



Notes for using the Portable Privacy Workstation (SD12008)

The Portable Privacy Workstation can be used to provide a clearly defined space within a busy environment. It is easy to transport and comes in its own bag. It may support children and young people who find reduced visual input, additional structure, or a quieter workspace helpful.

The ideas in this download are suggestions rather than a fixed approach. Educators can choose to use each feature differently, adapting the workstation with the child while considering their communication, sensory preferences, strengths, interests and any individual support plans.



Personalising the workstation

Invite the child to help decide how the workstation looks and works. They might choose:

- a name or heading
- photographs, symbols, objects or words
- colours or images linked to their interests
- how information is arranged
- how completed activities are shown

Some children may prefer very little information, while others find a fuller sequence reassuring.

Choosing visual information

Use whichever form of communication is most meaningful to the child, such as:

- objects of reference
- photographs or drawings
- coloured or black-and-white symbols
- written words
- a combination of the above

Templates for the workstation can be found on Widget software.

Introduce visual information through shared use rather than testing the child. Observe how they respond and adjust the size, number, position and detail of the visuals accordingly.



Possible ways to use the workstation

Visual sequence

This area could show what is happening now, what comes next, when a break or preferred activity is available and when the sequence is complete.

Use a short “now and next” sequence or a longer visual timetable, depending on what the child finds helpful. Symbols can be arranged horizontally or vertically. When something is finished, the child might remove, turn over, tick or move the symbol to the finished pocket. Alternatively, they may leave it visible if this is reassuring.



Activity boxes

The boxes that are included could hold:

- practical, play-based or sensory activities
- books and any tasks
- writing materials
- equipment for a particular activity
- items linked to the child's interests



The boxes may be numbered, colour coded, labelled or left plain. Activities can be offered in a suggested order or chosen by the child. Completed items may be moved elsewhere if this makes the sequence clearer and less overwhelming. Have resources ready where possible to avoid unnecessary waiting.

Choice or strategy board

If using the section as a choice board, offer genuine choices that are available, clearly understood and meaningful to the child. These could include preferred activities, new experiences, opportunities to rest or ways to join others. Some children may prefer two options, while others can choose from more. Adjust the number, size and position of choices in response to the child. Repeated choices may reflect enjoyment, interest, safety or a need for predictability. Consider what the child is communicating before removing a preferred option.

Alternatively, this section could contain strategies showing what works for the child. They could use these to communicate what they need visually.

Finished section or storage pocket

A finished symbol could be placed in the red pocket on the workstation. Symbols of the tasks could be posted into this pocket once completed. However, not every child will want or need a separate finished section.

This pocket could also be used to hold spare visuals, choice cards, communication materials and anything not currently needed. It also keeps resources together when the workstation is moved.



Supporting participation

The workstation may be used for independent activity, shared work or supported learning. It should **not** be used to isolate a child, manage behaviour or restrict access to peers, play and the wider environment.

Where appropriate, choices can include shared activities or opportunities to work alongside others. Social interaction should be encouraged sensitively, while respecting a child's need for space and regulation.

Reviewing the use of the workstation

Regularly consider:

- whether the child is comfortable using the workstation
- which features are helpful
- whether anything creates discomfort or a barrier
- how the child communicates their preferences
- whether the support remains appropriate
- what the child, family and support team can contribute

Some children may use the workstation temporarily; others may benefit from it as an ongoing reasonable adjustment. Decisions should be guided by the child's wellbeing, communication, access and participation,.

