

St Matthew's Federation Focus Tool Policy

Introduction

At the St Matthew's Federation, we recognise that some children may require additional support to enable them to focus for extended periods of time. We ensure that a variety of resources are available for this purpose, including the use of focus tools.

Focus tools are self-regulation tools which can help individuals exercise the impulse for motion without negatively affecting attention and focus. When used effectively within a classroom setting, they can help the child to remain focused upon a specific task or input because they allow the child the opportunity to move discreetly without drawing attention away from the learning.

Effective focus tools

A good focus tool:

- Is quiet and safe
- Can be used without looking, so the user can focus on the lesson
- Can be used out of other children's eyesight to eliminate distraction
- Meets the student's sensory needs (some prefer certain textures while others avoid them)
- Fits the student's physical abilities (they must have the fine motor skills or strength to use the tool)
- Is relatively cheap (or durable, if more expensive)
- Is small (can fit within a pocket)
- Allows for lots of finger and hand movement

Fidgets that demand visual attention or those with a game component that require matching, unlocking, or solving something are less effective for boosting on-task behaviour. This is because they require hand eye co-ordination and therefore take focus away from the learning.

Focus tools provided by and used at St Matthew's Federation include:



Marble in mesh



Flippy Chain Toy

A child will be given the opportunity to use a focus tool if they are identified as struggling with focus within the classroom. If a child is on the SEN record, class teacher, child and

SENCo will discuss provision and identify suitable focus tools to be used. This will then be recorded on their Pupil Passport and My Plan.

All focus tools will be kept within a class focus box. Class teacher and pupils will agree on times when these tools can be used and class teacher will make it clear to the pupil when it is to be returned.

A focus charter (see appendix 1) identifies the rules for appropriate use of focus tools within the classroom. Prior to the first use, this charter will be shared and the pupil/ class teacher will be required to sign to show they agree to these terms.

Alternative support

Fidgeting can take many forms and is therefore best supported using a variety of tools. At St Matthew's we offers a range of provision to support focus and attention within the classroom, including:

- Allowing a student to stand at their desk and work.
- Using alternative seating that allows for movement, such as a wobble cushion.
- Using a kick band on a student's chair.
- Providing an allocated work station or space away from distractions.
- Use of Kinetic Sand.
- Velcro under the desk.
- Use of doodle book



Wobble cushion

Staff at St Matthews recognise that the most effective support is achieved in collaboration with the child and parents. Decisions about which tools work best will always be discussed and shared with all involved.

Written: August 2025