



Purpose

This policy has been written to support staff in creating a learning environment conducive for all kinds of learner. It outlines guiding principles and provides clear direction on how the school environment should be presented and organised to facilitate effective and optimum learning for all students, including those with autism.

Consultation

The policy has been written with full and regular consultation with school staff over one academic year from 2017-2018. Consultation consisted of various discussions and experimentations over the year. This final document represents the consensus of school staff views.

Aim

The school aims to create a learning environment which engages pupils, celebrates achievement and effort and assists learning. Equally, Thriftwood recognises the need for pupils to remain calm and focused without experiencing sensory or information overload. This is particularly important for pupils with autism. So, a balanced view is sought to create an interesting and welcoming environment which also allows focus and calm.

The environment should be well organised, clear and well signposted to maintain pupil equilibrium.

Rationale

Pupils with autism frequently experience difficulties maintaining sensory regulation. In order for students with autism to feel calm and alert ready to engage in learning, support to regulate sensory integration from the environment is helpful. Three main patterns of sensory processing are understood. They are:

- Over responsiveness to sensory stimulation
- Under responsiveness to sensory stimulation
- Sensory seeking

The **3 Principles**, below, encapsulate the underlying pedagogical rationale of the school's approach which will support sensory regulation.

The policy gives guidance for teachers so that they can use their professional judgement to make decisions about creating an environment conducive to learning for all. The policy also gives some clear direction to ensure a consistent approach to environment and display across the school.

3 Principles

1. Organised, tidy and uncluttered rooms and storage spaces are calming, support focus and facilitate independence.
2. Displays, notices and learning materials on the walls support learning, respect privacy and celebrate achievement when they are current, accessible and relevant to needs and age.
3. Harmony and calm in the learning space is achieved when colours, labels and materials are consistently stored neatly within the room with limited colour, size and style variability.



Specific Direction

Teaching Space

- The whiteboard at the front of the room should be kept clear of all other surrounding information to enable focus from pupils.
- If the teacher has a desk, it should be tidy and organised without causing distraction for pupils and paying attention to GDPR.
- Appropriate visuals are used to assist and direct learning. These are stored or displayed as required.

Walls

- Visual timetable should be relevant to pupils' needs and be kept up to date, according to the correct principles.
- In each class there should be one learning or interactive display, one achievement board which celebrates learning and one to support emotional regulation.
- Displays should have impact, e.g. small writing up high cannot easily be read other than by taller people.
- Displays should also be relevant to current learning.
- Displays should be in good order, i.e. not shabby with torn edges
- If number lines and phonic resources are displayed on the walls they should be accessible (consider if up high is helpful), accurate (i.e. not x for xylophone) and in good order and not in poor condition.
- All boards in one room should be covered in a similar tone or colour theme. Classrooms may well differ in theme.
- The space between displays should be defined and clear.
- Font on displays and labels should be uniform in each room and large enough to read. Fonts across classrooms may vary.
- Notices and information leaflets should at least be current and relevant. It is helpful for teachers to question whether these should be displayed publically outside the classroom to avoid clutter.
- Photos of the pupils should be outside every classroom and large enough to be seen. Photos within the classroom of pupils engaging in activities should be limited and large enough to be seen.
- Celebration Wall (School)- To celebrate pupils achievement outside of the classroom, each class to display a new piece of work in a frame labelled with class and pupil name each term.

Personal Pupil Information

- Pupil targets should not be displayed publically on the walls to respect dignity.
- Data concerning pupil achievement should not be displayed publically to conform with GDPR and respect dignity.

Equipment and Furniture

- Resources and equipment should be clearly labelled and kept neatly and in good order, e.g. pencils sharpened.



- The organisation of the room should be clear to all those entering

Implementation and Monitoring

As the result of this guidance all spaces will be organised, uncluttered and visual information kept to a minimum.

- All teachers will be responsible for their own classrooms and working environments.
- All staff have responsibility to keep the school clean, tidy and organised.
- SLT will decide on who takes responsibility for specialist rooms and other areas.
- Phase Leads will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the policy with the staff in their departments.
- The Senior Leadership Team will take overall responsibility for implementation across the school.
- The state of the environment will be a feature of all learning walks.