



Zones of Regulation at MPPS

Dear Mentone Park families,

Mentone Park Primary School has launched the Zones of Regulation as a new addition to our whole school approach to Wellbeing. The Zones of Regulation is an internationally renowned intervention which helps children to manage difficult emotions, known as 'self-regulation'. Self-regulation can go by many names such as 'self-control', 'impulse management' and 'self-management'. Self-regulation is best described as the best state of alertness for a situation. For example, when your child takes part in a sports game, they would need to have a higher state of alertness than when, for example, they were working in a library.

From time to time, all of us (including adults) find it hard to manage strong feelings such as worry, anger, restlessness, fear or tiredness, and this stops us from getting on with our day effectively. 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'.

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 tricky learning problem or challenge. By teaching them how to cope with these feelings might make them better at tackling learning challenges and build better resilience so they don't give up so easily when faced with difficulty. We aim to help children to:

- Recognise when they are in the different Zones and learn how to change or stay in the Zone they are in.
- Increase their emotional vocabulary so they can explain how they are feeling.
- Recognise when other people are in different Zones, thus developing better empathy.
- Develop an insight into what might make them move into the different Zones.
- Understand that emotions, sensory experiences such as lack of sleep or hunger and their environment might influence which Zone they are in.
- Develop problem-solving skills and resilience.
- Identify a range of calming and alerting strategies that support them (known as their personal 'toolkit').



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What are the different Zones?

The Zones of Regulation is a concept used to help students learn how to self-regulate. The Zones of Regulation creates a system to categorize how the body feels and emotions into four coloured Zones with which the students can easily identify.

Blue Zone: low level of concentration; not ready to learn; feels sad, sick, 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; feels mad/angry, terrified, yelling/hitting, elated.

We will teach the children 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?

The Zones of Regulation and strategies for each Zone will be explored through discrete teaching lessons. Teachers will be using the Zones language as part of daily school life so all staff will be referring to them, not just their class teacher. Students will have the opportunity to check in on their zones during the day and will be able to use our MPPS Zones strategies when they need. We have attached the Zones of Regulation and Strategy Posters, if you wish to use them by putting them up at home.



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

- Identify your own feelings using Zones language in front of your child (e.g.: I'm frustrated. I think I am in the Yellow Zone.)
- 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



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- back to the Green Zone.”)
- At times, wonder which Zone your child is in. Or, discuss which Zone a character in a film / book might be in. (e.g.:
“You look sleepy. Are you in the Blue Zone?”)
 - Engage your child in discussion around Zones when they are in the Red Zone is unlikely to be effective. You need to be discussing the different Zones and tools they can use when they are more regulated / calm.
 - Teach your child which tools they can use. (eg: “It’s time for bed. Let’s read a book together in the comfy chair to get you in the Blue Zone.”)
 - Regular Check-ins. “How are you feeling now?” and “How can you get back to Green?”
 - Modelling it is important to remember to show the children how you use tools to get back to the green zones. You might say “I am going to make myself a cup of tea and do some breathing exercises because I am in the blue zone” and afterwards tell your child how using those tools helped you get back to the green zone.
 - Share how their behaviour is affecting your Zone. For example, if they are in the Green Zone, you could comment that their behaviour is also helping you feel happy / go into the Green Zone.
 - Put up and reference the Zones visuals(attached) and tools in your home.
 - Praise and encourage your child when they share which Zone they are in.

Tips for practicing the Zones of Regulation

- Know yourself and how you react in difficult situations before dealing with your child’s behaviours.
- Know your child’s sensory threshold. We all process sensory information differently and it impacts our reactivity to situations.
- Know your child’s triggers.
- Be consistent in managing your child’s behaviour and use the same language you use at home.



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- Empathise with your child and validate what they are feeling.
- Have clear boundaries/routines and always follow through.
- Do not deal with an angry, upset child when you are not yet calm yourself.
- Discuss strategies for the next time when you are in a similar situation.
- Remember to ask your child how their choices made you feel (empathy).
- Praise your child for using strategies. Encourage your child to take a sensory break to help regulate their bodies.
- Create a 'calm' box full of things which help to keep your child calm and alert.

Common Questions

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.

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.

How can we support our children if they are 'letting it out at home'?

If your child struggles to deal with big emotions after school or at bedtime, you're certainly not alone. According to the experts, it's a very common and natural response that children have when they're trying to deal with the world around them. While this behaviour is normal, parents can still put many measures into place to minimise the effect and prevent an after-school meltdown.



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Quick Tips

Save questions for later

- Parents are always enthusiastic to hear how their child's day went at school, but timing is everything! They have just spent a full day at school, and now they are being drilled for more information and expected to answer question after question. Sometimes that's all just too much. Find the time that works best for your child, it doesn't always have to be as soon as you see them. Let them unwind first and wait until they are ready to talk.

Early dinner

- Most children are generally ravenous by the time they get home from school. Sometimes they have been so engrossed in playing that they have forgotten to eat their lunch. Don't be afraid to give them their full dinner as early as 3:30 or 4:00. You will be surprised by how much their demeanour can change after a full meal. It doesn't have to affect the family dinner either – they can still eat a bowl of porridge or fruit salad when the family sits down to dinner at a later time.

Early shower or bath

- Having water run over the body or being submerged in a tub full of water, can have a calming effect on any child who is in the most negative mood imaginable. There are no set rules about what time they should have a bath, so if it works, why not do it?

Rest or move

- After a long day at school, some children just need to rest, while others need to move and burn off some energy. Everyone is different, so find out what works for your child. If they need rest, organise some quiet time on the couch with a book or a puzzle. If they need to move, stop at the park or beach to let them run around freely.

Reconsider after school and weekend activities

- If you have busy afternoons and weekends where you are rushing from one activity to the next, it may be time to reconsider whether they are worth pursuing right now. The rushing and busyness of additional activities can often add an extra burden to an already overstretched and overstimulated child.



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Connection activity

- Sometimes a one-on-one connection activity with a parent or loved one, is all that is needed to fill up the emotional tank again. A ten-minute quiet game with no phone, screens or interruptions can be something you both look forward to when getting home from school.

Unstructured play

- Play and laughter are an amazing way to help release pent up emotions. Even though they have playtime at school, it is still bound by rules, structure, and expectations. Find a place where they can run around freely, direct their own play, be creative, and most importantly be themselves.

Talk to the teacher

- While it is normal for children to feel the need to release their emotions after the school day, there may also be something happening at school that is triggering the meltdowns. Talk to your child's teacher to get a better picture of their day.

Talk to your child

- If your child is unravelling immediately upon getting home, they are most likely internalising their feelings during the day and have just learnt to put off their reaction, rather than dealing with the problem when it occurs. Talk to your child about the things that have upset them during the day and how they can calm down and let it go while in the moment.

Please don't hesitate to contact your child's classroom teacher if you have any further questions. We look forward to a positive year where your child's wellbeing continues to be at the forefront of our curriculum.

Kind regards,

Pamela Kousis

Student Wellbeing Coordinator



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