



Riverside Primary School

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Dear Parents and Carers,

As we move into the second half of the summer term, we wanted to share some guidance around the use of fidgets in school.

We recognise that for some children, small sensory or movement tools can genuinely support focus and regulation. Research shows that small, repetitive movement can help some children maintain attention - particularly children with ADHD, anxiety, or sensory differences - but only when the tool supports learning rather than competing for attention.

However, over time we have noticed that some items being brought into school are actually becoming a distraction rather than a support. In some cases, children are becoming more focused on the fidget than the learning itself. Some items are also noisy, messy, visually distracting, or are not designed for classroom use. With 30 children in a classroom, multiple noisy or visually engaging fidgets can quickly become distracting for everyone.

We will continue teaching children that fidgets are learning tools, not toys. A fidget is only helpful if it supports learning and attention - otherwise, it can quickly become another distraction.

Therefore, moving forward, we ask that any fidget brought into school is:

- Small and discreet
- Quiet
- Able to be used without needing constant visual attention
- Not distracting to others
- Not messy if it breaks or bursts

As a general rule: If it needs constant attention, makes noise, or turns into a game, it's probably not helping regulation.

Examples of appropriate fidgets:

- Small stress ball that can fit in one hand
- Marble in mesh
- Worry stone
- Small textured ring

Examples of inappropriate items:

- Large stretchy toys
- Putty or slime
- Items such as mini skateboards or other novelty toys
- 3D printed fidgets that are noisy - see some examples below
- Items that require lots of movement or visual attention

We kindly ask parents and carers to regularly check what children may be bringing into school to ensure they are suitable for use in a classroom environment.

We will continue teaching children how to use fidgets appropriately in school. Our three simple rules are:

1. **It stays in your hands** (not being thrown, bounced, spun across the table, etc.)
2. **Focus stays on the learning** (if the fidget is becoming the main focus rather than supporting attention, it needs a break)
3. **If it becomes distracting, we take a break from it and put it away** (because it is not helping at that moment)

A successful fidget should almost fade into the background: You're using it, listening, learning - and almost forgetting it's in your hand.

It is also important to remember that not every child needs a fidget. Some children regulate more effectively through strategies such as:

- Classroom routines and structure
- A movement or brain break
- A drink of water
- Calm breathing
- A wobble cushion or chair band
- Sensory circuit time

Teachers provide regular movement opportunities and brain breaks for all children at appropriate points throughout the school day to support attention, regulation, and learning. In many cases, movement or sensory strategies before learning can be more effective than a handheld fidget. Our long-term aim is always to help children develop increasing self-awareness, regulation, and independence. Where a child has an identified sensory or additional need, staff will continue to work with families to support appropriate strategies on an individual basis.

Please note that the use of fidgets in classrooms will remain at the discretion of the class teacher. Staff may ask children to put items away if they are becoming distracting, unsafe, or are no longer supporting learning. Staff will also be revisiting these expectations with children during the first week back to help ensure a shared understanding of how fidgets can be used successfully and appropriately in school.

Thank you, as always, for your support and understanding.

Kind regards,
Riverside Primary School

Suitable for the classroom

Discreet and quiet. Can be held in one hand.

Not suitable for the classroom

Noisy, and/or visually distracting.

