

Leadership and Teamwork in the Early Years

No AI has been used in this assignment.

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1. Agenda for team meeting

Meeting Location:

Ysgol Y Hapus, Swansea

Members in attendance:

Kelly Evans – Year 6 Teacher and School's Health and Safety Officer (HSO)

Lucie Daley – Acting Headteacher and School's Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

Lucy Willimer-Cant – Year 1 Teacher and Additional Learning Needs Coordinator (ALNCo)

Meg Evans – Morning Nursery Teacher and Pastoral Support Officer (PSO)

Agenda for Team Meeting 26/11/2025:

1. Reviewing Safeguarding Policy and Procedures – DSO
2. Review health and safety policies in relation to fire evacuation procedures – HSO
3. Implementing a whole school approach for emotional regulation – ALNCo
4. Proposal of an extra wellbeing activity including pupils and their parents – PSO
5. Discussion based on the new outdoor learning area by all members in attendance.

2. Individual script

Thank you, Kelly. As you are all aware it is my responsibility as the Additional Learning Needs Coordinator [ALNCo] to make sure that every child with additional learning needs [ALN] in our school gets the right support to thrive. To do this I must ensure that we create inclusive environments where every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential (Swansea Council, 2023). Therefore, the agenda I would like to discuss today is about how we can support all our pupil's emotional regulation needs by introducing a whole school approach through creating Zen Zones in every classroom. Over the past year we have seen more children, not just our ALN pupils, struggling to recognise and manage their feelings, and this is affecting whole class learning time and well-being.

A Zen Zone is a calm area created within the classroom where children can choose to go when they are feeling upset, overwhelmed, frustrated or when they just to regulate themselves. It should be a quiet space, so perhaps near a reading area, and needs to be comfortable and cosy to help the children feel safe. In the Zen Zones we would include sensory tools, such as fidget toys, stress balls and sensory bottles, as well as calming activities like mindfulness colouring or breathing technique cards. The aim is to create a calming environment where children can go independently to manage their emotions, and it should not be used as a 'time out' area. This approach is supported by Estyn (2018) and the Welsh Government (2021), which highlights the benefits of a whole school approach to emotional wellbeing and shows that spaces like Zen Zones can improve children's self-regulation, confidence and overall wellbeing.

As a school we have a legal responsibility to ensure that we are reducing barriers to learning for all of our pupils. The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 (Welsh Government, 2018) highlights that strong universal provision and early intervention should be in place throughout the school for all pupils who may be struggling, not just for our ALN children. Introducing Zen Zones supports this requirement because it gives every classroom a consistent, safe space where children can regulate their emotions and get themselves ready for learning again, which also aligns with the Health and Wellbeing area of the Curriculum for Wales (Welsh Government, 2020).

One of the main benefits of having Zen Zones in every classroom is consistency. Children have the same expectations, hear the same language, and use the same strategies no matter where they are in the school. Staff can show children how to use the space, help notice when they are upset, and use calming language to support emotional regulation. This helps us as a school follow The Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021 (Welsh Government, 2021), as we are giving all children the tools to manage their emotions, which then allows them to access their learning, and encourages them to become more independent, which is a key focus of the Code.

I have put together two action plans to help us introduce Zen Zones and ensure they are set up and used consistently across the school.

The first action plan focuses on staff training. We need to make sure everyone is on the same page about the purpose of the Zen Zone, the language to use and how to spot early signs of dysregulation, so that our approach is the same across the whole school. I have already spoken to Lucie about this, who has agreed to give us a slot in next week's INSET to discuss it with all staff and collaborate as a team on ideas and questions.

The second action plan focuses on actually setting up the spaces themselves. For this, staff will need to look at their classrooms and find an appropriate space for a Zen Zone, and then create a calming area using cosy furniture, fairy lights and resources. I have decided to share the responsibility of creating these spaces across all staff. I will be there to support and advise if needed, but I want everyone to play a part in making this whole school approach to emotional regulation a success. This links with Jillian Rodd's ideas about leaders creating supportive environments and working with staff as a team when making changes (Rodd, 2020). By involving everyone, I hope staff will feel a sense of ownership over their Zen Zones and really understand the benefits for the children because they have created them themselves.

The aim is to have Zen Zones set up across the whole school by the end of next half term. Thank you all for listening, if you have any questions please save them until the end of the meeting. I will now pass you over to Megan to continue with the next part of our agenda.

From an ALN point of view, outdoor learning can have huge benefits for all of our pupils, but especially those with ALN or those who find the classroom overwhelming. Being outdoors allows our ALN children to learn at their own pace in a calm and open environment. For those children who feel overwhelmed in the classroom, being outdoors can help them feel more relaxed (Welsh Government, 2022).

The Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales (2021) encourages schools to use different ways of working that help children engage with their learning and remove any barriers they may have. Outdoor learning fits well with this because it gives pupils lots of meaningful opportunities to explore, communicate with others and work as a team. It can also benefit children who have an Individual Development Plan [IDP] because being outside allows them to work on their targets in a real, hands-on approach, with support from staff in the natural environment.

The ALN Code for Wales (2021) highlights the importance of supporting children with sensory and physical needs. Being outdoors benefits these children as it allows them to take part in natural sensory experiences and gives them more space to move freely. Physical movements such as running, climbing, balancing or jumping are beneficial for ALN children as they can help build their confidence and make it easier for them to explore and to take part in activities that support their emotional regulation (Fledglings, 2025).

So, I feel our new outdoor learning area will really support our ALN children and give them more opportunities to learn and thrive. If we as staff also work together to make it more inclusive, it will help all of our children feel happier, more confident, and more engaged in their learning.

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