

Maes yr Haul Primary School

ALN Protocol - Fidget Tools (May 26)

1. Context

This protocol has been developed in line with:

- **The Equality Act 2010**
- **The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018**
- **The Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021**

The protocol supports schools in maintaining **high expectations for learning**, whilst making **appropriate, proportionate and purposeful adjustments** to remove barriers to learning and enable learners to access education on an equitable basis.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this protocol is to:

- Clarify the **appropriate use of fidget tools** within classrooms and around the school,
- Ensure strategies are **educationally justified**, not habitual or novelty-based,
- Support staff professional judgement,
- Maintain consistent expectations across the school community.

The protocol recognises that while some learners benefit from sensory regulation strategies, **fidget tools are not universally beneficial** and must not compromise teaching and (learning) the learning of the individual or others.

3. Principles of Inclusion

In line with Bridgend CBC and CSC guidance, inclusive practice:

- focuses on **meeting identified need**,
- is **needs-led, not resource-led**,
- is **reviewed for impact**,
- supports learner independence rather than reliance.

Fidget tools are therefore considered a **support strategy**, not an entitlement, reward or substitute for effective teaching and classroom routines. Decisions will be made on an individual, person-centred basis.

4. Definition of Fidget Tools

For clarity, a fidget tool is defined as:

A small, discreet, non-distracting item used to support sensory regulation or attention where a specific need has been identified.

Items that resemble toys, games or novelty objects are **not considered appropriate classroom fidget tools**.

5. When the Use of a Fidget Tool May Be Appropriate

A learner may use a fidget tool **only where**:

- There is a **clear, identified need** affecting access to learning,
- The adjustment supports **engagement, regulation or attention**,
- Use has been **agreed with the class teacher and ALNCo**,
- The learner's views (where appropriate) have been considered,
- The strategy would usually be **recorded** in a:
 - One Page Profile
 - IDP (where applicable)
 - or agreed classroom support plan

This reflects ALN Code expectations that **Additional Learning Provision (ALP)** must be clearly identified, purposeful and reviewed. Fidget tools may constitute Additional Learning Provision (ALP) or a reasonable adjustment where they are required to address a learner's identified need.

6. When Use Will Not Be Supported

The use of fidget tools will not be supported where they:

- Distract the learner or others,
- Disrupt teaching and learning,
- Are used for play, sharing or social interaction,
- Are introduced by parents/carers without prior agreement with the school,
- Are not linked to an identified barrier to learning.

Bridgend CBC and CSC guidance supports schools in **maintaining consistent, calm learning environments**, and staff are not expected to accommodate strategies that undermine this.

7. Expectations and Practical Arrangements

Where use is agreed:

- Tools must be **small, quiet and non-stimulating**,
- They must remain **in the learner's hand or workspace**,
- They must not require supervision or redirection,
- Their use will be **monitored and reviewed**,
- Staff may withdraw or adapt use if impact is negative.

Fidget tools should be **provided or approved by the school** to maintain consistency and safeguarding. The key consideration will be whether the tool demonstrably improves the learner's access to learning.

If learners bring fidget tools / toys to school that have not previously been agreed with the ALNCo, the teacher may remove these and require the learner to take them home. We recognise that this will need to be handled sensitively, so prior discussion where parents feel their child may need this support is essential.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

School

The school will:

- maintain a register of learners who access approved fidget tools to support their learning.
- use professional judgement to assess appropriateness via teacher and ALNCo,
- make reasonable adjustments where a learner would otherwise be at a substantial disadvantage,
- handle sensitively, any learners who may bring non-approved fidget tools / toys into school without prior agreement,
- review strategies regularly.

Parents and Carers

Parents/carers are asked to:

- Discuss concerns with the class teacher or ALNCo,
- Avoid sending items into school without prior agreement,
- Understand that strategies must work within a **classroom context**, not just at home.

9. Monitoring and Review

This protocol will be reviewed regularly and evaluated in line with ALN processes, learner progress and wellbeing. It may be updated in response to any revised Bridgend CBC, CSC or Welsh Government guidance.

Parent Guidance – Fidget Tools

Why does the school have this approach?

We are committed to inclusive, high-quality learning environments.

We are committed to creating calm, focused and inclusive classrooms where all children can learn successfully.

Some children benefit from sensory tools, such as fidget tools. While these are sometimes helpful, experience and guidance show they can also:

- Reduce focus,
- Create distraction,
- Become a source of play rather than support,
- Increase dependency rather than independence.

Having clear guidance helps ensure that any support used in school is **safe, appropriate and genuinely helpful for learning** without having a detrimental impact on the learning of others.

How are decisions made?

Decisions about fidget tools are based on:

- A child's **individual learning needs**,
- Whether the tool improves **focus, engagement or regulation**,
- **Classroom impact** on other learners,
- **Professional judgement** of staff,
- Whether strategies are helping learning over time.

Where appropriate, support will be agreed with the learner and may be recorded in a One Page Profile or Individual Development Plan (IDP) in line with Welsh Government and Bridgend CBC guidance.

What can parents and carers do?

- ✓ Talk to your child's teacher or the ALNCo if you feel your child may benefit from support,
- ✓ Share helpful information about what works at home,
- ✓ Support any strategies agreed with the school,
- ✗ Please do not send in fidget toys or sensory items without agreeing this with the school first (without prior agreement, teachers may remove this item or swap for an approved item and require this to be taken home)

Our Shared Aim

We work together with parents / carers to support children to:

- Stay focused in lessons,
- Develop independence,
- Feel confident and supported in their learning,
- Improve engagement with learning.

Our approach ensures that support is **fair, effective and focused on helping every child succeed. (learning outcomes)**.