**SENSORY ENVIRONMENT CHECKLIST**

This Sensory Environment Checklist has been developed as a guide to help think about the sensory responses to a setting that some might experience, and consider some of the reasonable adjustments that might therefore be implemented.

This checklist does not cover all aspects of an individual’s sensory profile. However, it does seek to provide a understanding for families, caregivers and staff working with individuals’ with sensory processing differences about how a setting might be altered if they find their environment to be impacting upon their occupational performance and participation.

**Visual:**

Many people with sensory processing challenges in this area can report sensitivity to the light levels in certain settings, the type of lighting, flickering lights, reflections, bright bold colours and busy patterns.

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| What to look for | Current Environment | Action Needed (if required) |
| Lighting Quality: Is the lighting suitable. Is it possible to alter light levels?  Are any fluorescent lights regularly checked and changed?  Are the effects of light coming into the room creating distracting patterns or glare minimised?  Is any light reflecting on objects such as metal or shiny surfaces in the classroom minimised.  Is the impact of wall displays considered. How busy or cluttered are these and do they cause distraction?  Are there designated areas for specific activities to provide clarity to the classroom organisation. Is there suitable space between furniture and no clutter.  Do individuals have the opportunity to work at a workstation to focus their attention, if necessary? Do they have their own space at home?  Are there any strong or irritating patterns which might cause difficulty and have these been minimised where possible? (e.g. bright colours on shiny surfaces, fluorescent or neon colours).  Are there any changes in the pattern on the floor / wallpaper when entering a different room that might be difficult to individuals to process.  Are seating arrangements considered to help those who might struggle with maintaining their visual attention to tasks? |  | |

**Auditory**:

Difficulty in sensing and processing auditory information can impact on a person’s ability to learn and effectively complete routine tasks on a daily basis. Challenges in this area may result in presentations of overwhelm, withdrawal and avoidance. Exhaustive levels of physical effort are required to concentrate.

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| What to look for | Current Environment | Action Needed (if required) |
| Are sounds from classroom equipment and furniture kept to a minimum where possible? (e.g. the sound of chair legs scraping on the floor)  Can televisions, videos, audio systems, lights and computers be switched off when not in use to avoid a mains hum?  Can classrooms and hallways be carpeted where appropriate to reduce noise created by the movement of people, chairs and desks? Can this be considered at home?  Are there differences with the levels of noise at different times of the day? Have these been considered and have strategies been implemented in support?  Have the acoustics of the room, for example the school gym and dining hall been checked and modified to lessen echo where possible.  Has the bathroom at home been considered to reduce the noise (e.g. fans, toilet flushing, water hitting the bathtub). Can extra towels or blankets be put in the bathroom to help reduce noise? Can the task be altered (e.g. can the bath be run whilst the person is in another room?).  Are sounds from outside minimised where possible? For example, are windows suitably soundproofed so that the noise of passing traffic is not a nuisance.  Is there a quiet room or space that the person can access which provides a calm place to relax?  Are individual’s warned when there might be a loud noise upcoming, for example school bell or family member returning home? |  | |

**Olfactory:**

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| What to look for | Current Environment | Action Needed (if required) |
| Are smells within the classroom and home setting kept to a minimum where possible?  Is the smell of paints, glue, clay and cleaning fluids minimal. If present, do these interfere with a person’s ability to participate?  Are staff / visitors / other family members aware that the smell of perfumes, aftershaves or deodorants may be distressing.  Are staff / visitors / other family members aware that some may react to the smell of others.  Are smells from outside monitored and reduced, where possible.  Are alternative toileting arrangements allowed (e.g. possible use of staff or disabled toilets).  Can the smell of cooking from the cafeteria or food technology rooms be reduced where possible. If not possible, is there an understanding amongst staff / other family members that the individual might need additional strategies / support in place when accessing this room? |  | |

**Touch:**

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| What to look for | Current Environment | Action Needed (if required) |
| Do variations of the school uniform offer enough flexibility to enable pupils to be able to wear clothing they find comfortable?  Is any uncomfortable clothing (seams, inflexible or itchy fabrics) avoided, where possible?  Are alternative arrangements made for those who find writing to be physically painful or difficult?  Can padding be used to make hard chairs more comfortable?  Are pupils in school are allowed to sit on carpet squares if the floor is not carpeted?  Are opportunities made available for those needing additional tactile input to explore and generate this feedback? Are there sensory fidgets / tactile items made available that help regulate and meet this need?  Does the individual seek to minimise touch from others? Is this recognised by staff / other family members, particularly when demands are placed on them? |  | |

**Other Considerations:**

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| What to look for | Current Environment | Action Needed (if required) |
| Are individual’s encouraged to let others know if they are finding a sensory aspect of the environment distressing. Can a sensory ‘check-in’ from a familiar caregiver be facilitated?  Are individual’s in school allowed to leave the classroom slightly earlier or later than peers to avoid noisy corridors/ crowds?  Does home and classroom organisation and seating takes into consideration individual sensory concerns? (e.g. A pupil with a fascination with light reflection does not sit by the window).  Are children who become anxious by the close proximity of others allowed ample space around their area?  Are children allowed to enter the dinner hall / assembly before or after peers to avoid queuing and crowds?  Is there a designated place and a clear system/routine for children to follow if they feel they need to withdraw due to sensory overload to ‘chill out’? |  | |