Together Notts

For children, young people and families

Nottinghamshire Inclusive Mainstream Practice

Ordinarily Available Provision

Practical guidance for inclusive mainstream schools and settings

A needs-led guide to inclusive teaching, support and reasonable adjustments that should ordinarily be available to all children and young people in mainstream schools without waiting for a diagnosis or specialist involvement.

Last updated November 2026

SEND Partnership

Nottinghamshire County Council

Parent Carer Forum – Championing the voice

NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

Click here to return to this page

Contents

Section 1: About Inclusive Mainstream Practice

1.1 Key terms used in this guidance 04
1.2 Values and principles 05
1.3 Introduction, purpose and use 06
1.4 What children and young people should expect 08
1.5 Core references 09

Section 2: Good practice for all children and young people

2.1 Involving children and young people 10
2.2 Working in partnership with families 10
2.3 Building relationships, belonging and inclusive culture 11
2.4 Providing inclusive environments and sensory accessibility 11
2.5 Supporting attendance 12
2.6 Supporting transitions 12
2.7 Implementing effective assessment, planning and review processes 13
2.8 Effective teaching to support learning and executive function 13
2.9 Strong leadership and systems 14
2.10 Supporting children and young people in care and those with a social worker 15
2.11 Preparation for adulthood from the earliest years 15
2.12 When to seek further advice 16

Click to navigate

I'm interactive

Section 3: Four Broad Areas of Need

3.1 Communication and interaction **17**
3.1.1 A good communication and interaction environment .. 18
3.1.2 Attention and listening 19
3.1.3 Receptive communication: understanding language 20
3.1.4 Autism and social communication 21
3.1.5 Expressive communication: expressing needs and ideas 22
3.1.6 Key resources and references 23

3.2 Cognition and learning **24**
3.2.1 Cognition and learning: a good cognition and learning environment 24
3.2.2 General learning and adaptive teaching 25
3.2.3 Executive functioning and cognitive load 26
3.2.4 Specific learning difficulties 27
3.2.5 Key resources and references 28

3.3 Social, emotional and mental health **29**
3.3.1 A good SEMH environment 29
3.3.2 Relationships and emotions 30
3.3.3 Behaviour as communication 31
3.3.4 Emotional wellbeing and attendance 32
3.3.5 Transition and change 33
3.3.6 Key resources and references 34

3.4 Sensory, physical and health needs **35**
3.4.1 A good sensory, physical and health environment 35
3.4.2 Vision impairment 36
3.4.3 Hearing loss 37
3.4.4 Physical disability and mobility 38
3.4.5 Health, medical needs and care plans 39
3.4.6 Sensory processing 40
3.4.7 Key resources and references 42

Appendix 43
Enhanced Provision and In-house Hub Standards links

Section 1: About Nottinghamshire Inclusive Mainstream Practice

1.1. Key terms used in this guidance

Term	Meaning
CYP	Children and young people.
DfE	Department for Education; the government department responsible for education and children's services in England.
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan; a legal document that specifies assessed needs, outcomes and provision. Also known as an EHC plan.
Graduated approach	The Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle used to understand need, put support in place and check impact; part of the SEND Code of Practice.
Needs-led	Support based on the CYP's strengths, barriers and presentation, not dependent on diagnosis.
OAP	Ordinarily available provision; the support, teaching, reasonable adjustments and inclusive approaches that should usually be available in mainstream settings without waiting for diagnosis or specialist involvement.
Reasonable adjustments	Changes made to prevent disabled CYP being placed at a substantial disadvantage.
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.
SENCo	Special Educational Needs Coordinator; the member of staff with statutory responsible for coordinating SEND provision in a school or setting.
Universal Provision	Teaching approaches and provision available for every CYP in school.
Whole-school expectations	Inclusive approaches that should be visible across classrooms, routines, relationships, leadership and systems.

1.2 Values and principles

Values	Principles
Belonging and inclusion	Ensure every child and young person is known, included and valued within their school community
Child and family centred	Listen to children, young people and families early and often, using accessible communication and pupil voice to understand what helps, what is difficult and what needs to change.
Strengths-based ambition	Start with strengths, interests and aspirations, maintain high expectations and remove barriers to learning and participation.
Graduated approach	Respond to presenting needs as soon as they are identified, using the graduated approach and reasonable adjustments rather than waiting for a diagnosis or specialist support.
Equity and needs-led support	Support based on the CYP's strengths, barriers and presentation, not dependent on diagnosis.
Accessible and practical	Plan environments, teaching, routines and communication so support is practical, consistent and easy for teachers to apply.
Shared responsibility and commitment	A school ethos that champions inclusive practice as 'everybody's business' and staff working in roles across the school system who share a commitment to inclusion, belonging and ensuring that all children thrive.
Looking ahead	Support CYP from the earliest stage to develop independence, confidence, communication, relationships and life skills for their future including preparation from adulthood.
Whole-school expectations	Inclusive approaches that should be visible across classrooms, routines, relationships, leadership and systems.

1.3 Introduction, purpose and use

Why this guidance exists	• Inclusive education is central to Nottinghamshire's ambition for all CYP to feel safe, valued, listened to and inspired to achieve their full potential. • This guidance describes the inclusive teaching, support and reasonable adjustments that mainstream schools and settings should normally be able to provide from their existing staffing, expertise and delegated resources. • This guidance is intended to support consistent, equitable, needs-led inclusive practice, early identification, the graduated approach, constructive conversations with families and timely review of impact.
Scope and audience	• This guidance is for mainstream schools and settings. • Examples should be interpreted developmentally and adapted to the age, communication, strengths, barriers and context of the CYP.
Legal context and duties	• Schools should use their best endeavours to secure the special educational provision called for by a pupil's SEN, in line with the Children and Families Act 2014 and SEND Code of Practice. • Schools should anticipate barriers and make reasonable adjustments so disabled CYP are not placed at a substantial disadvantage, in line with the Equality Act 2010. • Teachers should adapt teaching to respond to CYP's strengths and needs, consistent with the Teachers' Standards. • Schools should meet duties relating to safeguarding, attendance, equality, medical needs and provision specified in EHCPs. OAP supports these duties but does not replace them.
What Inclusive Mainstream Practice is and is not	• It is a core inclusive offer, part of high-quality teaching, whole-school expectations, reasonable adjustments and the graduated response. • OAP is needs-led. Support should be based on the CYP's strengths, barriers and presentation, not dependent on diagnosis. • Important to recognise that OAP is not an exhaustive checklist, a ceiling on support, or a guarantee that every strategy will be suitable.

How schools should use this guidance	• Begin with the CYP: listen to their views, strengths, aspirations, family knowledge and lived experience. • Consider barriers across learning, communication, sensory processing, relationships, health, attendance, environment and context, not just presenting behaviour. • Do not wait: Support when a need or barrier is identified. A diagnosis, external report or formal assessment is not a prerequisite for action. • Check the whole-school expectations in Section 2, then select a small number of relevant strategies from one or more areas of need. • Record who will do what, how often and for how long, with expected impact and a review date. This should be tied into the Assess-Plan-Do-Review process as part of the graduated response. • Review implementation and impact with the CYP and family. Continue, adapt, intensify or seek further advice where needed.
Understanding presentation	• "What you might notice" is not a diagnostic checklist. Similar presentations can arise from different or interacting factors, including communication, learning, sensory processing, physical or mental health, trauma, relationships, environmental demands and unmet needs. Schools should look for patterns across time and context, test hypotheses respectfully and review whether support is reducing barriers.
Local pathways and multi-agency support	• Ordinarily available provision is strengthened when education, health, social care and other services provide accessible advice, consultation and workforce support at the earliest stage. Nottinghamshire's SEND local offer details the support that can be accessed without a diagnosis or EHCP.

1.4 What children and young people should expect

Children and young people should be able to say…	What you can do
Know me, my strengths and what matters to me.	Build a rounded picture of interests, identity, aspirations, relationships, communication and successful support, not only difficulties or labels.
Listen to me and show me what changed.	Provide accessible ways to express views, revisit them, and explain how they influenced decisions and support.
Help me feel safe, welcome and that I belong.	Prioritise trusted relationships, dignity, predictability, anti-bullying work and meaningful participation in learning, social times and school life.
Tell me what is happening and prepare me for change.	Make routines visible, explain changes early and plan transitions with the CYP and family.
Communicate with me in a way I can understand and use.	Use speech, signing, symbols, objects, writing, visuals, technology or other communication methods according to the CYP's preferences and needs.
Make the adjustments I need without making me feel different or difficult.	Anticipate barriers, offer discreet choices and normalise flexible ways of accessing learning, participating and showing understanding.
Help me build friendships, independence and a hopeful future.	Create authentic opportunities for relationships, choice, self-advocacy, community participation and preparation for adulthood.
Act when I need help. Do not wait for a diagnosis.	Respond promptly to identified strengths and barriers, put support in place and review whether it is making the intended difference.

1.5 Core references

- SEND Code of Practice: statutory guidance explaining duties and expectations for supporting CYP with SEND.
- Equality Act 2010: sets out the legal duties around equality, disability discrimination and reasonable adjustments.
- Teachers' Standards: outlines the professional expectations for teachers, including adapting teaching to respond to CYP's strengths and needs.
- Nurture UK Six Principles of Nurture: explains the key principles that support relational, inclusive and emotionally safe school environments.
- DfE Working together to improve school attendance: statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities on maintaining high levels of attendance: emphasises early identification of barriers, strong relationships with families, whole-school culture, accurate attendance processes, data-informed support, and additional support for pupils with SEND, medical needs, social workers or other vulnerabilities.

Section 2: Good practice for all children and young people

The whole school expectations listed below form the foundation for robust Ordinarily Available Provision. School leaders should audit their provision and ensure that these foundations are embedded as part of everyday practice.

Expectation	What you can do
2.1 Involving children and young people	• Embed pupil voice in everyday school practice. Support CYP to share their views, co-produce ideas and help implement them. • Provide regular, accessible ways for CYP to express how they are feeling and what they think, such as check-ins, feeling boards, surveys, pupil passports, visual tools and pupil councils. • Gather pupil voice at different points in the year and whenever needs change. Give CYP feedback about how their views have shaped decisions. • Use pupil views around attendance, learning, relationships, regulation and support in action plans, with scaffolds where appropriate. • Involve CYP in the graduated approach, including setting and reviewing targets, identifying what helps them learn and recognising their strengths, achievements and aspirations. • Agree discreet ways for CYP to show when they do not understand or need help, such as help cards, agreed signals or check-in systems.
2.2 Working in partnership with families	• Build trusting, compassionate relationships with families through regular, accessible communication, using flexible options such as in-person meetings, virtual or telephone contact, home-school diaries, messaging systems, surveys or informal opportunities such as coffee mornings. • Share information clearly and accessibly so families understand the support in place, the school's OAP offer, attendance processes, SEND provision and how they can contribute to strategies at home. • Make communication inclusive by recognising when families may need additional support, such as translations, interpreters, accessible written information, simplified local offer information, flowcharts or named contact points. • With consent, share relevant information between staff so families do not need to repeat their story unnecessarily and can access support at the earliest opportunity. • Co-produce key SEND information and provision with CYP and families where possible, using formal and informal feedback to inform planning. • Ensure the Nottinghamshire Local Offer and relevant parent/carer support services are clearly signposted on the school website and in accessible communications.

Expectation	What you can do
2.3 Building relationships, belonging and inclusive culture	• Ensure CYP have reasonable access to food, water, toilets, warmth, rest, movement and personal care with dignity. • Ensure CYP are known, greeted, included and able to access safe spaces when needed. • Provide trusted adults, calm spaces and pastoral support that remains connected to learning, belonging and participation. • Join up pastoral, safeguarding, attendance, health and SEND responses so the CYP and family experience one coherent plan. • Create a culture where all adults use strengths-based, respectful and relational language. • Treat behaviour as communication and respond with curiosity, not blame. • Identify a key adult where consistency, co-regulation or emotional safety is needed. • Use relational and restorative approaches, such as PACE, emotion coaching and repair conversations, ensuring that adults are appropriately trained in these approaches. • Promote peer awareness and sensitivity towards difference, including SEND, and ensure anti-bullying systems consider the increased vulnerability of some CYP with SEND. • Recognise that CYP whose presenting behaviour challenges peers, may also have unmet needs or vulnerabilities and may require support alongside clear boundaries.
2.4 Providing inclusive environments and sensory accessibility	• Take a whole-school approach to identifying and reducing barriers across learning, physical, sensory and social environments. • Use accessibility and sensory audits, alongside CYP voice and specialist advice, to inform reasonable adjustments and inclusive practice. • Ensure accessibility information, communication needs and agreed adjustments are recorded and shared with relevant staff, so support is consistent. • Provide accessible curriculum materials and communication approaches as part of everyday teaching, including appropriate digital accessibility features. • Plan inclusion proactively across the wider school day, including transitions, social times, trips, clubs, assemblies and practical activities. • Review arrangements regularly so adaptations continue to support access, dignity, independence and safety. • Provide trained staff, suitable facilities and safe equipment.

Expectation	What you can do
2.5 Supporting attendance	• Monitor attendance patterns and respond early with support, not solely compliance. • Work with CYP and families to identify barriers, risk factors and protective factors. • Offer flexible arrivals, meet-and-greet arrangements, quieter entrances, soft starts or gradual transitions where needed. • Maintain connection during absence through check-ins, work where appropriate and a planned welcome back. • Use attendance as a safeguarding and belonging issue, with clear roles for pastoral, SEND and attendance staff. • Ensure pastoral, safeguarding, SEND, attendance and disadvantage leads work together, so support is coordinated and not fragmented. • Where part-time timetables are considered, they should be exceptional, time-limited, clearly planned and reviewed regularly with the CYP and family. • Celebrate small steps towards improved attendance and participation, particularly for CYP who find attendance difficult.
2.6 Supporting transitions	• Plan for daily, lesson-to-lesson, social-time, staffing, seasonal and phase transitions. • Prepare CYP using visual timetables, social stories, transition books, familiarisation visits and clear explanations of what will stay the same and change. • Make daily and lesson routines visible, consistent and explain changes in advance. • Share pupil passports and transition information sensitively and in good time. • Plan positive endings and new beginnings with CYP and families. • Prepare for movement between activities, people, rooms, year groups and phases. • Extend transition support beyond the first day or visit and review what is working.

Expectation	What you can do
2.7 Implementing effective assessment, planning and review processes	• Use observation, assessment, pupil voice, family views, work scrutiny and screening tools to understand need. • Record strengths, barriers, starting points, provision and progress clearly. • Use Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycles and adapt strategies where impact is limited. • Ensure assessment arrangements are in place, where necessary, and reflect the CYP's normal way of working, for example quiet space, rest breaks, extra time, laptop, reader, scribe or adapted resources where appropriate. • Check whether hearing and vision have been considered when CYP present with attention, communication, learning or behaviour needs. • Use CYP self-assessment, case studies and holistic evidence to show progress, particularly where progress is uneven or made in small steps.
2.8 Effective teaching to support learning and executive function	• Break tasks and instructions into small, clear steps, with visual, verbal and written prompts. • Reduce cognitive load by chunking learning, modelling expectations, using examples and giving processing time. • Use pre-teaching, overlearning, repetition, dual coding, scaffolding and explicit links to prior learning. • Teach planning, sequencing, organisation, memory strategies and self-checking explicitly. • Provide alternative ways to record learning, including assistive technology, drawings, discussion, photographs, audio or video. • Make sure strategies taught in interventions are used and reinforced in everyday classroom teaching so CYP can generalise skills. • Plan how additional adults are used so they promote independence and learning, rather than creating unnecessary dependence. • Use seating plans and groupings to provide access to positive role models, peer support and structured opportunities for conversation. • Adapt homework and provide access to homework support, such as homework clubs or adult support, where homework creates barriers.

Expectation	What you can do
2.9 Strong leadership and systems	**Leadership expectations** • Ensure policies, routines and behaviour systems allow reasonable adjustments and do not create barriers to inclusion. • Ensure temporary and support staff understand essential routines, provision and adjustments. • Deploy delegated resources transparently and responsively. • Primary schools considering inclusion hubs or enhanced provision should refer to the links in the appendix at the end of this guidance. **Staff development and support** • Provide planned, manageable Continuing Professional Development (CPD) linked to the needs of CYP in the school. • Identify training requirements for specific approaches, interventions or strategies, and ensure staff can implement them safely and effectively. • Ensure staff know how to request and apply advice from SENCos, specialist teachers and external professionals. • Provide coaching, mentoring, supervision and opportunities to share good practice so training changes classroom practice. • Prioritise staff wellbeing, including safe opportunities to reflect, debrief and seek guidance. **Monitoring and accountability** • Monitor inclusive practice through learning walks, observations, staff reflection, family feedback and CYP outcomes. • Evaluate whether CPD leads to changes in classroom practice and improved outcomes for CYP.

Expectation	What you can do
2.10 Supporting CYP in care and those with a social worker	• Work with the Virtual School and relevant professionals to support CYP in care and those with a social worker. • Ensure Personal Education Plans (PEPs) are responsive, strengths-based and regularly reviewed. • Align PEPs, SEND plans, safeguarding plans and other assessments so that outcomes, provision and responsibilities are coherent. • Ensure staff understand that this cohort may have experienced trauma, loss, attachment disruption or adverse experiences. • Avoid repeated story-telling and ensure that information is shared lawfully and, on a need-to-know basis. • Make sure designated teachers and governors have clear roles in supporting these CYP. • Use Pupil Premium Plus purposefully and monitor its impact. • Monitor belonging, participation, attendance, exclusions, progress and preparation for adulthood, not only attainment. • Anticipate the impact of placement, school, staff and relationship changes and maintain essential routines, adjustments, records and trusted adult connections.
2.11 Preparation for adulthood from the earliest years	• Build age-appropriate independence, communication, choice, self-advocacy and decision-making throughout education. • Create meaningful links between learning and future aspirations. • Develop experiences and support for employment or meaningful activity, independent living community inclusion and good health. • Make transition planning increasingly personalised and outcome focused as children and young people mature. • Support CYP to recognise their strengths and understand their support needs, helping them to advocate for themselves effectively and with confidence. This should promote independence, self-advocacy and meaningful participation, while avoiding unnecessary adult dependency.

2.12 When to seek further advice

Consider further advice when…	What you can do
Needs are persistent, complex or changing	Review what has been tried, check implementation, gather CYP and family views, and seek advice through the SENCO or relevant local pathway.
OAP is not reducing barriers	Use Assess, Plan, Do, Review to adapt or intensify support, agree clear outcomes and consider targeted or specialist provision.
Safety, health, attendance or safeguarding concerns increase	Follow safeguarding, health, attendance and escalation routes promptly. Do not wait for a diagnosis or external report before taking reasonable action.
Specialist or statutory provision may be required	Consider specialist assessment, multi-agency planning or an EHC needs assessment where evidence indicates that more than ordinarily available provision may be required.

Section 3: Four Broad Areas of Need

Using the four areas: selecting strategies by need

- The categories are a route to support for CYP not labels.
- Before using the area-specific sections, check that the whole-school expectations in Section 2 are in place. Area-specific strategies should build on, not replace, high-quality inclusive classroom practice and ordinarily available provision across the school system.
- Use the left-hand column to identify possible presenting needs. Select a small number of relevant strategies based on the CYP's individual profile from the right-hand column, agree who will do what, review impact through Assess–Plan–Do–Review, and adapt support with the CYP and family.
- Many CYP will need strategies from more than one section. For example, communication, regulation, sensory processing and executive functioning interact.

3.1 Communication and Interaction

3.2 Cognition and learning

3.3 Social, emotional and mental health

3.4 Sensory, physical and health needs

Section 3: Communication and interaction

3.1.1 Communication and Interaction: a good communication and interaction environment

What you might notice...	What you can do
CYP may need different ways to attend, communicate, interact, play or understand routines.	• Start with functional communication and participation, not compliance or 'normalising' communication. • Set up the environment so the CYP has regular reasons to communicate. Use activities that match their developmental stage, interests and preferred way of communicating.
OAP is not reducing barriers	• Create calm communication spaces and reduce competing noise. • For younger CYP or those at earlier developmental stages, use play-based activities such as role play, messy play, music, songs, outdoor play and shared stories to encourage communication. • For older CYP or those at later developmental stages, use drama, group discussion, shared projects, creative writing, music and problem-solving tasks to encourage talking, listening and confidence. • Notice when and where the CYP communicates most easily, for example during free play, practical tasks, outside, after school or with trusted peers. Build more communication opportunities into these times. • Ensure staff understand typical communication and language development, so they can notice when CYP may need additional support. • Make sure adults know the CYP's interests, communication strengths and preferred ways of joining in, so support is consistent across lessons, social times and transitions. • Provide resources to support communication and participation e.g. visual timetables, now and next, visual timers. • Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) and specialist communication should be introduced and develop with appropriate advice and training.

3.1.2 Attention and listening

What you might notice...	What you can do
CYP may appear distracted, need extra processing time, respond differently to group instructions or find listening and doing at the same time difficult.	• Check whether hearing has been screened or whether further advice is needed. • Find out where the CYP listens best, for example near the front, at the side, close to an adult, away from noise or in a quieter space. Use this to plan seating and group work. • Reduce distractions before giving important information. Use a shared attention cue such as a speaking object, gesture, sound cue or visual prompt so CYP know when to listen and when it is their turn. • Gain attention respectfully before giving key information; use the CYP's name where helpful. • Keep instructions short and specific. Give one step at a time, pause, then check the CYP knows what to do next. • Use visuals alongside spoken language, such as a visual timetable, now-and-next board, task checklist, communication board, timeline, visual timer or object of reference. • Use clear signals for transitions and expectations, such as traffic light symbols, first-and-then language, a countdown, gesture, sound cue or agreed class routine. • Give extra processing time. Avoid repeating the instruction too quickly or adding more language while the CYP is thinking. • Remember that listening may not always look like sitting still or giving eye contact. Look for other signs that the CYP is taking in information. • Use backward chaining for multi-step activities so the CYP experiences success quickly before building independence with earlier steps. • Avoid requiring listening and writing simultaneously where this creates a barrier.

3.1.3 Receptive communication: understanding language

What you might notice...	What you can do
CYP may struggle to follow instructions, understand questions, make choices, understand non-literal language or follow routines without support.	• Use a quieter space or reduce background noise when the CYP needs to listen, process or follow instructions. • Use visuals with spoken language, such as gestures, actions, objects, photographs, symbols, written key words, signs or a visual timetable. • Label key areas, resources and equipment using pictures and words so the CYP can find things independently and learn vocabulary in context. • Show the routine clearly using a schedule, now-and-next board or objects of reference. Use these consistently every day rather than only when the CYP is unsettled. • Pre-teach important words before a lesson or activity and revisit as required. Use real objects, pictures, examples and rehearsal so the words make sense. • Use short sentences and familiar words. Reduce the amount of language if the CYP looks unsure, becomes overwhelmed or stops responding. • Keep content age appropriate even when language demands are reduced. • Pause after giving information so the CYP has time to think and respond. Repeat and emphasise key words, speaking slowly and clearly without sounding unnatural. • Explain non-literal language, jokes or sayings clearly. Do not assume the CYP will understand hidden meanings, sarcasm or implied instructions. • Check understanding through demonstration, choice or explanation rather than asking 'do you understand?' • Build vocabulary by talking about what words mean, how they are similar or different and how they sound. • Use structured approaches where appropriate alongside advice from speech and language specialists.

3.1.4 Autism and social communication

What you might notice...	What you can do
CYP may need support with social understanding, transitions, change, shared attention, communication and relationships.	• Promote a whole-school culture where neurodiversity is understood, respected and included. Neuro Inclusive Network provides guidance and resources to support neuro-affirming practice and inclusive approaches for autistic and neurodivergent learners.
CYP's needs may change across the day or according to context.	• Make sure the CYP's needs, strengths, interests and communication preferences are written down and shared with all relevant staff, for example through a pupil profile. • Ask the CYP, family and relevant professionals what helps the CYP communicate, learn and feel safe. Review this regularly because needs can change. • Adapt adult communication. Use clear language, reduce unnecessary words, explain hidden meanings and do not force eye contact. • Use the CYP's name before giving important information when this helps them notice that the message is for them. • Be curious about what the CYP may be communicating through actions, silence, movement, gestures, facial expression or changes in behaviour. • Make routines and transitions predictable while retaining choice and flexibility. • Use the CYP's interests, passions and preferred objects to build shared attention, interaction and motivation. • Create opportunities for turn taking with adults and peers, using games, shared tasks, role play, small-world play or structured paired work. • Support the CYP to prepare for social situations using rehearsal, visual information, scripts, social understanding tools and agreed coping strategies. • When group work is used, give clear roles and responsibilities so the CYP knows what to do and what others will do. • Offer common-interest groups or enrichment activities so the CYP can connect with peers through shared interests. • Support peers to understand different communication styles in a respectful way, without singling out the CYP. • Refer to guidance in sections 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 for support with executive function, emotional wellbeing and regulation, and sensory processing if relevant to the CYP

3.1.5 Expressive communication: expressing needs and ideas

What you might notice...	What you can do
CYP may need support to express ideas, choices, feelings, needs or speech sounds clearly.	• Offer communication choices so that the CYP can communicate in the most meaningful and effective way for them. The CYP may choose to communicate by speaking, pointing, looking, signing, using an object, using a symbol or using a communication device.
CYP may use spoken, non-spoken, written, signed, symbolic or technological communication.	• Keep communication tools available and easy to reach, such as objects, signs, photographs, symbols, written words, iPads, communication boards or communication books. • Model the CYP's communication method while you talk. For example, point to the symbol, use the sign or show the object as you say the word. • Add one small step to what the CYP communicates. For example, if the CYP says "car," the adult might say "red car" or "car go." • Focus on the meaning of what the CYP is trying to say, not on correcting mistakes. Check you have understood by repeating back or showing what you think they mean. • Give the CYP enough time to respond and allow them to finish. Do not rush, interrupt or speak for them. • Agree simple ways for the CYP to communicate essential needs, such as help, toilet, break, pain, stop or "I do not understand." • Teach and model how language changes across contexts, including formal and informal situations. • Model standard English naturally while valuing all communication attempts and avoiding unnecessary correction. • Use visual support to help the CYP get their message across, such as pictures, symbols, written words, objects, word banks, scripts, rhyme or music. • If speech is unclear, repeat back the word or phrase correctly in a natural way. Do not ask the CYP to keep repeating it. • If you do not understand, be honest and kind. Encourage the CYP to use another way to communicate, such as pointing, showing, drawing, choosing from options or acting it out. • Use listening games and phonological awareness activities, such as rhyme, alliteration and sound discrimination, to support early speech, language and literacy development. • Use approaches such as word webs, topic webs, narrative sequencing cards or vocabulary games to build expressive language.

3.1.6 Key resources and references

- C&I School Toolkit
- ARNA Support for Schools: a Padlet containing advice and guidance around anxiety related non-attendance
- Speech and Language UK: provides information and resources to support speech, language and communication needs. Previously ICAN.
- Elklan: offers training and practical resources for supporting communication and language development.
- Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists: provides professional guidance and information about speech, language and communication needs.
- AUsome Training | Learn from Autistics: Autistic led Neurodiversity Training for schools and parent/carers
- www.pandasonline.org: NeuroBears is a research informed autism education programme for autistic children aged 5–14 and their families
- Autism Understood: a community for autistic young people, created by autistic adults

Section 3.2: Cognition and learning

3.2.1 A good cognition and learning environment

What you might notice...	What you can do
CYP may have barriers linked to literacy, numeracy, memory, executive functioning, language, uneven profiles or small steps of progress.	• Identify emerging barriers to learning and ensure that all supporting staff are aware of needs and support required. • Address confidence, motivation, engagement and emotional safety as well as academic skills. • Use a range of assessment techniques appropriately. This can include tools such as PIVATS, B-Squared and other school or specialist assessments that track progress over time. Monitor response to intervention carefully and change approaches when not successful. • Ensure the curriculum is accessible while maintaining high expectations. • Match learning to the CYP's current developmental and learning profile while maintaining access to the wider curriculum and high expectations. • Use the EEF Five a Day framework to ensure best practice: explicit instruction, cognitive and metacognitive strategies, scaffolding, flexible groupings and technology.

3.2.2 General learning and adaptive teaching

What you might notice...	What you can do
CYP may need more time, repetition, practical learning, clear modelling or support to generalise skills.	• Keep teaching clear, explicit and well structured. Explain the learning purpose and show the CYP what success looks like. • Chunk instructions and information. Give one step at a time, pause, check understanding and avoid adding more language while the CYP is processing. • Use spoken, written, visual and practical examples together so the CYP can see, hear and practise the learning. • Use 'I do, we do, you do' modelling, worked examples and 'What A Good One Looks Like' (WAGOLL). • Pre-teach and revisit key vocabulary. Use pictures, objects, actions, examples and real contexts to make new words meaningful. • Break learning into small, achievable steps. • Link new learning to what the CYP already knows, their interests and everyday experiences. • Provide practical, hands-on and multisensory learning opportunities, including concrete resources and pictorial support before moving to abstract ideas. Do not assume one fixed learning style. • Provide accessible materials e.g. font, letter size spacing, layout and colour, and consider visual stress support where appropriate. • Allow extra time for processing, task completion and recording. Adjust the amount of work expected where this helps the CYP show what they know. • Offer alternative ways to record learning, such as scribing, drawing, talking, using technology, matching, sorting or choosing from options. • Use specific praise and feedback that tells the CYP what they did well and what their next step is. • Plan purposeful extension or consolidation tasks so the CYP is supported whether they need more practice or are ready to move on. • Make sure adaptations are part of everyday classroom practice and not dependent on a formal diagnosis. • Consider whether homework supports or increases barriers to learning and adapt or reduce it where needed.

3.2.3 Executive functioning and cognitive load

What you might notice...	What you can do
CYP may find it difficult to plan, sequence, organise, remember, start tasks, finish tasks or manage multi-step learning.	• Support planning, organisation, memory, attention, sequencing, processing and flexible thinking through clear routines and visible prompts. • Break tasks into manageable chunks, especially tasks that involve planning, drafting, editing, problem solving or several steps. • Use task planners, checklists, tick lists, writing frames, graphic organisers, visual timers and task boards to show what to do and when to stop. • Model thinking out loud so the CYP can hear how to plan, start, monitor, review and correct work. • Give the CYP time to process questions and instructions. Use pre-warning, cue cards or planned questions rather than unexpected questioning where needed. • Plan prompts, movement or regulation breaks. • Support task initiation by offering sentence starters, first-step prompts, guiding questions, picture prompts or a short adult check-in. • Make links between learning explicit and revisit them often so the CYP can transfer skills across lessons and contexts. • Teach the CYP how to use available resources independently, rather than assuming they know when or how to use them. • Notice signs of overload, such as reduced attention, frustration, avoidance or fatigue, and offer a timely break or reduce cognitive load. • Reduce unnecessary copying and competing demands. • Make reasonable adjustments to homework where the CYP finds it difficult to transfer learning from school to home. • Teach metacognitive skills.

3.2.4 Specific learning difficulties

What you might notice...	What you can do
CYP may have difficulties with reading, spelling, writing, maths, coordination, language or processing, with or without a formal diagnosis.	• Use assessment information, classroom observation and discussion with the CYP, family, SENCo and relevant staff to identify the main barriers to learning. • Use appropriate tools to identify barriers to learning e.g. maths assessments and screeners and Identifying Dyslexia in Schools Toolkit. • Keep expectations high while adapting how the CYP accesses tasks, records learning and demonstrates understanding. • Not withhold age-appropriate curriculum content while foundational skills develop. • Teach key skills explicitly and in small steps. Revisit them regularly and help the CYP apply them in different subjects and real-life contexts. • Provide memory supports such as keyword lists, sticky notes, task boards, worked examples, times table squares and visual reminders. • Use assistive technology where available, such as speech-to-text, text-to-speech, e-readers or typing, when this helps the CYP show what they know. • Use structured, cumulative and multisensory approaches for literacy and numeracy, with frequent practice and overlearning. Consult EEF for evidence-based interventions. • Use approaches such as phonics, phonological awareness, morphology, word banks, high-frequency word practice and short, regular intervention, when supporting reading and spelling. Consult 'What Works for Literacy Interventions'. • Consider whole-word recognition and other evidence-informed approaches, where phonological approaches are not effective on their own. • Ensure reading materials are well matched to reading accuracy and interest level, including high-interest, low-reading-age texts where needed. • When supporting writing, provide sentence starters, writing frames, vocabulary mats, alphabet strips, planning tools, oral rehearsal and opportunities to record in different ways. • Use appropriate planning tools, for example mind maps and graphic organisers.

3.2.4 Specific learning difficulties

What you might notice...	What you can do
CYP may have difficulties with reading, spelling, writing, maths, coordination, language or processing, with or without a formal diagnosis.	• When supporting maths, use concrete and pictorial resources such as number lines, hundred squares, Numicon, counters, models, diagrams and real-life examples before using symbols alone. • Plan interventions carefully, monitor their impact and adjust them if the CYP is not making progress. • Support confidence, motivation and engagement by recognising effort, celebrating success and making sure tasks feel purposeful and achievable.

3.1.5 Key resources and references

- Nottinghamshire Cognition and Learning Padlet: a collection of local tools, guidance and resources to support cognition and learning.
- R2i Primary Padlet: offers primary-phase resources and practical ideas to support inclusion, learning and executive functioning.
- R2i Secondary Padlet: offers secondary-phase resources and practical ideas to support inclusion, learning and executive functioning.
- Education Endowment Foundation: provides evidence-informed approaches that improve educational outcomes.
- EEF metacognition guidance: evidence-informed guidance on metacognition and self-regulated learning.
- Assistive Technology Mini Guide: ideas for using assistive technology to support access to learning.
- Mind Mapping: supports planning, organisation, memory and recording ideas visually.
- Hertfordshire phonological awareness pack: activities and guidance to support early literacy and phonological awareness.
- Numicon guide for parents: parent-friendly guidance on using Numicon to support mathematical understanding.
- Numicon general guide: practical guidance for using Numicon in learning activities.

Section 3.3: Social, emotional and mental health

3.3.1 A good SEMH environment

What you might notice...	What you can do
CYP may show distress, conflict, withdrawal, anxiety, emotional overload or difficulty repairing relationships.	• Provide predictable routines, clear expectations and a safe base through adult interactions and management of the environment. • Make pastoral support accessible to all CYP, with safe spaces, emotional support systems and clear pathways for escalation. • Use inclusive assessment and planning that considers learning, development, starting points, progress, strengths and areas for development. • Use strengths-based language, praise effort and individual progress and avoid comparison or pass/fail or deficit-based language. • Avoid whole-class visual tracking systems that may increase shame. Use positive praise, positive notes, Dojo or Seesaw, brag tags, wider school recognition or a scrapbook for success. • Use relational and restorative approaches to manage conflict without compelling disclosure or apology. • Frame assessments carefully to reduce anxiety. Give feedback that is timely, clear, specific and discreet. • Provide opportunities to explore emotions and interoception. For example, using emotion wheels, sensation wheels, emotion labelling vocabulary and calming techniques. • Provide access to a safe, non-punitive, low stimulus space and planned movement or sensory regulation as required.

3.3.2 Relationships and emotions

What you might notice...	What you can do
CYP may have difficulties with friendships, their sense of belonging, emotional awareness, expression wellbeing and regulation.	• Ensure that all adults are emotionally available, validate feelings and respond calmly, respectfully and curiously, even when behaviour challenges. • Identify a key adult where appropriate to provide consistency, emotional security and a predictable relationship. • Use intentional meet and greet and connect with them in meaningful ways. • Build connection into the school day through circle time, personalised register routines, therapeutically informed sessions, emotional check-in boards and structured opportunities to name emotions, share feelings and practice listening. • Model positive interactions, problem-solving and restorative conversations, using approaches such as PACE, restorative practice and emotion coaching. • Prioritise predictable relationships, connection before correction, nurture principles and trauma-informed approaches. • Consider family context, developmental factors, care experience, loss, bereavement, adoption, attachment and social care involvement. • Use nurture principles and relational influence rather than over-reliance on rewards. • Support CYP to develop peer relationships and belonging. • Use nurture groups, buddying, peer mentoring, interests and meaningful responsibilities to build confidence, connection and participation. • Provide CYP with opportunities to develop emotional literacy skills through whole class PSHE lessons and targeted support e.g. ELSA. • Address bullying, discrimination and isolation promptly and meaningfully.

3.3.3 Behaviour as communication

What you might notice...	What you can do
CYP may communicate distress, confusion, anxiety, unmet needs, sensory overload, frustration or a need for connection through their behaviour.	• Refer to Understanding Behaviour in Schools | The East Midlands Education Support Service for advice about understanding behaviour as communication and respond using relational, reflective approaches. • Avoid negative labels. For example, reframe "attention-seeking" as "attention-needing." • Be curious about behaviour and seek to understand underlying needs, including the link between language, communication, regulation and behaviour. • Consider what distressed behaviour may communicate, such as "I don't understand what I need to do," "I can't express my needs," "I don't feel heard," "I'm worried I might fail," "I'm overwhelmed" or "I'm anxious about change." • Identify patterns, triggers, functions of behaviour, risk factors and protective factors so support can be proactive rather than reactive. • Use regulatory approaches such as co-regulation, calm language, reduced verbal demand and planned breaks to de-escalate behaviour and develop self-regulation skills. • Use restorative language and conversations to manage conflict, repair relationships and support reflection once the CYP is calm enough to engage. • Use solution-focused discussion, pupil passports, agreed staff scripts and Individual Behaviour Plans where additional support is needed. • Use logical and proportionate consequences only when necessary and adjust expectations where needed. • Avoid interrogation, lecturing, public correction or shaming responses, as these can increase distress, masking or disengagement. • Teach and reinforce the behaviour or skill the CYP needs to use, rather than focusing only on what they should stop doing. • Provide CYP with opportunities to develop emotional awareness, expression and regulation through whole class PSHE e.g. Zones of Regulation. • Use proportionate risk assessment and safeguarding procedures where there is a risk of harm.

3.3.4 Emotional wellbeing and attendance

What you might notice...	What you can do
CYP may have patterns of non-attendance. **CYP may have difficulties participating and / or may appear withdrawn, distressed or dysregulated.** **CYP may struggle to engage during the school day and / or leave the classroom.**	• Notice early signs that a child may be struggling with attendance, such as separation anxiety, withdrawal or changes in behaviour and implement support at the earliest opportunity. Tools such as the ATTEND Framework can support early intervention as part of the school's graduated response to emotionally based non-school attendance. • Use emotional wellbeing monitoring, accessible pastoral support, safe spaces, anti-bullying procedures and school counselling where available. • Monitor attendance through morning and afternoon registration, first-day contact, attendance tracking systems and weekly or monthly reviews. • Use attendance information to identify emerging patterns, including particular days, lessons or transitions. Treat monitoring as a safeguarding and support tool, not only a compliance measure. • Support the bridge into school through soft starts, breakfast club, meet and greet, early or later arrival, quieter entrances, helping roles and gradual transitions. • Use transitional objects, such as a heart on sleeve or small item from home, to support emotional regulation and security. • Maintain connection during absence through check-ins, supportive phone calls, appropriate work sent home and letting the child know they are 'held in mind.' • Welcome learners back warmly, acknowledge them sensitively, support reintegration into class and avoid public scrutiny or shame. • Use backward chaining where appropriate, for example helping a CYP attend for a short successful part of the day before gradually building up attendance.

3.3.5 Transition and change

What you might notice...	What you can do
CYP may be distressed, dysregulated or withdrawn when faced by transitions, changes in routine, activity, person or place.	• Prepare for change using visits, photos, maps, transition books, rehearsal and named adults. • Plan positive endings as well as beginnings. • Share essential information and successful responses in good time. • Plan transitions ahead with strong relationships, pupil voice, family involvement, clear timelines and expectations. • Support transition through positive endings, transition days, familiarisation visits, key adults, About Me profiles, pupil passports, information sharing and structured transition work such as Ready 4 Secondary. • Prepare learners for what will stay the same and what will be different, including routines, classrooms, timetables, larger buildings and organisational skills. • Extend transition support beyond the initial transition period, including maintaining links with the previous setting during the first term, where helpful. • Review support after transition and adjust it.

3.3.6 Key resources and references

- Pupil Voice Padlet: provides tools and examples to help staff gather pupil views in accessible and meaningful ways.
- Routes to Inclusion Padlet: brings together inclusion resources, tools and templates that can be used to support planning and classroom practice.
- EBSA Padlet: provides resources to help schools understand emotionally based school avoidance and plan supportive responses.
- Ready 4 Secondary: offers transition resources to help pupils prepare for the move to secondary school.
- Virtual School resources: Nottinghamshire Virtual School resources focused on developing relational, attachment-aware and trauma-informed practice, including practical materials and training links.
- Trauma Informed Schools UK: provides training and resources to support trauma-informed practice in schools.
- NottAlone: mental health advice and support for CYP and the families and professionals who support them.
- MHST schools offer training: Mental Health Support Team information and training offer to help schools support children and young people's emotional wellbeing.
- Anna Freud resources and training: evidence-based mental health and wellbeing resources and training for schools, colleges, early years settings, families and professionals.
- PACE: a therapeutic approach based on playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy, often used to support relational and trauma-informed practice.
- Restorative practice: information and training linked to restorative approaches, helping settings strengthen relationships, repair harm and support positive behaviour.
- ELSA: information about Emotional Literacy Support Assistant approaches, which help pupils develop emotional understanding, coping skills and social confidence.
- Emotion Coaching: resources and training on responding to children's emotions in the moment, helping them feel understood and develop regulation skills.
- Zones of Regulation: a framework and set of resources to help children recognise emotions, understand levels of alertness and build self-regulation strategies.
- Developmental and emotional milestones – Togetherness: a resource outlining typical developmental and emotional milestones, useful when considering children's needs in context.
- Restorative – East Midlands Education Support Service: Nottinghamshire-focused restorative practice information and resources to support relational approaches in schools and settings.

Section 3.4: Sensory, physical and health needs

3.4.1 A good sensory, physical and health environment

What you might notice...	What you can do
CYP may have needs linked to vision, hearing, physical access, motor development, medical needs, fatigue and / or sensory processing.	• Provide trained staff, suitable facilities and safe equipment. • Keep classrooms well organised with clear, uncluttered routes and consistent layouts, letting CYP know about any changes in advance. • Complete a sensory and accessibility audit of classrooms, corridors, dining areas, toilets, playgrounds and shared spaces. Use this to identify visual, acoustic, sensory and physical barriers. • Consider seating in relation to the teacher, teaching focus, light source, noise sources, sensory triggers, visual access and physical barriers. • Review routes so CYP can see, hear and move around safely, including access to doors, equipment, seating, toilets and shared areas. • Provide access to quiet zones, calm spaces or safe spaces when CYP may become visually, sensory or physically overwhelmed. • Provide accessible storage, seating, equipment and changing arrangements that protect dignity. • Plan trips, swimming, assemblies and practical lessons in advance, including access to toilets and changing facilities. • Ensure appropriate evacuation procedures are in place, including Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP) where required. Provide opportunities for learners to practice evacuation procedures so they become predictable and safe. • Support communication of preferences or distress and review arrangements as independence and needs change.

3.4.2 Vision impairment

What you might notice...	What you can do
CYP may need adapted visual materials, support with visual fatigue, environmental access, mobility or social inclusion.	• Follow Qualified Teacher of Vision Impairment advice and ensure all relevant staff understand it. • Audit lighting, glare, board contrast, displays, routes and signage. • Ensure practical classroom adjustments focus on reducing visual fatigue, supporting independence and making learning materials easy to access. • Use clear, uncluttered formats, accessible fonts and appropriate print sizes. Avoid cursive fonts and low-contrast materials. • Reduce visual clutter in presentations and displays. Use good contrast between text, illustrations and backgrounds. • Minimise glare on interactive whiteboards and use blinds or curtains where this improves visibility. Make sure whiteboards are clean, scratch free and written on with clear, contrasting pens. • Use real objects, tactile markers and assistive technology. • Provide prominent signage, clearly labelled storage and accessible print sizes so CYP can find spaces and resources independently. • Seat CYP with a clear view of the focus of attention. • Verbalise information written on boards and avoid relying on facial expression or gesture alone. • Give CYP time to map or remap rooms when furniture or resources move, and alert them to environmental changes in advance. • Remind CYP to use prescription glasses or contact lenses where applicable.

3.4.3 Hearing loss

What you might notice...	What you can do
CYP may miss speech, incidental learning or group discussion, particularly where background noise, distance or visual access is difficult.	• Implement deaf awareness training and follow Qualified Teacher of the Deaf advice. • Ensure practical classroom adjustments focus on improving access to spoken information, visual cues and participation in group discussion. • Ensure staff understand hearing technology and basic troubleshooting, including batteries and consumables. • Use the learner's name to gain attention. • Face the CYP when speaking, avoid talking while writing on the board. • Use captions, written prompts, visuals, pre-teaching, key vocabulary and visual timetables. • Use carpeting and soft furnishings where possible to improve acoustics. Minimise background noise and encourage good listening behaviour, including turn-taking and reduced overlap. • Not expect CYP with hearing needs to listen, watch and take notes at the same time. Provide written information, captions or note-taking support where needed. • Ensure typical resources and support are easily accessible, e.g. access to laptops, hearing aid batteries and opportunities for rest breaks when listening effort is high. • Be aware that CYP may use lip reading and visual cues. • Repeat or summarise peer contributions and use subtitles or written copies for video and audio materials. • Encourage use and care of hearing aids if applicable. • Be aware that PE and practical lessons may increase difficulty due to distance, acoustics and reduced access to instructions.

3.4.4 Physical disability and mobility

What you might notice...	What you can do
CYP may need support with access, fatigue, movement, fine/gross motor skills, personal care, independence or practical subjects.	• Practical classroom adjustments should support independence, comfort, participation and access to learning across the school day. • Provide accessible drop-off/pick-up, routes, seating, toilets, storage and movement around school. • Allow adapted timing for movement between lessons when needed, without loss of learning. • Use adapted equipment / seating, assistive technology, alternative recording methods and accessible timetables. • Use adapted equipment such as Dycem mats, pencil grips, adapted scissors, cutlery, one-handed tools, writing slopes and supportive seating where needed. • Support fine and gross motor development through activities such as dough disco, threading, pegboards, tweezers, LEGO, playdough, throwing, catching, hopping, core stability games and crossing-midline activities. • Provide appropriate outdoor equipment, e.g. slides, tunnels and balance beams, to support confidence, coordination and physical development. • Plan educational visits in advance, including accessible transport and toileting, supporting medical and sensory needs and making reasonable adjustments, so families are not required to attend to enable participation. • Use a co-produced plan that protects dignity, privacy, choice and informed consent. • Follow safeguarding, moving-and-handling and infection-control requirements.

3.4.5 Health, medical needs and care plans

What you might notice...	What you can do
CYP may need an Individual Healthcare Plan, intimate care plan, medical equipment, staff training, recovery time or reintegration after absence.	• Think CYP first, not condition first. Consider the emotional, social and learning impact of medical needs as well as physical care. • Not require families to attend school to provide care that can reasonably be planned for and delivered by trained staff. • Work with families and health professionals to understand needs and risks throughout the day. • Maintain updated Individual Health Plans, intimate care plans and risk assessments. • Provide trained staff and appropriate medical equipment such as lockable medicine storage, first aid bags or medical fridge where required. • Maintain belonging during medical absences, through regular contact, class updates and thoughtful ways of showing the CYP they remain part of the school community. • Provide remote learning options such as Teams and Google Classroom, and plan gradual reintegration when CYP are able to return to school. • Make reasonable adjustments for fatigue, pain, treatment, continence and fluctuating needs. • Use a co-produced plan that protects dignity, privacy, choice and informed consent. • Follow safeguarding, moving-and-handling and infection-control requirements.

3.4.6 Sensory processing

What you might notice...	What you can do
CYP may be over-responsive, under-responsive or sensory seeking. This may affect attention, regulation, movement, comfort, participation, transitions, social interaction and readiness to learn.	• Use observation, pupil voice and family information to understand the CYP's sensory profile, including what helps, what is overwhelming and what changes across the day. • Complete a sensory audit of classrooms, corridors, dining areas, toilets, playgrounds and shared spaces, then adapt lighting, noise, seating, displays, smells, movement routes and crowding where possible. • Provide predictable routines and prepare CYP for changes using visual timetables, now-and-next boards, transition warnings, social stories, maps, photographs or clear verbal explanations. • Offer agreed sensory supports such as ear defenders, quiet spaces, tactile items, wobble cushions, chair or table bands, weighted resources where advised, fidget tools, movement breaks or access to water. • Consider flexibility around uniform, food textures, sensory snacks or safe alternatives where sensory needs affect comfort, regulation or attendance. • Seek advice and provide safe alternatives, where CYP mouth or chew objects, such as approved chew tools, alongside risk assessment. • Plan sensory breaks proactively rather than waiting for distress. Breaks may include walking jobs, stretching, heavy work activities, access to outdoor space, calm breathing, sensory circuits or time in a low-stimulus area. • Provide discreet ways for CYP to request sensory support, such as an "I need a break" card, agreed signal or visual choice. • Reduce unnecessary sensory load by limiting background noise, avoiding cluttered slides, keeping displays purposeful, giving one instruction at a time and avoiding talking while CYP are copying or processing.

3.4.6 Sensory processing (continued)

What you might notice...	What you can do
CYP may be over-responsive, under-responsive or sensory seeking. This may affect attention, regulation, movement, comfort, participation, transitions, social interaction and readiness to learn.	• Review seating with the CYP in mind, considering light, sound, smell, proximity to doors, peer movement, adult access, visibility, escape routes and whether the CYP needs to sit near or away from others. • Support participation in assemblies, dining halls, PE, practical lessons and social times by offering quieter entry, alternative seating, reduced waiting, rehearsal, adapted equipment, sensory breaks or a planned exit route. At times it may be appropriate for CYP not to participate in certain contexts if the sensory environment is overwhelming, e.g. assemblies or loud dining areas. • Record agreed sensory strategies in a pupil profile or support plan so all adults know what to offer, when to offer it and how to review whether it is helping. • Teach CYP to recognise early signs of sensory overload or under-arousal using simple language, visuals, interoception activities, 5-point scales, energy accounting or colour-rating systems.

3.4.7 Key resources and references

Vision

- RNIB Bookshare: accessible books and learning materials for learners with print disabilities.
- RNIB: information, advice and resources for supporting CYP with vision impairment.
- Curriculum Framework for Vision Impairment: guidance to support curriculum access and specialist skill development for learners with vision impairment.
- Guide Dogs: information and support linked to mobility, independence and access.
- British Blind Sport: inclusive sport resources for people with vision impairment.
- Youth Sport Trust inclusive sports programme: resources to support inclusive physical education and sport.
- Activity Alliance education: education resources to support inclusive physical activity.
- Activity Alliance: information and resources about inclusive sport and activity.

Hearing

- National Deaf Children's Society: information, advice and resources for supporting deaf CYP.
- Nottingham Deaf Society: local information and support for Deaf people and those supporting them.

Physical needs

- Changing Places: information about accessible toilets and facilities for people who need additional space and equipment.
- Active Hands are Achieving Hands: activities to develop fine motor skills.

Health

- DfE supporting pupils with medical conditions: statutory guidance on supporting pupils with medical conditions in school.

Sensory processing

- Derbyshire Multi-Agency Sensory Processing Needs Toolkit: a graduated, multi-agency toolkit for identifying and supporting sensory processing needs across education, therapeutic and community settings.

Appendix: Enhanced provision and in-house hub standards

- Nottinghamshire Enhanced Provision and In-house Hub Provision Standards front sheet.docx
- Nottinghamshire Inclusion Base Provision Standards final v1.docx

Together Notts

For children, young people and families



Last updated November 2026

SEND Partnership

Nottinghamshire County Council

Parent Carer Forum
Championing the voice

NHS
Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

D&P/10-26/86414