

## **Separate Spaces in TDSB Schools**

- All staff should be familiar with the various definitions of separate spaces including:
  - Sensory Rooms
  - Snoezelen Rooms
  - Calming Spaces/Rooms, including informal spaces (i.e., empty classroom)
  - Gross Motor Rooms
- Superintendents of Education must be aware of these spaces, their intent and usage.
- Schools must communicate to Superintendents of Education their intent to develop a separate space, beyond the immediate classroom, that will be used in a proactive and positive manner.
- No separate spaces will be developed without the consent of the Superintendent.
- Appropriate documentation will be developed and maintained as required. Documentation may include Individual Education Plans including ABC Charts, Behaviour Support Plans, Safety Plans, recording/tracking sheets.
- Students must always be supervised by staff when using a separate space.

## Key Messages

### Separate Spaces in Schools

#### What are these types of spaces?

Separate Spaces in TDSB Schools refers to spaces that must be intentionally used as part of the academic program developed for students. All staff should be familiar with the intended uses and function of the various types of separate spaces including: Sensory Rooms; Snoezelen Rooms; Gross Motor Rooms.

#### Definitions

**Sensory Rooms** provide students with soothing and stimulating environments. A student participates in a Sensory Room environment as part of their programming. The spaces are specially designed to deliver stimuli to various senses, using lighting effects, color, sounds, music, scents, etc. The combination of different materials are explored using tactile and other senses.

**Snoezelen® Rooms** are supervised, multisensory environments developed under trademark according to specific criteria. The term is often used incorrectly to describe a sensory room.

**Calming Spaces and Rooms** are supervised separate rooms or areas within a classroom used by a student who has made the choice to go to this room or area or freely choose to go when prompted by an adult. Calming spaces/rooms are locations that are used proactively and positively. The spaces/rooms often have beanbag chairs, mats, couches, and preferred activities. Students may leave this room or area and return to the classroom at any time. Calming spaces/rooms are not intended as seclusion spaces/rooms that are used for isolation, lack of compliance or other disciplinary purposes.

## Key Messages

### Separate Spaces in Schools

**Gross Motor Rooms** are supervised specially designated spaces that allow a range of gross motor activities for students as indicated in the IEP. These rooms often contain specialized gross motor equipment. Safe use of these rooms and the equipment requires input from Occupational/Physical Therapy Department.

## Key Messages

### Separate Spaces in Schools

# Managing the Use of Calming and Sensory Rooms

#### **When should a calming or sensory room be used?**

- A calming room/space or sensory room may be appropriate for some students as one strategy that supports their ability to process sensory input and/or to de-escalate increasing agitation.
- The development of a separate calming or sensory room outside of the immediate classroom must be discussed with your Superintendent of Education.
- Input and strategies, including the use of any specialized equipment from Professional Support Services Staff should be accessed with parental consent.
- The use of the calming room/space or sensory room must be included in the student's IEP and/or Safety Plan, if applicable.

#### **How do students get to the room?**

- A student must choose to go voluntarily or respond positively to a verbal suggestion, gesture, picture cue to access the room/space.
- Students should be allowed to leave the room/space at any time.

#### **How are students supervised while in room?**

- Students must be supervised at all times by a staff member, (i.e., in a clear line of sight with staff), while in the calming room/space.
- Rooms must never be locked.
- If the door is closed, the student must be accompanied or in a constant clear line of sight at all times by staff.
- Staff should be trained in the use of any specialized equipment and students should be supervised in its appropriate use at all times.
- Support staff may not be alone with any student for more than 30 minutes.

#### **How should the frequency and duration of visits to the room/space be monitored?**

- The use of the calming room/space or sensory room is planned based on the individual needs of the student and the strategies listed in the IEP and/or Safety Plan.
- Staff must keep a record of individual student use of the room.

#### **How is the use of the room communicated to parents?**

- Parents would be informed about the calming room/space or sensory room through the IEP and/or the Safety Plan.
- When a separate calming room or sensory room outside of the immediate classroom is used, but has not been planned for in the IEP and/or Safety Plan, the parent/guardian must be notified following the use of the room.
- In the case of unplanned use, the IEP and/or Safety Plan should be reviewed, as appropriate.
- All use of calming room/space or sensory rooms must be documented.

#### **How is the use of the calming room/space communicated to staff, including appropriate training?**

- All staff should receive professional learning in the area of positive behaviour supports.
- The use of calming room/spaces and sensory rooms should be reviewed with all staff in school at an annual staff meeting.
- Ongoing review of the use of these spaces should occur with new staff and/or when new students are going to be accessing the calming room/space or sensory room.
- There should be yearly discussion regarding the purpose, use and policies around these spaces.