Reasonable adjustments in school for young people with sensory processing differences

Some students have difficulty processing everyday sensory information. This can be being oversensitive (hypersensitive) or under-sensitive (hyposensitive) or both. This impacts how the students experience their school day. There are adaptations that can be put into place to help create a successful relationship for the student.

## Uniform

* Allow the students to adapt parts of their uniform. Students with sensory sensitivities can find certain fabrics or parts of clothing such as seams or styles of clothing unbearable. This can present a barrier to their ability to learn or engage during the school day. For example, a cotton t-shirt rather than a shirt or leggings rather than trousers.
* The student may struggle to identify their body temperature and could require prompting to remove or add clothing.

## Transitions between classrooms

* Students can leave classrooms early or late to avoid noisy, busy corridors.
* Allow students to select a nominated friend to walk with to and from classrooms.

## Fidget Toys Sensory Toolkit

* Allow the student to use fidget toys in class.
* Students have access to a sensory toolkit which contains soothing items of their choice.

## Sensory Strategies

* Allow the students to wear ear-defenders/headphones to clock out noises
* Sunglasses can help students that struggle with light sensitivity.
* Movement breaks/movement passes for secondary school age children
* Deodorant/ perfume be aware of the use of your own or students’ deodorant or perfume, this can be a negative memory trigger.

During breaktimes

* Provide a ‘safe space’ for the students to spend time in/eat at breaktimes.
* Provide structured eating window to allow healthy eating habits.

## During lessons

* Classroom cards can provide students with the ability to leave a classroom of their own volition for various reasons, preventing the student becoming overwhelmed. Examples of these are: ‘Time out cards’ which allow the student to have some time out of the classroom if they feel overwhelmed or ‘toilet cards’ which allow the student to use the toilet without having to ask.
* Predictability/advance notice of changes (back up in writing or visuals). Changes in teacher, classroom and teaching assistants can have an impact.
* Not insisting the child attends areas of potential sensory overload e.g. assembly, music sessions

## Seating in classrooms

* Creating a predictable environment by allowing students to have designated seats.
* Advance notice of environment changes e.g. furniture moves, display board changes, seat plans.
* Allow the student to choose where they would prefer their seat to be, in an optimal environment for their sensory needs – front, back or near the door.

## School day

* Stagger the start/end of the school day to allow them to navigate the school at less busy times.
* Provide a different entrance/exit to the school with a trusted adult/friend.
* Visual timetables/now and next (can be hand drawn)
* A trusted adult to build a relationship with. To support with co-regulation. “Co-regulation is nurturing connection of another individual that supports regulation needs through the use of strategies, tools, and calming techniques in order to self-soothe or respond in times of stress.”