

Environmental Audit

An environmental audit is a way of assessing the physical environment to ensure that it provides a safe and supportive learning space for all children and young people. An environmental audit is especially beneficial for children with special educational needs who may have additional sensitivities and challenges within the environment.

The audits are designed to:

- Risk assess a specific learning space
- Identify areas of potential sensory overwhelm
- Promote an Inclusive learning environment



While a practitioner may complete an environmental audit, it is also important to capture the child voice and clarify what environmental factors are impacting on their learning and participation as what may be acceptable for some, may be overwhelming for others.

There are many different types of audits available, and you may wish to develop your own to suit the specific needs of your school, environment, or children.

There are a number of environmental audits available on the internet. Teachers, schools and settings may wish to explore the use of these or develop their own audit taking.

Example Audit with things to consider. It does not cover all aspects and there will be aspects specific to your environment, it is a starting point for discussion and reflection. The Audit is designed to be used as a working document that is carried out at different times of the day and days of the week to ensure a good cross section of conditions are observed and reviewed regularly.

Pointer	Things to consider	Current Situation	Possible Action
VISUAL			
Classroom illumination is suitable for all learners.	Fluorescent lights.		
	Flickering light coming into the room through blinds.		
	Light reflecting on shiny surfaces.		
The classroom is clutter free.	Busy and cluttered wall displays.		
	One wall with minimal displays/distractions to help learners focus on teacher.		
	Designated areas for specific activities to give clarity to classroom organisation.		
	Access to an individual, low arousal workstation.		

Pointer	Things to consider	Current Situation	Possible Action
NOISE			
Noise in the classroom	Noise created by the movement of people, chairs, other furniture.		
	Noise from electrical equipment.		
	Seating arrangements in relation to noise.		
	Humming from fluorescent lighting.		
	Acoustics of the gym, hall, dining hall, swimming pool, sports field.		
	Availability of alternative, quiet learning space.		
Noise outside the classroom	Noise from movement through corridors.		
	Loud hand driers.		
	Weather, grass cutting, other children working or playing outside.		
	Strategies to help learners cope with fire alarms.		
TASTE AND SMELL Taste and smell are closely linked and can be distressing for some learners who will be distracted from learning.			
Smells in the classroom.	Smells from glue, paint, clay, cleaning fluids.		
	Perfumes, deodorants, hair products, washing powders.		
Smells from outside the classroom.	Cooking smells from the cafeteria or cookery room.		

Pointer	Things to consider	Current Situation	Possible Action
TOUCH AND FEEL Difficulties with touch will impact on participation in learning tasks.			
Classroom environment	Classroom temperature		
	Seating – furniture		
	Seating – social environment		
School environment and routines	Learners are confident in corridors and moving around school.		
	A designated area for learners who need time out.		
Culture of the school	The wellbeing of the individual and their inclusion.		
	Routines in and around school – queuing and waiting.		
Learning tasks	Availability of a range of tools for recording work – both high tech and low tech.		
Individual comfort	Is school uniform comfortable to wear?		
GENERAL ISSUES			
Adults' awareness of learners' anxiety.	Learner's awareness of their own anxiety levels.		
	Learner's ability to express their anxiety to adults.		
	Learner's ability to deal with raised anxiety.		

Name of person completing this audit.....	
Has this audit been completed with a particular pupil in mind?	Yes/No Name:
Class name	
Date	

How to conduct an Environmental Audit

- Evaluate the current situation and identify areas that require change
- Verify the information you collected on your environmental audit e.g., check lighting reflections on the whiteboard at different times during the day
- Check which increase child or young persons have sensory sensitivities
- Teachers and parents can provide information about factors that impact particular students
- Children or young people can provide information: consider using visuals or a digital device e.g., iPad and have pictures of different areas (e.g., cloakroom or dinner hall). The child/young person then meets with the teacher to talk about the pictures. Asking the child/young person about the pictures e.g., 'how does this make you feel?', 'what do you think of when you look at this picture?'
- Create an action plan for addressing changes e.g., by the end of week 2 I will have created a class seating plan.
- Monitor changes throughout the week e.g., did this change increase child or young person's learning behaviours?



An environmental audit does not cover all aspects but provides ideas on the ways in which a school or setting might be altered if children experience sensory processing difficulties and find it difficult or overwhelming to tolerate certain sensations or situations.

Useful Links:

[Environmental Audit](#)

[Sensory audit for schools and classrooms](#)

[Early years environmental audit](#)

[Audit your environment – Early Education](#)

[Inclusive Teaching Checklist](#)

[Sensory Audit Tool](#)