



SEND indicator matrix: Secondary



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SEND AREA: Cognition and learning

SEND identifiers

Struggles/has difficulties with:

- Handwriting/presentation skills, despite support and writing frames, and level of EAL above band B
- Reading all the lines, despite using reading ruler and/or finger to track
- Tracking information from the board, keeping track of their place when reading, or copying from the board to own writing at an appropriate speed
- Tracking from a piece of written or numerical text placed next to learner
- Telling the time, times tables, and/or recalling digits
- Recalling information shortly after learning it – e.g., 30 seconds later

Exhibits signs of:

- Missing letters when copying writing; missing words when reading
- Attention-seeking in class; trying to make others laugh
- Work-avoidance behaviours – tearing up work; dropping equipment to avoid working
- Copying others' work and answers
- Missing lines when reading and/or writing
- High levels of distraction – trying to make others laugh when teacher turns their back; making noises; laughing
- Mixing up b/d or 6/9 when writing; missing letters; large, immature writing
- Poor phonological reading; not making progress despite structured interventions

What to do next

- Conduct writing assessments and further observations in class
- Arrange for cognitive ability tests (CAT)
- Arrange for psychometric tests, where qualifications and experience of staff permit
- Arrange a DASH (detailed assessment of speed of handwriting) test in home or preferred language
- Arrange a phonic screening test
- Arrange a reading test (such as the New Group Reading test from Read Write Inc, or phonological tests)
- Arrange a working memory test in home language
- Trial the use of a coloured overlay and/or reading ruler
- Refer to an optometrist to assess visual difficulties
- Consider arranging dyslexia and dyscalculia screening

SEND AREA: Communication and interaction

SEND identifiers

Struggles/has difficulties with:

- Making and keeping friends
- Making and maintaining appropriate eye contact
- Listening
- Turn-taking in conversations, games, class discussions, PE, and/or social activities

Exhibits signs of:

- Avoiding social friendships and/or falling out with friends
- Staring and/or avoiding eye contact
- Unusual head movements – putting head on the desk or constantly turning head
- Hyper-focusing on stimuli in the environment, such as small images or class displays; collecting tiny items
- Poor participation in activities; can end in social fall-outs or aggression
- Immature play; playing chase games/tag; playing with small items
- Pushing others away and/or withdrawing into quiet areas
- Invading other people's personal space; prodding; inappropriate hugging
- Laughing out loud and/or singing at inappropriate times; humming
- Seeking out sensory play using blu tack/sensory toys; fixating on small items
- Lining up equipment such as pens, rulers, fidget toys, etc.
- Becoming angry when peers touch their equipment/pens, etc.
- Feeling distressed, upset, or angry when touching different textures, such as paint or sand
- Spitting at others or biting others/self when angry
- Hitting own head with hands/against a wall
- Screaming or making a high-pitched screech
- Covering ears with hands or putting coat over head in response to loud noises
- Mimicking inappropriate phrases heard from peers and or movies
- Seeking out repetitive patterns; needing a constant routine; becoming upset by unplanned events
- Becoming upset and/or crying due to changes in seating plans
- Fixating on talking about own interests; being obsessed with the same type of interests
- Struggling with eating in loud areas; withdrawing to quiet areas
- Struggling with crowded places; preferring the library and/or other quiet places
- Damaging uniform, such as tearing shirt, biting collar or sleeve, tearing tights, etc.
- Pulling own hair

What to do next

- Referral to outside agencies e.g., speech and language team (using an interpreter if learner using EAL is working at bands A–C)
- Carry out observations of turn-taking games such as Lego therapy, Ludo, etc.
- Carry out ABC (Antecedents, Behaviour, Consequences) observations
- Create a sensory profile
- Administer a self-esteem questionnaire
- Administer social pragmatic profile assessments
- Apply Talking Mats framework, using visual screening tools
- Observe and apply dyspraxia checklist

SEND AREA: Social, emotional, and mental health difficulties

SEND identifiers

Exhibits sign of:

- Low attendance and poor punctuality to school; arriving late to lessons and/or avoiding lessons
- Poor handover from parent/carer to school staff; clinging to parent/carer and/or running away/absconding
- Stomach aches; feeling sick; headaches and/or migraines
- Low motivation and low mood; looking sad; crying
- Attention-seeking with adults; calling out in class
- Shouting at others; calling names; being critical of others
- Panic attacks; breathing difficulties
- Seeking support and/or clinging when adult moves away
- Engaging in conflict with peers; being hurtful towards peers, both verbally and physically
- Losing things; dropping pens, etc.
- Breaking pens/equipment; ripping up paper/books
- Struggling to sit for lengths of time; fidgeting/tapping hands, fingers, and legs; moving up and down and out of the chair frequently
- Drawing the same images over and over; making repetitive actions and/or fixating on the same actions,
- Drawing on hands and/or legs, scratching arms, and/or pinching fingers
- Stimming, including humming/making noises
- Emotional outbursts manifesting as anger; numbness; crying; fight, flight, or freeze reactions; etc.
- Breaking into others' conversations; interrupting/talking over others
- Banging fists on the table/wall; throwing/upturning furniture
- Sitting under the table; hiding in cupboards, corners, etc.
- Running out of class; absconding from lessons
- Pushing/hitting peers and/or staff

- Fear in response to sounds; struggling with fire alarms
- Repeating sexualised language/phrases, and/or racist words
- Not wanting to shower; poor personal hygiene
- Falling asleep in class and/or struggling to fall asleep at night

What to do next

- SENDCo to carry out a sensory profile in the environment (for either neurodivergent and/or trauma profile)
- SENDCo to meet parents to initiate the assess, plan, do, review process
- Complete a strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQ) with learner and parents in home or preferred language; score areas of needs
- Conduct ADHD/neurodivergence questionnaire to gather further information from family (in home or preferred language)
- Conduct anxiety/mental health questionnaires with family (in home or preferred language)

SEND AREA: Physical and/or sensory needs

SEND identifiers

Exhibits signs of:

- Squinting/struggling to see when reading from the interactive white board
- Struggling to focus under bright lights; preferring dark/dim light
- Not hearing sounds or staff when speaking to them
- Missing or not reacting to loud sounds, such as bells and/or fire alarms
- Walking on tip toes and/or missing a step
- Struggling to fasten buttons and/or tie shoes, for example when getting changed for PE
- Banging or bumping into furniture and/or other people; clumsiness; falling off chairs
- Having a poor handwriting grip
- Struggling to thread beads, roll clay into shapes, use paints/pastels, etc.
- Struggling to use scissors and/or glue – i.e., cutting and sticking
- Poor organisation; losing equipment; dropping items
- Poor balance in PE; poor coordination when walking up steps or stairs

What to do next

- Possible referral to optometrist
 - EAL Co-ordinator asks the family to refer to the GP
 - EAL Co-ordinator asks the family to refer to an optometrist/audiologist
 - SENDCo to refer to an occupational therapist
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