



## **ETHOS AND VALUES**

Many students at Tweendykes have sensory processing difficulties. Students with autism are likely to show signs of sensory processing difficulties but other students may also show signs.

Staff are trained in supporting sensory processing difficulties and all the support is overseen and audited by a Specialist Sensory Occupational Therapist.

## **WHAT IS SENSORY PROCESSING?**

Sensory processing is the ability to process, interpret and use appropriately, information received through the senses – tactile, auditory, visual, olfactory, gustatory, vestibular and proprioception.

Sensory processing allows young people:

- To regulate your arousal levels e.g. calm, alert...
- To plan and execute fine and gross motor movements
- To process, filter and react to the relevant sensory information

For students that struggle to regulate their sensory processing they may show signs through behaviour, refusal to work, becoming upset, being under responsive or many other ways. It can become a significant barrier to learning.

They may also develop their own strategies for self-regulating. If they are deemed dangerous or ineffective by class teams then it is important to look for a suitable replacement. It is more effective to replace these behaviours than to stop them completely.

Staff can use the Sensory Profiling Questionnaire to aid them to identify behaviours that may indicate a sensory processing difficulty. This information can then be put onto a sensory 'flower' to be displayed in the classroom to allow all staff to have an up to date knowledge of pupil needs.

The aim is for students to eventually recognise when and how they need to regulate and are able to do this independently. This may need to be scaffolded and supported by staff, using visual support, until the student is able to do this for themselves.

## **THE SUPPORT WE PROVIDE**

We do not deliver Sensory Integration Therapy but instead offer sensory regulation support through the following:

- Opportunities throughout the day for a 'sensory diet'
- Sensory equipment in classrooms
- Opportunities to regulate through regular outdoor activity at playtimes
- PE sessions to encourage physical activity
- Daily Sensory Circuits opportunities
- Trained 'Sensory Champions' in every class
- Sensory 'flowers' in classrooms to inform all staff of any sensory needs

## **Sensory Equipment**

There are 3 models of sensory equipment that are consistent across the school and will depend on the age and size of the students. Each class has their own equipment based on one of these models as well as any additional individualised equipment for particular pupils.

This equipment will be used for a morning sensory circuit as well as regularly throughout the day for sensory breaks. Sensory Champions and teachers will use their knowledge of the children, the sensory profiling questionnaire and the related guidance to adapt the activities and timing of each piece of equipment to meet their sensory needs.

This equipment and the individualised activities will then be used when needed throughout the day to ensure students are regulated.

### Staff training

- All staff have broad awareness of the sensory integration needs of children with autism
- Key staff trained in sensory integration therapy approaches (sensory champions)
- Teachers given regular training and updates through teachers' meetings
- Lead teacher trained by attending Julia Dyer courses.

### WHERE TO GO FOR HELP?

Sensory issues may present as behavioural aggression, refusal to work, becoming upset, self-regulating in a harmful way, being under responsive or many other ways

#### Sensory Champions

One member of each class team is trained by the sensory lead and specialist OT throughout the year. They have some knowledge of strategies to try to reduce minor sensory processing issues. They will use the Sensory Profiling Questionnaire to assess difficulties and complete a sensory flower to be displayed in the classroom.



#### Sensory Lead

If sensory processing issues continue you can speak to the Sensory Lead (Rachel Stott). There may be further advice given at this point regarding activities/equipment for the classroom. There may also be a recommendation to begin daily Sensory Circuits.



#### Specialist Sensory Integration Occupational Therapist

If sensory processing issues persist, there is the opportunity to consult an OT that regularly visits the school. She is able to do brief and full assessments based on level of need. From this, a plan will be put in place and staff will be given strategies to encourage self-regulation. For some pupils there may be a referral to the Sensory Processing Service depending on individual needs.

