

Research project: How do secondary school-aged children with a neurodiverse condition experience sensory differences within the school setting?

- We would like to invite your child to participate in a research project to learn more about how children experience multisensory input within the school setting.
- The project will collect information from children and young people with a neurodiverse condition.
- The project is being carried out by the school's Occupational Therapist, overseen by a mentor and Sheffield Hallam University.
- This leaflet tells you more about the project and what taking part involves. Please read the information and discuss it with others if you wish.
- Allowing your child to take part in this study is your decision. It's ok to decide not to take part.

Why is this research being done?

Sensory processing difficulties and delayed motor skills are typical for neurodivergent adolescents. School participation and academic learning skills are known to be impacted by sensory processing problems. We know little about a child's sensory experiences in the school setting. This study will seek to answer this question and provide evidence to improve the quality of care and educational provisions children receive.

Why have I been chosen, and do I have to take part?

You have been identified as the parent or guardian of a child or young person with a neurodiverse condition. The sensory profiling measure identified Your child as having sensory processing differences. Participation in the study is voluntary; whatever you decide will **not** affect the standard of care and other support or benefits your child receives.

What will happen if I decide to let my child take part?

If you decide your child can participate, you will be asked to complete a consent form. We would also like your child's agreement to participate. Therefore, your child will also be offered information regarding the study to decide if they want to participate. They will be asked to complete a consent form.

This study will involve your child answering questions about the school setting and their sensory experiences during an interview. Some students find it easier to express themselves through art; therefore, art-based materials will be available in the sessions to allow children to express their thoughts and views differently. This will be completed in one to three-hour-long sessions.

Will taking part be kept confidential?

We will keep what your child tells us in the interview and during arts-based sessions confidential unless there is anything they say that makes us concerned that they or someone else is at risk of serious harm. If this happens, we will talk to you and the safeguarding team about the best thing to do. The team follows stringent rules about confidentiality. All information is stored in locked filing cabinets and password-protected folders on computers.

What are the possible benefits and risks of taking part?

Information collected from your child could lead to a greater understanding of how the school environment could support sensory overload for children and younger people, aiding access to education.

Talking about positive and negative experiences within the school setting may recall upsetting or distressing experiences. If this happens, concerns about safeguarding nature will be raised with a member of the safeguarding team. We have active student support mechanisms so your child can access our onsite mental health team and therapy interventions to mitigate the distress. Also, remember that taking part is entirely your and your child's decision and your child can withdraw from the study at any time without reason. A record of your child's name and number will be anonymised. The information will be encrypted online on the school-secured system in password-protected files.

Are there any expenses or payments for taking part in this study?

Your child will be offered the opportunity to participate in a school day trip free of charge—time and place to be confirmed.

If I want to take part, what do I do next?

To participate, you must complete and sign the consent form in the invitation pack sent via post or link within an email you received. If your child chooses to participate, they must also complete and sign a consent form.

If you have any questions about completing the consent form or any of the statements included, please get in touch with study manager Tanya Oliver at toliver@xxxxxxx.co.uk, 0191 xxxxxxx.

What if I change my mind during the study?

Your child can withdraw from the study at any time. They do not have to give us a reason for changing their mind. If they withdraw from the study, we will keep the information obtained within our analysis. This will include your details so we know you have participated if you contact us again. However, we will not use this information to contact you.

What will you do with the information I provide?

The researcher will use your name and contact details and your child's name and contact details to contact you about the research study, ensure that relevant information about the study is recorded for your care, and oversee the quality of the study. Individuals from Sheffield Hallam University and regulatory organisations may look at your research records to check the accuracy of the research study. I am the only person who can identify people from the information. People at Sheffield Hallam University will only have anonymised data. The people who analyse the information will not be able to identify you or your child and will be unable to find your name or contact details.

We will use your child's information to understand how secondary school-aged children with a neurodiverse condition perceive and experience sensory overload within the school

setting. We will also summarise the findings to share with others, including our participants. We may present the findings at events and on websites. We will write about the study in publications read by researchers, educational providers, and school stakeholders. This information will not identify you or your child and will not be combined with other information in a way that could identify you. The data will only be used for research and cannot be used to contact you or to affect your child's care.

How long will the researcher keep my information?

The researcher will keep identifiable information about you for at least 3 years after the study. We will also keep the information your child shared in interviews and arts-based activities for a minimum of 3 years as well. Information will be stored in the school's secure system, Veeam, to ensure your and your child's data is safe.

Who is responsible for keeping my information safe?

We will use information from you and your child to undertake this study and act as the data controller. This means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly.

Your rights to access, change, or move your information are limited, as we need to manage your information in specific ways for the research to be reliable and accurate. If your child withdraws from the study, we will keep the information about you and your child we have already obtained. We will use anonymised information to safeguard your rights. These data will not be used for any other purposes. You can find out more about how we use your information at https://xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

What will happen if the study stops earlier than expected?

Should the research stop earlier than planned and your child be affected in any way, we will tell you and explain why.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Please keep this copy.

Getting in touch with the research team

Our contact details are:

Research investigator – Tanya Oliver

toliver@xxxxxxxxxxx.co.uk

0191xxxxxxx ext. xxx

School supervisor – Rebekka Wall

Rwall@xxxxxxxxxxxx.co.uk

University supervisor – Sue Allen

suexxxxxxxxx@gmail.com

You should contact the Data Protection Officer if:	**You should contact the Head of Research Ethics (Dr. Mayur Ranchordas) if:**
• you have a query about how the University uses your data • you would like to report a data security breach (e.g., if you think your data has been lost or disclosed inappropriately) • you would like to complain about how the University has used your data DPO@shu.ac.uk	• you have concerns with how the research was undertaken or how you were treated ethicssupport@shu.ac.uk

Postal address: Sheffield Hallam University, Howard Street, Sheffield S1 1WBT
Telephone: 0114 225 5555