



Learning Tool Policy

2026-2027

St Edmund Campion Catholic Voluntary Academy

At St Edmund Campion we recognise that some pupils require sensory learning tools, including handheld fidget items, chew tools and ear defenders to aid emotional regulation, support focus and foster inclusion. However, commercial items marketed as "fidget toys" frequently cause disruption. The aim of this policy is to establish a clear distinction between learning tools and play items and ensure a productive learning environment for all.

Learning Tools as a Reasonable Adjustment

At St Edmund Campion learning tools are treated as a formal **reasonable adjustment** permitted only as part of the process outlined below:

1. **Identification of Need:** Tools are allocated to pupils with documented special educational needs: ADHD, autism, high anxiety, or sensory processing differences.
2. **Approval Pathway:** A tool must be formally agreed upon by the class teacher and the SENDCo/external SEND professional, following consultation with parents/carers.
3. **Trial Period:** Approved items will undergo a 2-to-4-week trial period to evaluate whether they successfully enhance student engagement without disrupting peers.

Permitted Learning Tools

An individual learning tool must meet the following criteria to be permitted within the classroom:

- **Silent & Non-Distracting:** The object must not emit sounds (clicking, squeaking, popping) and cause no visual flash or glare.
- **Discreet Size:** Tools must be small enough to be held entirely within the pupil's hand or used subtly out of direct sight under the desk.
- **Safe and Cleanable:** Items must be non-toxic, structurally durable, and able to be cleaned regularly.

Permitted Learning Tools
• Stress balls and kneadable erasers • Tangle toys and marble-mesh sleeves • Textured pencil grips or silent desk strips • Approved chewable necklaces/accessories.

Classroom Rules and Expectations

Pupils granted access to a learning tool must follow the classroom rules and expectations set out below:

- **The "Tool, Not a Toy" Rule:** The tool must be used purely for self-regulation. It is not to be used for games, performance, or social interaction.
- **No Sharing or Trading:** The tool is assigned to an individual pupil for hygiene and behavioural reasons; tools cannot be shared or traded with classmates.
- **Designated Usage Times:** Tools may be used during periods of seated concentration (e.g., listening to instruction or independent desk work). They are not to be used during tests, dynamic group work, or physical transitions around the school unless stated in an EHCP.
- **Storage:** When not in use, the tool must remain out of sight in the child's tray or teacher's desk.

Staff members may temporarily confiscate a tool if:

- the tool becomes a source of distraction for the user or nearby peers
- the tool is misused (e.g., thrown, tapped on the desk, or waved in the air)
- the pupil fails to comply with a direct instruction to put the tool away.

If a pupil's tool is repeatedly confiscated, the SENDCo will review the student's support plan to explore alternative, non-object strategies for self-regulation.

Break and Lunchtime Rules and Expectations

- **Transition to Breaktimes:** Before leaving the classroom for morning break or lunchtime, pupils must store their learning tools in their tray. Learning tools are not allowed on the playground to prevent loss/damage.
- **Playground Alternatives:** If a pupil requires sensory or emotional regulation during breaktimes, they may access the designated quiet area.
- **Play Toys:** Standard commercial fidget toys from home must not be brought onto the playground. These items will be confiscated by staff and handed to the class teacher.
- **Exceptions for Heavy Duty Items:** Exceptions apply to high-wear sensory items, such as approved chewable accessories or ear defenders, which may be worn continuously if explicitly outlined in the pupil's individual support plan.