

Harlands - Sensory Processing

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SENSORY PROCESSING

Understanding. Supporting. Empowering.
Happy minds. Stronger together. Thriving at Harlands.



WHAT IS SENSORY PROCESSING?

Sensory processing is how our brains receive, organise and respond to information from our senses.

We all experience the world through our senses, but some children find it harder to process this information.

They may be extra sensitive, or seek more input, or find it hard to cope with everyday sights, sounds, smells, tastes, textures or movement.

At Harlands, we understand that every child experiences the world differently. With the right support and environment, children can feel safe, regulated and ready to learn.



POSSIBLE CHARACTERISTICS

Children with sensory processing differences may:

- ★ Be over-sensitive (notice more) or under-sensitive (notice less) to sensory information
- ★ Be easily overwhelmed by busy or noisy environments
- ★ Find it hard to filter out background noise or distractions
- ★ Avoid certain textures, foods, smells or environments
- ★ Seek movement or pressure (e.g. fidgeting, climbing, crashing)
- ★ Notice small details others may miss
- ★ Find changes or transitions difficult
- ★ Become anxious, distressed or shut down in challenging environments
- ★ Have a strong need for routine and predictability
- ★ Show differences across one or more senses – these differences can change from day to day



STRENGTHS ASSOCIATED WITH SENSORY DIFFERENCES

- ★ Strong attention to detail
- ★ Creative and imaginative
- ★ Good at noticing patterns
- ★ Honest and observant
- ★ Persistent and determined
- ★ Unique perspective on the world
- ★ Deep focus on areas of interest
- ★ Empathetic and kind
- ★ Resilient and adaptable
- ★ Many strengths and talents in other areas



HOW WE SUPPORT CHILDREN WITH SENSORY PROCESSING DIFFERENCES AT HARLANDS

1 UNDERSTANDING AND IDENTIFICATION



- Early identification of sensory needs.
- Observations by teachers and support staff.
- Use of screening and assessment tools where appropriate.
- Working with parents and professionals.

2 SENSORY FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENTS



- Calm, predictable and organised spaces.
- Minimising unnecessary noise and visual clutter.
- Quiet areas and safe spaces available.
- Consideration of lighting, temperature and layout.

3 PERSONALISED SUPPORT



- Individual sensory profiles.
- Tailored strategies and adjustments.
- Sensory tools and equipment as needed (e.g. wobble cushions, weighted items, ear defenders).
- Clear routines and visual supports.

4 REGULATION AND SELF-HELP SKILLS



- Teaching strategies to help children recognise and manage their sensory needs.
- Breathing, movement and mindfulness activities.
- Supporting independence with sensory tools.

5 SENSORY DIET AND MOVEMENT



- Planned activities throughout the day to help regulate.
- Gross motor breaks and movement opportunities.
- Sensory circuits and brain breaks.

6 WORKING TOGETHER WITH FAMILIES



- Sharing strategies and tools that work at home and school.
- Listening to parental expertise.
- Regular communication and updates.
- Joint planning and goal setting.

7 STAFF TRAINING AND AWARENESS



- Ongoing training in sensory processing and regulation.
- Staff understanding triggers and strategies.
- Consistent responses across school.

8 MONITORING AND CELEBRATING PROGRESS



- Regular review of sensory strategies.
- Celebrating small steps and progress.
- Adjusting support as needs change.
- Recognising strengths and achievements.



Our goal is to create a sensory-aware, inclusive environment where every child feels understood, supported and able to access learning and reach their full potential.



HOW YOU CAN HELP AT HOME



- ✓ Learn what helps your child feel calm and regulated.
- ✓ Create predictable routines and visual schedules.
- ✓ Offer movement breaks and active play.
- ✓ Provide a calm, quiet space for downtime.
- ✓ Be patient and supportive – every day is different.

- ✓ Listen to your child's needs and preferences.
- ✓ Encourage independence with sensory tools.
- ✓ Limit overwhelming environments when possible.
- ✓ Celebrate strengths, interests and progress.
- ✓ Work in partnership with the school.



USEFUL NATIONAL LINKS

- NHS – Sensory Processing Difficulties
www.nhs.uk/conditions/sensory-processing-difficulties
- Sensory Integration Education
www.sensoryintegration.org.uk
- IPSEA – Information, Advice and Support about SEND
www.ipsea.org.uk
- YoungMinds – Supporting Young People's Mental Health
www.youngminds.org.uk



USEFUL WEST SUSSEX LINKS

- West Sussex Local Offer (SEND Information)
www.westsussex.gov.uk/local-offer
- West Sussex SENDIAS
www.westsussexsendias.org.uk
- West Sussex Educational Psychology Service
www.westsussex.gov.uk/education-children-and-families/services/education-psychology-service
- West Sussex Parent Carer Forum (WSPCF)
www.wspcf.org.uk



At Harlands, we care for minds as well as we do for learning.
Together, we build confidence, resilience and a bright future.