

Sensory Circuits



What is it and why would you use it?

Sensory circuits can be effective in supporting individuals to improve their levels of attention and focus. They can help to tackle sensory imbalances and support those with lots of energy to enable them to redirect it positively. Sensory circuits should include the following 3 elements in the correct order in order to be effective. (Please note you may wish to change the order if you have a child with a very low level of energy and this is causing them to struggle to engage)

- **Alerting** – to provide vestibular stimulation, preparing the brain for learning and for the demands of the school environment. Examples of this could include skipping, running, or jumping jacks
- **Organising** – sorting and preparing the body and brain, providing situations to increase focus, attention span and performance. Activities that require multi-sensory processing and balance. Examples of this could include climbing, balancing, throwing into a target, scooting.
- **Calming** – this is an important to ensure they are calm and centred and ready to learn. Examples of this could include press ups, large ball squash (gym ball) deep hand pressure, bear hug while wrapped in a blanket.

Who is it for?

Sensory Circuits are an example of a sensory integration intervention. They can be used to help those who struggle to process and appropriately use sensory information. Consequently, Sensory Circuits may facilitate engagement for learning.

It is important that we are sensory detectives and personalise circuits to each individual pupil. For some children it may work keeping the same sensory circuit for a half term and other pupils may need them changing more regularly. The amount of times a circuit is used also depends on the pupil. Some may need input before every session. Circuits may help before lunchtime to support pupils in the dining room or before a time where they are required to sit such as an assembly. If you want a pupil to engage in any session, then think about what you are doing to enable them to focus.

What does it look like?

Sensory Circuits can take place anywhere and at any time the pupil needs them to happen. Remember to personalise – what might be calming for one pupil could be alerting to another.

The amount of time spent on each area should also be personalised. E.g. one pupil may benefit from 5 minutes on etc, whereas another may need very little alerting time and lots of calming to enable them to engage in the next learning session.

Like all sessions throughout a pupil's day, think about what support you are giving them – perhaps they need photographs of the equipment, a now / next board or a simple visual timetable to show the activities. They may also need a timer / countdown for each activity.

