to identify motivators for children and what they like and don't like	Communication: Communication books & Choice boards time set aside to find clear motivators and to teach the initial phases using a communication partner and a facilitator. Opportunities throughout the school day to practice their current stage.	Communication: Communication books & choice boards - time set aside to teach how to use the boards/strips. Opportunities throughout the school day to practice their current stage.	Communication: Communication Books - time set aside to teach how to use the book. Opportunities throughout the school day to practice their current stage.
Oakey Relax Oakey Relax creates sensory alignment and helps support sensory impairment. It is used to create a positive connection between a child and an adult. This session incorporates SoSafe, modelling language of private and public.	Oakey Relax Oakey Relax creates sensory alignment and helps support sensory impairment. It is used to create a positive connection between a child and an adult. This session incorporates SoSafe, modelling language of private and public.	Oakey Relax Oakey Relax creates sensory alignment and helps support sensory impairment. It is used to create a positive connection between a child and an adult. This session incorporates SoSafe building to paired work with another child, adult modelling language of private and public and pupils requesting using visuals or words. Individual children may request Oakey Relax as one of their ER tools	Oakey Relax Oakey Relax creates sensory alignment and helps support sensory impairment. It is used to create a positive connection between a child and an adult. This session incorporates SoSafe or paired work with another child (depending on needs of individual), adult modelling language of private and public and pupils requesting using visuals or words. Individual children may request Oakey Relax as one of their ER tools

Emotional Regulation Hierarchy

Note: A child can be at different stages on the same day depending on the activity, environment or their mood.

