



# SEND Newsletter

## Self regulation



### Dear Parent/Carer

This term, our newsletter shines a spotlight on **self-regulation**—a vital life skill that helps children recognise, understand, and manage their emotions, behaviour, and attention so they can learn, play, and interact successfully throughout the school day.

Self-regulation is not something children simply *know* how to do. It develops gradually and is strengthened through positive relationships, predictable routines, and the right tools and strategies at both school and home. When children feel calm, safe, and regulated, they are far more able to take part in learning, build friendships, solve problems, and thrive socially and academically.

Importantly, self-regulation is much more than “staying calm” or “paying attention.” It is a complex set of skills shaped by many influences—including environment, routines, relationships, and the supportive adults around a child. When these elements work together, children are better equipped to manage their emotions, stay focused, and engage confidently in all aspects of school life.

I hope you find something useful in this month’s edition. All information shared has been carefully researched from trusted educational and child-development sources, including evidence-based studies and recognised frameworks.

Best wishes

**Liz Anscombe**

Assistant Head of School and SENDCo



### What is self-regulation?

**Self-regulation** is a child’s ability to **understand and manage their emotions, thoughts, and behaviours** in ways that help them cope with challenges, stay focused, and respond appropriately to situations throughout the day.

### What can it help with ?

- **Learning** — staying focused, following instructions, and problem-solving
  - **Emotional wellbeing** — managing big feelings and reducing anxiety
  - **Social success** — building friendships, taking turns, resolving conflict
  - **Independence** — making good choices and managing daily routines
- Strong self-regulation develops over time and is shaped by **relationships, routines, environment, and adult support.**

## Five domains to self-regulation

**Biological, Emotional, Cognitive, Social, and Prosocial**—are important because they help us understand *why* a child may be struggling and *how* we can support them effectively.

When children become upset, distracted, or overwhelmed, it's usually because **one of the domains is under stress.**

For example:

- A child having a meltdown about homework may be **tired or hungry** (biological) therefore may require food or rest.
- A child refusing to try something new may be feeling **anxious** (emotional) therefore require reassurance or help naming their feelings.
- A child avoiding reading may be finding the task **too demanding** (cognitive) therefore require tasks breaking down in smaller chunks of learning.

**Seeing the *cause* makes supporting the child much easier.**

**Understanding the domains helps recognise what's really going on beneath the surface.**

**The domains help us see the root of the behaviour – not just the behaviour itself**

**They show how stress can look different for every child**



## Self-Regulation

### Biological Domain

Helps children regulate their bodies and energy levels

- Bright lights, noise

### Emotional Domain

Supports children with recognising and managing emotions

- Worry, angry, disappointment

### Cognitive Domain

Helps children with thinking, problem solving and learning

- Difficult tasks, transitions, decision-making

### Social Domain

Supports children's interactions and relationships with others

- Playtime, group work, sharing





# Ways to help



**Co-regulation** is when an adult provides **calm, supportive guidance** to help a child feel safe and settled. Co-regulation comes first; when children experience a supportive adult calming with them, they gradually learn how to *do it for themselves*.

## The Power of Co-Regulation

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**Children need adults To co-regulate**  
Before they can manage their emotions and behaviour, children need adults to help them feel safe and supported
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**Sit beside them quietly**
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**Offer a hug or gentle reassurance**  
Name their feelings without judgement
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**Give positive feedback**  
Praise your child when they demonstrate self-regulation

## Supporting a Child With Self-Regulation

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**Create predictable routines**  
Routines and schedules help children feel secure.
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**Regulate your own emotions**  
Maintain a calm voice and body posture as you interact.
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**Make adjustments as needed**  
Provide additional support when the child experiences extra stress.
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**Model self-regulation skills**  
Show children healthy ways to cope with strong emotions.

In other words, **self-regulation is the goal, and co-regulation is the pathway that helps children get there.**

