



DURANTS SCHOOL – POLICY DOCUMENT

Sensory

July 2026

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Next review date: July 2029

The Sensory Curriculum

We learn about our environment and ourselves through our senses of vision, hearing, smell, taste, touch and Movement. Without any one of these we are limited in our capacity of learning. Many of our students have sensory impairments so they must learn to develop each of their senses individually and in combination. We aim to provide a stimulating multi-sensory curriculum for all our students who will benefit from this approach, to encourage more awareness of visual, auditory, vestibular and tactile experiences. This method gives rise to new learning, using all the senses to access the curriculum and makes learning fun!

We also offer a range of activities, which include:

- Sensory room.
- Swimming
- Tacpac
- Body awareness programmes.
- Art and crafts room
- Music Therapy room
- Rebound therapy
- Conditioned relaxation therapy
- Other activities on occasions i.e. sensory forest walks/activities.
- Arts Award

These specialist areas are used by individuals and small groups to develop their multi-sensory experiences and awareness.

Sensory rooms

Sensory rooms provide a controllable 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 room provides 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. Sensory rooms provide 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.

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.

Policy

The sensory and Therapeutic Curriculum encompasses the traditional therapies- physiotherapy, speech and language therapy and occupational therapy, but it also includes movement and dance therapy and the use of the multi-sensory environments. The input of our therapy teams and the use of our multi-sensory environments are linked together in a total approach to leading to the development of programmes for communication, body awareness and mobility and control over the environment.

Objectives:

- 1) To enable each pupil, whatever the degree of special need, to access the curriculum so that they can reach their full potential and enhance their self-esteem. Due regard will be given to National curriculum guidelines and the criteria for disapplication and support.
- 2) To stimulate and maintain pupil curiosity, interest and enjoyment in their own education.
- 3) To identify needs, assess and provide the most effective support as early as possible for pupils on the Autistic Spectrum and those with learning difficulties.
- 4) To involve parents and pupils in the assessment and delivery of individual needs remediation and to strive for close cooperation between all agencies concerned.
- 5) To teach using a multi-sensory approach and to encourage students to discover their individual learning styles.
- 6) To ensure all staff are aware of the different types of Autism specific and special educational needs (SEN), in order to make suitable provision in their curricular areas. Awareness should be promoted through information being shared with support staff and other agencies in staff meetings, Multi agency meetings and through INSET and training sessions.
- 7) To meet the individual needs of all pupils by offering appropriate forms of educational resources.
- 8) To encourage a 'Whole School' approach to the provision of support for pupils and to foster an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding together with high expectations.
- 9) To ensure that there is no discrimination against pupils on the Autistic spectrum or those with any physical, sensory or learning difficulty in the learning environment, whilst taking into account the constraints of the school building.

Review

- 1) All pupils must have an annual review of their statement to which the pupil, parents and staff will be asked to contribute.
- 2) All pupils will have an IEP written by the class teacher that will be reviewed with parents.
- 3) Formal assessments for core subjects and foundation subjects will be completed by class teacher.
- 4) All pupils on the Autistic spectrum or those with learning difficulties will have a sensory profile check list completed by their class teachers.
- 5) All pupils sensory check list data will be used to identify sensory needs and targets.

Definition

There is a wide spectrum of sensory, multi-sensory and physical difficulties. The sensory range extends from profound and permanent deafness or visual impairment through to lesser levels of levels of loss, which may only be temporary. Physical impairment may arise from physical, neurological or metabolic causes.

(Code of Practice 2001 7.62)

Hearing Impairment (HI)

Children with a hearing impairment range from those with a mild hearing loss to those who are profoundly deaf. They cover the whole ability range. For educational purposes, children are regarded as having a hearing impairment if they require hearing aids, adaptations to their environment and/or particular teaching strategies in order to access the concepts and language of the curriculum.

A number of children with a hearing impairment also have an additional disability or learning difficulty.

Hearing loss may be because of conductive or sensory-neural problems and can be measured on a decibel scale. Four categories are generally used: mild, moderate, severe and profound.

Visual Impairment (VI)

Visual impairment refers to a range of difficulties from minor impairment through to blindness. Children with visual impairments cover the whole ability range. For educational purposes, children are regarded as having a visual impairment if they require adaptations to their environment or specific differentiation of learning materials in order to access the curriculum. Children who are blind or have very limited useful sight require tactile methods of learning, such as Braille and 3D representations, together with use of their hearing. Partially sighted children also need differentiated materials and may use enlarged print or a mix learning method.

Physical difficulties (PD)

There is a wide range of physical disabilities and children cover the whole ability range. Some pupils are able to access the curriculum and learn effectively without additional educational provision. They have a disability but do not have a special educational need. For others, the impact on their education may be severe. There are a number of medical conditions associated with physical disability which can impact on mobility, such as cerebral palsy, spina bifida and muscular dystrophy. Pupils with physical disabilities may also have associated sensory impairments, neurological problems or learning difficulties.

Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI)

Pupils with multi-sensory impairment have a combination of visual and hearing difficulties. They are sometimes referred to as deaf/blind but may have some residual sight and/or hearing. Many also have additional disabilities but their complex needs mean that it may be difficult to ascertain their intellectual abilities.

Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASCs)

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In order to fulfil the schools aims for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASCs) and/or significant Social Interaction and Communication Difficulties (SICD), we believe that children with ASCS/SICD:

- Have unique learning styles.
- Need a teaching and learning setting that is highly structured.
- Need teaching approaches/tasks adapted and structured to capitalise on their visual strengths.
- Require work to improve their social understanding.
- It is also essential that parents, other professionals and teachers work collaboratively to ensure consistency of approach.

To meet the needs of pupils with ASCs and/or SICD, they must have opportunities to:

- Develop an appropriate functional communication system.
- Manage their behaviour, including stress and anxiety, through highly structured approaches.
- Follow programmes which capitalise on their strengths as visual learners.
- Extend their ability to play both developmentally and socially.
- Increase their social understanding.
- Learn about their emotions and the emotions of others including, when appropriate, work on mind reading.
- Become independent learners.
- Begin to address any sensory anomalies and have sensory integration work if it is felt to be needed.
- Generalise skills across situations/settings.

Sensory curriculum

A sensory curriculum is part of a whole school curriculum or learning experience. It covers the development of the senses of taste, smell, touch (tactile experiences, vision, sound and Vestibular (bodily experiences). It also covers the development of the integration of all these senses to form a multi-sensory approach for the child to use in learning situations. Pupils on the Autistic spectrum and those with learning difficulties usually find a sensory curriculum is a vital part of their learning process. The sensory curriculum is extended and integrated throughout the national curriculum.