



Sensory Processing Parent Guide

Swarden Primary School

This booklet will explain:

- What is sensory processing?
- What do sensory processing difficulties look like?
- What can we do in school to support?
- What can be done at home to help?



What can you do at home?

If you feel your child is experiencing some sensory difficulties then please do talk to us. Make a note of things that seem to cause difficulty and together we can select the appropriate strategies.

Some general tips might include using chew toys, cutting out labels, buying sensory friendly uniform (M and S), using ear defenders and fidget toys at home, reducing screen time and lighting before bed.

All of these strategies will depend on the specific sensory need. Please contact me for more information and support.
Claudia Miller
senco@swarden-tkat.org



What are we doing in school

We are working hard in both schools to minimise the visual stimulus in the classrooms; especially reducing the information at the front of the classrooms.

The teachers are working with individuals to ensure that their sensory needs are met.

Some children need to fidget and we have specific tools to help them, we also ignore a certain amount of movement as long as it is not disruptive.

We have pop up bays to enable the stimulation to be minimised, ear defenders to minimise noise and play tents with sensory boxes if children need them.

Physical breaks from work and shake up activities to raise alertness levels. We have trialled a number of products, weighted blankets, wobble cushions, and fidget toys and will continue to source items for pupils that need them.



What is sensory processing?

We make sense of ourselves and of the world around us from the way we interpret sensory information from our 7 senses. The 5 external senses; touch, taste, sound, sight smell and the 2 body senses, body awareness (feedback from our muscles and joints) and movement/balance (which is feedback from our inner ear). Our brains interpret the information but can only interpret a certain amount and will automatically filter out certain information. This process occurs constantly and is automatic for most. This enables us to remain alert and take part in everyday activities like play, learning, interacting with friends.



What happens when processing doesn't work efficiently?

Some people will receive too much information (over sensitive) and others too little (under sensitive). This can be in any of the 7 senses and can be a combination. For example you can be over sensitive to sound and under sensitive to taste.

Looking at each of the 7 senses here are some examples:

Taste– oversensitivity may result in a very limited diet and gagging with certain tastes whilst under sensitivity may see children seeking heavily flavoured food, cramming food into their mouths, licking non edible items, dribbling and biting.

Smell– oversensitivity may see children disliking perfume, food smells, toilet smells; they struggle to concentrate. Under sensitivity sees children smelling everything, but not always recognising foul smells.

Body awareness– Many children will fidget, rock, play rough, crave certain physical outputs, chew and be more accident prone. Often they seek deep physical sensation to calm oversensitivity.



Tactile– oversensitivity may result in clothes being an issue, others touching, the feel of certain foods. Under sensitivity could mean they don't feel pain, heat etc and seek tactile contact to gain feedback.



Movement and Balance– oversensitivity could mean poor balance and will avoid equipment, dislike of escalators, lifts etc, whilst under sensitivity may see people seeking fast movement, rides, constant movement, risk taking behaviour.



Auditory– oversensitivity will see covering the ears, dramatic reaction to certain noises, distraction if noises in their area or outside when trying to concentrate. Under sensitivity may see children not responding to their name, not 'hearing' the bell or whistle, speak in a loud voice.



Visual– oversensitive children may cover their eyes, wear sunglasses, stare at one spot whilst under sensitive children may also need to touch everything, will struggle to see something on a shelf, struggle to cross the road.