

Childwall Abbey School Sensory Policy



A calm, safe and welcoming place in which to work and learn.

A place where everyone supports each other to achieve.

A place we enjoy coming to each day.

INTRODUCTION

We learn about our environment and ourselves through our senses of vision, hearing, smell, taste, touch and movement.

Without any one of these we are limited in our capacity for learning.

"To function and participate in the world that surrounds us, we need to use our senses. Senses provide individuals with unique experiences and allow us to interact and be involved with the rest of society. They help us to understand the environment around us and respond within it... Imagine what happens when just one or all of your senses are intensified or are not present at all... this is the case for many individuals on the autistic spectrum".

(The Sensory World of the Autistic Spectrum - A greater understanding, The National Autistic Society (NAS) 2003).

At Childwall Abbey School we believe that each child is a unique individual whose work and experiences in school has to be suitably tailored to meet his/her sensory requirements in order to ensure that effective learning takes place.

Staff members are trained to recognise and acknowledge the impact of sensory issues on the lives of many pupils, particularly those on the Autistic Spectrum.

All pupils entering CAS will be screened for sensory processing difficulties using the NAS, Sensory Processing Profile.

Aims:

- CAS aims to use the expertise and advice of the Occupational Therapy service to assess pupils on the Autistic Spectrum and other pupils displaying sensory processing needs (as required).
- CAS aims to provide appropriate sensory accommodations for each child in the classroom who has been identified by the school staff, parents/carers and Occupational Therapist as having a sensory processing need.
- CAS aims to the most effective sensory support as early as possible for all identified pupils.
- CAS aims to support and empower pupils, including those on the Autistic spectrum, to access the curriculum so that they can reach their full potential and enhance their self-esteem.

- CAS seeks to stimulate and maintain pupil curiosity, interest and enjoyment in their own education.
- CAS aims to deliver teaching and learning using a multi-sensory approach and to encourage pupils to celebrate their success.
- CAS aims to involve parents/carers and pupils in the assessment and delivery of an individual sensory programme.

Implementation:

CAS staff recognise that each pupil has a unique learning style.

Pupils, especially those on the Autistic Spectrum, are provided with highly structured teaching and learning settings e.g. access to a quiet workstation in classrooms to minimise sensory overload.

Our sensory room is available to be used to provide therapeutic sessions or quiet time for pupils with or without sensory processing difficulties.

CAS staff will use a sensory assessment document (NAS) to identify pupils with environmental and sensory processing needs.

CAS will then make adaptations to provision for individuals seeking advice from the NAS where needed on:

- ❖ individual pupil sensory environment
- ❖ sensory focused activities
- ❖ individual sensory diet (if needed)
- ❖ provide individual sensory profiles (if needed)

Individual sensory profiles will be assessed and reviewed by the SENCo, class teacher and parents/carers, on a termly basis and at the annual review meeting.

Pupils identified as experiencing sensory processing difficulties will be assessed using the following seven categories:

1. Auditory Processing

The hearing system is situated in the inner ear. This informs us about the sounds in the environment.

2. Touch Processing

The touch system is situated on the skin. This tells us about touch, pressure, pain and temperature.

3. Oral Sensory Processing

This refers to the taste and smell systems. These tell us about different tastes on our tongue and smells in our immediate environment.

4. Visual Processing

The sight system is activated by light and is situated in the retina of the eye. Our sight helps us to define people, objects and colours.

5. Vestibular Processing

This refers to the balance system, which is in the inner ear. It provides information on where our body is in space and its speed, direction and movement.

6. Multisensory Processing

_This is the body awareness system situated in the muscles and joints. It tells us where our bodies and body parts are and how they are moving.

7. Behaviour and Emotional Responses

Pupil behaviours and emotional responses are observed by pupil, school staff and parents/carers.

- Teachers adapt both the environment and teaching approaches to meet the needs of pupils with sensory processing difficulties. A multi-sensory approach is used as a teaching and learning strategy in the classroom.
- The use of sensory boxes enhances the learning process by providing therapeutic resources to calm heightened emotions.

"Trying to understand autism from within is the first axis of our approach to understanding autism. In the first instance you need to try to share the mind of someone who is different" (Theo Peters, Foreword, *Sensory Perceptual Issues in Autism and Asperger Syndrome*).