



Concentration Tools Guidance

Purpose

At our school, some children may use concentration tools to help them focus, regulate their attention, manage anxiety, or support sensory needs.

A concentration tool is only helpful if it supports learning. If it distracts the child using it, or distracts others, it is no longer functioning as a tool and has become a toy.

The aim of a concentration tool is to increase focus on learning, not to provide entertainment.

What is a Concentration Tool?

A concentration tool is a small, quiet item that helps a child remain focused and engaged in learning.

A concentration tool should:

- Be quiet
- Be used discreetly
- Stay in the child's hands or on their desk
- Help the child concentrate on their learning
- Not require visual attention
- Not distract other pupils

When a Tool Becomes a Toy

A concentration tool becomes a toy when:

- It is being played with instead of supporting learning.
- The child is looking at it more than their work.
- It is being thrown, spun, bounced or used as entertainment.
- It distracts others in the room.
- When it is taken out of the classroom and used as a toy at break/lunch.

Key Rule

If it helps learning, it is a tool.

If it distracts from learning, it is a toy.

When a tool becomes a toy, it will be removed and may be reintroduced at a later time when it can be used appropriately.



Examples of Appropriate Concentration Tools	Examples of Inappropriate Concentration Tools
These tools can generally be used without looking at them and without distracting others. TOOL = Helps learning	These items often draw attention away from learning and are more likely to become toys. TOY = Stops learning
✓ Stress ball (used quietly) ✓ Therapy putty ✓ Tangle toy (used discreetly) ✓ Marble mesh fidget ✓ Textured worry stone ✓ Small sensory strip attached to desk ✓ Fidget ring ✓ Hand grip exerciser ✓ Sensory chews / jewellery	✗ Pop-it toys used during lessons ✗ Rubik's cubes ✗ Spinners that attract visual attention ✗ Noisy clickers ✗ Light-up toys ✗ Scented toys ✗ Squishy toys that are thrown or stretched across the room ✗ Trading cards, collectibles, keyrings or novelty toys ✗ Any item that makes noise, flashes, or encourages play

Expectations for Pupils

Pupils using a concentration tool are expected to:

- Continue completing their work.
- Follow adult instructions.
- Use the tool quietly and safely.
- Keep the tool for its intended purpose.
- Return the tool if asked by a member of staff.

Responsibilities of Staff

Staff will:

- Decide whether a concentration tool is appropriate for classroom use.
- Monitor whether the tool is supporting learning.
- Remove a tool if it becomes distracting.
- Work with pupils and families to identify suitable alternatives where necessary.



St Paul's CofE Primary School

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Working with Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are asked to discuss any sensory or concentration needs with the class teacher, who may also discuss with the SENCO, before sending concentration items into school.

The school reserves the right to determine whether a particular item is suitable for classroom use.