



Sensory Policy and Guidance

(for Four Seasons ARP and Zen Den Provision).

Our Shared Vision

Striving for excellence in everything we do

High Quality
Education for
ALL

Effective
home/school
and community
partnerships

Equality Mission Statement

We are committed to ensuring equality of educational opportunity and support for all pupils, parents, carers, staff and visitors irrespective of age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy, gender reassignment, and socio-economic background. We aim to provide a fully inclusive school in which every person feels proud of their identity and is able to participate fully within the school community. We believe that a diverse school community is a strength which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

Approved by: SFM Committee	Date:
Signature (Chair of Committee):	Signature (Headteacher):

Last reviewed on: 5.3.2026	Next review date: 5.3.2027
----------------------------	----------------------------

Article 3 (Best Interests of the Child)

The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.

Article 23 (Children with a Disability)

A child with a disability has the right to live a full and decent life with dignity and, as far as possible, independence and play an active part in the community.

Article 31 (Leisure, Play and Culture)

Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of activities.

Rationale

At Becontree Primary School, we understand that some of our children who attend our Additional Resource Provision (Four Seasons ARP) or our Intervention Space (The Zen Den) have a range of sensory processing issues, which may impact on their learning and participation.

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 children:

- to regulate their 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 children 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 staff then it is important to look for a suitable replacement. It is more effective to replace these behaviours than to stop them completely.

The aim is for children 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 child is able to do this for themselves.

The Sensory Curriculum

In order to support the child to achieve and maintain a calm-alert state, enabling them to engage in their learning we ensure that they receive a sensory diet through delivery of our curriculum. We provide a stimulating multi-sensory curriculum for all our children who attend our ARP/Intervention Space to encourage more awareness of visual, auditory, vestibular and tactile experiences. This allows them to engage in new learning by using a range of senses to access the curriculum and make learning fun.

Our sensory support is woven into our curriculum. The curriculum is based on a predetermined topic which ensures the children have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. Further evidence of the range of curriculum areas can be found on both the long and medium term planning.

Curriculum Aims

The aims of our sensory curriculum are:

- Every child attending our ARP/Intervention Space has the right to expect that they will be given every opportunity to develop new skills across a range of broad curriculum areas.
- Each child will be given a broad and balanced range of experiences that will seek to encourage progress and their development.
- The sensory room and classroom experience will seek to support the class practices and individual programmes prepared by outside agency support e.g. Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapists, Educational Psychologist.
- The use of the sensory environment will:
 - seek to promote the child's progress by concentrating on different routes and methods than those traditionally used in the classroom.
 - seek to encourage the child to become self-motivated and self-directed overcoming any obstacle that an individual or hidden disability may present to the child.
 - exploit the unique attributes of each stimulator (object or person) seeking to provide the child and young person with opportunities that may be difficult to copy in the busy classroom.
 - enable the child to have focused provision in an environment that provides little or no distraction, giving the child the opportunity to work in a relaxed, conducive and appropriate atmosphere.
 - enable staff to use a personal programme, which respects and notes the choices made by the individual. Small groups work together in a different environment than that of the classroom that provides for cooperative activity, which encourages a feeling of self-worth and achievement.
 - seek to develop the child's speech and language skills thus seeking to enable, responses to stimuli according to individual needs and prompt actions and reactions from their staff
- Professionals are able to give specialist advice and support around the best and most effective ways to work with individual children. For example, where to position activities, types of activities which sounds and tastes to work with and from which side to work with a child.

The sensory curriculum may be detailed through access to:

- Sensory room
- Tacpac (Touch and Communication Pac)
- Arts and crafts
- Music
- Cooking
- Sensory circuits
- Physical touch
- Use of specialist equipment for individuals, e.g. weighted blankets, wobble cushion, peanut ball, ear defenders, chew toys etc.

This curriculum is delivered with individuals and in small groups where appropriate.

Sensory Rooms

Sensory rooms are essential to provide and ensure a safe, non-threatening environment in order to calm or stimulate children through each of the senses. Many children need the controlled environmental stimulation to engage in appropriate sensory activities. It can also be used as a space where children can experience and learn the pre-requisite skills to some curriculum activities.

Sensory rooms provide:

- a controlled environment where we can select and control sensory experiences. They provide an ambience that allows us to develop other work with children who may find classrooms distracting or challenging.
- sensory stimuli to develop, sight, sound, touch and hearing as well as encouraging independence. They are places where children often feel safe enough to communicate their feelings and thoughts that may not surface in classroom-based discussions.
- an environment to meet the needs of the varied learning styles of individual pupils. Sensory rooms are about focused stimulation and providing educational experiences in a manner and style that children can relate to and access, to enable all pupils to achieve their full potential in all areas of the curriculum.

Good Practice

The use of the sensory room should

- never be used as a time out room for the purpose of behavioural management.
- be restricted to individuals or small groups of children supervised by an adult.
- not have the window in the door covered up and staff should be able to see in at all times.
- not have any intervention lasting longer than a single lesson period. For example, up to 30 minutes.
- not be lockable during periods of use by children/staff.

Tacpac

Tacpac is an activity resource designed to aid communication and sensory awareness in people with:

- Sensory impairment
- Developmental delay
- Profound and multiple learning difficulties
- Tactile defensiveness
- Limited or pre-verbal communication

Tacpac provides a structured and emotionally safe framework for pupils to make contact with their own bodies, their environment and other people, and develop a relationship. The 'adult' ensures that each tactile experience is well organised and sensitively offered, and adjusted to suit the pupils' responses.

Sensory Circuits

Sensory circuits are physical activities that help to alert, organise and then relax the senses of children so that they are ready to engage in learning.

The circuit needs to incorporate three stages:

Alerting

These activities provide vestibular (sense of movement, centered in the inner ear) and proprioceptive (sensations from joints, muscles and connective tissues that underlie body awareness.) input to make children more aroused and ready for learning.

Vestibular input activities should include: spinning, swinging and hanging upside down. Proprioceptive input activities should include: lifting, pushing and pulling heavy objects.

Organising

These activities provide challenges involving multi-sensory processing, for example balancing and moving, throwing and balancing.

Calming

It is important that the calming activities are completed as part of the circuit. They provide input to ensure that the child finishes the circuit in a calm, centred and ready for the day.

Physical Touch

Many of the children seek out physical touch. This can be in many forms, e.g., handholding, a reassuring hug or a deep pressure squeeze. All positive touch should be child led and meet the need of the child at that time i.e., to calm them, meet their sensory needs or help them to feel secure.

Staff should use their professional judgement as to the needs of the child and what touch is appropriate or what has been highlighted in their Individual Management Plan.

Only adults who know the child well should engage in physical touch.

Fundamental Skills

These will be encouraged at all times to extend the child's sensory dictionary; these will concentrate on expanding the child's ability to choose to:

- Look, listen, and attend.
- Communicate preference (enabling child control over their environment to influence choice).
- Signal feelings (let others know how to alter their behaviour to take account of the child).
- Communicate (relate looking, listening and attending to preference and signalling feelings).
- Play and have fun (enabling the child to interact with others and demonstrate control)
- Link movement to activity/choice/experience.
- Explore the environment around them

And to move on to the development of:

- Choice and determination (effect changes)
- Spatial awareness (exploring & expanding personal boundaries).
- Language (in a form which can be interpreted and acted upon)
- Logic and likelihood (make, predict and construct changes).

Sensory Communication

The child is assessed by their response when stimulated by various materials. A full range of materials is used to encourage a response from each child. Each child's

responses will be different, and can be seen to motivate both staff or the child to continue, (with or without support) repeat or communicate, they may include:

Vocal Responses

Vocal responses which indicate pleasure or displeasure; a child's response may be verbally telling staff using words to indicate what they like and do not like.

Facial Expressions

A child will indicate their feelings towards a different stimulus for example by smiling, grimacing, semi closure of eyes, frowning, laughing, etc.

Physical Expressions

A child will indicate their feelings towards differing stimulus by, for example, the arching of their back, pushing away, lifting of arms and waving, pulling away individual body parts.

Degree of Responsibility

A child will take more and more control over their actions as they become familiar with the activity and have the opportunity to be supported through new and sometimes familiar activities.

Enjoyment or Engagement with the task

A child's level of emotional enjoyment will be noted to help set up an interest base and preferences to be indicated.

Performance

A child's individual progress regarding skill and task acquisition will be encouraged and recorded.

Making choices about what is liked and not liked provides the child with the opportunity to be respected and have a sense of self-worth.

Links with other policies and guidance

- Physical Restraint Policy

- SEND Code of Practice

[SEND Code of Practice January 2015.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/262222/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf)