

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Pick and Mix Tool

This pick and mix resource offers short activities to develop core skills at the heart of SEL that could be hooked onto existing routines.

The core skills are detailed in the EEF's [Improving Social and Emotional Learning in Primary Schools](#) guidance report.

SEL CORE COMPETENCY	SELF- AWARENESS			
DISCUSS IT	Describe some of the feelings that you have had today. Our feelings change all the time and sometimes we don't know why. It's perfectly normal.	All feelings are okay. It is good to share how we feel. Sometimes our feelings lead us to behave in ways that are not okay. It is normal to feel frustrated or angry but it's not okay to act in a way that hurts or upsets others.	What are your body cues when you experience strong emotions such as when you are happy, frightened, sad, excited or angry?	What are you like as a person? Do you use positive or negative words to describe yourself?
DO IT (PUPILS)	Think about what factors cause your feelings to change from positive to negative and vice versa. Smile at your partner and tell a joke. Now laugh. How did that make you feel?	When people are in positive, playful moods, what behaviours can they sometimes display that are not okay? When people are in negative, wobbly moods, what behaviours can you sometimes notice that are not okay?	Pick an emotion and point to where you notice that feeling in your body – your body cue. Explain to a partner how it feels. For example: When I'm nervous my face gets hot. When I'm excited it feels like popcorn in my tummy.	Think of some kind words to describe your partner. For example: smart, supportive and funny. Pick one word to tell your partner and remind them of a time when they demonstrated the word.
DO IT (ADULTS MODEL)	Use feeling words when a situation arises in school "I feel *** when *** because..." Share your own feelings with children during the day, using a wide range of emotion words.	Admit publicly when you make a mistake. Talk through how you'll go about making things right and what you'll do to avoid making the same mistake in future.	Use of "I statements" to articulate how you feel and why. 1. I feel ... (name the emotion) 2. When you... (state what they did) 3. Please .. (explain what you'd like them to do)	Look at yourself in a mirror. Model cognitive reframing to turn a negative thought about yourself into a positive e.g. "I'm so daft, I made a stupid mistake." To "It was a FAIL (first attempt in learning), I'll be better at my next attempt."

SEL CORE COMPETENCY	SELF-MANAGEMENT			
DISCUSS IT	How do you feel right now? Which zone are you in? Blue Zone - low state of alertness or energy Green Zone - ideal state of alertness or energy Yellow Zone - heightened state of alertness or energy Red Zone - extremely heightened state of alertness or energy	What happens when you get really angry or frustrated? How do you behave? Does the way you behave help? What could you do instead?	What do you say to yourself when you are finding something tricky? Do you give yourself positive affirmations? Do you get frustrated or disappointed at yourself or other people? What could you do to help yourself in future?	What is your most important goal for today? Why is it your goal? What will you do to achieve it?
DO IT (PUPILS)	Talk to your partner. How do you look or act when you feel like this? What do you need to do? What could you do to help yourself?	Think about the last time you got really angry. What made you so? What did you do to feel better? What will you do the next time the same thing happens?	Think of some positive affirmations to tell yourself when you are struggling. Make a list of your ideas. Put it somewhere you can see it when you are having a tough time.	WOOP Work with a partner to talk through a WOOP. Wish Outcome Obstacle Plan
DO IT (ADULTS)	At different points in the day take time to notice your feelings and associated body cues. Model how to select strategies to self-regulate.	Admit when you're finding something challenging. Talk through how you make a plan to tackle the challenge. Model how to ask for help when needed.	Use positive self-talk. Model how you talk to yourself in tricky situations. Use 2nd person pronouns or your own name to distance yourself from the emotions or stress source. For example: Right Fred, you can do this. You can manage. You just need to...	Model your own WOOP to the children. Talk through each step.

SEL CORE COMPETENCY	SOCIAL AWARENESS			
DISCUSS IT	Have you felt empathy towards somebody or something today? It could be a real-life person, animal, book character or someone from the TV. Why should we consider others' feelings?	How can you show kindness, gratitude and appreciation when it is deserved?	Sometimes people feel left out. If you have felt like this before try to remember how it was for you. How can we do our best to notice when this happens to others? What can you do about it?	Why is it so wonderful that we are all so different? What would life be like if we were all exactly the same?
DO IT (PUPILS)	INSIDE: OUTSIDE ** Think of a time you had a confrontation with someone. What happened? With your partner, delve into what was happening on the INSIDE for that person (thoughts, feelings) and what behaviours were witnessed on the OUTSIDE (actions and interactions).	Make a list of things you can do to be kind at home and at school. Try to action as many as you can.	GET IN ROLE ** Put yourself in the person's shoes. What are they thinking, feeling, doing? What are their motivations, intentions, reasons? Talk from their perspective for example: a stream of consciousness, or what they might write in their diary.	Think about some of your heroes (real life, famous, fictional characters, superheroes). Make a list of what makes them different and special. How are they similar to and different from you?
DO IT (ADULTS)	Recognise others' body cues (OUTSIDE clues). Acknowledge that you have noticed, ask how they feel and offer support.	Make a list of things you can do to be kind at home and at school. Try to action as many as you can.	Notice and acknowledge pupils' and your own feelings. Model how to speak up for ourselves and others.	Model appreciation and acceptance of others' beliefs and cultural differences when an occasion arises.

SEL CORE COMPETENCY	RELATIONSHIP SKILLS			
DISCUSS IT	How do you show people that you appreciate them and what they do for you?	How do you tell people that they have hurt your feelings or upset you? How could you let that person know so that they have the opportunity to repair things?	Demonstrate poor communication techniques e.g. fold your arms, don't look at the person you're interacting with, be distracted while talking, interrupt them, roll your eyes, mumble, shrug your shoulders. How did the other person feel? How did you feel watching?	We all hurt one another's feelings from time to time. What can you do to make things right and better?
DO IT (PUPILS)	What 3 things are you grateful or thankful for today? Think of somebody that you appreciate and love. Tell them. Show them.	Make a list of positive things you could do or say to let someone know they have upset you or hurt your feelings. How could you make things worse?	Make a list of good communication techniques. Create class guidelines for good listening and communicating. Model them whenever you interact with people.	HOT-SEATING Take turns to role play and interview one another. Closely examine the person's thoughts, feelings, motivations and responses. Before the hot-seating, children should discuss what it is they want to know and identify questions they want answering.
DO IT (ADULTS)	Start and end each day by saying aloud to the class or your colleagues 3 things that you are grateful for.	Tell pupils about a conflict you have dealt with in the past. Model how you spoke or might speak to the other person using 'I statements' I felt.. when... I would like... I hope... I wish.. I disagree with you because...	Greet others (adults and pupils) by name daily. Actively build a connection with someone (adult or pupil) in your school with whom you do not normally interact.	Acknowledge the efforts of others (pupils and other adults) with encouragement and affirmation. Model fairness, respect, and appreciation for others. Model respectful disagreements with courteous language and a restorative mindset.

SEL CORE COMPETENCY	RESPONSIBLE DECISION MAKING			
DISCUSS IT	How can you decide or judge if something you want to do is the right thing to do? How can we determine whether it is safe for us and others?	Why is it important to listen to and follow instructions from trusted adults even when we'd rather not? What prompts can you give yourself to listen and to follow instructions?	We face all sorts of problems every day. Talk about some problems you've experienced today and whether they were small, medium or big problems? How did you overcome them?	Think about a choice you need to make, jot down what the positive and negative consequences of that choice could be. Now POOCH
DO IT (PUPILS)	CONSCIENCE ALLEY ** Think about a dilemma or scenario faced by a character in a book or a film. The class forms two lines facing each other. One person takes the role of the protagonist and walks between the lines as each member of the group speaks their advice. When they reach the end of the alley, they make their decision and justify it.	THIS PATH: THAT PATH ** Recall a situation when you made the wrong choice or didn't do as instructed by a trusted adult (went down the wrong path). Tell your partner what happened and what the consequences were. Discuss how the outcomes could have been different if you'd chosen another path.	With your partner, make a list of the sorts of problems that: a. will sort themselves or that don't need an action b. you can solve on your own or with a friend c. an adult should help with	POOCH 1. Identify the PROBLEM 2. Explore different OPTIONS to resolve problem 3. Discuss an OUTCOME for each option 4. Make a CHOICE 5. Reflect on HOW things went
DO IT (ADULTS)	Use a crisis point, scenario or dilemma from either real life or from your class book to explore the consequences of decisions or choices that were made.	When making a decision in class, explain to pupils how your choices could be viewed through the lens of others.	Model problem-solving strategies, like gathering all relevant information before drawing a conclusion.	Create your own POOCH. Share it with adults and/or pupils. Welcome their feedback.

** [SEL reading strategies](#)