



# Zones of Regulation Policy

## RATIONALE

Self-regulation is something everyone continually works on, whether we are cognizant of it or not. We all encounter trying circumstances that test our limits from time to time. If we are able to recognize when we are becoming less regulated, we are able to do something about it to feel better and get ourselves to a better place. This comes naturally for some, but for others it is a skill that needs to be taught and practiced. This is the goal of The Zones of Regulation (or Zones for short). By addressing underlying deficits in emotional and sensory regulation, executive functions, and social cognition, the curriculum is designed to help move students toward independent regulation. The Zones of Regulation incorporates Social Thinking® concepts and numerous visuals to teach students to identify their feelings/level of alertness, understand how their behaviour impacts those around them, and learn what tools they can use to manage their feelings and states. At Kinross PS, we have implemented the Zones of Regulation across the school as a strategy to assist our students in developing skills to maintain and improve their mental and social well-being.

## WHAT ARE THE ZONES OF REGULATION?

The Zones is a systematic, cognitive behaviour approach used to teach self-regulation by categorizing all the different ways we feel and states of alertness we experience into four concrete zones. The Zones curriculum provides strategies to teach students to become more aware of, and independent in controlling their emotions and impulses, managing their sensory needs, and improving their ability to problem solve conflicts.



### The Four Zones: Our Feelings & States Determine Our Zone

The **Red Zone** is used to describe extremely heightened states of alertness and intense emotions. A person may be elated or experiencing anger, rage, explosive behaviour, devastation, or terror when in the Red Zone.

The **Yellow Zone** is also used to describe a heightened state of alertness and elevated emotions; however, one has some control when they are in the Yellow Zone. A person may be experiencing stress, frustration, anxiety, excitement, silliness, the wiggles, or nervousness when in the Yellow Zone.

The **Green Zone** is used to describe a calm state of alertness. A person may be described as happy, focused, content, or ready to learn when in the Green Zone. This is the zone where optimal learning occurs.

The **Blue Zone** is used to describe low states of alertness and down feelings, such as when one feels sad, tired, sick, or bored.

## VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF THE FOUR ZONES



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The Zones can be compared to traffic signs. When given a green light or in the Green Zone, one is “good to go”. A yellow sign means be aware or take caution, which applies to the Yellow Zone. A red light or stop sign means stop, and when one is the Red Zone, this often is the case. The Blue Zone can be compared to the rest area signs where one goes to rest or re-energize. All of the zones are expected at one time or another, but the curriculum focuses on teaching students how to manage their Zone based on the environment and people around them.

It is ok to have red zone feelings, but the correct ‘expected’ strategies need to be chosen (eg ask for help, take a breath, time out) not the red unexpected behaviours (eg hitting, screaming, swearing)

## SYSTEM FOR IMPLEMENTING THE ZONES OF REGULATION

- Starts with teaching the difference between feelings and behaviours in all zones
- Teaching expected and unexpected behaviours in all zones
- Develop tool box strategies for all zones
- Implement self-monitoring tools, tracking tools for teachers, and a system for monitoring progress towards the development of self-regulation skills

## STRATEGIES

At Kinross PS, teachers are expected to teach a series of lessons to students on the Zones of Regulation.

There are many strategies we can teach our students to help them self-regulate. The following are a few examples from the program. Students should be able to select up from 3-5 strategies from their toolbox they can use to regulate their emotions.

- Size of the problem
- Breathing strategies (lazy 8 & 6 sided breathing )
- Chill out area in the classroom
- Checking In- bookmarks/coloured zones
- Have a break
- Jump, bounce
- Take a walk
- Squeeze object
- Count to 5 or 10

- Social stories
- Listen to music
- Change activity

## RESOURCES

The Zones of Regulation has a resource book and we have 3 copies in the library. All resources have also been placed on the shared drive in the folder 'Zones of Regulation'. Posters are to be displayed within each classroom and teachers must implement a method that students can use to communicate the zone they are in at any given time. Eg bookmark, class poster, chart

## COMMON LANGUAGE

At Kinross PS, we will use common language of the Zones, in identifying our feelings and students will be able to select from learnt strategies to assist them if needing to transition to a different zone. This will be particularly true for students in the red zone.

I am in the \_\_\_\_\_ zone.

I feel \_\_\_\_\_.

The strategy I will use is \_\_\_\_\_.

### Examples:

"This is really frustrating me and making me go into the yellow zone. I need to use a tool to calm down. I will take some deep breaths."

"I am feeling angry/upset. I am in the red zone. I will sit in the chill out area and use a fidget/stress ball."

## INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLANS

The Zones of Regulation can be used to set targets for students with self-regulation issues when writing IEPs.

Sample IEP Goals and Objectives

1. Sam will improve his ability to self-monitor his own behaviour

- **Objective/Target: Sam will identify his current emotional state on a levelled chart indicating differing levels of emotional arousal**
- **Objective: Utilizing a levelled chart system, Sam will identify his current level of behavioural escalation**

2. When experiencing emotional or behavioural arousal, Sam will select a strategy to help himself return to a calm state

- **Objective/Target: When experiencing emotional arousal (e.g. feeling sad, mad, etc.) Sam will utilize a tool-box chart to identify a strategy to respond without behavioural escalation**
- **Objective: When experiencing behavioural escalation, Sam will utilize a tool-box chart to identify a strategy to de-escalate his behaviour, with adult facilitation**

