

# PORTFIELD SCHOOL & SATELLITE CENTRES



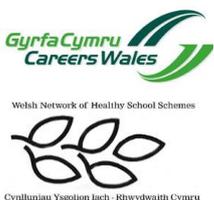
## POLICY DOCUMENT FOR SENSORY



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## **Review of Policy**

This policy will be reviewed annually unless changes of circumstances or legislation requires it to be amended earlier.

Signed: ..... Date: .....  
Headteacher

Signed: ..... Date: .....  
Chair of Governors

## **Portfield School Mission Statement**

Working together    Learning together    Achieving together

At Portfield School we strive to

- Create a happy, safe, supportive and stimulating learning environment
- Value everyone
- Develop everyone's personal, social, emotional health and wellbeing
- Promote relevant academic and vocational skills
- Meet individual needs through an imaginative and flexible approach
- Enable all learners to achieve their full potential

### **UNCRC United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**

- Portfield School places the values and principles of the UNCRC at the heart all policies and practices
- Portfield School is a Rights Respecting School

## *Sensory Policy*

### The sensory curriculum.

We learn about our environment and ourselves through our senses of vision, hearing, smell, taste, touch and movement. Without any one of these we are limited in our capacity of learning. Many of our students have sensory impairments so they must learn to develop each of their senses individually and in combination. We aim to provide a stimulating multi-sensory curriculum for all our students who will benefit from this approach, to encourage more awareness of visual, auditory and tactile experiences. This method gives rise to new learning, using all the senses to access the curriculum and makes learning fun!

We also offer a range of activities, which include:

- Sensory rooms.
- Horse riding.
- Swimming.
- Tacpac
- Aromatherapy massage.
- Music therapy.
- Body awareness programmes.
- Tracking.
- Sound beam.
- Eye gaze.
- Integrex
- Bike mobility.
- Rebound.
- Other activities on occasions.

Specialist areas are used by individuals and small groups to develop the interactive use of switches to control light and sound. They are also used for individual assessment, and for planning for individual visual and multi-sensory programmes for students.

### Policy

The Sensory and Therapeutic Curriculum encompasses the traditional therapies-physiotherapy, speech and language therapy and occupational therapy, but it also includes hydrotherapy, aromatherapy, music therapy, movement therapy and the use of the multi-sensory environments. The input of our therapy teams and the use of our multi sensory environments are linked together in a total approach to leading to the development of programmes for communication, body awareness and mobility and control over the environment.

### Objectives:

- 1) To enable each pupil, whatever the degree of special need, to access the curriculum so that they can reach their full potential and enhance their self-

esteem. Due regard will be given to National curriculum guidelines and the criteria for disapplication and support.

- 2) To stimulate and maintain pupil curiosity, interest and enjoyment in their own education.
- 3) To identify need, assess and provide the most effective support as early as possible for pupils with special educational needs.
- 4) To involve parents and pupils in the assessment and delivery of individual needs and to strive for close cooperation between all agencies concerned.
- 5) To teach using a multi-sensory approach and to encourage students to discover their individual learning styles.
- 6) To ensure all staff are aware of the different types of special educational needs (SEN), in order to make suitable provision in their curricular areas. Awareness should be promoted through information being shared with support staff, in staff meetings and through INSET.
- 7) To meet the needs of all pupils individual needs by offering appropriate forms of educational resources.
- 8) To encourage a 'Whole School' approach to the provision of support for pupils and to foster an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding together with high expectations.
- 9) To ensure that there is no discrimination against pupils with any physical, sensory or learning disability in the learning environment, whilst taking into account the constraints of the school building.

## **Review**

- 1) All pupils must have an annual review of their statement to which the pupil, parents and staff will be asked to contribute.
- 2) All pupils will have an IEP written by the class teacher that will be reviewed with parents termly.
- 3) Formal assessments for core subjects and foundation subjects will be completed by class teacher every May.

## **Definition**

There is a wide spectrum of sensory, multi-sensory and physical difficulties. The sensory range extends from profound and permanent deafness or visual impairment through to lesser levels of loss, which may only be temporary. Physical impairment may arise from physical, neurological or metabolic causes. However, all pupils benefit from a multi-sensory approach to learning regardless of any disabilities.

## **Sensory Curriculum**

A sensory curriculum is part of a whole school curriculum or learning experience. It covers the development of the senses of taste, smell, touch (tactile experiences, vision, sound and bodily experiences). It also covers the development of the integration of all these senses to form a multi-sensory approach for the child to use learning situations. Very special children usually find a sensory curriculum is a vital part of their learning process. It is a tool for learning. The sensory curriculum is extended and integrated throughout the national curriculum for very special children.

## **Sensory Rooms**

Sensory rooms provide a controllable environment where we can select and control sensory experiences we can reduce or subdue conflicting sensations or enhance or exaggerate the sensory experiences we wish to develop.

Sensory rooms provide an ambience that allows us to develop other work with children who may find classrooms distracting or challenging. They are places where children often feel safe enough to communicate their feelings and thoughts that may not surface in classroom based discussions. Sensory rooms provide an environment to meet the needs of the varied learning styles of individual pupils.

As we understand more about the way children learn and the way that the brain develops, we realise that we need to create much more creative and varied styles and types of learning environments, if we are to meet the needs of our children. Small sensory rooms play a vital role in the assessment and ongoing education of children with additional needs.

Our understanding of autism means that we know that some children find it very difficult to modulate the sensory input of all modalities in large cluttered, or even uncluttered, spaces. Small controllable sensory rooms can really help a child make sense of the environment around them. For some, the lack of visual and sound clutter is essential for their education for many reasons.

To create...

a calming environment

a stimulating environment

an uncluttered environment

a controllable environment

Sensory rooms can be many different things.

‘Using a multisensory environment – A practical guide for teachers’ outlined that...

‘The physical, psychological and sociological forms of the MSE (multi sensory environment) encompass 12 design prototypes, each with a particular design feature (Pagliano 2000) they are: the white room, the grey room, the dark room, the sound space, the interactive area, the water area, soft play, the portable environment, the virtual environment, the inclusive area, the pluralist environment and the social space’.

Prof Pagliano outlines ‘the darkroom with its black ceilings, walls and floor forms a giant black background on which images can be presented with maximum definition and minimum visual distraction. The principal use of the room is for visual stimulation, both ophthalmic and cortical. Supplementary equipment that can be used include spotlights and colour slides, fibre-optic sprays, iridescent paint, play dough, coloured and ultraviolet lights and pen light torches which promotes awareness and a

multi-perspective understanding. It focuses on temporal change of the MSE. If the MSE stays the same it becomes stale and both children and staff lose interest. Children notice that which is different. Ideas to help make changes in the MSE can relate to the use of themes (such as sea, space, festivals, indigenous culture) and performances ( such as art exhibitions, music, acting out a story) with a value placed on diversity.'

### **Use of Multi-Sensory Rooms**

Pupils will have a clear programme of activities for use in such rooms and records kept. Sensory rooms are about focused stimulation and providing educational experiences in a manner and style that children can relate to and access, to enable all pupils to achieve their full potential in all areas of the curriculum.

Portfield School adopts the Local Authority guidance on the Use of Sensory rooms.

**PEMBROKESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL  
CYNGOR SIR BENFRO**



**GUIDANCE ON THE USE OF  
SENSORY ROOMS**

**Graham Longster  
Director of Education and  
Children's Services**

**OCTOBER 2012**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This guidance is intended to establish greater clarity regarding the use of rooms or areas in school other than the main classroom. It will be helpful to develop a common terminology covering the areas that may be used depending on their purpose. This should enable schools and the local authority to establish shared expectations about the context and environment.

There are a wide range of reasons why it is essential for pupils to spend some time outside their usual classroom. These may include:

- Additional and/or alternative curriculum activities or learning programmes that may be individual or small group work
- specific enhanced arrangements for individual or small groups with specialist staff such as for SEN, Language assistants or Music.
- provision for speech and language therapy, physiotherapy, school nurses and school-based counselling
- access to sensory rooms as part of a specific programme for individuals who have additional needs or as part of a sensory curriculum for groups of children as part of, for example, the Foundation Phase
- areas of the school used for pupils who have demonstrated challenging or disruptive behaviour and, as part of a whole school approach to positive behaviour, pupils may be placed outside their classroom.

## **2. PROVIDING SENSORY EXPERIENCES**

### **2.1 Sensory Rooms**

The use of sensory rooms has become a particular issue of concern recently and the following guidance will again be helpful to schools in establishing a shared expectation in terms of the use of these specialist facilities.

Sensory rooms are essential to provide and ensure a safe, non-threatening environment in order to calm or stimulate children through each of the senses. Many children need the controlled environmental stimulation to engage in appropriate sensory activities. It is also a space where children can experience and learn the pre requisite skills to some curriculum activities.

Multi sensory rooms are being included in the guidelines for many national curriculum documents e.g. 'Routes to Learning' from the Welsh Government.

**A sensory room must never be used as a time out room for the purpose of behaviour management.**

*Sensory rooms are specifically designed environments which create a very wide range of sensory experiences for children with additional needs in order to provide:*

- Therapy
- Relaxation
- Learning and fun
- Development of hand-eye co-ordination
- Understanding of 'cause and effect'

*By focusing on particular senses such as:*

- Touch
- Vision
- Sound
- Smell
- Taste
- Balance

All of which can be manifested in many ways through:

- Sound (music)
- Visual effects
- Tactile experience
- Use of aromas
- Movement
- Activity

A Sensory Room should:

- Provide a sensory managed environment
- Provide an environment that stimulates all the senses and heightens awareness and promotes relaxation
- Provide an interesting atmosphere to encourage children to explore their environment
- Provide an unrestrained atmosphere where children feel able to enjoy themselves

## **2.2 Access**

Written permission must be sought from parents/carers before the sensory room is utilized by any child.

Use should be restricted to individuals or small groups of children supervised at all times by a member of school staff.

Doors should not be lockable during periods of use by children/staff.

The room should be wheelchair accessible and large enough not to be claustrophobic in nature.

Sessions should be recorded in a log book and not last longer than a single lesson period.

### **2.3 Risk Management**

Use of the room should be covered by an up to date and robust risk assessment.

All children must be supervised when in the room.

Electrical equipment (e.g. lamps, rope lights, fibre optic lights, media systems) must be regularly checked.

Equipment must be kept clean.

There should be regular checks for damaged or faulty equipment.

Damaged equipment must be removed and repaired or replaced immediately.

All electrical wires are to be kept free from doors and walkways.

### **2.4 Good Practice**

The Head teacher should provide policy and information outlining the principles of a sensory curriculum for all staff.

All staff engaged in the delivery of multi-sensory teaching should be aware of and teach according to the content of the policy.

When working alone with a child or young adult the room must contain a window to another populated area or the door left ajar.

Appropriate staff should identify those students with complex needs and compile individual multi-sensory teaching approaches to be used across the curriculum. Approaches will incorporate pre-requisite skills and specific activities, which will underpin the assessment, process and inform the target setting procedures.

The Head teacher for multi-sensory experience in rooms has the responsibility for ensuring appropriate records are maintained.

Liaise with Occupational Therapists, Speech & Language Therapists, Physiotherapist, and ALN Advisory Teachers where appropriate for advice on the compilation of multi-sensory teaching approaches.

Staff should liaise with parents, regarding the content and delivery of multi-sensory teaching approaches in sensory rooms.

### **3 FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS**

There will be times when it is totally appropriate for a school to add to or amend its arrangements for the use of rooms and spaces outside the main classrooms. This could be as a result of changes in demographics or in the curriculum and support needs of pupils.

When a change in the use of accommodation that affects the delivery to children is being planned, it is essential that headteachers work closely with their governing body to explain the proposed change and to receive the agreement of the governing body or relevant committee. It would be good practice for the governors to visit the accommodation and approve the proposal.

It is also essential that the local authority are made aware of the proposal and are able to agree to both the purpose and context of the change including any implications for safeguarding. The school should write to the Director of Education who will action a joint Directorate review of the proposal with Social Services. The Director of Education must issue written approval before the change to the use of such accommodation can commence.

In voluntary aided schools, where the responsibility for buildings rests with the governing body, it is recommended that the approval of the Director is still required for safeguarding purposes and the governing body can implement the change with the knowledge that it does not constitute a safeguarding risk.

Governing Bodies must monitor the use of sensory rooms on an annual basis. This should be undertaken as part of The head teacher's report to the Governing Body. The Headteacher's report will indicate:

1. How rooms have been used.
2. Any change of use or structure of rooms.