

The **ZONES** of  
Regulation®



*September 2022*



## What is it about?

The **ZONES** of  
Regulation

Self-regulation refers to a person's ability to understand and manage their own behaviours and reactions.

- An approach aimed at helping children gain skills in consciously regulating their actions, which in turn leads to increased control and problem solving abilities.
- The approach helps children recognise when they are in different emotional states, called 'zones'.
- There are 4 zones and each is coloured coded.
- Children learn strategies or 'tools' to stay in a zone or move from one zone to another.
- Children explore calming techniques, cognitive strategies and sensory support so they will develop a 'toolbox' of methods to use to move between zones.
- Originally designed for children with a range of need (ASD, ADHD, selective mutism, anxiety disorders and SEMH needs).
- However, this approach is beneficial for all (even us adults).



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For a person to successfully regulate there are 3 key criteria that are needed. *Sensory processing, executive functioning and emotional regulation.*

1) Sensory processing- how your brain processes information from the senses.

Most of us can filter out certain stimulus. *E.g. turning down your car radio when looking for a new road sign.* For some this is difficult. It can also be difficult to do this when we are in a *heightened sense of emotional state* and our tolerance levels may differ. *E.g. stress, grief etc.*

We have the ability to modulate sensory inputs and do this unconsciously however some individuals may have difficulty receiving this sensory information, processing it and then responding to it.

Some may be *hyper sensitive (over stimulated)* to sensory stimulus. *E.g. The whirring noise of IWB that others may not hear.* Others can be *hypo sensitive (under stimulated)*. *E.g. Will hug very tightly and enjoy it.*

Some people can also have both sensory seeking (hypo) and sensory avoiding (hyper) behaviours.

The Zones approach addresses sensory processing by helping children understand what support they need to regulate.



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2) Executive Functioning- the cognitive processes that are needed for control over behaviour. Some of these process are influential in our ability to self-regulate e.g. attention shifting, working memory (how we process, use and remember daily info), flexible thinking (finding different approaches to a problem), self talk and even impulse control.

The Zones approach helps children develop increased control and problem solving abilities.

3) Emotional Regulation- the ability to control emotions. Being able to work out the **size of a problem**, motivation and understanding others' perspectives are all key in regulating emotions.

Struggling in any of these areas mean children may **struggle with their own emotions**.



## Aims at St Bernadette's

The **ZONES** of  
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- 1) Children can successfully name a range of emotions.
- 2) Develop their understanding and awareness of how to make better choices.
- 3) Provide children with regulation tools they could use to calm themselves (independently) without disrupting the class.
- 4) Gain skills in their ability to think about others.
- 5) Develop ability to work out what the social expectations are in a given setting.

HOW BIG IS MY PROBLEM?	
<b>5</b>	<b>EMERGENCY</b> Earthquake, fire, danger to yourself or others
<b>4</b>	<b>GIGANTIC PROBLEM</b> Fighting, someone is hurt, destruction to the class
<b>3</b>	<b>BIG PROBLEM</b> Small accident (spilled something, feel down), not feeling well
<b>2</b>	<b>MEDIUM PROBLEM</b> Someone is bothering you, you need something
<b>1</b>	<b>LITTLE PROBLEM</b> Runny nose, need to go to the bathroom, lost your resources, having trouble with your work
<b>0</b>	<b>GLITCH</b> Not getting called on, not getting the resource you wanted, losing in a game



## What are the Zones?

The **ZONES** of Regulation®



Blue Zone- low state of alertness. When your body or brain is moving slowly or sluggish.

Green Zone- a regulate state of alertness. The zone children generally need to be in for school work or being social. Green zone shows control.

Yellow Zone- a heightened state of alertness. Starting to lose some control.

Red Zone- an extremely heightened state of alertness or intense feeling. When you are overwhelmed by your feelings and have a loss of control.

### The Blue Zone

Low states of alertness.

A person may feel sad, tired, sick or bored.

The brain and body is moving sluggishly



### The Green Zone

Regulated state of alertness.

A person may be described as happy, calm, focused or content.

Ready for learning.



### The Yellow Zone

Heightened state of alertness.

May be experiencing stress, frustration, anxiety, excitement, silliness, nervousness or confusion.

Starting to lose control

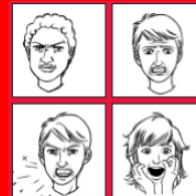


### The Red Zone

Extremely heightened states of alertness or very intense feelings.

May be experiencing anger, rage, explosive behaviour, panic or terror.

Not in control of emotions or body.





## What are the Zones?

The **ZONES** of  
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- Everyone experiences the different zones at one time or another.
- The Red and Yellow zones are NOT 'naughty' or 'bad'. It is important we teach the children all of the zones are normal to experience.
- We want to teach the children how to react appropriately to a situation and figure out the social expectations of the situation, regardless of which zone they are in.
- Teaching skills and strategies that the children can use to move between zones is key.





## Key Questions

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**Can you be in more than one zone at one time?**

Yes. You may feel tired (blue zone) because you did not get enough sleep and anxious (yellow zone) because you are worried about an activity/event. 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 go 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.



## *What next at St Bernadette's?*

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- 1) x3 sessions termly
- 2) Zones display in classrooms and referred to consistently.
- 3) Pre and post class questionnaires to compare chn's answers prior to sessions and after.
- 4) Clear progression across the school from FS1 to year 6 where chn can build on previous skills.



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# Any Questions?

Feedback form