

# Adaptive Teaching Strategies

**An overview of whole school and classroom approaches to support SEND**



## **Speech, Language and Communication**

Speech, Language and Communication (SLCN)  
Autism Spectrum Disorder

## **Cognition and Learning**

Cognition and Learning  
Specific Literacy Difficulty (SpLD)  
Moderate Learning Difficulty

## **Sensory and Physical**

Dyspraxia  
Hearing Impairment  
Vision Impairment  
Sensory Processing Differences

## **Social, Emotional and Mental Health**

Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)  
Anxiety  
Attachment Difficulties  
ADHD (Inattentive and Hyperactive)



# Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)

A speech, language and communication need is the term used to describe difficulties with listening, understanding and communicating with others.

Difficulties within this area of need may include:

- Difficulties with speech sounds
- Difficulties with understanding language (also known as receptive language skills)
- Difficulties with producing language (also known as expressive language skills)
- Difficulties with using language appropriately in context (also known as social skills or pragmatic language skills)
- Stammering/dysfluency
- Developmental Verbal Dyspraxia;
- Selective Mutism
- Auditory Processing Disorder

## Classroom Strategies

- Consider creating an environment that prevents sensory overload
- Pre-teach and then reinforce new vocabulary
- Have an awareness of how the pupil feels about speaking aloud in class
- Consider seating arrangements e.g. close to the front of the room
- Use the pupil's name to gain their attention before giving instructions
- Consider the pace when speaking
- Use clear and simple language
- Facilitate opportunities for overlearning
- Carefully choose talk partners
- Repeat key information
- Use visuals alongside spoken information
- Break down information into smaller parts
- Allow the pupil time to formulate responses
- Allow processing time
- Send home key topic vocabulary at the start of a new unit
- Consider creating a distraction free space with reduced background noise
- Allow opportunities for learning breaks
- Display key vocabulary in the classroom
- Create an environment that is visually supportive e.g., consistent use of colour coded visual information, photos of staff, rules, etc
- Create a supportive social environment e.g. groupings, playtimes, social skills
- Use visuals to support communication e.g. coloured cards to indicate when a pupil needs support, PECS, communication boards, Makaton
- Provide positive modelling of language by adults
- Provide alternative methods for communication of ideas – visual aids, whiteboards, signals or symbols
- Have regular 'check ins' to ensure the pupil understands
- Pause when giving instructions to the class
- Create opportunities for learning new vocabulary

# Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)

## Whole School Approaches

- Provide regular staff training on speech, language and communication needs
- Acknowledge celebration and awareness weeks/days associated with SLCN
- Consider the use of a whole school language programme e.g. Language for Learning, Speech Link, Language Link, Word Aware
- Create a whole school approach on involving parents/carers on vocabulary and topic words
- Consider ways to create a vocabulary rich environment with accompanying visuals
- Create a consistent approach to the use of visuals e.g. class visual timetables, staff lanyard visuals

## Resources

- Clicker software
- Communicate in Print
- Discreet desktop communicator
- Easi-Speak Pro microphone
- Fans (e.g. place value, letters)
- Laptop
- Magnetic whiteboards
- Mind map whiteboard
- Mind mapping software (e.g. Inspiration)
- Recordable buttons
- Recordable talking pegs
- Reference flip stands
- Speech recognition software (e.g. Dragon Speaking Naturally, AcceleRead - AcceleWrite)
- Talking tin lids
- Talk-Time recordable postcards
- Think pads
- Visual timetables
- Visuals on lanyards
- Communication boards
- Communication card

## Interventions

- Active Listening for Active Learning
- Colourful Semantics
- Communication Fix
- Derbyshire Language Scheme
- Language Steps
- Lego Therapy/Build to Express
- Listening Ear
- Nuffield Early Language Intervention
- Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)
- Playground Pals (provision targeted at pupils who require support with developing social skills)
- Reading Between the Lines
- Social skills
- Socially Speaking (pragmatic social skills)
- Speech Link
- Language Link
- Word Aware
- Talk Boost



# Autism Spectrum Disorder/Condition (ASD/ASC)

Difficulties and differences within this area of need may include:

- More restricted use of spoken language
- A literal understanding of others' speech (being unable to understand sarcasm, metaphors or figures of speech)
- More limited social understanding
- More restricted social interaction skills
- Narrow/highly specific interests
- Restricted and repetitive patterns of behaviour
- Repetitive and obsessive behaviours
- Poor social imagination and inflexible thinking (not coping with changes)
- Sensory processing difficulties and unusual sensory sensitivities and/or interests
- Elevated stress and anxiety

## Classroom Strategies

- Consider ways to support organisation e.g. keep belongings and areas separate and labelled
- Create an environment that is organised and less cluttered (including displays)
- Give additional prompts and reminders about home learning
- Consider seating arrangements to support sensory overload e.g. away from windows, heaters and busy displays
- Create an individual workstation/quiet working area in the classroom
- Implement the TEACHH approach
- Provide a traffic light card or other card/visual the pupil can use to communicate that they need support
- Give the pupil responsibilities
- Ensure consistency and predictable routines where possible
- Pre-warn the pupil of change
- Be explicit and literal when giving instructions
- Break down tasks into manageable chunks
- Arrange for carefully chosen talking partners and peers for group work
- Implement strategies to support emotional regulation
- Model appropriate social behaviour
- Avoid large amounts of verbal information
- Use simple and concise language
- Pair verbal information with visuals
- Avoid metaphors and idioms
- Utilise visual support for routines e.g. visual timetable, now and next board
- Be aware that facial expressions and gestures may be misinterpreted
- Use the pupil's name before giving instructions
- Recognise small achievements
- Allow opportunities for learning breaks
- Utilise specific interests to support engagement in learning tasks
- Implement support during unstructured times e.g. clubs, calm spaces
- Scaffold social interactions
- Utilise social stories for key events or areas of need
- Ensure staff working with the pupil are aware of any sensory difficulties
- Nurture the development of trusted relationships with adults
- Implement strategies to support SLCN
- Use social stories for key events

# Autism Spectrum Disorder/Condition (ASD/ASC)

## Whole School Approaches

- All school staff to have autism awareness training with regular refresher sessions and ASD induction for new staff
- Assess or audit the sensory environment of your school
- Consider the SPELL Framework as a whole school approach (Structure, Positivity, Empathy, Low Arousal and Links)
- Work towards being a 'Autism friendly' school by undertaking a strategic review
- Organise awareness-raising events, such as Autism Acceptance Week
- Create accessible calm and/or sensory spaces in your school
- Create a consistent approach to the use of visuals e.g. class visual timetables, staff lanyard visuals

## Resources

- 5-Point Scale
- Choosing board
- Communicate in Print
- Communication passports
- Desktop visual timetable
- Ear defenders
- Fans (e.g. feelings, behaviour prompts)
- Chair bands
- Key ring symbols
- Mind map whiteboard
- Mind mapping software
- Multi-sensory chewable fidget
- Now and next boards
- Passes (e.g. time out, step out)
- Pop up desk barrier
- Pop up sensory space
- Sensory box
- Shoulder weights
- Tactile curriculum resources
- Talking recordable photo albums
- Think pads
- Vibrating tactile calming cushion
- Weighted ankle bands
- Weighted pen/pencil
- Weighted support wristbands

## Interventions

- Active 8
- Attention Autism
- Comic strip conversations
- ELSA
- Explorers Social Communication Group
- Language Steps
- Lego Therapy
- Listening Ear
- Mindfulness/meditation sessions
- Narrative Enrichment Program
- Narrative Intervention Program
- Nuffield Early Language
- PECS
- Playground Pals
- Reading Between the Lines
- Sensory Circuits
- Sensory room sessions
- Social Skills
- Socially Speaking
- Social Thinking
- Speech Link
- Language Link
- Talk Boost
- TEACCH approach



# Cognition and Learning

Difficulties within this area of need may include:

- Attainment across the curriculum is below age-related expectations
- Difficulties with both verbal and non-verbal reasoning
- Understanding concepts and language across the curriculum
- Difficulties with problem solving
- Acquiring and applying basic literacy and numeracy skills
- Difficulties in other adaptive functioning areas, such as self-help skills, concentration, attention, social skills and communicating in a range of contexts

## Classroom Strategies

- Give clear and simple instructions
- Break down instructions
- Provide a visual timetable
- Use visual cues and prompts
- Use social stories for key events
- Allow time for the pupil to formulate responses (thinking time)
- Provide pre-teaching opportunities
- Prepare the pupil for a new topic
- Plan for small group and targeted individual support where possible
- Plan opportunities for success
- Provide working walls, word maps, lists, checklists and task boards as appropriate
- Use visuals alongside written information
- Avoid copying tasks
- Plan for multisensory teaching tasks
- Provide opportunities for repetition and overlearning
- Plan for memory activities and games
- Make simple adaptations to resources e.g. font, line spacing, coloured paper,
- Utilise Thinking Matters 'Thinking Frames' to plan ideas and record learning
- Consider different ways of recording
- Arrange for carefully chosen talking partners and peers for group work
- Explore assistive technology e.g. laptop, iPad and other software
- Have an awareness of how the pupil feels about speaking aloud in class
- Consider seating arrangements e.g. close to the front of the room
- Use the pupil's name to gain their attention before giving instructions
- Consider the pace when speaking
- Use clear and simple language
- Use concrete and pictorial representations in maths
- Share key texts and vocabulary with parents and carers to support home learning and over-learning
- Create pre-prepared tables and graphs
- Implement strategies and resources to support handwriting as appropriate e.g. Easygrip pen, handwriting slope, pencil grips, seat wedge
- Provide opportunities for movement/learning breaks
- Plan well matched tasks
- Provide opportunities for the pupil to plan and record ideas
- Provide opportunities for the pupil to verbalise ideas
- Create writing frames

# Cognition and Learning

## Whole School Approaches

- Ensure the curriculum is delivered at a level appropriate for the pupils' age and stage of development i.e. pupils who are attaining at a level significantly behind their peers are taught a curriculum that is adapted and suited to their age and areas of interests
- Consider how ICT is used to support learning
- Plan for staff training to ensure teaching and support staff are trained and skilled in supporting children and young people with general and specific learning difficulties
- Create a consistent approach to the use of concrete resources and learning aids e.g. word banks, phonics mats, manipulatives in maths

## Resources

- Clicker software
- Tinted reading ruler
- Tinted exercise book
- Communicate in Print
- Dictation software/device
- Dyslexia friendly dictionary e.g. Barrington Stoke
- Easi-Speak Pro microphone
- Easygrip and long loop scissors
- Electronic dictionary
- Reading pen
- Fans (e.g. place value, letters)
- Laptop, netbook or Alpha-Smart
- Letter formation whiteboard
- Magnetic tinted wipe-clean boards
- Mind map whiteboard
- Mind mapping software (e.g. Inspiration)
- Recordable cards
- Dyslexia friendly reading books e.g. Barrington Stoke
- Handwriting support e.g. Easygrip pen, pencil grips, writing slope

## Interventions

- Touch-typing
- EnglishType
- BBC Dancemat
- Nessy
- Wordshark
- Toe by Toe
- Write from the Start
- Colourful Semantics
- Funky Fingers
- Brain Gym
- Sensory Circuits
- Numbershark
- Five Minute Box
- Read, Write Inc



# Specific Literacy Difficulty (SpLD)

Difficulties within this area of need may include:

- Processing difficulties (slow processing speed)
- Working memory difficulties
- Dyslexia/persistent literacy difficulties are marked by difficulties with phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing speed.
- Dyslexia is best thought of as a continuum – not a distinct category – and there are no clear cut-off points.

## Classroom Strategies

- Utilise strategies in the 'Cognition and Learning' section
- Pre-teach and then continue to reinforce new vocabulary
- Provide lists of key words of subject/topic-specific vocabulary
- Gain an understanding of how the pupil feels about reading/speaking aloud in class
- Use multi-sensory methods as often as possible
- Allow the pupil to use pictures and symbols to express their understanding
- Facilitate overlearning opportunities
- Try mnemonics to help the pupil recall a sequence
- Use the chunking method – this involves putting information into small bits and then chunks
- Use or encourage the pupil's use of mind maps. These can help reinforce the connections that need to be made between key points. They can also support recording and sorting
- Ask the pupil to repeat aloud what has to be remembered or planned
- Use verbal 'rehearsing' strategies (self-talk and 'thinking aloud')
- Provide pre-written notes and avoid copying tasks
- Use colour-coding in presentations
- Use less information on the page, with appropriate size of print and font
- Allow different ways of recording
- Allow thinking time
- Use simple and concise language
- Consider pace and the amount of verbal information given
- Use visual and written prompts
- Repeat and rephrase questions when necessary
- Encourage the pupil to use a highlighter or adhesive tabs to highlight key points/sections.
- Use post-it notes or cards for sequencing information
- Encourage the pupil to use metacognition strategies linked to Thinking Matters
- Allow the use of word processing for longer writing tasks
- Consider resources to support visual stress e.g. tinted overlays, tinted books

# Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD)

## Whole School Approaches

- Implement robust and effective transition processes
- Offer a broad, balanced and inclusive curriculum, including appropriate timetabling and grouping arrangements
- Ensure that learning environments promote engagement e.g. tinted IWB screens, visuals alongside text
- Work effectively in partnership with local external professionals/agencies
- Regularly capture the views of pupils with a specific learning difficulty
- Provide staff with a broad range of regular CPD opportunities
- Consider how the curriculum and teaching supports executive functioning skills
- Review dyslexia friendly classroom strategies

## Resources

- Clicker software
- Tinted reading ruler
- Tinted exercise book
- Communicate in Print
- Dictation software/device
- Dyslexia friendly dictionary e.g. Barrington Stoke
- Easi-Speak Pro microphone
- Easygrip and long loop scissors
- Electronic dictionary
- Reading pen
- Fans (e.g. place value, letters)
- Laptop, netbook or Alpha-Smart
- Letter formation whiteboard
- Magnetic tinted wipe-clean boards
- Mind map whiteboard
- Mind mapping software (e.g. Inspiration)
- Recordable cards
- Dyslexia friendly reading books e.g. Barrington Stoke
- Handwriting support e.g. Easygrip pen, pencil grips, writing slope

## Interventions

- Touch-typing
- EnglishType
- BBC Dancemat
- Nessy
- Wordshark
- Toe by Toe
- Write from the Start
- Colourful Semantics
- Brain Gym
- Sensory Circuits
- Numbershark
- Five Minute Box
- Read, Write Inc



# Moderate Learning Difficulties

Difficulties within this area of need may include:

- Attainments across the curriculum which remains significantly below age-related expectations
- Significant difficulties with both verbal and non-verbal reasoning
- Significant difficulties with understanding concepts and language across the curriculum
- Significant difficulties with problem solving
- Significant difficulties with experiential learning
- Significant difficulties with acquiring and applying basic literacy and numeracy skills
- Significant difficulties in other adaptative functioning areas, such as self-help skills, concentration, attention, social skills and communicating in a range of contexts

## Classroom Strategies

- Ensure that classroom routines are supported by visual cues.
- Pre-teach and then keep reinforcing new vocabulary
- Lessons should start with an immediate, and achievable, activity
- Consider what interests and motivates the pupil and try to incorporate these interests into lessons as often as possible
- Keep language simple and familiar
- Keep instructions short and concise
- Repeat key points
- Ensure that learning activities are broken down into small steps
- Help the pupil organise their written work by using writing frames and prompt sheets
- Match sentences or paragraphs to a sequence or set of pictures; matching halves of different sentences; sequencing sentences to produce a piece of text; providing word cards, which they use to construct sentences
- Provide a multisensory approach to learning – this includes visual, auditory and kinaesthetic activities
- Use objects of reference to support the pupil's understanding, as part of experiential, practical and concrete activities
- Provide alternative methods of recording, e.g. labelled pictures, diagrams, flow charts
- Allow extra time to complete a task.
- Ensure that each small achievement is recognised
- Organise activities to develop listening and attention skills
- Practise a range of sequencing activities, e.g. pictorial activity or story sequences, word and sentence sequences
- Make use of role play and drama activities where possible
- Encourage the pupil to consider using simple cue cards
- Provide explicit, logical links using different colours, cue lines, diagrams and known symbols when appropriate. Colour-code your IWB
- Relate text to illustrations, photographs and video clips. Model meanings or concepts in drawings or diagrams

# Moderate Learning Difficulties

## Resources

- Acoustic reading phone
- Adapted text or diagrams
- Balance ball/balancing air cushion
- Bean filled core cisc seat balance aid
- Bold lined/squared exercise books
- Boxes font software
- CleverstiX
- Clicker software
- Coloured overlays, books and rulers
- Communicate In Print
- Dictation software/devices
- Dictionaries (e.g. dyslexia dictionaries)
- Digismart education apps
- Discreet desktop student communicator
- Easi-Speak Pro Microphone
- Easygrip and long loop scissors
- Electronic dictionary
- Electronic reading pen
- Fans (e.g. place value, letters)
- Fingergrip ruler
- Handiwriter
- Illuminated writing boards
- Laptop, netbook or Alpha-Smart
- Large print books
- Mind mapping software (e.g. Inspiration)
- Mini Talk-Time recordable cards
- Move Easy handwriting pens
- Neo pads
- Pen and pencil grips
- Plastic lacing board
- Posture pad
- Recordable buttons/pegs
- Seesaw balance
- Sit on wedge posture aid
- Sloping writing desk
- Soundfield system
- Speech recognition software e.g. Dragon Speaking Naturally, AcceleRead - AcceleWrite)
- Tactile curriculum resources
- Textured hand massagers
- Visual timetables
- Weighted pen/pencil

## Interventions

- Alpha to Omega Phonics Program
- BEAM (Balance, Education And Movement: balance and movement difficulties programme)
- Big Write Intervention Program
- Blitz Literacy Intervention Program
- Brain Gym
- Colourful Semantics
- Cued Spelling
- Dance Write Intervention Program (for both gross and fine motor skills)
- Dough Gym Program (fine and gross motor skills)
- Dynamo Maths
- Easyread Program (spelling and phonics)
- Elite Literacy Program
- ENABLE (Enhancing Attainment in Basic Literacy) Program
- Focused reading programmes (e.g. X Code, Phonics Songbirds)
- Funky Fingers ( gross motor skills and fine motor skills )
- Fuzz Buzz (alternative reading scheme)
- Lexia (phonics-based reading intervention)
- Little Stars Program
- Athletics Program
- Nessy
- Numbershark Program
- Plus One and Power of Two Programs (maths)
- Precision teaching interventions, e.g. Five-Minute Box
- Rapid Maths
- Toe by Toe
- Touch Typing
- Speed Up!
- Reading Between the Lines
- Units of Sound
- Wordshark Program
- Write from the Start



# Developmental Coordination Disorder (Dyspraxia)

Difficulties within this area of need may include:

- Getting dressed (e.g. managing buttons, pulling on socks)
- Using cutlery
- Sitting squarely on a chair
- Handwriting and presentation
- Using scissors and a ruler
- Taking part in PE
- Packing away equipment at the end of the day
- Poor executive functioning skills
- Low self-esteem

## Classroom Strategies

- Pre-teach and then continue to reinforce new vocabulary
- Provide lists of key words of subject/topic-specific vocabulary
- Allow the pupil to use pictures and symbols to express their understanding
- Facilitate overlearning opportunities
- Try mnemonics to help the pupil recall a sequence
- Use the chunking method – this involves putting information into small bits and then chunks.
- Use or encourage the pupil's use of mind maps. These can help reinforce the connections that need to be made between key points. They can also support recording and sorting
- Ask the pupil to repeat aloud what has to be remembered or planned
- Consider alternative ways of recording
- Provide pre-written notes and avoid copying tasks
- Allow different ways of recording
- Allow thinking time
- Use simple and concise language
- Consider pace and the amount of verbal information given
- Use post-it notes or cards for sequencing information
- Allow the use of word processing for longer writing tasks
- Ensure resources to support handwriting are accessible at all times
- Consider the seating arrangements in the classroom
- Encourage the pupil to use metacognition strategies linked to Thinking Matters
- Make appropriate adaptations to PE and sports sessions to allow access
- Utilise aids to support recording e.g. writing slope, Easygrip pen, supportive scissors

# Developmental Coordination Disorder (Dyspraxia)

## Whole School Approaches

- Implement robust and effective transition processes
- Work effectively in partnership with local external professionals/agencies
- Provide staff with a broad range of regular CPD opportunities
- Consider how the curriculum and teaching supports executive functioning skills
- Consider removing whole school procedures which negatively impact on pupils with DCD e.g. pen licences
- Utilise assistive technology
- Ensure supportive resources are available across the school

## Resources

- Balance ball
- Balancing air cushion or wedge
- Bean bags
- Bean filled core cisc seat balance aid
- Dictation software/devices
- Easi-Speak Pro Microphone
- Easygrip and long loop scissors
- Fingergrip ruler
- Handiwriter
- Handwriting for Windows software
- Laptop, netbook or Alpha-Smart
- Letter formation whiteboard
- Mini Talk-Time recordable cards
- Move Easy handwriting pens
- Neo pads
- Pen and pencil grips
- Plastic lacing board
- Posture pad
- Recordable buttons and pegs
- Seesaw balance
- Sloping writing desk
- Speech recognition software (e.g. Dragon Speaking Naturally, AcceleRead - AcceleWrite)

## Interventions

- BEAM (Balance, Education And Movement: balance and movement difficulties programme)
- Dance Write Intervention Program (for both gross and fine motor skills)
- Dough Gym Program (fine and gross motor skills)
- Early Handwriting Toolkit Program (motor and perceptual skills)
- Eurythmy Program (sessions to develop fine and gross motor skills)
- Funky Fingers (programme to build gross motor skills and fine motor skills - finger/hand strength and control)
- Smart Moves (motor skills development programme)
- Speed Up! (handwriting programme)
- Start Write, Stay Right Handwriting Program
- Write Dance Program (handwriting)
- Write from the Start Program (fine motor skills)



# Hearing Impairment

Hearing loss can range from minor and temporary to profound and includes..

- Mon-aural/mild/sensorineural or permanent conductive hearing loss
- Moderate hearing loss
- Severe hearing loss
- Profound hearing loss; this may include oral communicators and/or Sign Supported English (SSE)

## Classroom Strategies

- Try to eliminate background noises as much as possible and think generally about noise sources in the classroom/learning environment
- Sit the pupil close to, and facing, the central teaching area. They should not have to twist around in their seat to see you or the information being presented
- Consider whether the hearing loss is known to be worse in one ear; if so, the pupil should ideally be positioned so that the ear with better hearing is closest
- Ensure that you have the attention of the pupil before speaking and always face them
- Remember that facial expressions, gestures, and other body language are all helpful
- Speak naturally and clearly. Do not exaggerate your lip movements or shout
- Present only one source of visual information at a time
- Avoid talking while writing on a whiteboard (i.e. with your back turned). If you do, read back what you have written
- Check that the pupil has understood
- Avoid moving around too much while addressing the whole class/group
- Clearly identify who is speaking or asking a question
- Call the pupil by their name to initiate communication or use a familiar gesture
- Organise seating in a horseshoe or circle in group situations
- Paraphrase the contributions of peers
- Avoid standing in front of windows or light sources that may silhouette you (where the light is not on your face) and hinder visual cues
- Keep your hands away from your face when speaking
- Use captioned/sub-titled films and clips when appropriate or provide a script
- Maximize the use of visual media and demonstrations
- Wait until the room is quiet before speaking
- Use displays around the classroom to aid language development to reinforce vocabulary and concepts
- Give the pupil additional time to respond to questions (as hearing loss impacts on processing speed)

## Resources

- Radio aid system
- Soundfield system

## Interventions

- Healthy Minds program
- Audiology Services transition support programs

# Vision Impairment

Vision loss can range from minor and temporary to educationally blind and can include:

- Mild vision loss: Distance vision 6/12-6/18 Snellen/Kay (LogMAR 0.3-0.48) / Near vision N14-N18;
- Moderate vision loss: Distance vision 6/19-6/36 Snellen/Kay (LogMAR 0.5-0.78) / Functional moderate loss due to Cerebral VI / Near vision N18-N24;
- Severe vision loss: Distance vision 6/36-6/120 Snellen/Kay (LogMAR 0.8-1.3) / Severe loss due to Cerebral VI / Near vision N24-N36; and
- Profound vision loss: Distance vision 6/120 Snellen/Kay (LogMAR 1.32+)/Profound loss due to Cerebral VI/Educationally blind and possible Braille user

## Classroom Strategies

- Ensure that the classroom is well organised, with clear route ways
- Ensure the pupil is seated in the best position to see the whiteboard
- Avoid standing near or in front of a window; it can reduce you to a silhouette and make it difficult for the pupil to see you properly
- Speak clearly as you write on the whiteboard, facing the pupil
- When providing the pupil with worksheets and texts, consider print size and font style
- Do not assume all materials should be enlarged
- Avoid light or curved fonts such as italics
- If photocopying use a good quality original which is clearly photocopied-
- If the pupil has to write on the resource, allow extra handwriting space
- Keep a page design clear and uncluttered
- Consider colour contrast when presenting materials
- Avoid putting text over illustrations
- Provide individual copies of anything presented on the whiteboard if needed
- Avoid cursive script and using pens on the whiteboard that are low on ink
- Where lesson materials are electronic, print them out and in the specified size for the pupil on an electronic device
- Allow pupils to submit written work electronically wherever possible
- Allow extra time to process information and complete tasks
- Sensitively remind the pupil to use their specialist equipment, e.g. low vision aids, tablet, dark pencil, sloping desk tops, etc

## Resources

- Clean individual whiteboard with good black marker
- Laptop/tablet
- Modified large print books
- Books downloaded from [www.rnibbookshare.com](http://www.rnibbookshare.com)
- Bold lined and squared paper
- Mini Talk-Time recordable cards
- Recordable buttons and pegs
- Sloping desk top
- Talking book versions of books to compliment printed materials

## Interventions

- Transition support programs



# Sensory Processing Differences

- Sensory processing is the ability to accurately process sensory information from our environment and our own bodies through the use of our sensory systems
- Sensory information from the body and from the environment is registered through the various senses, touch, movement, proprioception, vision, sound, taste, smell and interoception, inside the body
- Differences in the sensory systems can result in a pupil experiencing the fight (sensitive) fight (seeking) and/or flight (avoiding) reaction as their body immediately responds to the sensory stimuli that they are sensitive to as if they are in danger
- It can influence a pupil's ability to concentrate and pay attention which in turn may impact their ability to problem solve, plan and make decisions

## Classroom Strategies - Auditory

- Help the pupil to make a plan to increase their understanding of instructions by asking people to talk slower, repeat instructions, take notes, etc
- Teachers could use a sound-field amplification (SFA) system that can reduce auditory stress and improve listening
- Check with the pupil during the lesson to see if they understand tasks
- Provide pupils with a copy of the class notes and or an audio recording of the lesson
- Underline, circle or highlight key terminology on reading material for the pupil
- If a teacher has a strong accent they should be aware that some pupils might find it difficult to follow what they are saying and might therefore miss verbal instructions
- Play calming classical background music.
- Allow pupils to listen to audio books or calming music during free time
- Ensure the pupil has an individualised plan on how to manage when noise levels become too much for them
- Help the pupil to make a plan for when he/she gets distracted to find their place
- Written instructions help pupils to refocus
- Have a clear beginning and ending to tasks
- Be aware of and limit noise from outside and inside the classroom where possible
- Identify if there are pupils in the class that speak loudly on a regular basis and whether this distract pupils who are sensitive to noise. If so, consider the seating arrangements of the pupils
- Consider the impact of the increase in noise levels during paired work and group discussions. If needed, a pupil can be given a quick break from the noisy classroom environment
- Pupils bothered by unexpected noise should be informed of fire drills
- Let the pupil sit near the back in case they have to leave the environment if they need to
- Allow the use of inner-ear or traditional ear defenders

# Sensory Processing Differences

## Classroom Strategies - Visual

- Use a window-guide or coloured overlays when reading
- Follow a predictable schedule and inform the pupil what is expected for a task to help them organise themselves ahead of time
- Make checklists and ask the pupil to tick or cross out each step as they complete it
- Break long tasks or assignments into shorter tasks with deadlines to help the pupil not feel overwhelmed and remain on track
- Provide clear instructions for tasks
- Provide pupil with a copy of the class notes and or an audio recording of the lesson
- Underline, circle or highlight key terms on reading material for the pupil
- Minimise overwhelming visual stimuli such as bright light
- Consider seating arrangements to place the pupil where there are the least movements near their desk
- Do not place the pupil near windows or doorways to the corridor where they can be distracted by watching people outside the classroom
- Reduce the visual displays in the classrooms to reduce overall distractions
- Decrease visual distractions by considering where in the class the pupil is seated.
- Use a window-guide or coloured overlays when reading
- Use a window-guide or coloured overlays when reading.
- Identify if there are any areas in the classroom where there are reflections of light or movement of shadows
- Consider seating arrangements to place the pupil where there are the least distractions caused by light near their desk

## Classroom Strategies - Taste and Smell

- Avoid food tasting sessions
- Be aware of the impact of odours in areas such as PE changing rooms, toilets, the dinner hall, kitchens, art, woodwork, design and technology spaces
- Be aware of the smell of cleaning products used around the school
- Pupils should be allowed to leave an area if an odour is too overwhelming for them
- Allow pupil to use chewable pencil toppers or chew buddies
- Be aware that this might impact a pupil's ability to participate in activities involving food
- This might impact what food and the amount of food a pupil eat, depending on what is available
- Alternative toileting arrangements should be made for pupils who cannot access the toilets due to smell sensitivity



# Sensory Processing Differences

## Classroom Strategies -

### Vestibular

- Ensure the different areas of the school are clearly signposted and that pupils have a map to help them find their way around the school
- Provide the pupil with a map of the school in their planner or lanyard
- Pupils might need more support and for a longer period of time when they join the school to help them orientate themselves. They should not be given consequences if they arrive late for lessons due to this being a difficulty
- Consider the impact of this during certain physical activities in PE and make reasonable adjustments for the pupil, for example they can help to organise the activity but does not have to participate, etc
- Allow the pupil to use sensory fidgets in the classroom
- Allow the pupil to do chair push-ups now and then
- Allow a movement break
- For school trips; prepare and provide support to a pupil that have to access areas they might struggle with or provide an alternative route
- A pupil that is very sensitive to movement might find it difficult to sit at a right angle to the front of the class as they will have to turn their head, as well as lift their head up and down when writing information from the whiteboard. The pupil will manage better facing the front of the class

## Classroom Strategies -

### Proprioceptive

- Ensure there is sufficient space between tables in the classrooms
- Ensure pupil's book bags are not in the way where they walk
- Consider this during PE lessons as it might impact a pupil's confidence to participate in activities where there are a lot of people moving around and objects to navigate
- Teach pupils about boundaries – people's, objects and spaces all have boundaries and help them think about this in order to plan their movements cognitively
- Be aware that this will impact concentration and participation in lessons
- Allow the use of sensory fidgets to help the pupil concentrate
- Teach pupils about rest and time management in order to help them to monitor their physical exertion
- Allow pupil to chew gum in class, if they are able to do so in a subtle manner
- Allow chewing on chewable pencil toppers
- Teach pupils about nutrition to help them understand how different food groups influence stamina, endurance and the ability to maintain attention in order to learn
- Be encouraging during PE lessons without drawing too much attention to the pupil

# Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)

Difficulties within this area of need are multi-variant, often complex and can indicate a range of possible unmet needs. Areas of need may include:

- Anxiety;
- Depression;
- Attention Deficit Disorder or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder;
- Attachment Disorder;
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder;
- Tourette Syndrome;
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder;
- Oppositional Defiance Disorder;
- Conduct Disorder;
- Eating disorders;
- Self-harm;
- Personality disorders
- Psychosis

## Classroom Strategies

- Set a consistently positive ethos in your classroom from the outset
- Establish a welcoming atmosphere via 'meeting and greeting'
- Use humour
- Break down aspects of work into smaller units to identify areas that they can achieve in
- Consider seating arrangements
- Allow short breaks and/or provide extra time when required
- Consider the tone and volume of your voice
- Speak with the pupil individually to avoid attention from others
- Once you have spoken to the pupil move away, expecting compliance. This enables the pupil to make a good choice
- Use visual rule reminders
- Say "thank you" after an instruction, rather than please.
- Praise a pupil nearby who is on task and complying
- Repeat questions when necessary
- Pair the pupil with a positive role model wherever possible.
- Identify any changes to routine well in advance.
- Find opportunities to show the pupil that you trust them
- Give the pupil opportunities to be responsible
- Recognise small achievement
- Be explicitly fair, equal, balanced and consistent in your approach
- Each lesson must be a fresh start
- Be open and honest if you've made a mistake
- Outside of class, share your experiences, concerns and stresses with a trusted colleague
- Use multi-sensory methods (e.g. visual, auditory and kinaesthetic) as often as possible
- Ensure that distracting items are kept away
- When possible, incorporate structured opportunities for movement/activity to release excess energy



# Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)

## Whole School Approaches

- Implement robust and effective transition processes
- Offer a broad, balanced and inclusive curriculum, including appropriate timetabling and grouping arrangements
- Ensure that learning environments promote engagement e.g. tinted IWB screens, visuals alongside text
- Work effectively in partnership with local external professionals/agencies
- Regularly capture the views of pupils
- Ensuring that key policies and frameworks within the school provide clear staff guidelines for supporting SEMH and ensuring that these:
  1. highlight the importance of valuing all children and establishing positive relationships;
  2. are based on positive education/psychology principles and growth mindset approaches
  3. ensure that sanctions for inappropriate behaviour are restorative and that they do not compromise entitlement to education;
  4. provide a 'common language' to describe social, emotional and mental health difficulties;
  5. underpin positive staff and peer modelling of pro-social behaviours;
  6. prioritise induction of new staff; and
  7. equip staff with the understanding, knowledge and skills to modify and differentiate and personalise their strategies and approaches, to take account of individual needs
- Accessing resources from Young Minds and other organisations, such as the Anti-Bullying Alliance, to support a whole school/setting approach;

## Resources

- Bean bags
- Calming tactile cuddle ball
- Choosing board
- Colouring books
- Communication passports
- Ear defenders
- Fans (e.g. feelings, behaviour prompts)
- Fidget aids
- Individual work stations
- Key ring symbols
- Multi-sensory chewable fidget
- Now and next boards
- Passes (e.g. time out, step out, etc.)
- Pop up concentration desk barrier
- Pop up sensory space
- Sand timers
- Sensory box
- Shoulder weights
- Weighted ankle bands
- Weighted support wristbands

## Interventions

- Be The Jellyfish Program
- Circle of Friends
- Drawing and Talking
- ELSA or other suitably qualified mentor
- Emotion Coaching Program
- Emotional literacy programs
- Friends for Life Program
- Peer mentoring
- Listening ear
- Mindfulness/meditation
- Playground Pals
- Social skills programs
- Socially Speaking
- Anger management programs e.g. Cool Kids, Moving on from Anger, Anger Alphabet

# Anxiety

Anxiety can present in different forms in children and young people. It generally manifests in the form of avoidant behaviours. They may seem distracted or absent-minded, agitated, hyperactive or withdrawn.

Pupils displaying challenging behaviour may also be doing so as a response to anxious feelings.

You might look out for some of the following signs and behaviours:

- Avoidance of people and places in school/college
- Difficulty concentrating
- Withdrawal from social activities
- Seeming tired, fidgety or absent-minded
- Not completing tasks or homework
- Constantly seeking reassurance
- Worrying a lot about minor issues, such as having the correct equipment
- Having frequent headaches, stomach aches, etc.
- Avoiding difficult situations, such as tests or assessments
- Frequent unexplained absences

## Classroom Strategies

- **Make yourself available:** make pupils aware that you are available to talk, and share information about any other support available in your school
- **Listen to understand:** when discussing anxious feelings with a pupil, listen to them with curiosity and openness.
- **Teach your pupils about anxiety and wellbeing:** this could include improving pupils' knowledge and understanding of what anxiety is, healthy coping strategies for dealing with it and when to seek help.
- **Provide structure and clear expectations:** establish a consistent daily routine that pupils can rely on. Use visual aids such as schedules or calendars to help pupils anticipate any changes
- **Create an inclusive environment:** carry out an audit of your classroom to ensure it is inclusive. Use visual aids and other communication devices to support learning and communication differences
- **Work with individual pupils to support their needs:** working with pupils and their parents and carers, you might identify particular difficulties, triggers and patterns, and work together to create an individual support plan



# Attachment Difficulties

## Avoidant Attachment Pattern

Observations may include:

- Withdrawn and quiet
- Relies on information and ignore feelings
- Self-reliant for their age
- Reluctant to ask for help
- Denies distress by saying “I’m fine”
- May try to take care of others
- Can appear happy and bright
- Behaves like a ‘model pupil’
- Might show sudden outbursts of anger or upset
- Avoids getting close to others
- Focuses on mistakes or failures
- Fear of failure
- Zones out or shut down when stressed

## Strategies

- Find opportunities to nurture
- Gently show that feelings are safe to share
- Help name feelings by saying “I wonder if...”
- Support the pupil to feel good about themselves regardless of achievement
- Organise pupils into small groups and encourage 1:1 relationships
- Arrange for older pupils to be buddies
- Show the pupil that you hold them in mind (I thought about you on the weekend and...)
- Use questions which are clear and precise
- Use characters, films, videos to help describe emotions
- Use writing frames (filling in boxes etc) to prevent anxiety a blank page
- Avoid activities which are about winning/ losing where possible

## Pre-occupied Attachment Pattern

Observations may include:

- Disruptive, loud and dominant in class
- Clingy or possessive in relationships
- Very demanding of your time and attention
- Concerned with getting attention rather than with learning
- Finds it difficult to settle
- Talks excessively
- Has concentration difficulties
- Very focussed on feelings
- Finds it hard to follow rules and structure
- Has poor understanding of cause and effect
- Cannot take responsibility for their actions
- Coercive, controlling, & confrontational
- Under performing academically
- Becomes stressed or angry when things change

## Strategies

- Find opportunities to nurture
- Recognise the hidden feeling of fear behind behaviour
- Show empathy even when I’m raging at you
- Provide a highly predictable, structured routine
- Use visual timetables
- Break down tasks into small chunks
- Provide transitional objects 'please look after this for me for a while'
- Offer extra support for transitions
- Plan beginnings, endings and separations
- Provide strategies to calm strong emotions
- Provide time out routines
- Provide a calm space
- Mediate and scaffold peer relationships

# Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

## **Predominantly Inattentive Type**

Formerly known as ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder). Difficulties with the attentional system, focus, concentration and staying on task being the most significant impairments and not usually presenting with difficulties as a result of physical hyperactivity or impulsivity.

## **Hyperactive/ Impulsive Type**

Difficulties with Impulse control and physical and mental hyperactivity being the most significant impairments and not usually presenting with difficulties as a result of attentional dysregulation.

## **Combined Type**

There are difficulties in all three areas - inattention, physical and mental hyperactivity and impulsivity

## **Classroom Strategies**

- Well organised, uncluttered classrooms can help a child with ADHD to better navigate their environment, for example, easily accessible resources and equipment, with written labelling supported by visual representations
- Ensure that the whiteboard is well lit with minimal surrounding peripheral distractions. All other visual displays to be clearly labelled and easy to access
- Explore creating a low arousal, calming area with a degree of privacy to use when the child with ADHD is feeling overwhelmed or needs support to regulate their emotions
- Explore creating a space for increased physical movement
- Provide a range of resources to support attentional regulation, for example, standing desks, attentional tools or “tactile resources,” rocking chairs, privacy desk barriers, timers or ear defenders
- Seat the child with ADHD close to the teacher whilst reducing peripheral distraction as much as is possible, for example, away from the windows or doors
- Repeat instructions
- Establish clear classroom daily routines
- Support organisation
- Ensure rules are unambiguous and written in a positive way. Revisit regularly with novelty in the delivery
- Give directions clearly and visually
- Share plan changes in advance
- Engage with the pupils’ interests
- Create active learning opportunities
- Encourage pupils to share their work
- Allow thinking time
- Carefully consider grouping
- Support working memory through repetition, rehearsal and review
- Use timers and visual prompts
- Support transitions
- Allow planning time/opportunities
- Interact with the pupil in a calm manner
- Use attentional tools and tactile resources e.g. fidget aids
- Plan for multi-sensory experiences
- Consider access arrangements for tests
- Use the pupil’s name before giving instructions to them
- Consider alternative ways of recording



# Reference and Document List

## **Bromley Graduated Approach Documents**

<https://bromleyeducationmatters.uk/Page/15652>

## **Kent Core Standards**

<https://www.kelsi.org.uk/special-education-needs/inclusion/the-mainstream-core-standards>

## **Lewisham Graduated Approach**

<https://schoolsservices.lewisham.gov.uk/Page/18097>

## **Southwark LA SEND Guidance for Schools**

<https://localoffer.southwark.gov.uk/education/southwark-la-send-guidance-for-schools/>

## **Field Guide, Enabling Environments**

Dr Helga Abernethy OT, PhD; Sonia Swart OT; Amy Goodman Goldberg OT  
23 November 2022

## **Beacon House - Therapeutic Services and Trauma Team**