

Autism / Social Communication Differences

What you might see:

You might see a child who:

may be very sensitive to noise, lights, touch, movement or smells.

does not notice sensations others do and seek more sensory input.

experiences strong reactions to unexpected sensory experiences.

struggles to filter out background noise.

finds busy, noisy or fast-moving environments overwhelming.

responds slowly because sensory information takes longer to process.

finds everyday activities like assemblies or busy corridors difficult.

avoids certain textures, activities or places due to discomfort.

exhibits anxiety, distress or tiredness from too much sensory input.

seeks certain sensations (movement, pressure, fidgeting) to stay calm.

shows regulating behaviours like rocking, pacing or fidgeting.

has high sensory demands, which make learning difficult.

finds it harder to process spoken language when experiencing sensory overload.

Sensory Differences

What you can try:

- Identify sensory differences in collaboration with CYP and Parent Carers and record adjustments within planning (e.g. CAT Sensory Profile or Sensory Ladder).
- Consider sensory differences when planning reasonable adjustments.
- Use an individual plan to manage sensory needs, with readily available equipment such as sensory resources, ear defenders or cushions.
- Adapt the environment (e.g. reduced distraction areas) according to pupil need.
- Complete regular sensory environment audits (e.g. C-SENSE).
- Ensure access to a low-arousal space (Autism Standard 11).
- Include sensory and movement activities within teaching to support regulation.
- Promote agreed sensory strategies to support self-regulation, with input from relevant services where appropriate.