**Sensory Circuits**

**What are Sensory Circuits?**
The aim of the Sensory Circuits programme is to facilitate sensory processing and sensory integration, and to allow children to be in the optimum state of alertness, ready for learning. In the longer term there appear to be many other benefits which include:

- Improvements in self-esteem
- Development of physical skills – learning to skip with a rope, perfecting jumping, hopping, balancing or throwing
- ‘Waking up’ and more readily engaging in group activities
- Increased focus and attention and an improved ability to settle down to work
- Quicker, more effective dressing skills
- Opportunities to engage in specific learning while taking part in the circuits, eg: times tables can be recited while bouncing on trampettes
- Improved communication skills

**Strategies we offer in our provision at COPASS**

**Sensory circuits structure:**
A circuit runs in 3 sections, based on the theories of sensory processing and sensory integration and the practical consideration of providing a structured sensory motor input.

1. **Alerting section** – to provide vestibular stimulation (allowing fluid in the ears to move about through jumping and head movement), preparing the brain for availability for learning and for the demands of the school environment

2. **Organising section** – activities that require multi-sensory processing and balance. The individual needs to organise their body, plan their approach and do more than one thing at a time in a set sequential order. Activities such as climbing, hopping, balancing, looking and throwing into a target, hone skills that increase focus, attention span and performance within the classroom setting.

3. **Calming section** – this is very important to provide input to ensure that as children leave the circuit and enter the classroom they are as calm and centred and ready for the day as possible.

The circuit is held first thing on arrival and stays set up in the sensory circuit room for children to access as necessary throughout the day. The circuit takes no more than 20-30 minutes to complete. The sensory circuit is an active, physical and fun activity carried with music with a beat of between 140 - 160 per minute as this avoids over alerting. Music with this beat entrains the brain, increasing heart rate and level of alertness.

Examples of sensory circuit activities that may be used are:

- Skipping with a rope – individual or rope turned by others or French skipping
- Trampette bounce
- Crash landing – jumping form a trampette onto a crash mat of jumping from high place to low place
- Space race – jumping around course of cones on a space hopper
- Bouncing sphere – bouncing seated on an exercise/fit ball
- Jogging on the spot
- Jumping jacks from crouched position back to crouch
- Hopscotch
- Hoop-la – standing in a hoop and rotating
- Step ups – stepping up and down on a solid bench or platform
- Logroll – roll along line of gym mats, commando crawl
- Balance obstacle course
- Rolling ball – with tummy down on fit ball, walk hands out and back again
- Hand over hand pull – pulling self along using rope attached to wall bars
- Simon says sequences
- Gymnastic ribbon exercises
- Balancing on a wobble board
- Press ups
- Pilates plank exercise
- Crawling
- Ball squash – child lies on a mat and fit ball is rolled slowly up and down the child by an adult, using maintained and constant pressure to calm