Oxfordshire protocol for the identification and assessment of pupils with Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Strategies for teachers in schools
(Key Stage 2)

Oxfordshire protocol for the identification and assessment of pupils with Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

General Organisation

- Make sure classroom is well organized, tidy and calm

- Lower your voice rather than raising it

- Allow children 5 minutes each day to tidy their desks

- Display classroom rules

- Individual assignment charts can be used and sent home to the parent for signature

- Ensure that the child has a list of tasks. Numbered cards with symbols can be used for non-readers

- Develop an in class reward system to reward all children who complete home/school work

- Use a visual aid (timer/alarm) to indicate periods of special work. Start with a short time (5 – 10 minutes) and gradually increase as the class becomes more successful

- Indicate either using an auditory and or visual signal to mark when the present task is ending

- Tape a checklist to the child's desk to indicate the various steps, which are involved in starting and completing a task

- Use visual planners such as mind maps, etc.

Assertive Teaching

Do

- Give the impression that you are remaining calm and are in control
- Sort out 'I won't' from 'I can't'
- Make sure interactions between you and the pupil end positively
- Leave room for both of you to manoeuvre
- Punish the behaviour and not the pupil
- Give short, appropriate and immediate punishment
- Use the language of choice, *If you choose to do this, that will happen, but if you do that this will happen*

Don't

- let the pupil 'get' to you
- react without thinking
- make threats that you cannot carry out

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Physical Arrangements in the Classroom

Principles

- A flexible classroom is likely to be more successful.

- Reduce distractions

- Pupils with ADHD to work alongside other pupils as much as possible

- Ask the pupil which aspects of the classroom help or hinder his/her learning and adapt accordingly

- Ensure equipment is easily available so that traffic jams do not occur

- Try sitting the pupil with different pupils

- Some teachers allocate seats in different parts of the classroom and when losing concentration the pupil gives a signal and they move to the reserve position

- Avoid pupils who may be encouraging inappropriate behaviour

- Separate pupils who might distract each other

- Reduce distractions around the pupil's desk (e.g. equipment, toys, and pencil cases)

- Teach pupils how to manage their own workspace

- Seat the pupil close to the information s/he needs

- Seat the pupil next to good role models whom they consider to be 'significant others' with good study skills. Be prepared to rotate the role models.

- Seat the pupil away from doors and windows, and in a place, which is easy for the teacher to get to without interrupting the lesson or embarrassing the pupil

- Seat the pupil so s/he can be seen easily wherever the teacher is in the class

- Where possible increase the distance between the desks

- Several tables can be provided for group work and rows for independent work

- Arranging tables in a horseshoe shape has been found to promote discussion without impeding work

- Establish a designated quiet area for all pupils, as pupils with ADHD may need greater quietness that other pupils

- Establish clear rules for the classroom – all children remain seated, six feet on the floor (two human, four chair!)

- Provide a legitimate reason for the pupil to leave their seat after a required period of sitting. Include a reason for returning to their seat

- Help with organization by providing trays for work to be completed and work finished

- Complete an observation schedule on the pupil to see if overactive periods coincide with a time of day or other circumstances. Plan active tasks or computer work for these times, giving work that requires more concentration at other times

- Adopting the principle of 'lightest touch' involvement with the pupil, a teaching assistant can be used to observe the pupil because this promotes the pupil's independence and can support sustained work

Encouraging Good Behaviour

Guiding principles

- Pupils need to know that they are liked by the adults around them, by communicating their personal worth and acceptance

- It is possible to modify pupils' behaviour

- Pupils respond most positively when the expectations are clear

- A consistent system of rewards and sanctions will form the main element of any management strategy

- Interventions which try to manage behaviour are generally more successful than those that attempt to change it

Strategies

- Praise specific behaviour e.g. "That writing is very neat" or "I like how you correctly wrote down all the things you have to do" rather than "Well done!"

- Move around the room to control by proximity

- Reinforce specific behaviours

- Set short measurable goals – hourly, daily, weekly or monthly depending on the child's needs. Provide frequent feedback on progress towards these goals

- Tackle one target at a time with appropriate rewards and sanctions understood by all

- Use visual and auditory cues as behavioural reminders. For example a point's accumulator chart where a pupil colours in a square or attaches a sticker

- Where possible avoid confrontation, which can lead to escalation. Assertive approaches such as simply repeating the request calmly can be effective.

- For the pupil who can be angry and who might refuse to accept negative consequences, set a kitchen timer for a brief period to give the pupil time to decide if s/he will go to "time out" and so avoid a more serious consequence. This method reduces the need for negative consequences that might have to be physically enforced and can lower the temperature of the situation

- IEP targets should relate to academic performance and skills, rather than specific behaviour such as remaining in seat. The latter might be a strategy to achieve the former. This focuses on positive outcomes rather than negative behaviour

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- Simple behavioural interventions, when applied diligently, can be helpful

  - Ignore-rule-praise: ignore inappropriate behaviour, if it continues give the rule being broken, praise the pupil when they conform
  - Use behavioural contracts
  - Apply a token economy
  - Provide time out

- Find time each day to have a conversation with the pupils that is not work related, so that they feel valued

- Build a relationship by telling the pupil things about yourself, e.g. experiences that you did or did not like at school

- Catch the pupil's eye and smile at her/him during the day

- Acknowledge the pupil's feelings, *I know you don't like doing this task, but your need to do this because …*

- Ask the pupil to tell you if they find something particularly enjoyable or boring, and if the latter, do not become angry but find out why

Lesson Organisation

Establish contact immediately:

- Give early positive attention to pupil in each activity

- Make eye contact with the pupil

- Expect the child to make eye contact when you are talking to her/him

- Allow child to make frequent responses but only acknowledge those which are relevant

- Maintain visibility between you and the pupil at all times

- Stand near the pupil when giving instructions or explanations, a touch on the shoulder, mentioning her/his name, may gain her/his attention

A 'getting started' routine for each lesson

- Pupil should be taught the routine

- Use individual visual or written checklist following set procedures
- Help can be given from more organised classmates

- Have an activity for the pupil to do as soon as s/he enters the room, e.g. draw, go on computer

- Be prepared to adapt the routine to assist in a smoother transition between parts of the day

Use agreed cues to gain attention

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- Have an agreed signal given by a member of staff to gain the class's attention, e.g. raising hand, saying 1,2,3, and class responding 4,5,6, clicking fingers with class joining in

- Have an agreed list of instructions that everyone complies with e.g. stop what you are doing, be still, put pens and equipment down, be quiet, look at the member of staff

- Other staff taking the class should use the same agreed signal

Provide regular reminders of on task behaviour

- Use a combination of verbal and visual reminders

- A visual reminder is the traffic light system, green for being on task, amber when concentration slips and give verbal prompt, turn to green with praise if back on task, otherwise go to red when a previously agreed prompt is applied

Divide learning tasks into small chunks

- Give instructions one at a time, and monitor pupil's reaction

- Use an index card with written instructions by the pupil in their own words

- Index cards can be used to present the pupil's work, e.g. a few maths problems

- Persist, generally as more time is needed over a longer period for learning to occur

When doing a sustained teacher input

- Give the pupil something to do e.g. doodle pad, write down the key words from a presentation

- Develop a 'bag of tricks' to help the pupil meet his need for physical activity in an acceptable way

Present rules and instructions clearly and briefly

- Display rules around the classroom

- Vary the way they are presented e.g. written list, poster for specific rule

- Have pictures of desired behaviour e.g. on task, co-operative working, sitting and listening

- Refer to the rules regularly

- Encourage the pupil to say a rule, especially at the start of a learning activity

- The pupil can say the rule softly whilst working on a task

- Be as tough as nails about rules but always in a calm and positive way

- Manage feedback objectively to other staff.

Lesson Presentation

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Provide a summary at the start of the lesson

- Include the learning objective, an outline, introduce key concepts and new vocabulary

Ensure a lively pace for presenting the lesson

Include a variety of activities during each lesson

- Vary the modes of presentation e.g. teacher talk, question and answer, OHP, interactive whiteboard, handouts, posters, video, audio tapes, role play

- Mix seated tasks with more physical activities

- Have a blend of high and low interest tasks

Use a communication style which benefits the pupil

- Pupils with ADHD react better to task instructions that are global, that is, simple, step by step and structured, rather than being very detailed

- If the pupil seems to be drifting use cue words such as *ready, wait for it, this is the interesting bit, now here we go*

- Gain eye contact and use an enthusiastic, firm, business-like tone of voice

Make learning tasks within lessons brief; break longer ones into different segments

Provide an active response as part of the learning task

- Rather than simply reading from a text, allow the pupil to highlight words or perform a task related to the text

- Allow the pupil to use different coloured pens

Involve the pupil in preparation/organisation of resources for lessons

Allow time for content preview, review and recap

- This helps the pupil know what is expected of them and enables them to make sense of what they are doing

- 'Priming' helps motivation and involves previewing the task and the likely rewards of successful completion

- Help to prepare the pupil for new situations by coaching her/him in advance as this reduces anxiety and so can help the pupil deal with new experiences

Provide opportunities for protected (isolated) study

- Attention problems can mean that pupils with ADHD will have a greater need for quietness than other pupils so a designated quiet place for use of all pupils is valuable

Actively involve the pupil during lesson presentation

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- The pupil can be teacher's helper, writing key words or drawing key images on the board

- Encourage the pupil to visualise the key material to be learned, checking that s/he is doing this by asking her/him about the image in their mind

- Allow pupils to make frequent responses during the lesson with choral answers, choosing individuals, number fans, individual whiteboards, and class hand signals

- Use role-play to act out key concepts

- Use co-operative learning activities, especially where each member of the group is given a specific role or piece of information that must be shared with the group

- Use game-like activities and teach appropriate use of reference and resource materials

- Interact frequently with the pupil, both verbally and physically

- Use the pupil's name in your lesson presentation

- Write personal notes to pupils that can read about key elements of the lesson

When presenting a large amount of text on a board use different colours to emphasise key words or information

Use more frequent and specific feedback for pupils with ADHD on their work performance

- This helps because of memory and attentional difficulties, as well as counteracting their low self esteem

- Pair pupils to check work, let the pupil share what s/he has learned with a less able class mate

Be realistic about the amount of writing from pupils with ADHD

- Difficulties with sequencing, concentration and distractibility make writing a very difficult task.

- Set short achievable writing tasks, providing prompts and writing frame.

- Offer other ways of recording work, using a scribe, tape recorder, and word processor on computer, diagrams.

Use mild reprimands

- These should be used sparingly, be clearly focused and highly specific

- For example, a reminder about being off task will be more effective if it is accompanied by a statement of the task requirement, *please stop talking and get back to reading page 5 of your geography book* rather than, *please get on with your work*

Use rewards

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- Preferred activities, such as working on a computer, are more effective than concrete rewards like sweets

- It is the pupil's preference that counts, so it is useful to develop an agreed menu of rewards, that fits with the school's behaviour policy

Helping the Pupils Complete Class Work

- Be there to start off the pupil on the learning task

- Pupils with ADHD forget quickly, with verbal information often being lost, so tagging it to a visual cue may help, e.g. remembering the countries in the United Kingdom by picturing a map

- During a teacher's verbal input listing key words can help the pupil to concentrate e.g. Captain Cook – Endeavour – UK Aug 1768 – Tahiti – Great Southern Continent – NZ Oct 69 to April 70 – Botany Bay 29 April 1770

- Actively encourage pupils to develop mental images of the concepts or information being presented, and ask them about their image

- Work set should be brief and adjusted to meet the pupil's ability to focus on a task, e.g. fewer maths problems, shorter piece of writing

- Give a finishing time to indicate a piece of intense work, perhaps using a sand timer or stopwatch; start with a short period and gradually increase

- Provide 5 minute warning before ending a lesson

- Give verbal reminders of time left to complete task, with five minute warning at end

- Where practical provide immediate feedback on work

- Enable pupil to use other ways of recording to writing e.g. tape recorder, scribe, diagrams, use of computer or laptop, multiple-choice responses

- Where possible use pupil's interests as subjects for reading and writing

- The pupil's work output can vary from day to day, or even within a day so teacher demands will need to adapt accordingly

- Mix low and high-level interest tasks

- Make printed work accessible by:

  - Using large print
  - Keeping the page format simple
  - Only using relevant pictures and visual information, reducing distractions
  - Providing one or two activities on a page
  - Having blank spaces on each page
  - Using large black print, rather than handwriting
  - Using buff coloured paper if light causes glare on white paper
  - Writing clear, brief, and simple instructions
  - Underlining key words

- Drawing borders around the part of the page to be emphasised
- Dividing the page into sections, and encouraging the pupil to cover up sections that are not being used
- With access to colour printing, using colour for emphasis

- Have a clear system for tracking completed and uncompleted work

- Use a raffle ticket system for completed work with a reward at the end of the day

Homework

- Provide written copy of notes for homework, or ensure it is written in the homework diary

- Restrict homework to that which is essential (some have suggested that it is best not to place great emphasis on homework)

- It is usually not a good idea to send uncompleted class work home

Special Arrangements for Key Stage 2 SATS

Pupils with ADHD may have no problem with intellect; their difficulty is with output. Most will under perform in tests. Questions will be misread, time may be allocated unwisely and poor writing and unreliable spelling may disadvantage them. Teaching exam technique is especially important, and it may be helpful to use the special arrangements that allow a reader, prompter, or the pupil to be in a room on their own. Details can be found in the QCA materials published each year about the Key Stage 2 SATs.

Managing Behaviour in Unstructured Times

Correspondence training

This involves the pupil in making a promise about inhibiting problem behaviours, and then fulfilling the promise. The pupil has to report accurately how they have behaved, and are then reinforced for this.

Comprehensive support programme

Different interventions together seem to have additive and interactive effects. What works for one pupil, may not work for another. Some interventions become less effective over time and so new strategies need to be introduced. Novelty is of value to both pupils and adults, where familiarity can lead to a 'wash out' effect. A 'suck it and see' approach is necessary, with careful monitoring to assess what works and what is unhelpful. Helping the child to reflect on their performance can enable and empower them to shape the next stage.

Peer support

Use of a buddy or buddies to act as prompts towards appropriate behaviour.

Adults to provide structure

Pupils with ADHD find unstructured situations the most difficult in which to make good behaviour choices. Where possible, staff should provide structure at unstructured times, by guiding the pupil to activities with other pupils on the playground or in clubs. Adults should only leave the pupil for a short time before suggesting a change in activity.

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Strategies to address specific difficulties

Individual Strategies

Any individual strategies need to be matched to the specific needs of the pupil about whom there is concern. This is not a simple process, and particularly as the pupil progresses into and through Key Stage 2. The pupil may well experience different groupings or sets so it is important that all teachers are familiar with the pupil's programme of support.

If a pupil needs individual strategies, this should be part of the SEN Code of Practice staged approach. This then ensures there is an Individual Education Plan (IEP) drawn up in collaboration with teachers, parents/carers, and the pupil.

Specific strategies can, in many cases, be helpful to pupils displaying ADHD types of behaviours. Medication is not a solution in itself to ADHD but when it has been prescribed, strategies that might not have worked before may become more effective. The aim of all interventions, whether behavioural or medical, is to help pupils: gain more self control; concentrate better; be more capable of independent work; and, make more progress socially and educationally.

Strategies need to be seen as teacher tools for promoting on-task behaviours rather than a means of labelling behaviours or the child. In all cases, there needs to be careful planning, geared to individual needs, with space for negotiation, and a regular system for reviewing progress.

Inattention

- Give regular and consistent feedback on behaviour, and redirect pupil back on task

- Provide a quiet space for working

- Sit the pupil near pupils who are good role models, changing the one who sits next to them to share the burden

- Give learning tasks one at a time

- Have an ongoing piece of work to which they can return to break up longer tasks.

- Set learning tasks that match the pupil's attention span

- Long tasks should be split into shorter steps

- Vary the type of learning tasks in a lesson

- Help the pupil to have short-term goals, which lead to tasks being completed

- Limit homework to what is essential, and encourage adults at home to support it

- Gain the pupil's attention and then give clear and short instructions

- Provide a pictorial or written outline of the lesson

- Have a private system to help the pupil to stay on task, e.g. showing a card, giving a signal

- Let the pupil share her/his work with a pupil still working on it

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- As the pupil will be more forgetful than others it is very important to avoid signs of exasperation when repeating instructions, repeating them as if you were giving them for the first time in a calm way

- Give tasks requiring most concentration when you know the pupil will be most attentive. Ask them when they feel this way and compare with your observations.

Overactivity

- Try to harness the pupil's activity and enthusiasm

- Have a key member of staff to welcome the child and assess his/her mood at the beginning of each session

- Invite the pupil to participate in the lesson by writing keywords or ideas on the board

- Provide opportunities for the pupil to move around the room

- Allow a short break between learning tasks

- Remind pupil to check work

- Warn the pupil about transitions, establishing rules and supervising closely, praising conforming behaviour to help them keep it up

- Pick up early signs of the pupil being out of control

- Provide a time out area where the pupil can become calm after being worked up

- Have stimulating activities available should the pupil need to be withdrawn from class

- Allow access to technology e.g. computer, headphones with tape recorder

- Teach the pupil to jiggle quietly, or try to divert them with a worry ball

Weak organisation

- Establish classroom routines but be prepared to be flexible

    - How to enter a room
    - How to ask questions
    - Who gives out books and equipment
    - What to do when work is finished
    - How to behave during transitions
    - Talking level

- Organise pupil's work daily, e.g. work to be done, work finished, and their tray or desk

- Visual timetable if pupil has difficulty with time; discuss preference – digital clock or analogue

- Have series of prompt cards showing steps to be taken for different learning tasks

- Give notes to the pupil covering the key elements in a lesson

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- Provide a homework diary, which can double up as a home/school diary for positive feedback

Impulsiveness

- Have clear and simple classroom rules

- Pick up early signs of being off task and re-direct

- Have more immediate rewards and consequences compared to other pupils

- Comment on poor behaviour not the pupil, and try to do this privately

- Focus on good behaviour, trying to give three positive comments to one negative

- Sit the pupil near a good role model, or near an adult

- Encourage the pupil to tell you the steps to complete a learning task, then whisper it to himself or herself, and finally say it silently to themselves

- Teach a precise and descriptive language e.g. stop/listen; look/think; answer/do

- Set a limit on the number of questions an individual pupil is allowed to ask each day.

Non-compliance

- Catch the pupil being compliant and give praise

- Provide immediate feedback on acceptable and unacceptable behaviour

- Use teacher attention to reinforce compliant behaviour

- Do not accept refusal, give the pupil a choice when being non-compliant, e.g*. do you want to use a red crayon or a blue one?*

- Have agreed consequences for non-compliant behaviour

Developing good relationships with other pupils

- Pupils with ADHD perform best in pairs rather than group situations, as group situations can be over stimulating

- Help pupils and adults to understand the nature of ADHD, with advice on helpful responses to the pupil's difficulties

- Praise appropriate social behaviour

- Praise pupil as much as possible in class to raise his/her status

- Give pupil responsibility so s/he can be seen in a positive light by class mates

- Teach specific social skills, select a situation, demonstrate appropriate behaviour and rehearse it with the pupil, e.g. turn taking in a board game, or asking for help

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- Agree clearly defined social behaviour goals with the pupil, with a system of mainly verbal rewards

- Encourage collaborative learning tasks with another pupil

- Use circle time activities to promote a positive classroom ethos

- Introduce the pupil to counselling skills, demonstrate and rehearse listening, reflecting and affirming, which can help the pupil to understand the feelings of others

- Help the pupil to play with younger pupils as they might fit in more easily and may develop valuable social skills

- Interaction between adult and pupil should be marked by brevity, calmness and quietness, with reprimands being quiet and accompanied by direct eye contact in the appropriate cultural context

- A pupil with ADHD may overreact to teasing, so staff need to be aware of the pupil's vulnerability and so soothe rather than inflame situations, and the pupil encouraged to seek adult help when teased

Building self esteem

- Provide reassurance and encouragement

- Frequently give specific compliments about positive behaviour and work, and avoid general praise which can be rebutted e.g. "y*our written work is good* " can get a negative response. It is harder to disagree with " *your letters are well formed and much clearer"*

- Focus on the pupil's talents and accomplishments by providing opportunities for these to be shown in a positive group context

- When pupil begins to become frustrated, reinforce the positives and give choices

- Show evidence of improvement, e.g. "This was your writing at the start of the year, and look at it now"

- Use activities that help to raise self-esteem

- Give the pupil responsibility, perhaps in a pair if support is needed

- Teach the pupil not to feel guilty about lapses in concentration, as it is part of their disability, and encourage them to ask for help such as "Please explain the homework one more time" or "I'm sorry, but I don't understand"

- Teach a problem solving approach to the pupil's difficulties by introducing a set of questions a pupil can use when feeling restless:

  - Where do I feel restless?
  - What is causing me to feel like this?
  - Who should I tell?
  - What are my options?
  - Which should I take?

- Why do I hesitate?

- Train and model positive self talk, e.g. *I did that well* or *I wrote four lines without leaving my seat*

Some conclusions

Pupils with ADHD are not all the same. Create a forum for them to talk over their learning experiences.

Strategies will work with some pupils and not others, some of the time but not at other times.

Teachers need to work with colleagues and parent/carers in a network to plan and support the pupil.

Strategies need to be planned to maximise success for the pupil, raise self-esteem and improve social relationships. They will need to be frequently reviewed.

Clear, firm, consistent routines and expectations are the key to effective management.

Teachers who demonstrate positive regard for the pupil and use calm, low key management strategies help the pupils most effectively.

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