St Alban's
Catholic Primary and Nursery School
Member of St Clare's Catholic Multi Academy Trust, Diocese of Hallam

Let God's love shine in our lives as we grow and learn together

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Use of Concentration Aids in classrooms

Section 1:

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DRAFT Policy agreed by LAC	
Policy to be reviewed	October 2028

1. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidelines regarding the use of concentration tools and ear defenders within St Alban's Catholic Primary and Nursery School. These tools can assist some pupils in enhancing focus, reducing anxiety, and supporting sensory needs. This policy aims to ensure that their use is beneficial for identified pupils in the classroom whilst maintaining a positive and conducive learning environment for everyone.

Concentration aids are small, handheld objects that can be moved around in various ways. They are often used to support children with Autism, ADHD, Sensory Processing Disorder, anxiety, and other additional needs. Although these may appear fun, for many pupils with SEND they serve a vital purpose in supporting regulation and attention by offering sensory stimulation, reducing stress, improving focus, and helping pupils to manage periods of high anxiety.

Ear defenders can also support pupils with sensory regulation needs, particularly in noisy environments. Used appropriately, they can reduce auditory overload and help pupils remain engaged in learning.

In line with our school vision, these tools are provided to help individuals regulate, focus, and reach their potential.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all pupils, staff, parents/carers at St Alban's Catholic Primary and Nursery School.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

School Leaders/SENDCO

- Ensure the policy is communicated effectively to all stakeholders.
- Provide training for staff on the appropriate use of concentration aids and ear defenders.
- Review and evaluate the policy regularly.
- Liaise with external professionals where necessary.

Teachers and Support Staff

- Communicate with the SENDCO to discuss individual pupil needs regarding the potential use of a concentration aids or ear defenders.
- Monitor use to ensure tools are used appropriately and do not disrupt learning.
- Provide feedback to the SENDCO and leadership regarding effectiveness.

Parents/Carers

- Request for the school to consider the use of a concentration aid or ear defenders if they have concerns about their child's needs.

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- Respect the professional opinion of school staff regarding whether it is appropriate for their child to access these tools.
- Support the school's policy by discussing the 'appropriate use' of tools with their children.
- Communicate with teachers about their child's specific needs and any concerns.

Pupils

- Use concentration aids and ear defenders responsibly and in accordance with school guidelines.
- Understand that these are tools to aid learning, not toys.
- Use them discreetly.
- Follow staff directions regarding when and how they may be used.

4. Implementation Strategies

Guidelines for concentration aids

- Concentration aids must be approved by the SEND team (SENDCo or Head) before being used.
- All concentration aids will be provided by the school; pupils may not bring their own.
- Pupils may only have one concentration aid at a time, kept in their drawer/chair bag when not in use.
- Concentration aids are for classroom use only and are not permitted at playtime, lunchtime, or while walking around school.
- Chew toys may only be used under adult supervision as part of a sensory plan.
- If a concentration aid becomes a distraction (e.g. thrown, used to make noise), it's use will be reviewed.

Guidelines for Ear Defenders

- Ear defenders may be used to support sensory regulation needs.
- Pupils may bring their own ear defenders only following discussion and agreement with a member of the SEND team.
- Ear defenders must be clearly labelled with the pupil's name.
- They should be stored safely when not in use.
- Ear defenders are not to be worn at playtime, lunchtime, or while walking around school, unless specifically agreed as part of a sensory plan.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

- Teachers will regularly assess the impact of fidget tools and ear defenders on pupil engagement and focus.
- Feedback will be provided to the SENDCO as part of intervention review sessions.
- The SENDCO will seek additional advice from external professionals where required.
- The Headteacher will discuss the impact of such provision with the SENDCO in the best interests of all children.

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- This policy will be reviewed annually and updated in line with the SEND Information Report.

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