What is the Buckinghamshire ELSA project?
Buckinghamshire Educational Psychology Service have been supporting local schools to deliver nurture groups since 2007. The ELSA project will help schools who want to deliver social and emotional interventions in school but who do not have space for a nurture group or who have some children/young people who might benefit from an individual or short-term group programme instead.

Contact details
Nurture Group Programme
C/O Educational Psychology Service
Buckinghamshire County Council
New County Offices
County Hall
Walton Street
Aylesbury
HP20 1UA

01296 383219
nurturegroup@buckscc.gov.uk
www.buckscc.gov.uk/schools/eps

If you require this document in an alternative format please contact Bucks Educational Psychology Service at:
eps@buckscc.gov.uk

For more information about ELSA:
http://www.elsanetwork.org/

Educational Psychology Service
Nurture Team
What is an ELSA?

- Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs) are members of school staff who receive training and support from educational psychologists to enable them to plan and deliver individual and small group support programmes in schools.

- ELSAs help children and young people to recognise, understand and manage emotions to increase their success and participation in schools.

What are the benefits to pupils?

- Pupils feel supported by being listened to and having 'special time'
- They develop greater self-awareness and coping strategies
- They are able to build more positive relationships with peers and others
- They learn to talk about their difficulties
- They feel better about themselves
- Pupils manage better in school

What are the wider benefits?

Having an ELSA means that there is a member of staff who can quickly offer support to pupils with social and emotional needs in school.

Other staff benefit from the new insights and skills the ELSA brings following their training and schools find themselves more confident in being able to manage pupils’ needs.

Providing support to meet an individual’s needs can increase their learning and improve the learning environment for their peers because of the effect of reduced disruption.

ELSAs will need:

Time to undertake initial training and attend group supervision
Scheduled time to plan and work with identified individuals or groups
An appropriate room to work in
Access to resources
Assistance from a nominated member of senior staff to clarify and enable the ELSA role in the school context

What makes a good ELSA?

ELSAs need to be able to build a good rapport with challenging and emotionally vulnerable pupils.

They need to be able to work independently and creatively.

They need to be willing to learn and to plan and evaluate programmes of support.

How can my school get involved?

Schools can apply for a member of staff to become a trained ELSA. The ELSA will receive four days of training delivered by the educational psychology service. They will also be offered group supervision support. The application form will be available on the nurture page and through the schools bulletin.

Origins of ELSA

Sheila Burton, an educational psychologist, developed the ELSA model in Southampton and then Hampshire. The model was adopted by educational psychology services in other areas.