



SENSORY POLICY

Guidance for Staff

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In consultation with: The School Leadership Team

Completed: January 2025

Review Date: January 2026

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Sensory Equipment

The young people at Knowsley Central School may have access to sensory equipment to meet their sensory needs within the school setting. School staff will be informed of its correct use.

Some students will have specific activities to follow using equipment, such as within a sensory diet, which meet their specific needs. If an individual program is produced it will be discussed with relevant staff.

All staff should check equipment for wear and tear and for cleanliness prior to using it. Any concerns should be raised with the Occupational Therapist.

Each class is provided with a specific sensory equipment to facilitate the universal sensory lifestyles in class. The class kit consists of weighted lap pad, weighted snake, vibration, body sock

1: Aims:

At Knowsley Central School, we understand that our young people have a range of difficulties associated with sensory processing, which may impact on them accessing their learning and participating in learning activities. Our aim is to support the young people in school to ensure that they are regulated and are able to achieve and maintain a calm-alert state, enabling them to engage with and achieve their potential in a range of school activities.

2. Curriculum aims

- The sensory input experienced within the sensory room and classroom will seek to support the class practices and individual programmes prepared by the Occupational Therapist.
- The main aim of the staff working in the sensory room will be to promote progress. All access will reflect a genuine commitment to valuing the individual for themselves, respecting their age and special needs, and offering the entitlement to make educational progress along a forward and creative continuum.
- The use of the sensory environment will seek to promote the young person and young person's progress by concentrating on different routes and methods than those traditionally used in the classroom.
- The sensory environment will seek to encourage the young person and young person to become self-motivated and self-directed overcoming any obstacle that an individual or hidden disability may present to the young person and young person.
- The sensory environment will exploit the unique attributes of each stimulator (object or person) seeking to provide the young person with opportunities that may be difficult to copy in the busy classroom.
- The sensory environment will seek to develop the young person and young person's speech and language skills thus seeking to enable, responses to stimuli according to individual need and prompt actions and reactions from their staff.

- Staff working in the sensory environment will have access and support from other professionals, for example, Occupational Therapist (OT) Speech and Language Therapist (SALT).

3. Occupational Therapy/Sensory Diets

Knowsley Central School employs a part-time Occupational Therapist with specialist training in Sensory Integration theory and intervention. The Occupational Therapist works closely with teaching staff, parents and other professionals to assess each individual young person's sensory needs and implement a sensory diet.

A sensory diet is a planned programme of activities designed to meet a young person's specific sensory needs. This can include access to specific activities, adapted equipment and environments. Sensory approaches at Knowsley Central School are embedded within daily classroom practice.

The following procedures are in place to ensure that the individual sensory needs of our young people at Knowsley School are met in an appropriate and safe way:

- Occupational Therapists participate in a range of Continuing Professional Development activities to remain up to date with current Sensory Integration research and practice;
- Ongoing training in sensory issues and approaches is provided to Knowsley Central staff by the Occupational therapist through team training sessions and refresher training.
- Occupational Therapist works class-based in order to observe, trial and monitor the young peoples' sensory needs and sensory diets.
- Occupational Therapist meets and liaises regularly with all staff;
- Risk assessments and guidelines are in place regarding the use of sensory approaches, equipment (including weighted equipment) and Therapy rooms.

Sensory diets

The OT provides all classes with a whole class sensory diet / lifestyle document with general recommendations for all pupils within the class based on whole class observations.

To promote a sensory-friendly setting, the school environment is regularly evaluated, and each class has been provided with a toolkit of specialist sensory resources and equipment.

5 sensory circuit rooms are set up around school and are available throughout the day for pupils to access under the supervision of trained staff.

The concept of a sensory diet is based on the idea that each individual requires a certain amount of activity and sensation to provide them with the 'just right' level of arousal and alertness. A

sensory diet can include access to specific activities, adapted equipment and environments. Sensory approaches are designed to work within the daily classroom.

- The Occupational Therapist participates in a range of Continuing Professional Development to remain up to date with current Sensory Integration research and practice.
- All staff have received training or coaching delivered by the OT on the key features of sensory processing difficulties and on best-practice guidance to support these in the classroom.
- Knowsley School staff receive ongoing support and training in sensory issues through staff training sessions, demonstration and modelling of techniques, and discussion with OT.
- The Occupational Therapist liaises with staff regularly. Staff are aware of the days that the OT works.
- Individual sensory diets with more specific activities will be provided for some children who require targeted/specialist support within in school.

4. Use of Sensory Equipment

Each Young person at Knowsley Central School has access to a range of equipment to meet their sensory needs within the classrooms, around the school and care setting. In order to ensure that the equipment is used appropriately all staff are advised to:

- Read relevant risk assessments and guidelines before using equipment;
- Refer to Occupational Therapist for advice and/or demonstration of equipment as needed;
- Check equipment for wear/tear and cleanliness prior to use;
- Report any concerns regarding equipment to the Senior Leadership Team and the Occupational Therapist.

5. Physical Touch

Many of our young people seek out positive touch. This can be in the form of handholding, a reassuring hug, deep pressure squeezes on hand, head, shoulder, arms, legs, back and hand and foot massage. This is written into the young person's sensory report and diets. We do not complete full body massage on bare skin. All positive touch should be young person led and meet the needs of the young person at that time (i.e. to calm them, meet their sensory needs or help them to feel secure). All pressure applied to the young person is only applied, following instruction from the Occupational Therapist, following a sensory assessment.

Staff should use their professional judgement as to the needs of the young person and what touch is appropriate. Deep pressure techniques, with no direct pressure on the body, but provided through the use of sensory equipment and positive movement can prove highly effective in calming our young persons. We need to be aware of the appropriateness of this on a number of levels.

- Only adults who know the young person well and have completed the appropriate competencies should engage in physical touch techniques previously mentioned:
- When using deep pressure, the young person's torso, neck or head should NOT be directly touched, Limbs should only be touched to facilitate comfort and or correct positioning for the young person or young person.
- Staff at Knowsley Central should use their knowledge of the young person to assess whether deep pressure is appropriate or an alternative proprioceptive or tactile input could alternatively be used.
- Staff members can refer to the Occupational Therapist for advice on deep pressure.

Deep Pressure Touch

Deep pressure touch is a positive form of touch. It provides the central nervous system with input to help calm, plan and organise thought processes and bodies better.

- Deep pressure given through shoulders, arms, legs, feet, hands, back and head by a member of staff who has received advice, demonstrated their appropriate technique and have been deemed competent from Occupational Therapist.
- Deep pressure given through body using a therapy ball or cushion by a member of staff who has received advice and demonstration from Occupational Therapist.
- Staff should use their knowledge of the young person to assess whether the deep pressure input is appropriate.
- Staff members can discuss with the Occupational Therapist for further advice if required.
- Each young person will require permission from parents/guardians for staff to use deep pressure input as part of their therapeutic intervention.

Touch is an important part of implementing sensory processing strategies. Touch is essential in order to provide sensitive and good quality care for the young people that we support. Used in context, and with empathy, touch supports the development of natural interactions with the young people we care for.

If you have any questions the please ask

Kind regards

Occupational Therapist

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I Do / Do not give permission for my young person to receive deep pressure touch as part of a sensory diet.

Signed: (Parent/Guardian)

Date: