

SUPPORTING A CHILD WITH PWS IN THE CLASSROOM

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Key Area	What You Need to Know	Strategies to Support
Food Security	Children with PWS experience constant hunger and difficulty controlling food intake. Access to food must always be managed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep food locked away and out of sight. • Be consistent – no unplanned snacks or rewards with food. • Use non-food rewards and motivators.
Supporting the Child's Food Plan	Each child has an agreed food plan created with parents. This is non-negotiable and vital for their health and reassurance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the parents' rules exactly – no exceptions. • Give consistent reassurance about what and when they will eat. • All staff (including substitutes, lunch staff, after-school care) must know and follow the plan. • Avoid food-related discussions around the child.
Special Days & School Events	Birthdays, parties, and celebrations often involve food, which can be very stressful for children with PWS.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always link with parents in advance if food is involved. • Each family will have their own rules about "special treats" – these must be respected 100%. • Plan ahead so the child is included and supported (e.g., provide an agreed alternative treat, focus on non-food fun).
Routine & Predictability	Sudden changes can increase anxiety and lead to distress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide clear structure to the day. • Use visual timetables. • Give warnings before transitions or changes.
Anxiety & Emotional Regulation	Children with PWS may feel anxious, particularly around food, change or social situations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay calm and reassuring. • Offer choices where possible. • Provide quiet spaces for calming down.
Unique Medical Needs	Children with PWS have some specific health vulnerabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temperature regulation: They may not feel the cold/heat – watch for overheating or under-dressing. • No vomit reflex: Illness may not show in the usual way – always take signs of sickness seriously. • Pain sensitivity: They may not express pain clearly – small injuries can be more serious than they appear. • Share concerns with parents promptly.
Learning & Engagement	Children may learn at a different pace but benefit greatly from support and encouragement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break tasks into small steps. • Celebrate achievements. • Use strengths and interests to motivate learning.
Social Interaction	Social understanding can be challenging.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support positive peer interactions. • Model social skills. • Encourage friendships through structured activities.