



Sensory Tools Policy 2026-2027

Purpose

This guidance outlines the appropriate use of sensory tools to support pupils in managing their sensory needs, maintaining attention, and engaging successfully in learning. It is intended for pupils who may experience sensory processing differences, attention difficulties, or other SEND-related needs.

Sensory tools are learning supports and should not be viewed or used as toys.

Fidget Tools

What are fidget tools?

Fidget tools are small sensory resources that provide opportunities for discreet movement or tactile input. They can help some pupils regulate their sensory needs while remaining engaged in classroom activities.

Examples

- Stress balls
- Silent putty or Blu Tack
- Textured sensory strips
- Chair resistance bands
- Tangles or twist blocks
- Smooth sensory stones or pebbles

Purpose

Fidget tools may be used to:

- Support sensory regulation.
- Provide an outlet for movement.
- Improve concentration and attention during seated tasks.
- Help pupils remain engaged when listening or learning.

Authorisation

Use of a fidget tool must be agreed by the SENDCo and Class teacher following:

- A short trial period.
- Discussion with the pupil and their parents/carers.

Expectations for Use

- Only approved sensory items supplied or agreed by the SENDCo should be used.
- Tools should be quiet, discreet, and non-disruptive.
- They may be used during activities where movement assists self-regulation.
- Tools will be removed if they become a distraction to the pupil or others.
- Their effectiveness will be reviewed every four weeks using a monitoring record.
- Fidget tools must not be used for play, games, or swapping with other pupils.
- Staff should provide clear guidance on appropriate use and expectations, and a form must be signed by the class teacher, parents and the child.
- Tools must not be taken outside during break times, lunchtime, or PE lessons.

Chew Tools

What are chew tools?

Chew tools, sometimes known as *chewelry*, are specially designed items that provide safe oral sensory input. They are intended for pupils who seek oral stimulation by chewing clothing, pencils, fingers, or other unsuitable objects.

These tools are commonly used to support children with sensory processing differences, ADHD, autism, or other SEND-related needs.

Examples

- Food-safe silicone chew necklaces
- Silicone chew bracelets

Purpose

Chew tools may be used to:

- Meet oral sensory needs safely.
- Reduce chewing of unsafe or inappropriate items.
- Protect clothing, equipment, and personal belongings.
- Support emotional regulation and concentration.

Authorisation

- Approval from the SENDCo and Class teacher is required before a chew tool is introduced.
- Advice from an Occupational Therapist (OT) or Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT) should be sought where appropriate.

Expectations for Use

- Chew tools are for individual use only and must be clearly labelled with the pupil's name.
- They should be cleaned daily or according to manufacturer guidance.
- Use should be based on need and not become continuous or habitual.
- Staff should regularly check items for signs of wear or damage.
- Tools must not be taken outside during break times, lunchtime, or PE lessons.
- Provision should be reviewed each half term by the SENDCo in consultation with parents/carers.
- Staff should provide clear guidance on appropriate use and expectations, and a form must be signed by the class teacher, parents and the child.

Monitoring and Parental Involvement

Before introducing a sensory tool, the following process should be followed:

1. The class teacher discusses the request with the SENDCo following a discussion with parents / carers.
2. A trial period of two to four weeks is implemented, during which staff record observations relating to focus, regulation, behaviour, and learning on CPOMs or in Star Books.
3. Staff should consider whether any initial improvements are linked to the novelty of the tool and monitor whether benefits are maintained over time.
4. Outcomes are reviewed with the SENDCo. Where the tool has a positive impact, the SENDCo will meet with parents/carers and the pupil before adding the provision to the pupil's support plan and SEND provision map.
5. Ongoing monitoring of both behaviour and academic progress will continue to ensure the tool remains beneficial.

Hygiene and Safety

To maintain health and safety standards:

- Chew tools must be manufactured from non-toxic, BPA-free materials.
- Chew tools are not transferrable and should only be used by one child.
- Any chew tool showing signs of wear, cracking, or discolouration must be replaced immediately.
- Fidget tools should be cleaned before being used by another pupil.
- All sensory resources should be stored securely in clearly labelled trays, boxes, or containers when not in use.

Summary

Sensory tools can be an effective way of supporting pupils' regulation, focus, and engagement when matched appropriately to identified needs. Their use should be carefully monitored, regularly reviewed, and implemented as part of a planned approach to meeting individual SEND needs.

This policy will be reviewed by class teachers and the SENDCo in July 2027