



Attachment and Trauma Sensitive Schools Award (ATSSA) Criteria

England, Wales and Northern Ireland



Bronze - Attachment & Trauma Aware and Silver - Attachment & Trauma Friendly Awards

NB All Attachment & Trauma Aware criteria must be achieved and evidenced before a school can apply for the Attachment & Trauma Friendly Award

Section 1: The School Community			
Criteria: BRONZE Attachment Aware	Evidence	Criteria: SILVER Attachment Friendly	Evidence
1. Achieving the ATSSA is referenced in the SDP		1. A strategic approach to achieving ATSSA is evidenced in the SDP and relevant policies and documentation	
2. Most staff have accessed approved training on A&T		2. Attachment and trauma training is delivered in the school's induction programme for new staff and supply staff	
3. Planning documents show work & expectations are differentiated to take into account the needs of pupils who have experienced adversity		3. Approved Next Steps training has been undertaken by key staff, including a member of SLT	
4. Chair and/or interested governor have accessed approved training on A&T		4. A Link Governor for A&T has been appointed	
5. A developmentally sensitive framework to understand and respond to behaviour e.g. FAGUS, Boxall Profile, is used		5. Developmental profiles, assessing development across emotional and social domains, are used for vulnerable pupils	
6. Breakout Spaces outside the classroom are provided for dysregulated pupils, supported by a trusted adult		6. Exit plans are negotiated for dysregulated pupils	
7. Outside agencies are used effectively		7. Avenues of support, not limited to LA are actively explored and used effectively	
8. Key Workers for pupils with A&T related		8. A Lead Practitioner for A&T is appointed	



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difficulties are appointed and trained			
9. School works closely with families, to enhance their understanding of child development (impact of attachment & trauma) and building positive relationships.		9. Training/support groups for parents of pupils with A&T related difficulties are provided	
10. Homework is non-compulsory but encouraged to support learning and building positive relationships with parents/carers (e.g. reading for pleasure)		10. Homework is mostly relational and built around family activities rather than worksheets.	
11. The curriculum is sensitive to pupils whose life experiences may contain chaos and uncertainty		11. Key staff are trained in practices such as sand play and other creative and therapeutic techniques to facilitate communication and process	
12. Pupils' histories are used as a framework within which to interpret behaviour*		12. Pupils' histories are researched, starting from conception to the present, and these are reflected upon to gain understanding of the impact of trauma and loss.	
13. A range of strategies is used to elicit 'pupil voice', to both hear pupils' views and ensure that they are involved in decision making, ensuring that particularly vulnerable pupils are supported in their communication and heard by adults.		13. Staff have access to good quality training to help them develop the skills needed to make pupils' voices heard, and regular workshops are held to ensure that no pupil is denied participation and all pupils, including the most vulnerable are enabled to communicate their thoughts, feelings, and wishes. Hart's Ladder of participation or similar, is used as a tool to ensure participation.	
14. Directed time for reflective practice for Key Workers is timetabled at least once a week and, more frequently as appropriate (e.g. if behaviour/anxiety is escalating)		14. Directed time for reflective practice (e.g. on the causes and meaning of behaviour) is timetabled at least once per half term for all staff	



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15. Quality staff care and emotional support for front-line staff to protect mental health and well-being is provided		15. Quality staff care and emotional support for all staff to protect staff mental health and well-being is provided.	
16. Additional funding, including Pupil Premium Plus is used effectively to support eligible pupils, with a clear distinction being made from Pupil Premium		16. Additional funding, including Pupil Premium Plus is used effectively and imaginatively to support the emotional wellbeing of eligible pupils.	
17. Input from parents about how additional funding could be used for their child is welcomed when offered		17. Where appropriate, parents and carers are consulted in how additional funding could be used for their child	

Section 2: Developmental vulnerability - Central Executive Function; Regulation; Developmental delay			
1. There is a number of strategies in place in every classroom to support executive function: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Visual timetables b) Visual behaviour prompts c) Environmental cues for transition preparation, e.g. turning light on and off; playing music and sand timers are used to warn about time until the end of activity. 		1. There is a wide range of strategies in every classroom to support executive function: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>Language</i> - check understanding frequently; use minimal speech; allow extra time for processing b) <i>Verbal & non-verbal working memory</i> - visual supports; consistent, structured environments and routines; checklists c) <i>Organisational challenges</i> - chunking, writing frames, checklists and multi-sensory cues d) <i>Time concepts</i> – calendars, days of the week displayed & referred to facilitate temporal understanding 	
2. Classroom organisation is adapted to overcome organisational challenges, e.g. seating, lighting and the position of		2. Classrooms well-planned with clearly defined visual boundaries designating where different types of activities will take place. Boundaries	



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resources, key words and clearly labelled resources		need to be as visually clear as possible. Clutter is kept to a minimum to maintain specific spaces and to ensure all spaces are welcoming and attractive. Colour coding using rugs, mats or coloured tape on the floor may be used to define different spaces.	
3. Boundaried 'safe spaces'/dens are available in each classroom for pupils to manage overload/dysregulation.		3. Individualised self-regulating boxes are created with particularly vulnerable pupils, to facilitate self-soothing, self-nurturing and self-regulating coping strategies.	
4. Meet & Greet (daily check-in and checkout) is provided for pupils with A&T related difficulties		4. Regular check-in is provided for pupils with A&T related difficulties throughout the day	
5. Sensory snacks, pauses and down time are used to support managing and improving sensory functions within the classroom		5. Staff recognise survival behaviours and respond sensitively, addressing physiological and emotional needs before trying to engage cognition.	
6. Activating and energising activities are used for pupils who are disconnecting or 'switching off'.		6. Advice and training is sought from Occupational Therapy or similar to develop and deliver daily sensory circuits.	
7. Teaching and learning is multi-sensory in all year groups.		7. Adults supervising playtime have designated roles, e.g. scanner, player, social play leader, and staff are active participants rather than observers.	
8. Regulation is achieved and maintained through the proximity of an attuned and regulated adult		8. Staff are skilled in monitoring excitement and anxiety, and make appropriate interventions to provide co-regulation	
9. Play is an integral part of the curriculum for all children, particularly for children who have experienced play deprivation, and all learning		9. Children experience emotional regulation through relational play before accessing structured 'emotional literacy' interventions	



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and interactions are playful and fun			
10. Children are supported by a trusted adult during unstructured time such as playtime and lunchtime		10. Children are protected from, or given significant support with potentially explosive situations, such as PE, assembly, field trips, transitions, sharing	
11. Access to younger children is facilitated to allow interactions with developmentally similar children		11. For pupils who find play/break time challenging, enjoyable alternatives are provided, e.g. Working Break, Sensory Circuit, INCRA's, with an additional outside free play break with one or two chosen companions, supported by an adult.	
12. Adults know the developmental social and emotional age of pupils in their care and recognise and respect that the child is behaving appropriately for their developmental stage		12. Systems are in place to ensure that all staff know who the particularly vulnerable pupils in the school are, and use a 'connection before correction' approach to support pupils.	
13. Work alone spaces are provided in every classroom to reduce over stimulation and are used positively rather than punitively		13. Regular sensory audits are carried out and acted upon	
14. Pupils, including the most vulnerable, are supported in communicating emotions, feelings and worries.		14. Each classroom provides a range of practical resources for facilitating emotional communication, e.g. emotional check-in, Worry Box, Worry Monster, which are used throughout the day, and responded to at the earliest opportunity.	

* The pupils' timelines and information therein is treated as sensitive, strictly confidential and shared only with parent's permission on a 'need-to-know' basis