Formalizing the Quiet Room as a Dedicated Low-Sensory Space

Policy Proposer(s): Lateefah Isegen

Summary

Ensure that whichever space Strath Union designates as its Quiet Room is a dedicated low-sensory space that meets published minimum standards, with clear usage standards, accessible signage, maintained sensory resources and regular student-led review.

Context

1. Strath Union's Quiet Room is open to all students who need to get away from the noise and activity of campus life, and stays unlocked during opening hours. Its webpage says the room contains sofas and chairs, adjustable lighting, fidget toys and soft blankets, and describes it as an unfinished project. However, in October 2026 the room held a single armchair and a small table, with acoustic panels and wall art propped unsecured against the walls rather than mounted, and no sofas, blankets or fidget toys in place.
2. Strath Union already runs a weekday Quiet Hour (9–10am) to reduce sensory stimulation, and its Accessibility Guide recommends clearly signposted quiet spaces, adjustable lighting, different seating options and equipment that helps students manage sensory input. However, the Union does not currently have a publicly listed standing policy that formally designates and protects the Quiet Room as a dedicated low-sensory space or sets minimum standards for its continued operation.
3. Sensory triggers can include loud or unexpected noise, bright lighting, crowded environments and visual clutter. Strath Union already asks Quiet Room users to be mindful of students affected by sensory overload, sensory-processing difficulties, mental-health concerns or feelings of overwhelm.

Benefit For Students

1. All students should be able to access a calm and supportive space within Strath Union when they experience sensory overload, anxiety or overwhelm, without needing to disclose a disability, provide medical evidence or make a booking. Wherever the Quiet Room is located, it should be formally recognised, protected and maintained for this purpose.
2. A dedicated low-sensory space is different from an ordinary quiet study room because its environment, resources and usage expectations are specifically designed to reduce sensory stimulation.
3. Neurodivergent, disabled and sensory-sensitive students, who are most affected, should be meaningfully involved in decisions about the room and its future development.

Actions & Outcomes

1. The Inclusion President, working with relevant Strath Union staff, will formally designate the Quiet Room as a dedicated low-sensory space. This applies to the current room and to any space that replaces it.
2. Strath Union will develop and publish minimum standards for the space, including adjustable or soft lighting with an easy-to-reach, clearly marked light control, comfortable seating, minimal visual clutter, appropriate sensory resources and clear expectations for quiet and respectful use.

Policy Passed:		Policy Expires:	

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3. The space will remain available without advance booking, proof of disability or additional permission during normal Union opening hours, subject to necessary safety or operational restrictions, and will not be routinely used for meetings, events or storage.
4. Any space designated as the Quiet Room must meet the minimum standards before it is used for this purpose. For the current room, this means completing the fit-out before the initial review, including securely mounting the acoustic panels and wall art and providing the seating and sensory resources described on the Quiet Room webpage. If the Quiet Room is relocated, students will be consulted and the new space will offer at least the same standard of provision.
5. Strath Union will review and improve the existing signage so that it clearly explains the purpose of the room and how it should be used, and will keep information about its location, accessibility and opening times up to date on the Strath Union website.
6. The Inclusion President will consult neurodivergent, disabled and sensory-sensitive students, including relevant student groups, about improvements to the room, and Strath Union will maintain its sensory resources and set up a simple way for students to report problems or suggest improvements.
7. An initial review of space will be completed by the end of the 2026/27 academic year and reported to Student Parliament. This policy will lapse three years after the date of passage and will be reviewed before it lapses.

Additional Information

Resources & Links:	• https://www.strathunion.com/support/wa/neurodiversestudents/quietroom/ • https://www.strathunion.com/union/access/guide/ • https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/about-autism/sensory-processing • https://www.autism.org.uk/learn/knowledge-hub/guides-and-resources/accessible-environments

Policy Passed:		**Policy Expires:**	

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Trustee Risk Register – *To be Completed by SMT member on behalf of Trustees*

As part of the Policy Process, our Trustee Board is asked to identify any financial, legal or reputational risk in policies - risks are listed below to highlight where we might run into challenges in implementing policy.

Financial	🟡 - An immediate financial risk has been identified, as no funding has been allocated for this within Strath Union's 2026–27 budget
Legal	🟢 - No immediate financial risk identified
Reputational	🟡 - A reputational risk has been identified should budgetary constraints prevent the successful implementation of the policy.

Policy Passed:		**Policy Expires:**	