



Sensory aids and Fidget policy 2026-2029

1. Rationale:

At Lyngford Park Primary School, we recognise that **some** pupils may benefit from the use of fidget/sensory toys (also known as fidget tools or concentration aids) to support focus, self-regulation, and inclusion in the classroom. However, **most** children should be able to manage the school day not needing these. At home they could be of benefit for before and after-school, as an aid to support regulation or for children to just enjoy playing with. We also plan in class; movement breaks to support within the school day to help with these needs.

Aims

- To enable pupils who need fidget/sensory tools for educational or medical reasons to use them effectively.
- To minimise disruption and maintain a positive learning environment for all pupils.
- To ensure fair and consistent application of this policy across the school.

2. Definition:

Fidget toys are small, handheld objects that can be moved around in various ways. They have become popular support aids for children with Autism, ADHD, Sensory Processing Disorder and other additional needs. Although fidgets may appear fun and enjoyable, for many pupils with **SEND** they can serve a beneficial purpose in supporting pupils' regulation and attention by offering sensory stimulation, reducing stress, improving focus, and helping pupils to regulate during periods of high anxiety. For **some** children with further sensory needs, chewy toys, often referred to as a 'chew' or 'chewelry' can help **some** individuals with Autism, ADHD or sensory processing needs regulate their nervous systems and safely manage the urge to chew on inappropriate items.

3. Guidelines for Use

- **Fidget tools** are only permitted for pupils with a documented need (e.g. as recommended in an Assess, Plan Do, Review document (APDR) or medical professional, such as an OT etc).
- Fidget toys must be approved by the school's SENDCO or a senior leader before being used or ceased being used in school.
- The type of fidget tool used will be agreed upon between the pupil, parents/carers, and the class teacher.
- Fidget tools must be small, quiet, and not visually distracting.
- They are to be used as a tool for concentration, not as a toy for playtime or social interaction
- Fidget tools are for individual use and must not be shared between pupils, unless instructed by the teacher.
- Fidget toys may only be used during specified times. For most cases, the expectation will be it is used for short bursts to aid concentration during some inputs and then put away when completing

independent work. This is to avoid distraction to others and have meaningful impact. They may also be part of a prescribed sensory timetable, or when directed by a teacher/LSA to aid regulation for more complex needs.

- If a child is showing a need for a chew toy, this must be agreed with the SENDCo and dentist informed. Then to liaise which one is appropriate and who will be supplying it.
- **Ear defenders**- for a **few** children it may be at times children do need these, especially for specific loud sounds going on in school or on trips. This will need to be agreed with the class teacher and to make sure it doesn't impact on a child missing any learning or instructions. Over-use of wearing ear defenders can also have detrimental impact on a person's hearing. The NHS guidance on the use of ear defenders around sound sensitivity is this:

"We do not recommend the use of ear defenders or ear plugs; this can cause a child to become even more sensitive to sounds in the long term. Avoid silence" The Dudley group NHS Foundation Trust, 2025. They suggest strategies such as:

- Recognising what sounds your child might be sensitive to. Reassuring them and talking about what is making that sound, as often it is the fear of not knowing or the surprise of the loud noise.
- When you know your child's trigger sounds, not focusing on them too much but can prepare your child and inform them that they may be going somewhere where they might hear these sounds. Prepare them for sound, reassure and support them through hearing the sound.
- Teach them breathing techniques to use to help them manage the sound and reduce anxiety around the sound.

Typically, as children grow and mature, so can their tolerance for sounds. If it is a real concern, you should raise this with your child's GP to see whether referrals need to be made.

If a child looks like they may require some support. We will always start with Blu Tac or a hair tie (this has been recommended from training with occupational therapists), before commercially agreed educational sensory toys, such as:



4. Use in Classrooms

- Teachers will remind pupils that fidget tools should not distract others.
- If a fidget tool becomes a distraction (e.g., is thrown, used to make noise, or used during inappropriate times), the teacher may withdraw its use and discuss alternative strategies with the pupil and parents/carers.
- Fidget tools are not permitted during practical lessons (e.g., PE, science experiments) unless agreed by the teacher for a specific purpose.
- Teachers will have sensory boxes in their classroom that may also contain fidget tools that may be used to self-regulate or meet other sensory needs when appropriate.

5. Parents:

- Request for the school to consider the use of a fidget/ sensory aid if they have concerns regarding their child's needs in relation to a medical or educational need. (First liaise with class teacher, who will then inform the SENDCo)
- Honour the professional opinion of school staff regarding whether it is appropriate for a child to have access to a fidget/ sensory aid.
- Support the school's policy by discussing the 'appropriate use' of fidgets/sensory aids with their children.
- If you feel your child may require a chew toy, we need to have a discussion regarding this, and the child's dentist informed. A discussion about who supplies it and to make sure it is made from non-toxic materials (free from BPA and Phthalates).

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

- Teachers will regularly assess the impact of fidget/sensory aids on pupil engagement and focus. This feedback will be provided to the SENDCO as part of intervention review sessions.
- The SENDCO will seek additional advice for individual pupils from external agency professionals, including Occupational Therapists/Sensory Integration Practitioners, as required.

7. Review Mechanisms

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the school leadership team, in consultation with governors. Adjustments will be made based on feedback and the evolving needs of the school community.