

Sensory Observation & Screening Toolkit: Secondary School

How to Use This Sensory Screening Checklist

This checklist is designed to help you and the adults supporting you understand your sensory patterns across school and home. It is not a test or a diagnosis. Instead, it helps build a clearer picture of what feels challenging, what feels manageable, and what helps you regulate.

You are the expert in your own experience. This checklist simply helps organise what you already know about yourself.

Step 1

Do it together

This checklist works best when you complete it with a trusted adult (school or home). It's not a test, and there are no "right" answers. Take your time and be honest about what it feels like for you.

Tip: You don't have to do it all in one go.

It can feel heavy to think about everything at once, so it's OK to do one or two sensory systems at a time across a few sessions

Step 2

Tick what fits most of the time

Read each statement and tick the ones that sound like you. If something only happens occasionally, you can leave it. If you're not sure, you can circle it or make a note to come back to it.

Step 3

Complete the "Voice of the Young Person" worksheet

The checklist gives a snapshot. The Voice of the Young Person worksheet gives more detail. It helps you explain your sensory experiences in your own words and what helps you feel calm, safe or focused.

Step 4

Look for patterns and what helps

Once both documents are completed, look back together and ask:

- **Which sensory systems show up the most?**
- **Are there certain times of day, lessons or places that are harder?**
- **Do things get worse when you're tired, stressed, rushed or things feel unpredictable?**
- **What sensory input do you naturally seek because it helps you regulate? (This often gives good clues about strategies that may help.)**

Step 5

Choose 2–3 priorities and make a plan

Use the "Making Sense of What You've Noticed" section at the end of this checklist to choose the top 2–3 areas to focus on first. Then use the [Sensory Strategies Library](#) to pick a small number of supports you're willing to try.

Once you've agreed what helps, you can create the [one-page Sensory Passport](#). This makes it easy for staff (and home) to support you consistently.



CONTENTS OF THIS CHECKLIST

Table of Contents

TACTILE SENSORY SCREENING	3
VISUAL SENSORY SCREENING	5
AUDITORY SENSORY SCREENING	7
OLFACTORY SENSORY SCREENING	9
GUSTATORY SENSORY SCREENING.....	11
VESTIBULAR SENSORY SCREENING	13
PROPRIOCEPTION SENSORY SCREENING	15
INTEROCEPTION SENSORY SCREENING.....	17
MAKING SENSE OF WHAT YOU'VE NOTICED.....	19

TACTILE SENSORY NEEDS

Also known as sense of touch



Over-Responsive / Sensitive to TACTILE input



Common Observations in School

(May be subtle or masked in structured environments)

- Being accidentally bumped or brushed past feels overwhelming or upsetting
- Crowded corridors and moving between lessons are stressful for me
- Certain uniform items or fabrics feel unbearable or distracting (labels, seams, tight clothes)
- Practical subjects can feel difficult because of how materials feel (science labs, DT materials, art supplies)
- Light touch from others feels more uncomfortable than firm contact
- I feel dysregulated after busy lessons where there is lots of physical contact



Over-Responsive / Sensitive to TACTILE input

Common Observations at Home

(Often more visible during routines, self-care or transitions)

- Certain clothes feel so uncomfortable that they affect my mood or concentration
- Self-care tasks like showering, hair brushing or brushing my teeth feel uncomfortable or stressful
- Unexpected touch from family members makes me tense or upset
- I avoid physical closeness even when I care about people
- I need time alone after busy days because touch feels “too much”

Under-Responsive to TACTILE input



Common Observations in School

(May appear subtle or misunderstood as “not noticing” or “careless”)

- I don't always notice when I've been bumped, hurt, or knocked
- I don't typically realise when my clothes are uncomfortable, twisted, or inside out
- I sometimes touch objects or people without meaning to
- I struggle to notice when my hands or face are dirty



Under-Responsive to TACTILE input

Common Observations at Home

(Often raised around independence and safety)

- I don't always notice cuts, bruises or minor injuries straight away
- I don't always realise when my clothes are uncomfortable, inside out, too tight or not right for the weather
- I might not notice when my hands, face or clothes are dirty
- I may prefer strong touch or firm pressure because light touch doesn't register clearly
- I can struggle with fine motor tasks (buttons, laces, grooming tasks)
- I find it hard not to touch things, even when I know I shouldn't

TACTILE/TOUCH – Additional Observations

This space can be used by home or school adults to add any patterns, triggers or environmental factors noticed over time.

(Use the 'Voice of the Young Person' Resource to further discuss sensory preferences & challenges)

How do touch differences affect me right now?

- Touch differences affect my learning or participation in school
- Touch differences affect my self-care or independence at home
- Touch differences affect my emotions or stress levels
- I think I manage this at school, but it takes effort
- Touch differences are not a big issue for me at the moment
- I tend to be sensitive to touch (things feel “too much”) – Over-Responsive
- I tend not to notice touch easily (I need stronger input to feel it clearly) – Under-Responsive

When Are These Needs Most Noticeable?

Touch responses can sometimes change depending on how busy things are, who is around you, what you're wearing, or how tired you are.

More noticeable during:

Less noticeable when:

VISUAL SENSORY NEEDS



Also known as sense of sight

Over-Responsive / Sensitive to VISUAL input



Common Observations in School

(More noticeable in busy, visually unpredictable environments)

- Bright lights, fluorescent lighting or flickering lights feel uncomfortable or overwhelming
- Visually busy classrooms, wall displays or cluttered spaces make it hard for me to focus
- Lots of movement around me (people walking past, doors opening, activity behind me) distracts or overstimulates me
- Looking at the board, screens or slides for long periods feels tiring or gives me headaches
- Busy corridors, assemblies or large group spaces feel visually overwhelming
- Busy practical classrooms (science, DT, art) feel visually intense and hard to manage
- I prefer to wear my hood up, look down, or reduce eye contact to limit visual input



Over-Responsive / Sensitive to VISUAL input

Common Observations at Home

(Often clearer during routines, outings or downtime)

- Bright lighting at home feels uncomfortable or irritating
- Cluttered or busy rooms make it hard for me to relax
- Busy shops or public spaces feel visually overwhelming
- After school I feel visually drained and need time in a calmer space
- Sudden changes to my environment make me feel unsettled

Under-Responsive to VISUAL input



Common Observations in School

(May be misunderstood as "not paying attention" or "daydreaming")

- I miss information written on the board or slides
- It takes me longer to process visual instructions or demonstrations
- I struggle to find resources or equipment even when they are nearby
- Copying from the board or textbooks is difficult for me
- I do not always notice visual reminders, timetables or displays
- I am drawn to bright lights, reflections or moving objects



Under-Responsive to VISUAL input

Common Observations at Home

- I struggle to find things even when they are in front of me
- I do not always notice mess or unfinished tasks
- I miss facial expressions or visual social cues
- I sit very close to screens or spend long periods looking at them
- I find it hard to organise homework, revision or tasks visually

VISUAL / SIGHT – Additional Observations

This space can be used by home or school adults to add any patterns, triggers or environmental factors noticed over time.

(Use the 'Voice of the Young Person' Resource to further discuss sensory preferences & challenges)

How do visual sensory differences affect me right now?

- Visual differences affect my learning or participation in school
- Visual differences affect my self-care or independence at home
- Visual differences affect my emotions or stress levels
- I think I manage this at school, but it takes effort
- Visual differences are not a big issue for me at the moment
- I tend to be sensitive to visual input (things feel “too much” or overwhelming) – Over-Responsive
- I tend not to notice visual detail easily or need more visual input to stay alert – Under-Responsive

When Are These Needs Most Noticeable?

Visual responses can sometimes change depending on lighting, movement around you, how busy the environment is, or how tired you are.

More noticeable during:

Less noticeable when:

AUDITORY SENSORY NEEDS



Also known as sense of sound

Over-Responsive / Sensitive to AUDITORY input



Common Observations in School

(Often raised as anxiety, behaviour or concentration concerns)

- Loud or unexpected noises (e.g. bells, alarms, shouting, chairs scraping) feel overwhelming or make me anxious
- Busy environments such as assemblies, dining halls or corridors feel too loud and hard to manage
- I find it hard to concentrate when there is background noise or lots of people talking
- Small repetitive sounds (e.g. tapping, sniffing, humming, clocks ticking) are hard for me to ignore
- Eating sounds (chewing, crunching, breathing noises) make it difficult for me to stay calm or focused
- I cover my ears, wear a hood or headphones, or look for ways to block out sound when it feels too much



Over-Responsive / Sensitive to AUDITORY input

Common Observations at Home

(Often raised as "sensory meltdowns" or avoidance)

- Household noise (TV, appliances, siblings, people moving around) feels overwhelming
- Sudden or loud sounds (e.g. doors slamming, toilet flushing) make me panic, freeze or shut down
- Busy shops, gatherings or public places feel stressful because of the noise
- I need quiet time after school or busy days to recover
- Noise makes it hard for me to relax, settle or sleep
- I avoid certain activities or spaces because the sound feels too intense

Under-Responsive to AUDITORY input



Common Observations in School

(Often raised as "not listening" or "ignoring instructions")

- I don't always notice when my name is called
- I miss verbal instructions unless they are repeated
- It takes me longer to process what someone has said
- I find it hard to follow group discussions, especially when more than one person is talking
- I may appear disengaged in lessons that are mostly verbal
- I sometimes make noises to myself or enjoy echoing spaces where sounds are amplified



Under-Responsive to AUDITORY input

Common Observations at Home

(Often raised as "not listening" or concerns about independence)

- I don't always respond when people speak to me
- I need things repeated and this can frustrate others
- I watch TV or listen to music very loudly
- I struggle to follow spoken routines or instructions
- People think I am ignoring them when I have not heard
- I enjoy making sounds or being in spaces where noise echoes

AUDITORY/SOUND Additional Observations

This space can be used by home or school adults to add any patterns, triggers or environmental factors noticed over time.

(Use the 'Voice of the Young Person' Resource to further discuss sensory preferences & challenges)

How do auditory differences affect me right now?

- Auditory differences affect my learning or participation in school
- Auditory differences affect my self-care or independence at home
- Auditory differences affect my emotions or stress levels
- I think I manage this at school, but it takes effort
- Auditory differences are not a big issue for me at the moment

- I tend to be sensitive to sound (noise feels “too much” or overwhelming) – Over-Responsive
- I tend not to notice sound easily or need more input to stay alert – Under-Responsive

When Are These Needs Most Noticeable?

Responses to sound can sometimes change depending on noise levels, unpredictability, how many people are talking, or how tired you are.

More noticeable during:

Less noticeable when:

OLFACTORY SENSORY NEEDS

Also known as sense of smell



Over-Responsive / Sensitive to SMELL input



Common Observations in School

(Often raised as avoidance, distress, or sudden behaviour changes)

- Certain smells (e.g. toilets, dining hall, science labs, food smells) make me feel overwhelmed, sick or anxious
- Food smells make it hard for me to concentrate or stay in a room
- Cleaning products, air fresheners or perfume feel strong, distracting or upsetting
- I feel uncomfortable in certain classrooms because of how they smell
- Strong smells make me want to leave the lesson or shut down
- I may comment that someone smells because the odour feels overwhelming to me



Over-Responsive / Sensitive to SMELL input

Common Observations at Home

(Often raised during routines, meals, or outings)

- Cooking smells feel overwhelming, even if I like the food
- Bathroom smells make it hard for me to use the space comfortably
- Certain perfume, deodorant or cleaning products feel too strong for me
- Strong smells affect my mood or make me irritable
- I avoid certain rooms or activities because of how they smell
- I find it hard to be near people who wear strong perfume, deodorant or have noticeable smells

Under-Responsive to SMELL input



Common Observations in School

(Often raised as hygiene, safety or awareness concerns)

- I don't notice smells that other people react to
- I don't realise when my clothes or belongings smell
- I'm not always aware of hygiene issues (e.g. body odour)
- I don't notice warning smells (e.g. burning, chemicals)
- I rely on others to tell me when something smells unusual



Under-Responsive to SMELL input

Common Observations at Home

(Often raised around independence and personal care)

- I don't notice when clothes need washing or changing
- I'm not always aware of my own body odour
- I struggle to tell when food smells off or unsafe
- I don't notice when rooms smell unpleasant
- I need reminders about hygiene or laundry routines

OLFACTORY/ SMELL Additional Observations

This space can be used by home or school adults to add any patterns, triggers or environmental factors noticed over time.

(Use the 'Voice of the Young Person' Resource to further discuss sensory preferences & challenges)

How do smell differences affect me right now?

- Smell differences affect my learning or participation in school
- Smell differences affect my self-care or independence at home
- Smell differences affect my emotions or stress levels
- I think I manage this at school, but it takes effort
- Smell differences are not a big issue for me at the moment

- I tend to be sensitive to smells (odours feel “too much” or overwhelming) – Over-Responsive
- I tend not to notice smells easily or rely on others to alert me – Under-Responsive

When Are These Needs Most Noticeable?

Responses to smells can change depending on enclosed spaces, ventilation, how close you are to others, stress levels or fatigue.

More noticeable during:

Less noticeable when:

GUSTATORY SENSORY NEEDS

Also known as sense of taste



Over-Responsive / Sensitive to TASTE input



Common Observations in School

(Often raised as refusal, distress or anxiety around food)

- I avoid school food because the tastes feel too strong or unpredictable
- Strong flavours make me feel uncomfortable, sick or overwhelmed
- I struggle with foods that are mixed together or touching on the plate
- Lunchtime feels stressful or anxiety-provoking because of food expectations
- I avoid food-related lessons or activities because I feel pressured to taste
- Unexpected changes to food (brand, recipe, temperature) make it hard for me to eat



Over-Responsive / Sensitive to TASTE input

Common Observations at Home

(Often raised as "fussy eating" or mealtime battles)

- I eat a small range of foods because many tastes feel unpleasant
- Being asked to "just try" foods makes me anxious or upset
- Certain flavours make me gag or feel overwhelmed
- Mealtimes feel stressful or emotionally draining
- If a safe food tastes slightly different, I may stop eating it

Under-Responsive to TASTE input



Common Observations in School

(Often raised as unusual food choices or lack of awareness)

- I prefer very strong flavours or spicy foods to feel satisfied
- I add lots of sauce, seasoning or flavouring to food
- I don't always notice when food tastes bland or unusual
- I may eat quickly without noticing taste
- I put non-food items in my mouth without thinking



Under-Responsive to TASTE input

Common Observations at Home

(Often raised around safety or eating habits)

- I prefer very strong, sour, spicy or intense flavours
- I seek out chewy or crunchy foods for extra sensory input
- I eat quickly and don't always notice when I'm full
- I may over-season food without realising
- I don't always notice when food is too hot in temperature

GUSTATORY/TASTE Additional Observations

This space can be used by home or school adults to add any patterns, triggers or environmental factors noticed over time.

(Use the 'Voice of the Young Person' Resource to further discuss sensory preferences & challenges)

How do taste differences affect me right now?

- Taste differences affect my learning or participation in school
- Taste differences affect my self-care or independence at home
- Taste differences affect my emotions or stress levels
- I think I manage this at school, but it takes effort
- Taste differences are not a big issue for me at the moment

- I tend to be sensitive to taste (flavours feel “too much” or overwhelming) – Over-Responsive
- I tend to need stronger flavours or more intense taste to notice it clearly – Under-Responsive

When Are These Needs Most Noticeable?

Responses to food and taste can vary depending on stress levels, predictability, social demands and fatigue. Consider when eating becomes more restricted or challenging, and what this may suggest about environmental load or emotional regulation

More noticeable during:

Less noticeable when:



VESTIBULAR SENSORY NEEDS

Also known as sense of Movement & Balance

Over-Responsive / Sensitive to VESTIBULAR input



Common Observations in School

(Often raised as anxiety, avoidance, or reluctance to join in)

- PE lessons or fast-paced movement activities make me feel anxious or overwhelmed
- Busy corridors and rushing between lessons make me feel unsettled or off balance
- I feel uncomfortable when my feet leave the ground or when I am not fully stable
- I avoid stairs, slopes or crowded stairwells because they feel unsafe
- I feel anxious using lifts, escalators or walking on uneven surfaces
- After busy movement-heavy lessons, I feel dysregulated, tired or irritable
- I feel anxious or unsafe sitting on high stools or chairs where my feet are not firmly on the floor



Over-Responsive / Sensitive to VESTIBULAR input

Common Observations at Home

- Activities like fairground rides or spinning feel too intense
- Car journeys, buses or trains make me feel nauseous or unwell
- Washing my hair or tipping my head back feels uncomfortable or stressful
- I feel anxious on heights, balconies or open staircases
- After busy days with lots of movement, I feel overwhelmed
- Bending forward to tie my shoelaces or pick something up makes me feel uncomfortable or off balance

Under-Responsive to VESTIBULAR input



Common Observations in School

(Often raised as "hyperactive", "unsafe", or "can't sit still")

- I find it hard to stay seated and often need to move
- I fidget, rock, bounce or shift position when sitting
- I lean on walls, furniture or people when standing
- I seek out spinning, running or fast movement
- I struggle with balance, coordination or gross motor tasks
- I find it hard to negotiate busy school spaces safely



Under-Responsive to VESTIBULAR input

Common Observations at Home

(Often raised around safety, routines or exhaustion)

- I am often in motion and find it hard to sit still
- I seek out bouncing, spinning or rough movement
- I slump, lean or struggle to maintain upright posture
- I have poor balance or coordination in everyday tasks
- I bump into things or misjudge distances

VESTIBULAR Additional Observations

This space can be used by home or school adults to add any patterns, triggers or environmental factors noticed over time.

(Use the 'Voice of the Young Person' Resource to further discuss sensory preferences & challenges)

How do movement differences affect me right now?

- Movement differences affect my learning or participation in school
- Movement differences affect my self-care or independence at home
- Movement differences affect my emotions or stress levels
- I think I manage this at school, but it takes effort
- Movement differences are not a big issue for me at the moment

- I tend to be sensitive to movement (motion feels overwhelming or unsafe) – Over-Responsive
- I tend to need more movement or struggle to stay still – Under-Responsive

When Are These Needs Most Noticeable?

Vestibular responses (movement and balance) can vary depending on transitions, changes in pace, environmental movement and levels of predictability.

More noticeable during:



Less noticeable when:



PROPRIOCEPTION SENSORY NEEDS

Also known as sense of Body Awareness & Force

Proprioceptive input (body awareness, deep pressure and muscle activity) is typically regulating for most people. Difficulties are more commonly linked to under-registration, force grading or a need for additional input rather than sensitivity.

<p style="text-align: center;">Seeks or Needs Increased PROPRIOCEPTIVE Input</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> Common Observations in School</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>(Often raised as “rough”, “clumsy”, “can’t sit still” or “too physical”)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> I find it hard to stay seated and often lean, rock, tip my chair or shift position during lessons <input type="checkbox"/> I slump on the desk, rest my head on my hands, or wrap myself into my chair to feel supported <input type="checkbox"/> I bump into desks, doorways or people without meaning to <input type="checkbox"/> I misjudge personal space and may stand too close or brush past others <input type="checkbox"/> I use too much or too little force when writing, colouring, cutting or using tools <input type="checkbox"/> My handwriting can look messy because I struggle to control pressure or speed <input type="checkbox"/> I fidget with my hands a lot (picking skin, pulling sleeves, cracking knuckles) to get body input <input type="checkbox"/> I chew hoodie strings, pens, nails or objects when concentrating or stressed <input type="checkbox"/> I press hard on the table, squeeze items, or “heavy lean” when working <input type="checkbox"/> I can seem too rough in PE, practical lessons or group work and may hurt others accidentally <input type="checkbox"/> When I feel dysregulated, I may slam objects, bang my bag, or punch walls/doors without thinking <input type="checkbox"/> I find changing for PE difficult because my body feels awkward, clumsy or hard to organise 	<p style="text-align: center;">Seeks or Needs Increased PROPRIOCEPTIVE Input</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> Common Observations at Home</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Often raised around behaviour, safety or exhaustion</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> I seek strong hugs, pressure or being “squashed” to feel calm <input type="checkbox"/> I like weighted experiences (heavy blankets, weighted lap pads, heavy hoodies) <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer tight or heavier clothing (hood up, snug layers) because it helps me feel held together <input type="checkbox"/> I chew clothing, hoodie strings, fingers or objects when I’m concentrating, stressed or bored <input type="checkbox"/> I pick at skin, bite nails, crack knuckles or fiddle with my body to get input <input type="checkbox"/> I jump, crash, stomp, slam doors or use more force than I realise <input type="checkbox"/> I lean heavily on furniture, walls or people when standing or walking around <input type="checkbox"/> I struggle to calm down unless I move my body or get deep pressure <input type="checkbox"/> I can accidentally hurt others during play because I misjudge my strength <input type="checkbox"/> When I’m dysregulated I might throw objects, hit things, or punch walls/cushions <input type="checkbox"/> I find fine motor tasks hard (buttons, laces, hair, opening packets) <input type="checkbox"/> I seem clumsy, drop things, knock drinks over, or misjudge where my body is
---	---

PROPRIOCEPTION Additional Observations

This space can be used by home or school adults to add any patterns, triggers or environmental factors noticed over time.

(Use the 'Voice of the Young Person' Resource to further discuss sensory preferences & challenges)

How do proprioception differences affect me right now?

- Proprioception differences affect my learning or participation in school
 - Proprioception differences affect my self-care or independence at home
 - Proprioception differences affect my emotions or stress levels
 - I think I manage this at school, but it takes effort
 - Proprioception differences are not a big issue for me at the moment
- I tend to need more proprioceptive input (deep pressure, heavy work or muscle input) to feel regulated

When Are These Needs Most Noticeable?

Proprioceptive responses (body awareness, muscle input and force control) can vary depending on movement opportunities, environmental demands and levels of fatigue or stress.

More noticeable during:





Less noticeable when:



INTEROCEPTION SENSORY NEEDS

Also known Internal Body Signals



Interoception is how we notice signals from inside the body (e.g. hunger, thirst, needing the toilet, tiredness, temperature, pain, illness and emotions). Some signals may feel very loud or urgent, while others may be quiet or hard to notice. You may experience different patterns across different body signals.

<p>HUNGER & THIRST </p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I notice hunger or thirst really quickly and it feels urgent or distracting</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> If I'm not allowed to eat or drink straight away, I get irritable, anxious or shaky and it's hard to think clearly.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I can go most of the school day without realising I'm hungry or thirsty, then suddenly feel dizzy, angry or overwhelmed.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> When I'm gaming, or focused on something, I forget to eat or drink until someone reminds me.</p>	<p>TOILETING </p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> When I feel the need to use the toilet, it feels sudden and urgent and I worry about not getting there in time.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I'm often worried or thinking about if I need to go to the toilet</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I don't notice I need the toilet until it feels urgent or uncomfortable.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I ignore the feeling and stay in class because I feel too worried to ask</p>
<p>TIREDNESS/ ENERGY </p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> If I feel even slightly tired, everything feels harder (noise is louder, work feels impossible, I get snappy).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> After a busy school day, I feel completely drained and can't cope with homework or conversation.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I don't realise I'm tired until I suddenly shut down, get emotional or argue with people.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I stay up late on my phone or gaming because I don't feel tired - then I crash the next day.</p>	<p>TEMPERATURE REGULATION </p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> If a classroom or space is too hot or too cold, I can't concentrate and feel uncomfortable or stressed.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Small temperature changes (e.g. going outside then back in) affect my mood more than other people's.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I don't notice I'm too hot or cold until someone points it out.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I forget to adjust my clothing (e.g. still wearing a hoodie in heat, no coat in winter).</p>

<p>PAIN / ILLNESS </p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Minor aches (headaches, tummy aches, heart beating fast) feel intense and worrying.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I focus on small body sensations and worry something is wrong.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I don't notice injuries (cuts, bruises, sprains) until they're pointed out.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I carry on even when unwell because I don't recognise early signs.</p>	<p>EMOTIONS & INTERNAL SENSATIONS </p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Strong emotions hit fast and feel huge (e.g. embarrassment feels unbearable, anger feels explosive).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> When my heart races or my chest feels tight, I think something is wrong and panic.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> My emotional reactions seem to come "out of nowhere" - I don't notice build-up.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I find it hard to explain what I'm feeling until it becomes intense or I'm already upset.</p>
--	--

(Use the 'Voice of the Young Person' Resource to further discuss sensory preferences & challenges)

How do interoception differences affect me right now?

- Interoception differences affect my learning or participation in school
- Interoception differences affect my self-care or independence at home
- Interoception differences affect my emotions or stress levels
- I think I manage this at school, but it takes effort
- Interoception differences are not a big issue for me at the moment

- I tend to experience my internal signals as "loud" (they feel intense or overwhelming)
- I tend to experience my internal signals as "quiet" (they are hard to notice until they become extreme)

When Are These Needs Most Noticeable?

Interoceptive awareness can vary depending on stress levels, fatigue, predictability and environmental demands. Consider when internal signals become more overwhelming or harder to notice.

Interoception difficulties are more noticeable during:

Interoception difficulties are less noticeable when:

MAKING SENSE OF WHAT YOU'VE NOTICED

What Have We Noticed About My Sensory Patterns?

Looking across all the sensory systems, these are the patterns that stand out most for me:

- I'm more sensitive in unpredictable or busy environments
- I need a lot of movement, pressure or physical input to feel regulated
- I don't always notice my internal signals until they're intense
- Sensory needs increase when I'm tired
- I mask or push through at school
- My sensory needs affect my emotions
- My sensory needs affect my learning
- My sensory needs affect my independence at home

OR..

Key patterns we've noticed together:

Which Sensory Systems Are Currently Impacting Me Most?

Select up to 3 priority areas:

- Tactile
- Visual
- Auditory
- Olfactory
- Gustatory
- Vestibular (movement & balance)
- Proprioception (body awareness & pressure)
- Interoception (body awareness & pressure)

When Is My Day Hardest?

If sensory overload builds up across the day, it helps to identify when things feel most difficult. This is often the best place to start.

- Morning routine (before school)
- Journey to school
- Arriving at school
- Morning lessons
- Break time
- Lunchtime
- Afternoon lessons
- End of day / leaving school
- After school / evening
- Bedtime

What is happening at this time that makes it hard? (Noise? Social pressure? Hunger? Fatigue? Movement? Unpredictability?)

Our Plan: 2–3 Priorities to Try First

Choose 2–3 High-Impact Priorities

When we focus on two or three high-impact sensory needs, things often improve across the whole day. Small changes can make a big difference.

Start where:

- The impact feels biggest for you
- You experience the most stress
- A small change could help quickly

Small environmental shifts often create significant change.

Priority 1:	
What is the sensory need? (What feels hardest right now?)	
When does this usually happen?	
What happens when it builds up?	
What small change will we try first?	
What do I need to do to make this strategy work? (What will I try? What will I practise? What will I remember to do?)	
What do adults need to do to help this work? (What support, reminders or adjustments will help me succeed?)	
What will be different if this works??	
How will we know it's helping?	
Review date:	

Priority 2:	
What is the sensory need? (What feels hardest right now?)	
When does this usually happen?	
What happens when it builds up?	
What small change will we try first?	
What do I need to do to make this strategy work? (What will I try? What will I practise? What will I remember to do?)	
What do adults need to do to help this work? (What support, reminders or adjustments will help me succeed?)	
What will be different if this works??	
How will we know it's helping?	
Review date:	

Priority 1:	
What is the sensory need? (What feels hardest right now?)	
When does this usually happen?	
What happens when it builds up?	

What small change will we try first?	
What do I need to do to make this strategy work? (What will I try? What will I practise? What will I remember to do?)	
What do adults need to do to help this work? (What support, reminders or adjustments will help me succeed?)	
What will be different if this works??	
How will we know it's helping?	
Review date:	

Next Steps

Once this plan has been completed (alongside the Voice of the Young Person worksheet), use the information gathered to create a clear, one-page Sensory Passport.

This passport should summarise:

- The young person's key sensory patterns
- The top priority needs
- Agreed strategies and supports
- What helps them feel regulated, safe and ready to learn

The Sensory Passport should be shared with relevant teaching and support staff so that strategies are applied consistently across lessons and settings.

Consistency matters. Sensory strategies are most effective when they are understood and used in the same way by all adults supporting the young person.

Review the passport regularly and update it as needs change.