

St Joseph's Fidget Tools and Sensory Aids Policy

1. Policy Statement

This policy establishes the lawful, inclusive, and educationally appropriate use of fidget tools and sensory aids within the school environment. The school recognises that some pupils, particularly those with additional learning needs, autism spectrum conditions, ADHD, anxiety, or sensory regulation difficulties, may benefit from access to sensory regulation tools to support concentration, emotional regulation, and engagement in learning.

At the same time, the school has a duty to maintain a safe, orderly, and minimally disruptive learning environment for all pupils.

This policy is designed to comply with:

- The Equality Act 2010
- The Children and Families Act 2014
- The SEND Code of Practice
- Relevant safeguarding, health and safety, and behaviour obligations

2. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

Fidget tools are small sensory or tactile objects intended to support self-regulation, attention, or anxiety management.

3. Guiding Principles

1. Reasonable adjustments should be made where appropriate for pupils with identified needs.
2. Any support tool used in class must enhance, or at minimum not impair, learning.
3. Use of fidget tools must be individualised rather than universally applied.
4. Staff retain professional discretion regarding classroom management.
5. The least distracting and least intrusive intervention should always be preferred.

4. Evidence Base

Research evidence regarding fidget tools remains mixed. Current reviews suggest there is insufficient evidence to support universal classroom implementation, although some pupils may benefit when tools are used carefully and individually.

5. Permitted Use

Fidget tools may be permitted where:

- They form part of a pupil's SEND support plan, behaviour support plan, pastoral support plan, or reasonable adjustment.
- A teacher or SENCO determines they support learning or regulation.
- Their use does not disrupt teaching, learning, safety, or assessment conditions.

6. Prohibited Items

The following are not permitted:

- Noisy or musical fidget devices
- Flashing or illuminated devices
- Items capable of being thrown or causing injury
- Novelty items used primarily for entertainment.
 - Items containing liquids which might leak or burst in the classroom.

7. Classroom Expectations

Pupils using fidget tools must:

- Use them quietly and appropriately.
- Stop using them immediately if requested by staff eg if they start to impact on the learning of other pupils around them.

8. Equality and Inclusion

The school recognises that some pupils may require sensory supports as part of reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010.

9. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years or earlier where legislation or guidance changes.

References

- Kriescher et al. (2022). Evaluating the Evidence for Fidget Toys in the Classroom.
- Graziano et al. (2018). To Fidget or Not to Fidget.