



Niagara Catholic District School Board

SENSORY ROOM AND MOVEMENT ROOM

ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

300 – Schools/Students

No 303.6

Adopted Date: March 27, 2025

Latest Reviewed/Revised Date:

In keeping with the Mission, Vision and Values of the Niagara Catholic District School Board, the following are the Administrative Operational Procedures for Sensory and Movement Rooms.

PREAMBLE

Niagara Catholic is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and supportive learning and working environment for all students and staff. Some students may experience high levels of dysregulation during the school day. The creation and use of a Sensory/Movement Room is proactive and supports student learning through self-regulation and calming strategies, promoting health and well-being, and preventing and de-escalating challenging behaviours.

Schools with a Sensory/Movement Room must keep students engaged in regular education settings, such as classrooms, for most of each school day.

DEFINITIONS

Assent: A student's affirmative agreement to participate. Students can show assent and assent withdrawal verbally and non-verbally. Some signs of assent include, but are not limited to, saying yes, smiling, use of visuals, actively engaging in an activity and interacting with an adult. Signs of assent withdrawal include saying "no", showing refusal to participate, and avoiding or demonstrating a negative attitude towards interacting with the adult or being in a location.

Individual Education Plan (IEP): An Individual Education Plan (IEP) is established for every student identified as exceptional and any other student requiring an IEP as determined by the school-based team. An Individual Education Plan is a written plan that outlines programming for a student with special education needs. In consultation with parents/guardians, an IEP defines a student's strengths and needs, identifying accommodations and/or modified expectations from the Ontario Curriculum or alternative expectations that make up a student's program.

Sensory Room: A Sensory Room is an intentionally created and designed space that provides multi-sensory resources to support the sensory needs of a student to engage them in learning as reflected in the goals identified in their Individual Education Plan. It is a controlled, sensory-focused space that aims to support social and emotional learning and provide students with the individualized sensory input they need to self-regulate, so they can be better prepared for learning and interacting with others.

Movement Room: A Movement Room is an intentionally created and designed space where a student can develop their gross motor skills and explore ways that their bodies can move. These engaging spaces build strength and confidence, promote body awareness, and inspire independent, active play.

CREATION AND DESIGN OF A SENSORY/MOVEMENT ROOM

The creation and design of a Sensory/Movement Room must be supported by the Principal, the Area Student Support Facilitator, and approved by the Superintendent of Education of Student Support.

A Sensory/Movement Room should be continuously evaluated by the Principal and the Area Student Support Facilitator to confirm:

- that it is still required,
- that it is being used in a purposeful and productive manner, and that,
- it is supporting student sensory and movement needs to assist them in achieving their learning goals and positive outcomes.

Occupational Therapist and/or Physiotherapist must be consulted in the creation and design of a Sensory/Movement Room. Facilities Services will ensure that the room meets building code and fire safety regulations. A Sensory/Movement Room must have a window for clear visibility from the outside, and if this is not possible the door must remain open for the safety of the student and staff. Despite visibility, at no time should a student be left alone in a Sensory/Movement Room. A Sensory/Movement Room must be included in the school fire safety plan and reviewed/revised annually.

USE OF SENSORY /MOVEMENT ROOM

Every student accessing the Sensory/Movement Room must have learning goals and success criteria linked to the use of the room as part of their Individual Education Plan (IEP). The IEP should clearly state when and for what purpose the Sensory/Movement Room will be used by the student.

- Parents/guardians must be informed of their child's program in the Sensory/Movement Room. If requested, the parents/guardians should be given the opportunity to view the Sensory/Movement Room.
- School staff will collect baseline data to determine the need of the Sensory/Movement Room as well as the creation of an individual program and schedule for the Sensory/Movement Room for the identified student.
- School staff will use the attached Tracking Sheet (Appendix A) to maintain and evaluate the student's success in the Sensory/Movement Room.
- Students must access a Sensory/Movement Room voluntarily, through demonstrated assent, and be supervised by designated staff.
- Students will engage in purposeful and productive sensory/movement learning activities provided by staff while using the Sensory/Movement Room. If the student's sensory/movement needs can be met in their classroom, use of an alternative space should be avoided.
- Transition planning should include the identification of sensory/movement activities that can be implemented in the regular classroom without disruption to others.
- In certain instances, an Occupational Therapist and/or Physiotherapist may be involved in the implementation and evaluation of student specific supports in the Sensory/Movement Room.
- Where student specific purpose equipment is prescribed by an Occupational Therapist and/or Physiotherapist to be utilized by a student in the Sensory/Movement Room it should not be shared with other students.
- The recommended usage time for a Sensory/Movement Room is 15 minutes per visit unless otherwise recommended by an Occupational Therapist and/or Physiotherapist.

- To ensure equal access, confirm supervision, and inform program planning, an individual student's use of a Sensory/Movement room shall be scheduled and recorded ([Appendix A](#)).
- The use of a Sensory/Movement Room is not a long-term strategy and should be regularly evaluated by the classroom teacher and support staff to assess the effectiveness of the student's progress towards goal achievement as documented in the student's IEP.
- A student must be supervised by an educator in the Sensory/Movement Room at all times.

EQUIPMENT AND CLEANING

All equipment in a Sensory/Movement Room should be inspected daily by staff to ensure equipment is clean, in good working order and safe to use. Equipment needing repair should be immediately brought to the attention of the principal. Appropriate repairs, disposals and/or replacement of equipment should be in consultation with the Area Student Support Facilitator. A Sensory/Movement Room should be maintained as a clean and hygienic environment for students and staff.

- A Sensory/Movement Room must be part of the Joint Health and Safety Committee monthly inspection and reporting.
- After each use of a Sensory/Movement Room by a student, the room should be cleaned by qualified staff in preparation for the next student. This cleaning should include specific cleaning of the contact surfaces which may be accessed by other students or staff.

A regular scheduled deep clean of the Sensory/Movement Room should be conducted by custodial staff, as part of the regular school deep clean schedule.

Resources:

- [*National Council for Special Education: Sensory Spaces in Schools 2021*](#)
- [*National Council for Special Education: Let's Get Regulated Information for Parents*](#)
- [*National Autism Resource: School Sensory Rooms*](#)
- [*https://smho-smso.ca/online-resources/sensory-strategies-to-support-the-mental-health-of-students-with-special-education-needs/*](https://smho-smso.ca/online-resources/sensory-strategies-to-support-the-mental-health-of-students-with-special-education-needs/)
- [*Niagara Catholic District School Board Policies/Procedures*](#)
 - [*Access to Board Premises \(302.6.3\) Administrative Operational Procedures*](#)
 - [*Accessibility Standards Policy \(800.8\)*](#)
 - [*Code of Conduct Policy \(302.6.2\)*](#)
 - [*Equity and Inclusive Education Policy \(100.10\)*](#)
 - [*Privacy Policy \(600.6\)*](#)
 - [*Safe and Accepting Schools Policy \(302.6\)*](#)
 - [*Building Bridges to Student Support: Niagara Catholic Special Education Plan*](#)

Adopted Date: March 27, 2025

Revision History:

Tracking Sheet

| Tracking Sheet | | | |
|----------------|---------|--------------------|--------|
| Student: | School: | Classroom Teacher: | Grade: |
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