

East Renfrewshire Educational Psychology Service

Sensory Processing Needs

Audit for Educational Establishments

This audit is designed to help staff in assessing and creating an environment that encourages the engagement of pupils with sensory processing needs. It is not exhaustive, but identifies areas of good practice in reducing the distress experienced by many pupils from sensory overload.

Visual		
Good practice	What are we doing well?	What else could we do?
<p>Fluorescent lights are regularly checked and changed. (Flickering lights can be very disturbing.)</p> <p>The effects of light coming into the room through blinds and creating distracting patterns are minimised.</p> <p>Light reflecting on objects such as metal or shiny surfaces in the classroom is minimised.</p> <p>The classroom is orderly and not cluttered so that pupils can make sense of the environment.</p> <p>Visuals are used regularly to enhance communication and identify different areas in the room.</p>		

<p>The impact of wall displays is considered. (Busy and cluttered wall displays can be distracting).</p> <p>Designated areas for specific activities to give clarity to the classroom organisation.</p> <p>Pupils have the opportunity to work at a quiet, separate workstation to focus their attention, if necessary.</p>		
Auditory		
Good practice	What are we doing well?	What else could we do?
<p>Sounds from classroom equipment are kept to a minimum. (Televisions, lights, audio systems and computers are switched off when not in use to avoid a hum)</p> <p>Classrooms are carpeted to lessen noise created by the movement of people, chairs and desks.</p> <p>The acoustics of the gym, dining hall and hall are checked and modified to lessen echo.</p> <p>There are agreed strategies in place when noise becomes too much for individual pupils.</p> <p>There is a quiet room or area in the classroom available which provides a calm place for pupils to regulate and relax.</p>		

<p>Pupils are prepared for planned loud noises such as school bells or fire drills and strategies agreed where these cause distress.</p> <p>Supports such as ear defenders or personal music players are allowed while also planning to gradually increase tolerance to the noise.</p>		
Smells		
Good practice	What are we doing well?	What else could we do?
<p>Smells within the classroom are kept to a minimum e.g. the smell of paints, glue, clay and cleaning fluids is minimal.</p> <p>Staff are aware that the smell of perfumes and deodorants may be distressing.</p> <p>Staff are aware that pupils may react to the smell of others.</p> <p>Smells from outside the classroom are monitored and reduced, where possible (e.g. cafeteria, F&TT, science)</p> <p>Alternative toileting arrangements are allowed (e.g. possible use of staff or disabled toilets).</p>		
Touch		
Good practice	What are we doing well?	What else could we do?

<p>The impact of uncomfortable clothing (seams, inflexible or itchy fabrics) is understood and avoided, where possible.</p> <p>Variations of the school uniform offer enough flexibility to enable pupils to be able to wear clothing they find comfortable.</p> <p>Alternative arrangements are made for pupils who find writing to be physically painful – use of laptop, speech-text software, scribing.</p> <p>Flexible seating arrangements – use of standard seats, standing, wobble cushions, gym balls, non-standard seating, carpet spots etc..</p> <p>Seating arrangements are considered (e.g. provide space for a pupil who is sensitive to touch, use carpet spot for pupil who struggles with personal space).</p> <p>Variety of tactile and fidget resources are available for pupil use.</p>		
General Sensory Needs		
Good practice	What are we doing well?	What else could we do?
<p>Pupils are encouraged to let an adult know if they are finding a sensory aspect of the environment distressing.</p>		

<p>Pupils are allowed to leave the classroom slightly earlier or later than peers to avoid noisy corridors/crowds.</p> <p>Classroom organisation and individual seating plan takes into consideration individual sensory concerns (e.g. A pupil with sensitivity to noise does not sit near the door).</p> <p>Regular movement breaks are scheduled in for pupils where beneficial.</p> <p>There is a designated sensory room or quiet place for pupils who need a break and its use is discussed and agreed with the pupil (i.e. the room is used not as a punishment but proactively to reduce sensory overload).</p>		
Staff Knowledge and Understanding		
Good practice	What are we doing well?	What else could we do?
<p>All staff have a comprehensive understanding of how sensory processing needs can impact on learning and engagement.</p> <p>All staff regularly audit their environment to ensure sensory triggers are identified and reduced.</p> <p>All staff are confident in identifying sensory likes and dislikes of pupils.</p>		

<p>All staff consider the sensory processing needs of pupils as part of their assessment of strengths and needs.</p> <p>The sensory processing needs of pupils and successful strategies are documented and reviewed in Child Wellbeing Plans</p>		
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