



**Strategies/Adaptations for supporting pupils with  
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities:  
in PSHE lessons.**

**SENSORY AND PHYSICAL**

**including: ASD/Anxiety/visual/hearing/sensory processing issues/DCD/Dyspraxia**

**Classroom environment/set up:**

- ✓ Position in room – location of child to accommodate needs as comfortably as possible for the individual child
- ✓ Pre- teach: individual pupils will be given the necessary preparation prior to the lesson so that they know what to expect within the lesson. Any new vocabulary will also be shared with the child before the lesson
- ✓ Pre-warning of change: Individuals will be alerted to any changes that will be made to the seating plan or organisation of the lesson will be shared with the child beforehand through a social script/the use of visuals/at the start of the day or day/s before
- ✓ Ensure all adults in the lesson know the child well and can recognise when to enforce rules and when not to. A non-confrontational approach will help the child to self-regulate and reduce any anxiety and arousal;
- ✓ Ensure any rules are consistently implemented and reinforced – for example those during group discussions. (School rules may need to be differentiated)
- ✓ Consider seating arrangements to minimise distractions (eg at the end of a row, or the back of the classroom). Paired working, or support from a positive role model may help the child to focus. They may also struggle to work in a group, so paired seating may be preferable;
- ✓ Allow a calming-down period before the lesson starts, especially if it follows a breaktime/lunchtime, as transition points may be difficult for the child to manage.

**Resources and equipment, you might consider before the lesson:**

- ✓ A timer will provide a focus for the child's attention, enabling them to complete a task;
- ✓ A 'time-out' card. This may support the child with moderating their own behaviour and to take responsibility for their actions;
- ✓ Listening to music on headphones while engaging with sedentary tasks, tests, or extended writing may help focus attention;
- ✓ Consider which rewards you might use to reinforce positive behaviour (in discussion with the child) and ensure these are given immediately upon task completion;
- ✓ The child may wish to use a word processor if their work is disorganised /illegible;
- ✓ A 'stress ball', or other fiddle object (agreed by the SENCO) may help with concentration

**Teaching methods to consider:**

- ✓ Ensure instructions are delivered clearly, concisely and step by step. Ask the child to repeat them back, or have them written on a prompt sheet;
- ✓ Explicitly teach, reinforce and role model strategies to improve listening skills and encourage note taking;
- ✓ Encourage the use of pictures, or diagrams to represent thoughts and ideas;
- ✓ Use subtle, visual pre-agreed cues, to remind the child when they are off task, or behaviour is inappropriate, (e.g. a tap on the desk to re-focus attention);
- ✓ Provide a mix of activities to suit a range of learning styles, especially including kinaesthetic activities. With this in mind, plan in time-limited learning breaks to allow for the release of excess energy. (an active 'job' might be useful strategy to break up the lesson).

## **Hearing impairment:**

### **Classroom environment/set up:**

- ✓ Speak to the child privately, before a lesson begins, to find out where they would prefer to sit and if there is anything else that can be done to help them;
- ✓ Discreetly check that the child is wearing a hearing aid (if applicable) and frequently check-in with the child that they are hearing and understanding;
- ✓ Be aware of seating arrangements to suit the child's specific needs, for example if they are reliant on lip reading etc (ie seated towards the front of the classroom with an unobstructed view, or with their good ear facing outwards into the classroom);
- ✓ Ensure that any background noise is minimised and control class/group discussions, so that only one person is speaking at once;

### **Resources and equipment you might consider before the lesson:**

- ✓ Ensure any videos/films used are captioned, or a suitable alternative way is provided;
- ✓ Provide any important information/instructions about the lesson in writing, as well as verbally. In addition, provide (in a written format) any lists of subject-specific vocabulary and technical terms;
- ✓ Consider sharing the lesson with the child's laptop (if they use one) and allow them to use headphones and the built-in assistive technology.

### **Teaching methods to consider:**

- ✓ Repeat clearly any questions asked by other students in class before giving a response;
- ✓ Assist with lip reading by doing the following: - ensure your face is clearly visible at all times when speaking and sitting directly opposite the child whenever possible; - seating the child so that they can see others in the class (where possible); - ensuring the lighting is adjusted so that it is not too dark; - providing written materials for all lessons, so that the child is not having to lip read and take notes from the whiteboard;
- ✓ Be aware of the specific circumstances for the child and adapt accordingly. For example: if they acquired their hearing loss early in life, they may have associated literacy issues and need additional support with reading and interpreting information. If they have associated speech issues, they may need support with reading out their work, or may prefer an adult to read it for them.

## **Visual impairment:**

### **Classroom environment/set up:**

- ✓ Keep your classroom visually uncluttered and reduce the number of objects in the immediate working area;
- ✓ Be mindful of seating arrangements and discuss any preferences with the child. For example, they may prefer to work at close distances, (such as sitting closer to the board), or move the object closer to them, (such as people getting closer when talking);
- ✓ Be aware of the specific circumstances of the child, for example: - If they are sensitive to light and glare, control the light in the classroom using blinds, sit the child with their back to windows and reduce the glare on surfaces; - The child may need to be seated near natural light, where possible; - The child may need to use a lamp, which should be placed behind their shoulder on the opposite side to their writing hand and/or on the same side of their stronger eye; - They may need to wear a hat/visors, or sunglasses even when staying indoors. Be sensitive to this and mindful of other pupils comments/ reactions surrounding this; - High contrast objects/pictures may be beneficial. As best practice on handouts/presentations, black & white give the highest contrast. Do not use dark colours together (like blue and green). Avoid using white & grey with other light colours. Avoid pastel colours next to each other. In addition, avoid the use of red or green pens on the whiteboard, as these can be difficult to see;
- ✓ Warn the child of changes in lighting, as this can cause extreme eye strain and headaches.

### **Resources and equipment you might consider before the lesson:**

- ✓ Familiarise yourself with any specific resources the child needs to support them; for example: - they may be better able to read their own writing if they use a thicker black pencil/pen/marker; - they may need a typoscope when reading. This is a reading shield made of a black material with a rectangular cut out. It reduces extra light reflected from the surface of the paper and helps assist with staying on the correct line while reading; - ensure the child is wearing any prescribed glasses to reduce visual fatigue;
- ✓ Provide enlarged/magnified pictures, images, maps and print. The VI team will have assessed the child's vision and recommended a font size and typeface to use. The SENCO will advise on this. Be wary that simply enlarging worksheets on a photocopier makes the letters, or edges of diagrams lose their sharpness and reduces the contrast. Please ensure resources are produced in the correct font size and type-face for the child to access.

### **Teaching methods to consider:**

- ✓ Allow the child to take a break from their work, as this enables them to be visually focused for shorter periods of time and prevents fatigue;
- ✓ Allow more time when visually exploring a material and when completing a visually challenging tasks;
- ✓ If the child has central visual field loss, they may experience incomplete images, or a central "blind spot" when looking. This may mean they appear not to maintain direct eye contact. Be sensitive to this and manage any comments/reactions from their peers

## **COMMUNICATION AND INTERACTION** **including: Speech and language/ASD**

### **Classroom environment/set up:**

- ✓ Create a relaxed, safe and friendly environment with lots of opportunities to talk. Not too noisy;
- ✓ Provide plenty of opportunities for the child to communicate in a small Communication Needs group (they will be less confident working in a big group and will be less involved);
- ✓ Carefully consider any pairings or groupings and include good communication role models for the child to copy;
- ✓ Ensure all adults respond positively to any attempt the child makes at communication – not just speech. Role model this positive response for the child's peers to copy;
- ✓ Listen carefully to what the child says, so that they don't need to repeat themselves;
- ✓ Provide a low distraction/quiet area for the child's group/pair to work so they can focus on their communication;
- ✓ Regularly check understanding and encourage the child to identify what they can/cannot understand.

### **Resources and equipment you might consider before the lesson:**

- ✓ Use signs, symbols and visual timetables to support communication;
  - ✓ Use visual displays (objects and pictures) that can be used to support understanding;
  - ✓ Provide a visual guide to the lesson, eg a check list, or pictures to aid understanding.
- Teaching methods to consider:
- ✓ Be aware of the specific communication difficulties the child may have - it may be a processing disorder;
  - ✓ Be aware of the level of language the child is using – use a similar level to ensure they understand;
  - ✓ Do not rush, or interrupt the child as this means they have to begin processing all over again from the beginning, causing frustration!
  - ✓ Slow down your rate of speech by using pausing and give the child lots of time to process and reply – be prepared to wait for an answer;
  - ✓ Allow time for the child to finish what they are saying, don't finish it for them;
  - ✓ Keep language simple by breaking long sentences into short separate ideas;

- ✓ Provide plenty of repetition (activities and vocabulary);
- ✓ Use non-verbal clues to back up what you are saying eg: gesture;
- ✓ Ensure adults are providing a clear language model and expand what the child says, by repeating their words back to them correctly, without pointing out their errors;
- ✓ Reduce the number of questions you ask and make sure you give time to answer;
- ✓ If you do need to ask questions in front of the class, try to use closed questions, as these require only a 'yes'/'no' answer, which will reduce anxiety.

## **COGNITION AND LEARNING**

### **including: Dyslexia/Dyscalculia/MLD/SLD**

#### **Dyscalculia:**

Although maths is unlikely to be focused on during a PSHE lesson, some of these strategies may still be applicable and worth bearing in mind as things to try. Resources and equipment, you might consider before the lesson:

- ✓ Provide written instructions, printed diagrams and personalised worksheets with a worked example (where appropriate/relevant) for the child to follow, to help them keep up in class;
- ✓ Tracking from the whiteboard to paper may be difficult. Share the lesson with the child, so they can follow it on a laptop (if used);
- ✓ Provide print outs of diagrams and visual support in lessons. Teaching methods to consider:
- ✓ The child may work slower than peers. Be sensitive to this and supportive of any additional time/repetition they may need;
- ✓ The child may become easily overwhelmed and anxious; they may shut down and employ avoidance strategies. You can interrupt this cycle by scaffolding the child's work and supporting them

#### **Dyslexia:**

### **Resources and equipment, you might consider before the lesson:**

When preparing resources:

- ✓ keep sentences and written instructions short and simple to read;
- ✓ check reading ages and ensure any work is differentiated appropriately;
- ✓ use pastel shades of paper (cream is a good alternative to white) and matt paper which reduces 'glare'; - avoid black text on a white background and light text on a dark background;
- ✓ use text font size 12, or above;
- ✓ clear, rounded fonts that have a space between (Century Gothic, Comic Sans, Arial or Verdana) will be used on all handouts, reading materials and on the interactive whiteboard;
- ✓ use 1.5 or double line spacing and wide margins and lower case rather than capital letters;
- ✓ numbered points, or bullet points are easier to follow, rather than continuous prose. Keep paragraphs short and pages uncluttered. For example, avoid using background graphics with text over the top, as this can be too visually confusing.
- ✓ Consider using visual representations (flow charts, illustrations, diagrams) to break up large sections of text, or to explain a particular point in a visual, rather than a written, way;
- ✓ Consider colour-coding text. For example, information in one colour, questions in another (bearing in mind the contrast in the colours/background)
- ✓ Avoid underlining and italics; - use bold text for titles & sub-headings, or to draw attention to important information, or key vocabulary;
- ✓ Use text boxes, or borders for headings, or to highlight important text.
- ✓ On worksheets, leave plenty of space to write a response.

**Familiarise yourself with any resources/equipment the child needs to support them and ensure that these are readily available during their lesson. For example:**

- ✓ It may help to use a ruler, or finger to track the words as they read;

- ✓ A personalised, coloured overlay, or ruler may help cut down on visual contrast and help 'stabilise' any written materials. It may be worth trying a variety of colours to work out the best to use;
- ✓ 'Text to speech' technology. Please facilitate this in your classroom, for example providing a quiet space, seating near to a power point etc. Teaching methods to consider:
- ✓ Help the child to learn and understand any specific vocabulary. This may be done visually, practically and/or during a pre-teach session to build the child's confidence before the lesson;
- ✓ The child may prefer it if an adult (or supportive peer) reads through questions with them;
- ✓ Be supportive of the child if they don't want to read aloud in front of the class (either offering to read it for them, asking a friend to read it, or checking with them beforehand if they would like it shared).

**SEMH including: ASD/ADHD/TRAUMA/ATTACHMENT/**

**Classroom environment/set up:**

- ✓ Ensure you are very familiar with the child's past experiences and context, as this will help you understand their behaviour;
- ✓ Ensure all classroom adults take a non-confrontational, trauma-informed approach. A discreet, understanding and reassuring approach from all classroom adults is vital;
- ✓ Provide a safe, consistent and warm classroom environment. Incorporate as many opportunities for humour and laughter in lessons as possible (as laughter reduces the traumatic response in the brain);
- ✓ Ensure the school day has clear expectations for behaviour and structure, as this will help provide a predictable environment, necessary for the child to feel secure enough to participate and access the learning;
- ✓ Classroom adults need to be emotionally available and able to support and coach the child in ways to calm themselves and manage emotions, as well as opportunities to practise de-escalating when they feel overwhelmed;
- ✓ Ensure adults are vigilant to and mindful of any trigger points for the child, as this will help de-escalate emotional situations;
- ✓ Very carefully check through the lesson content prior to the session and look at it through the eyes of the child's context and background. There may be obvious trigger points that can be planned for and managed prior to the lesson, with some elements needing to be avoided. Equally, there may be trigger points in the lesson, which may not be so clear from the outside. Ensure that the classroom environment, available adults and overall support for the child is strongly in place should this arises.

**Resources and equipment you might consider before the lesson:**

- ✓ Provide a safe and familiar breakout space for the child to use during times when they feel overwhelmed or emotionally dysregulated. The child may also need access to a space to exercise, so that they can have regular learning breaks;
- ✓ Consider the use of a 'help' card (or small item) for the child to use to signal that they are finding the situation tricky, without having to vocalise any details;
- ✓ Have consistent expectations and behaviour plans in place that are based on reward systems, not punishment.

**Teaching methods to consider:**

- ✓ Be extremely mindful and vigilant throughout the lesson, as some of the content of PSHE lessons can be very personal, maybe covering memories, families, emotions etc, all of which are likely potential trigger points. Equally, something which doesn't seem connected on the surface, may be a trigger for the child in some way;
- ✓ Slow yourself down when talking, as this will appear non-threatening: talk slower, use a lower pitch for your voice, don't use complex sentences, minimise body movements;

- ✓ During activities, teach and model positive self-talk to encourage self-belief. Help the child to see that making a mistake is considered a necessary part of learning and that minor mistakes will not incur adult anger, or punishment;
- ✓ Ensure you use plenty of positive reinforcements, rewards, role modelling with the child (while actively ignore any negative behaviour);
- ✓ Use collaborative problem-solving during activities, so that the child feels in control.