TOM TOM UNIVERSE

THE TOM TOM WAY

FOUR PILLARS SCHOOL PILOT & RESEARCH PACK

A practical route from classroom trials to credible evidence

BRIAN'S — Inner worlds

WAVES — Emotional intensity

CIRCLES — Comfort & predictability

BRIDGES — Connection & access

School invitation • six-week pilot • accessible feedback • ethics • reporting

Prepared by Counsellor Tomass J. Wood

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An invitation to evaluate — not a claim of proven effectiveness

Start here

SCHOOL PILOT & RESEARCH

For headteachers, SENCOs, school leaders, governors, teachers and independent evaluation partners.

What this document offers

A ready-to-adapt invitation and implementation package for a small, six-week school pilot of the Tom Tom Four Pillars. It provides materials for recruitment, ethical governance, lesson delivery, feedback, analysis and reporting.

The Four Pillars in one minute

BRIAN'S	WAVES	CIRCLES	BRIDGES
Inner worlds	Emotional intensity	Comfort & predictability	Connection & access

The Four Pillars are an emerging, child-friendly framework developed by Counsellor Tomass J. Wood. They invite staff to notice pupils' inner experiences, emotional intensity, familiar sources of safety and pathways to connection.

Two clearly separated routes

ROUTE A | School-led feasibility and service improvement

A school decides whether the resources are usable, acceptable and practical in its own setting. Individual pupil records remain within school systems. Only non-identifying, appropriately aggregated feedback is shared externally, subject to school approval.

ROUTE B | Formal independent educational research

A university or appropriately constituted research team designs a study and seeks its required ethics and governance approvals before collecting research data. This pack can inform a protocol but is not itself an ethical approval or validated study instrument.

Never interpret: being invited, signing a school interest form, or taking part in routine lessons as automatic permission to collect and publish identifiable children's data.

Contents & document map

SCHOOL PILOT & RESEARCH

Print the whole pack, or copy the relevant annex pages for the school pilot team.

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Suggested school workflow

- Read the invitation and appoint a named school lead.
- Check fit, staff time, accessibility, SEND duties, and safeguarding arrangements.
- Select Route A (internal improvement) or Route B (approved research).
- Set one or two practical questions before starting; record your measures.
- Run the six-week pilot without withdrawing established support.
- Review adverse effects and feedback, including pupils who did not enjoy it.
- Share a careful, non-identifying summary of feasibility and improvement opportunities.

Toolkit status

Version 1.0 • October 2026. This is a model resource for adaptation and school approval. It is not legal advice, a safeguarding policy, a replacement for AAC or EHCP arrangements, or proof of the Four Pillars' effectiveness.

Invitation to a school

INVITATION LETTER

Formal introductory letter — edit the school name, dates and contact details before sending.

To: Headteacher / Principal / SENCO / Inclusion Lead
Subject: Invitation to explore the Tom Tom Four Pillars in a six-week school pilot

Dear Colleague,

I am Counsellor Tomass J. Wood, a neurodivergent author and creator of Tom Tom Universe. I am inviting a small number of primary, secondary and specialist SEND settings to consider a supported, six-week trial of a developing educational approach: Brian's, Waves, Circles and Bridges.

The Four Pillars offer child-friendly ways to discuss thoughts and identity (Brian's), emotional and sensory intensity (Waves), routines and security (Circles), and communication and relationships (Bridges). I have created school teaching packs, pupil Passports, visual resources and evaluation materials to support staff who wish to explore the approach.

I am not asking schools to adopt an unproven intervention as established practice. Rather, I am seeking constructive professional feedback about feasibility, accessibility, acceptability and any perceived benefits or difficulties, while retaining all existing safeguarding, SEND, communication and wellbeing support.

Participating schools would choose a small suitable group, appoint a lead, adapt the resources for their pupils, and undertake brief baseline and follow-up reviews. There would be no requirement for pupils to disclose personal experiences or participate in feedback they do not wish to provide.

My preferred starting point is a school-led improvement exercise in which pupil-level records stay with the school. If a formal research study were proposed later, it would require an independent partner, appropriate approvals and separate arrangements for information and consent.

I would appreciate an opportunity to share sample resources and hear whether this might align with your inclusion and personal development priorities. Please respond by email if you would welcome a preliminary conversation.

Kind regards,
Counsellor Tomass J. Wood
Creator, Tom Tom Universe
www.tomtomuniverse.co.uk

Before sending

Attach this document or a short overview, not completed pupil forms. Do not promise evidence-based effects, registration, accreditation or a guaranteed place in a funded project.

Email invitation template

OUTREACH TEMPLATE

A shorter approach for first contact with a headteacher, SENCO or trust inclusion lead.

Subject: Invitation: school pilot of the Tom Tom Four Pillars (SEND, communication and emotional understanding)

Dear [name / school team],

I am Counsellor Tomass J. Wood, a neurodivergent author and founder of Tom Tom Universe. I have developed the Four Pillars — Brian's, Waves, Circles and Bridges — as a child-friendly way for schools to explore inner experiences, feelings, familiar supports and connection.

I am now seeking interested primary, secondary and specialist settings for a small six-week feasibility pilot. The aim is to learn whether the materials are practical, inclusive and useful in day-to-day teaching, and what needs changing. This is a developing approach, not an independently validated intervention.

The pack includes accessible pupil materials, staff guidance, school evaluation forms, and a clear distinction between school-led improvement and future formally approved research. Schools retain responsibility for safeguarding, reasonable adjustments and pupil data.

Would your SENCO or inclusion lead be willing to review the attached summary and let me know whether a short, email-led discussion would be helpful? I can provide examples of the primary, secondary and picture-supported resources.

Kind regards,
Counsellor Tomass J. Wood
www.tomtomuniverse.co.uk
Email correspondence preferred.

Suggested attachments

- [ ] This pilot invitation and research pack
- [ ] One sample primary / secondary resource
- [ ] One blank pupil Passport example
- [ ] One-page school resource overview

Follow-up after 10–14 days (optional)

“I am following up on my invitation to review the Tom Tom Four Pillars pilot. There is no obligation to take part. I would value even brief feedback on whether it fits your setting or what would make the materials more useful.”

Pilot at a glance

SCHOOL PILOT & RESEARCH

An implementation and feasibility study, not an efficacy trial.

ELEMENT	PROPOSED DESIGN
Setting	Primary, secondary, special school, SEND unit or alternative provision.
Participants	One class, tutor group or small group selected by the school; numbers depend on capacity.
Duration	Six weeks of activities; school may prepare beforehand.
Delivery	Existing staff; typically 10–20 minutes of focused activity weekly, plus brief routine use.
Approach	Teach and use Brian's, Waves, Circles and Bridges with age-appropriate adjustments.
Measures	Acceptability, accessibility, delivery fidelity and pupil communication / participation opportunities.
Safeguards	Voluntary feedback; no compelled disclosure; current supports continue.
External reporting	Aggregate findings only by default; review identifiability of small groups.
Output	Concise feasibility report and priorities for revision.

Aim

Decide whether the Four Pillars materials are feasible, acceptable, accessible and sufficiently clearly specified to merit wider piloting or formal evaluation; do not claim proven impact from six weeks without an appropriate comparison design.

Readiness and suitability check

SCHOOL DECISION

Complete before inviting pupils to provide any pilot feedback.

- [ ] School leader authorises activity
- [ ] Named SENCO / pilot lead appointed
- [ ] DSL and safeguarding policy confirmed
- [ ] DPO / privacy lead consulted
- [ ] School's SEND and equality duties reviewed
- [ ] Staff available for orientation
- [ ] Pupil access adaptations planned
- [ ] Existing AAC / support plans maintained
- [ ] Family information route agreed
- [ ] Feedback participation is optional
- [ ] Pilot question(s) written in advance
- [ ] Clear stop / change process agreed

Who should not be excluded automatically?

Do not presume that nonspeaking, disabled, anxious or autistic children cannot participate. Use accessible materials and specialist input. Equally, do not force participation where the activity would distress a child or clash with their individual support or wishes.

Stop / revise conditions

- A pupil indicates distress, refusal or discomfort; stop and offer ordinary support.
- Resources interfere with established AAC, medical support or agreed provision.
- Staff inadvertently disclose private information, diagnose or label pupils.
- The activity becomes disciplinary, compulsory self-disclosure or behaviour surveillance.
- A safeguarding concern is raised: follow school policy immediately.

Decision

Proceed / Revise before starting / Do not proceed at present. The school lead should record reasons and the next review date.

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Governance and responsibilities

SCHOOL DECISION

No pilot should rely on a single person interpreting its ethical or safeguarding obligations.

ROLE	ACCOUNTABILITY	NAME
Headteacher / SLT	Approve scope, resourcing, risk and local policies.	_____
Pilot lead / SENCO	Organise delivery, inclusion and reviews.	_____
Designated safeguarding lead	Handle concerns under school procedures.	_____
Data protection officer / lead	Decide lawful basis, privacy notices, security and any data-sharing.	_____
Class/tutor staff	Deliver activities; offer alternatives; record implementation.	_____
Pupil / family representatives	Advise what is respectful, practical and accessible.	_____
External author	Supply materials and receive approved non-identifying feedback only.	_____
Independent researcher (if any)	Own formally approved research protocol and governance.	_____

School lead contact card

School / trust | contact email

Pilot lead | named deputy | preferred contact route

Proposed six-week window | review meeting date

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The Four Pillars: practice definition

SCHOOL PILOT & RESEARCH

Shared language, not clinical categories and not a diagnostic checklist.

BRIAN'S	WAVES	CIRCLES	BRIDGES
Inner worlds	Emotional intensity	Comfort & predictability	Connection & access

BRIAN'S | Identity & inner experiences

Teach that different thoughts, worries, hopes, values and preferences can coexist. Invite pupil choice: “Which thought might be around?” Never infer an inner state without checking.

WAVES | Emotional & sensory intensity

Use a chosen metaphor or visual scale to notice how an experience feels. A Wave score is a private self-report when offered by the pupil, not a staff diagnosis.

CIRCLES | Safety & predictability

Explore people, routines, activities and objects that help a pupil feel secure. Record preferred adjustments and prepare for changes, with dignity.

BRIDGES | Communication & belonging

Explore how interests, relationships, AAC, time, space and accessible choices support participation. Respect boundaries, including “no” and “not now”.

The central question

“What could adults change or offer so this pupil can communicate, feel safe and access learning?” Do not use the framework to transfer responsibility for regulating distress onto the child.

Logic model: how change may occur

PILOT METHOD

An explicit, testable theory of change keeps expectations realistic.

STAGE	EXAMPLE
Inputs	Teacher orientation; Four Pillars materials; leadership time; age-appropriate visuals; existing SEND support.
Activities	Teach language; model supportive responses; offer Wave / Circle / Bridge choices; build pupil voice.
Immediate outputs	Activities delivered; adaptations recorded; staff and pupils able to access selected resources.
Potential near-term signals	Pupils are offered more ways to express needs; staff report clearer support choices; participation is easier in some situations.
Potential harms	Oversimplified emotional labels; public disclosure; shame; added workload; pressure to self-regulate.
Longer-term hypothesis	With sufficient refinement and testing, the approach may contribute to accessible communication and participation.

What would disconfirm the hypothesis?

Low participation, repeated refusal, confusion about the terms, staff using the check-in to reward or punish, resources that conflict with AAC systems, increased distress, or a heavy workload with little observable classroom value.

Interpretation limit

Implementation signals show what happened during a pilot. Without appropriate comparison, confounder control and independent evaluation, they do not establish that the Four Pillars caused improvement.

Research questions & objectives

PILOT METHOD

Agree a maximum of three questions; register them in the school plan before starting.

- Feasibility: Can staff use the resources reliably within the school timetable without disproportionate burden?
- Acceptability: Do pupils, including those using AAC, find the activities comfortable, understandable and respectful?
- Accessibility: Are the materials appropriate for age, language, communication, sensory profile and setting?
- Potential signals: Are there any observable changes in access to support and opportunities to participate that justify further study?
- Safety: What adverse or unwanted effects occur, and what modifications are needed?

Pre-specify the primary feasibility indicator

Suggested primary indicator: percentage of planned sessions delivered with core accessibility safeguards in place. This is measurable and more defensible than an unvalidated emotional “improvement” score.

Two optional secondary indicators

- [ ] Pupil-reported usability or comfort
- [ ] Staff-reported ease of use
- [ ] Requests for help accessible
- [ ] Routine / change previews offered
- [ ] Pupil participation opportunity
- [ ] Family views on communication

Decision rule example

A school might decide in advance to continue only when the approach is acceptable to pupils, accessible to intended participants and manageable for staff. Set locally meaningful thresholds; avoid retrofitting success criteria after reading the results.

Indicators, definitions & measures

PILOT METHOD

Record methods and limitations before collecting baseline data.

INDICATOR	OPERATIONAL DEFINITION	SOURCE
Delivery	Planned sessions completed / total planned sessions.	Weekly delivery log
Access	Pupils offered an appropriate communication mode / pupils involved.	Accessibility checklist
Voice	Pupils offered meaningful choice to join, pass or stop.	Session observation
Support response	Staff provide pupil-preferred support when needed.	Routine observation
Acceptability	Pupil selected: liked / neutral / disliked / not asked.	Choice / feedback form
Burden	Estimated staff preparation and delivery time.	Staff log
Unintended effects	Any confusion, distress, pressure or exclusion; response taken.	Safety / adaptation log

Simple rating anchors (optional)

0 = opportunity not provided; 1 = provided with substantial support; 2 = provided with some support; 3 = provided in the pupil's preferred way. These anchors rate the access offered by staff, not the worth or competence of the pupil.

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Six-week delivery schedule

PILOT METHOD

One flexible sequence, adapted to school calendars and each pupil's communication system.

WHEN	FOCUS	SCHOOL EVIDENCE
Before week 1	School authorisation, safeguarding, privacy, accessibility and optional baseline.	Readiness / governance checklist
Week 1	Introduce the Four Pillars in age-respectful language; agree individual choices.	Baseline / access record
Week 2	Brian's: thoughts, preferences, identity and recognising differences.	Delivery + pupil choice log
Week 3	Waves: private check-ins; co-regulation; respectful responses.	Wave access / support log
Week 4	Circles: routines, predictability, comfort and adaptations.	Routine adjustment log
Week 5	Bridges: preferred communication, interests, trusted people and access.	Communication opportunity log
Week 6	Pupil and family voice, staff reflection, follow-up and next-step decision.	Feedback / summary / harms check

Each week: 10–20 minute focal activity where feasible; do not insist on a uniform duration for all pupils. Record changes to the sequence rather than hiding adaptations.

Before Week 1: preparation

IMPLEMENTATION

Make delivery safe, accessible and achievable before choosing participants.

A 60-minute staff orientation agenda

TIME	TASK
0–10 min	Purpose, scope and current evidence limits.
10–25 min	Introduce each Pillar and rehearse non-judgemental language.
25–40 min	AAC, refusal, privacy, age adaptations, avoiding public emotional disclosure.
40–50 min	Choose measures and practise a brief observation / incident log.
50–60 min	Confirm DSL / DPO routes and who signs off the activity.

Staff language to practise

- “You can tell me, show me, use your device or choose not to answer.”
- “It is okay if that word or picture does not fit how you feel.”
- “Would you like quiet, time, a different task or another way to join?”
- “I will help change the environment; this is not your problem to solve alone.”

Minimum preparation

Select a consistent activity window, accessible visual materials, an opt-out route, a staff logging method and a secure storage location. Keep pupil names off externally shared summaries.

Week 1: introduction & baseline

IMPLEMENTATION

Introduce without identifying, labelling or ranking children.

Activity: one moment, four viewpoints

Read a short fictional situation: “A pupil enters an unfamiliar classroom. The lights are bright, the teacher changes the task and another pupil invites them to join a group.” Ask what the character might need, using all four Pillars. Offer silence, drawing, symbols or written answers.

Collect only what is needed

- [ ] Staff understand the definitions
- [ ] Pupils can decline tasks without penalty
- [ ] Communication adaptations are present
- [ ] Pupil support remains available
- [ ] Baseline observation window is defined
- [ ] School retains identifiable records

Baseline observation example

“During two ordinary transitions, staff offered an accessible preview of the change on one occasion. A nonverbal choice was available on neither occasion. This describes the supports offered, not the pupil's internal wellbeing.”

Do not

Do not ask pupils to disclose diagnoses, trauma, medication, family difficulties or emotional histories for pilot purposes.

Week 2: Brian's — identity

IMPLEMENTATION

Understand multiple thoughts and preferences without interpreting behaviour as a diagnosis.

Core activity: different Brians, different possibilities

Offer a fictional scenario: “Two pupils are invited to read aloud. One is excited; one would prefer to listen.” Ask pupils to select or create possibilities such as Curious Brian, Worry Brian, Confidence Brian and Safety Brian. Clarify that no one can know a character's thoughts for certain.

Primary version

Use fictional character drawings, simple thought clouds and optional picture cards. Give pupils a “pass” card and allow participation through pointing, drawing or supported conversation.

Secondary version

Invite reflection on exam pressure, belonging, social media, independence or conflicting priorities. Use “values”, “self-talk” and “decisions” as optional age-appropriate language.

What to record

- [ ] Pupil could choose / pass
- [ ] Preferred communication was available
- [ ] No forced personal disclosure
- [ ] Staff avoided assuming what pupil felt
- [ ] Time needed (minutes)
- [ ] What needs revising

Success means access

A quiet pupil who chooses not to share may still be fully participating in their own way. Measure whether choice was possible, not how much they revealed.

Week 3: Waves — regulation

IMPLEMENTATION

A Wave is a metaphor, not an assessment of illness or an instruction to calm down.

Core activity: private Wave choices

Offer five optional visual levels (tiny ripple to stormy wave). Invite pupils to choose a label, point, use AAC, draw their own scale or decline. Ask “What could adults change or offer?” and rehearse supportive responses.

Co-regulation first

- Offer calm, accessible communication and enough processing time.
- Adjust sensory demands where possible: noise, crowding, lighting, movement, task length.
- Support regulation through the pupil's own plan and trusted staff.
- Respect refusal and prevent public display of individually identifiable Wave ratings.

Record opportunities, not compliance

Example: “The teacher offered a quiet-space option and used the pupil's agreed communication method. The pupil chose to continue the lesson.” Avoid “child improved from 5 to 1 because the programme worked.”

Safeguarding boundary

If a child indicates harm, fear or acute distress, staff must follow school safeguarding and health procedures. Do not treat the pilot as therapy.

Week 4: Circles — safety

IMPLEMENTATION

Use predictability and familiar supports as a route to participation.

Core activity: my helpful Circle

Using fictional or personally chosen examples, explore a predictable start, a known adult, a favourite interest, a comfort object, and a preview of change. Invite the pupil to choose which supports they want considered, without requiring them to disclose private details.

Environment trial

Choose one minor, reversible classroom change: a Now / Next card, task preview, agreed movement break, transition warning, seating option or access to a familiar object. Agree who will deliver it and how to ask whether it helped.

Record the adjustment

Support / environmental adjustment offered

How the pupil was offered choice and could refuse

What staff observed (factual, not inferred)

Important distinction

Circles are not a rigid demand for sameness. They help identify the conditions under which pupils can encounter change safely and with reasonable support.

Week 5: Bridges — connection

IMPLEMENTATION

Make learning and relationships reachable in the pupil's preferred way.

Core activity: a Bridge from interest to participation

A teacher introduces a curriculum task through a pupil's chosen interest, provides an alternative communication route, or creates a safe option for working alongside others without pressured socialising. The pupil can accept, change or reject the option.

Practical choices

- [ ] Talk with a trusted adult
- [ ] Use AAC / picture card
- [ ] Write / draw privately
- [ ] Work alongside a partner
- [ ] Join a shared-interest task
- [ ] Choose independent participation
- [ ] Ask for extra processing time
- [ ] Say “not now” or “stop”

Staff observation

Record whether appropriate communication routes and invitations were available; do not make eye contact, spoken answers, sharing personal stories, or sociability an outcome requirement.

Bridge question

“What barrier can we remove?” is usually more useful than “How do we make the child join in?”

Week 6: review & next decision

IMPLEMENTATION

Use feedback to improve the materials, even if the findings are disappointing.

Collect at least three viewpoints

- Pupil: accessible, voluntary account of what was comfortable, useful or unwelcome.
- Staff: what was used, what was difficult and what adjustments were needed.
- Family: optional feedback about clarity or consistency, without pressure to share home information.

Review key feasibility outcomes

- [ ] Delivery proportion calculated
- [ ] Feedback refusals counted neutrally
- [ ] Staff time estimated
- [ ] Small-group privacy reviewed
- [ ] Accessibility adaptations summarised
- [ ] Unintended effects reviewed
- [ ] Negative evidence included
- [ ] School leader approves findings

Choose an honest next step

PROCEED / REVISE / PAUSE / STOP

Proceed only if the materials appear acceptable, safe and manageable. Revise unclear or inaccessible components. Pause for further professional advice where needed. Stop a method that creates harm or undue pressure.

Primary-school adaptations

INCLUSION

Maintain playful, age-appropriate access without pressure to reveal personal feelings.

Ways to present the Four Pillars

PILLAR	CHILD-FRIENDLY ACTIVITY
Brian's	Use thought bubbles on fictional characters; choose a thought or invent one.
Waves	Use a private picture-scale or draw a wave; offer opt-out.
Circles	Build a comfort map with routines, places or interests.
Bridges	Create a story of how two characters connect or ask for help.

Practical access

- Read aloud or display pictures; do not rely only on reading and writing.
- Offer short activities, movement, sensory breaks and small-group alternatives.
- Use the pupil's own communication system and familiar symbols.
- Avoid sticking a named child's emotional rating on a public board without considering privacy and choice.

Observation example

“The pupil selected a support symbol when it was offered by the teaching assistant” is a stronger observation than “their emotional regulation improved”.

Secondary-school adaptations

INCLUSION

Respect privacy, adolescent identity, autonomy and genuine self-advocacy.

Relevant scenarios

- Exam preparation and the tension between motivation and anxiety.
- Changing social groups and navigating online conversations.
- Unexpected timetable changes, substitute teachers and sensory overload.
- Choosing communication preferences, boundaries and help-seeking routes.
- Transitions to college, sixth form, training or other pathways.

Avoid infantilisation

Offer neutral iconography and terms such as “thought patterns”, “stress intensity”, “predictability” and “connection” as alternatives to child-oriented language. Young people should be able to choose whether Tom Tom imagery is suitable for them.

Confidentiality

Do not ask pupils to describe their mental health, identity, family or relationships in front of peers. Anonymous fictional discussion, private reflection and opting out must remain genuine options.

Teen feedback prompt

“If you were redesigning this resource for students your age, what would you keep, remove or rename?”

Specialist SEND & AAC inclusion

INCLUSION

Communication access is essential to valid participation, not an optional extra.

Before activities begin

- Check the pupil's current AAC plan and consult appropriate communication specialists.
- Provide genuine refusal methods: NO, STOP, BREAK, NOT NOW or equivalent individualized signals.
- Use real photographs or familiar approved symbols where generic drawings are unclear.
- Allow processing time, gesture, eye gaze, movement, sounds and supported choice-making.
- Avoid interpreting every movement as a clear yes/no without checking with knowledgeable staff.

Accessible feedback methods

METHOD	EXAMPLE
Partner-assisted scanning	Trusted trained partner offers choices consistently and pauses for a recognised response.
AAC / symbols	Pupil uses their usual symbols or device to choose liked, disliked or not sure.
Observed engagement	Staff record concrete approach, withdrawal or choice behaviours with context.
Proxy perspective	Family / keyworker contributes separately; label as proxy, not direct pupil voice.

Essential boundary

Do not replace or overwrite a pupil's established AAC system, attribute an unconfirmed message to them, or confuse an adult proxy report with first-person consent.

Ethics, dignity & safeguarding

GOVERNANCE

The child comes first; the pilot exists to learn, not to extract personal stories.

- School safeguarding arrangements apply throughout, including Keeping children safe in education 2026.
- The pilot does not replace EHCP provision, statutory duties, therapy, clinical care or reasonable adjustments.
- Access to ordinary teaching or support must not depend on joining feedback activities.
- Explain the activities in age- and communication-appropriate ways; honour refusal and withdrawal.
- Avoid coercion by teachers or external authors, public emotion scores, comparisons between pupils and diagnostic claims.
- Report safeguarding concerns immediately through the school's designated route; do not insert them into pilot datasets.

Research ethics

For any formal research with children, involve an independent research partner and secure the required ethics review and governance approvals before recruitment or research data collection. BERA (2024) and UKRI emphasise informed, respectful participation and child-appropriate consent / assent. [1, 2, 3]

Record adverse or unintended effects

Confusion, unwanted exposure, shame, fatigue, sensory distress, increased workload, communication barriers or perceived stigma matter even when individual participants also report benefits.

Privacy, information & data sharing

GOVERNANCE

Pupil-level data should remain in school systems by default.

Default data architecture

- School holds named pupil plans and individual observation sheets securely.
- The school DPO / controller decides lawful basis, transparency notices, retention and any DPIA.
- The external author receives non-identifying aggregates and thematic feedback only when approved.
- Exclude names, exact dates of birth, photographs, EHCP extracts, diagnoses, safeguarding records and identifying quotations from external reports.
- Check that tiny groups and distinctive combinations do not permit re-identification; suppress details where necessary.
- Use school-approved transfer channels; never send individual pupil information through unapproved personal email or AI services.

Separate choices

A person's voluntary agreement to answer feedback questions is not automatically the UK GDPR lawful basis for processing information. The school must determine and document the appropriate basis, special-category conditions if relevant, transparency information and data-sharing arrangements. [4, 5]

Local governance fields

School data controller / DPO contact and decision date

Storage location / authorised access / retention and deletion period

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Choosing the ethical route

GOVERNANCE

Use this page with school leadership, DSL and DPO before any data collection.

QUESTION	ROUTE A: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT	ROUTE B: FORMAL RESEARCH
Primary aim	Improve local practice and assess feasibility.	Generate generalisable knowledge through a study.
Authorisation	School governance and required local approvals.	School + independent research ethics / institutional approvals.
Pupil records	Stay with school by default.	As set out in approved protocol and data agreements.
Recruitment	School-approved information and opt-out / choice as appropriate.	Appropriate informed consent and child assent procedures.
Reporting	Careful internal report; approved aggregate external summary.	Pre-specified analysis, ethics-compliant public reporting.
Claims	Feasible / acceptable / needs revision.	Any effectiveness claims must match study design.

Do not self-certify

Only the responsible institution / governance leads can classify the activity, set lawful data handling and approve external research. Seek independent advice where the distinction is unclear.

School expression-of-interest form

SCHOOL TEMPLATE

Blank initial enquiry; no pupil names or diagnostic details.

School / trust and setting type

School postcode area (optional; do not include pupil information)

Headteacher / SENCO / lead contact name and official school email

- [ ] Primary
- [ ] Secondary
- [ ] Specialist SEND
- [ ] Alternative provision
- [ ] Other

Why does your school want to explore the Four Pillars?

What is the main implementation question?

Preferred term or six-week pilot window

Expression of interest is not formal enrolment, school approval, research consent or a promise of funding.

School pilot participation agreement

SCHOOL TEMPLATE

Draft terms for local review; not a legal contract or data-sharing agreement.

- [ ] Leader has reviewed resource and limitations
- [ ] Pilot lead and safeguarding contact named
- [ ] Data protection arrangements reviewed
- [ ] Accessibility and reasonable adjustments planned
- [ ] Feedback remains optional
- [ ] No external transfer of identifying pupil data
- [ ] Pilot may be paused if concerns arise
- [ ] Reports reviewed before external sharing

School name / pilot dates

Local delivery and safeguarding responsibilities

Permitted use of materials and any adaptation conditions

Reporting and sign-off route

School authorised representative: name / role / date

For schools to complete

This template should be checked against school/trust legal, safeguarding and information-governance procedures. Any data-sharing or research collaboration requires separately suitable agreements.

Family information sheet

FAMILY TEMPLATE

Adapt to the age group and language needs. Not a parental permission form.

Dear Parent / Carer,

Our school is considering a short trial of learning resources called Tom Tom's Four Pillars. The four ideas are Brian's (thoughts and preferences), Waves (feelings and sensory intensity), Circles (familiar supports and routines) and Bridges (communication and connection). The activities may use short fictional stories, pictures, discussions or writing.

Our goal is to understand whether the materials are practical, inclusive and comfortable for pupils. The Four Pillars are not a tested clinical treatment, therapy or diagnosis. Ordinary school support and SEND provision will continue.

Pupils will not have to disclose personal feelings or home experiences. Children can participate in the lesson in an accessible way and decline optional feedback. The school will explain any separate information / permission arrangements it has adopted.

Our school will hold any identifiable pupil information under its usual secure systems. We will not send identifiable pupil records to the creator of the resources as part of the default local pilot. Any wider research would have separate information and approvals.

Questions you may ask the school

- What activities are planned and what adaptations are available?
- How can my child indicate “no”, “stop”, “pass” or “I need a break”?
- Who should I contact if a resource causes distress?
- Will optional feedback be shared outside the school, and in what form?

School contact / preferred method / date

Primary pupil information page

PUPIL VOICE

Read aloud or adapt using the pupil's own symbols and communication.

We are trying some new activities about thoughts, feelings, things that help and ways to connect.

What might happen?

- We might read a story, look at pictures or talk about a made-up character.
- You can draw, point, write, use your communication device or simply listen.
- You do not have to tell anyone private things about your life.
- You can say NO, STOP, NOT NOW or PASS.
- If you feel worried, tell or show a trusted adult.

My choices today

- [ ] I would like to try
- [ ] I want to watch first
- [ ] I want a different way
- [ ] Not today

Something that could help me take part (optional)

For adults

A child choosing not to answer is not “missing data to be corrected”. Respect their choice. Any formal research consent/assent procedure must be separately approved.

Teen information & choices

PUPIL VOICE

A neutral, age-respectful explanation for students aged approximately 11–18.

You may be offered short activities using a four-part framework: thoughts and identity; stress and sensory intensity; predictability and support; communication and connection. We are evaluating whether the materials are useful and respectful — not evaluating you.

You can complete activities using your preferred communication method. You are not expected to disclose personal mental health information, a diagnosis, family circumstances or experiences with peers. Declining optional feedback will not affect your school support or grades.

What you control

- [ ] I can use alternative language
- [ ] I can ask for private responses
- [ ] I can request accessibility changes
- [ ] I can opt out of optional feedback
- [ ] I can say a resource was unhelpful
- [ ] I know who to ask for support

Feedback statement

"My view matters, including if I think the Four Pillars should be changed or not used."

A change I would suggest (optional)

School responsibility

Explain what information is collected, how it is used, who can access it and how students can raise concerns. Do not treat classroom authority as consent for formal research.

Picture-supported pupil voice

PUPIL VOICE

Illustrative choice board; use existing AAC vocabulary and access method.

Do I want to give feedback?

YES | NO | NOT SURE | STOP

How was the activity?

LIKED IT | NOT SURE | DID NOT LIKE | PASS

Support choices

- [ ] Break
- [ ] Quiet
- [ ] More time
- [ ] Help
- [ ] Different picture
- [ ] Finish

Staff instruction

Model choices without prompting a preferred answer. Record how the pupil communicated and whether the response was direct, inferred or proxy-reported. These generic tiles are NOT a replacement for pupil-specific AAC or speech and language therapy advice.

Primary pupil feedback form

PUPIL TEMPLATE

Voluntary. Child may point, draw, dictate or leave unanswered.

Do not write a full name here if the form might be used outside normal pupil records.

I felt about the activities...

- [ ] I liked them
- [ ] Some were okay
- [ ] I did not like them
- [ ] I am not sure
- [ ] I do not want to say

I could take part by...

- [ ] Talking
- [ ] Pointing / pictures
- [ ] Drawing / writing
- [ ] My AAC / device
- [ ] Listening
- [ ] Another way

My favourite part (optional)

Something I would change (optional)

Something adults could do to help me (optional)

A pupil may leave any or all questions blank. Staff record support needed separately without treating it as a pupil response.

Secondary pupil feedback form

PUPIL TEMPLATE

Anonymous or school-coded where feasible; participation is voluntary.

Rate these statements

STATEMENT	YES	SOMEWHAT	NO	PASS
The approach respected my age and identity.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I could choose my communication method.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I could say no without pressure.	☐	☐	☐	☐
The materials were clear.	☐	☐	☐	☐
At least one part felt useful.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I would change something.	☐	☐	☐	☐

What should schools keep? (optional)

What felt unhelpful, uncomfortable or childish? (optional)

What should change before other students use it? (optional)

Family feedback form

FAMILY TEMPLATE

Optional family voice; do not infer a pupil's thoughts from it.

How much information did you receive?

- [ ] Clear explanation
- [ ] Partly clear
- [ ] Not clear
- [ ] Prefer not to answer

What have you noticed?

- [ ] Child mentioned the activities
- [ ] Support language seems clearer
- [ ] No noticeable difference
- [ ] Some aspects felt unhelpful
- [ ] Child did not discuss it
- [ ] Not sure

What does your child find accessible or inaccessible? (optional)

What would make the pack more useful for families? (optional)

Any concerns you want the school to follow up? (optional)

Recording note

Family responses reflect that person's perspective. Do not quote private health or family details in an external report. Direct safeguarding concerns to normal school procedures.

Staff feedback & workload form

STAFF TEMPLATE

To be completed at baseline and/or review.

QUESTION	RESPONSE
Were the Four Pillars clearly defined?	Yes / partly / no / unsure
Could pupils decline and choose communication methods?	Consistently / sometimes / not yet
Could the activities fit routine teaching?	Yes / with adaptation / no
Was the resource age appropriate?	Yes / mixed / no
Were any unintended effects seen?	No / yes: record separately
Would you use or recommend any element again?	Yes / perhaps / no

Approximate preparation minutes each week

Approximate delivery minutes each week

Most useful adaptation, biggest challenge and next change

Baseline / endline summary form

MEASUREMENT TEMPLATE

Use the SAME definitions at both timepoints; focus on opportunities offered.

Group ID (school-held only): _____ Observation context: _____ Window: _____

MEASURE	BASELINE	FOLLOW-UP	NOTES
Planned activities delivered	____ / ____	____ / ____	_____
Communication choice offered	____ / ____	____ / ____	_____
Opt-out visibly available	____ / ____	____ / ____	_____
Preferred support offered	____ / ____	____ / ____	_____
Pupils invited to give feedback	____ / ____	____ / ____	_____
Feedback willingly returned	____ / ____	____ / ____	_____
Adverse/unwanted events logged	____	____	_____

Interpret the denominator

Always define what counted as an opportunity. Differences in lessons, staff, context, absence and AAC access can make baseline/endline comparisons misleading.

Context changes or alternative explanations

Weekly delivery and fidelity log

MEASUREMENT TEMPLATE

One row per session or agreed observation window.

WEEK	DATE	PILLAR	DELIVERED?	MINUTES
1	_____	Intro	Yes / No	_____
2	_____	Brian's	Yes / No	_____
3	_____	Waves	Yes / No	_____
4	_____	Circles	Yes / No	_____
5	_____	Bridges	Yes / No	_____
6	_____	Review	Yes / No	_____

Fidelity and respect checklist

- [ ] Purpose explained
- [ ] Preferred access used
- [ ] Real opt-out offered
- [ ] No forced disclosure
- [ ] Existing support maintained
- [ ] Negative feedback welcomed
- [ ] Staff followed safeguard route
- [ ] Adaptations logged

What was changed, why and by whom?

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Observation and adaptation log

MEASUREMENT TEMPLATE

Use factual language; store pupil-coded information only where authorised.

Date / setting / routine or lesson (avoid pupil names on shared copy)

What support, choice or communication route was offered?

What was directly observed (no interpretation of motivation)?

What changed in the environment or teaching approach?

Was the pupil's view directly expressed, inferred or proxy reported?

Next adjustment / who reviews / when

Record specific actions such as “visual change warning provided”, not judgements such as “pupil was manipulative”, “non-compliant” or “refused to regulate”.

Unintended effects & escalation

SAFETY TEMPLATE

Use the school's usual safeguarding and incident systems for significant concerns.

- [ ] Confusion about labels
- [ ] Unwanted public disclosure
- [ ] Pupil discomfort / withdrawal
- [ ] Sensory overload
- [ ] AAC incompatibility
- [ ] Increased staff workload
- [ ] Stigma / peer comments
- [ ] Other concern

What happened? Factual summary; do not include sensitive details in shared pilot report.

Immediate support or change offered

Staff lead / school incident reference (kept within school)

Follow-up and decision: continue / revise / pause / stop

Escalation

If a safeguarding concern is suspected, act without delay under school policy and refer to the DSL. Do not wait for the pilot review and do not send safeguarding information to the author.

Analysing a small pilot responsibly

ANALYSIS & REPORTING

Use descriptive summaries, meaningful context and transparent limitations.

A basic feasibility calculation

Delivery rate = number of planned sessions delivered ÷ number planned × 100. Example only: 5 delivered from 6 planned = 83.3%. This indicates delivery fidelity, not pupil outcome effectiveness.

For each indicator

- State numerator and denominator, including absence or nonresponse.
- Report raw counts as well as percentages when the group is small.
- Avoid drawing conclusions from tiny subgroup comparisons or informal “before/after” changes.
- Describe negative feedback, missing data and adaptations, not just successes.
- Check school approval and risk of identifiability before any external reporting.

Example summary (invented illustration, NOT results)

MEASURE	ILLUSTRATIVE VALUE
Delivery	5 / 6 scheduled sessions completed
Choice access	12 / 14 observed opportunities
Pupil feedback	7 liked, 3 neutral, 2 disliked; 2 did not answer
Unintended effects	1 report of confusing imagery, revised in week 4

Interpretation

This would support only a conclusion such as “some activities were implementable; the imagery needs revision”. It would not establish that the approach improved wellbeing or learning.

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Worked example: fictional school

ANALYSIS & REPORTING

For illustration; not an account of any participating school.

Context

A fictional mixed-age SEND group tried short Four Pillars activities during tutor time. A school lead kept named records internally. The team documented two communication options and available quiet-space support. No individual records were shared with the author.

What went well

- Pupils could select a fictional character's thoughts without discussing personal experiences.
- A classroom transition preview was added, improving clarity of staff routines.
- Staff discovered that several teenagers preferred neutral icons to cartoon imagery.

Problems and revisions

- One visual scale was confusing with the existing AAC vocabulary; staff used the pupil's established symbols instead.
- A public Wave board was replaced with a private, optional check-in.
- One pupil declined all feedback and still received ordinary support.

Permitted conclusion

“The school identified feasible elements and important accessibility revisions. More rigorous evaluation is required before making claims about effectiveness.”

School final report — cover sheet

REPORT TEMPLATE

A reporting structure suitable for leadership and an approved non-identifying summary.

School or anonymous pilot reference

School type / year phase (omit if identifying)

Pilot dates / number of intended sessions / number completed

Lead role / approval date (retain named version internally)

Primary feasibility question and measures

Materials used and significant adaptations

What did the school decide? Continue / revise / pause / stop

External sharing

Before publishing or sending this report externally, remove identifiers, suppress small numbers or distinctive stories and obtain the school's authorised sign-off.

School final report — findings

REPORT TEMPLATE

Use the template to report weaknesses as carefully as strengths.

1. Implementation: what was delivered and what was missed?

2. Accessibility and pupil voice: whose views could be heard?

3. Acceptability and staff capacity: what did people say?

4. Unintended effects and safeguards: what required a change?

5. Limitations and alternative explanations

School final report — decisions

REPORT TEMPLATE

Translate feedback into specific resource revisions.

FINDING	REQUIRED CHANGE	OWNER / WHEN
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

School overall judgement and rationale

Approval for any non-identifying external summary: role / date

Evidence claim safeguard

Suggested wording: “A school-based feasibility pilot found the resources [acceptable / challenging / in need of revision] in this setting.” Avoid “proven to improve behaviour”, “clinically effective” or “validated”.

Evidence standards & publication

RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT

Careful claims build trust with schools and grant funders.

What you can reasonably say

- "We have developed and piloted resources with participating schools." — only after this is true.
- "Staff or pupils reported these aspects as useful." — quote only approved and accurately attributed evidence.
- "The pack has been adapted following pilot feedback." — record specific changes and dates.
- "Further controlled, independent evaluation is needed." — use where relevant.

What you must avoid

- Implying approval or endorsement from schools, EEF, DfE, NICE or universities without permission.
- Treating approval to share a report as permission to identify an individual child.
- Presenting satisfaction or short-term observation as proof of causal impact.
- Publishing selective positive examples while ignoring negative reports or nonresponse.

Funding application evidence

Separate (1) project outputs, (2) user feedback, (3) school feasibility data and (4) independent outcome research. Each supports a different level of claim.

From pilot to independent research

RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT

An evidence-development pathway for academic collaborators.

Stage 1: co-design and feasibility

Invite pupils, families, SEND practitioners and school leaders to critique wording, access methods and suitability. Record modifications and usability. Decide whether a standardised, replicable version is ready for further testing.

Stage 2: research partnership

Seek an educational research team with expertise in SEND, implementation science, AAC and social/emotional learning. Collaboratively formulate research questions, comparator conditions, meaningful outcome measures, sample planning and analysis.

Stage 3: formal governance

Seek appropriate institutional ethics approval, school permissions, consent/assent and information governance. Consider trial registration or pre-registration where applicable, and independent evaluation.

Stage 4: credible reporting

Publish methods, participation and attrition, fidelity, adaptations, outcomes, adverse effects, limitations and conflicts of interest. Invite critical peer review rather than promising positive findings.

Potential research partner pitch

“We have a well-specified, pupil-centred practice framework and want independent help testing its feasibility, acceptability and, eventually, outcomes with appropriate ethical protections.”

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Research partner invitation

RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT

A short, adaptable approach for university education and SEND teams.

Subject: Potential independent evaluation partnership — Tom Tom Four Pillars educational framework

Dear [researcher / centre],

I am Counsellor Tomass J. Wood, a neurodivergent author and developer of the Tom Tom Four Pillars, a story-led educational framework built around Brian's (inner experiences), Waves (emotional/sensory intensity), Circles (predictability and comfort), and Bridges (communication and connection).

I have developed primary, secondary and picture-supported SEND resources, pupil Passports and structured school feedback materials. My immediate aim is to establish feasibility, accessibility and acceptability in real educational contexts; I am not claiming that the framework has already demonstrated effectiveness.

Would your team be interested in discussing methodological review, student or practitioner co-design, or a future independently governed feasibility study? I would welcome critique of outcomes, comparison design, recruitment, ethics, safeguarding, data protection and accessibility. I can supply a concise protocol and sample materials.

I use AI assistance for drafting, spelling and editing as an accessibility aid. The ideas, lived experiences and creative direction are my own. I would be happy to discuss documentation and research integrity requirements.

Kind regards,
Counsellor Tomass J. Wood
Tom Tom Universe
www.tomtomuniverse.co.uk

Keep roles clear

A potential university partner should decide its own research governance; authorship, intellectual property, conflicts of interest, ethics and the use of school data require clear written agreements.

Pilot launch checklist

IMPLEMENTATION CONTROL

A practical one-page sign-off before distributing materials.

- [ ] School leader authorisation obtained
- [ ] Staff briefed on all four Pillars
- [ ] Child-choice and privacy routes agreed
- [ ] Data protection review / notices completed
- [ ] No identifiable external transfer planned
- [ ] Baseline observation definitions fixed
- [ ] Adverse-effects plan in place
- [ ] External reporting sign-off identified
- [ ] Pilot question and indicator agreed
- [ ] Teaching / AAC adaptations checked
- [ ] DSL and safeguarding escalation confirmed
- [ ] Pupil-level storage approved
- [ ] Pilot timetable and facilitator named
- [ ] Feedback materials checked for age
- [ ] Review and stopping criteria agreed
- [ ] School copy of forms retained securely

School authorisation / date / next action

Readiness decision

Not ready / Ready with adjustments / Ready to begin. If the team cannot answer the safeguarding or information-sharing questions, pause and seek the appropriate school advice.

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References & further guidance

REFERENCES

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Research status

These sources provide the context for responsible school implementation and safeguarding; none is evidence that the Tom Tom Four Pillars itself has been tested, endorsed or proven.

Thank you — begin with a conversation

CONTACT & NEXT STEP

An accessible, thoughtful pilot can make the next version of the Four Pillars better.

BRIAN'S	WAVES	CIRCLES	BRIDGES
Inner worlds	Emotional intensity	Comfort & predictability	Connection & access

The Tom Tom Way begins with the belief that learning becomes more accessible when adults take children's identity, emotions, routines and communication seriously.

An invitation to schools should therefore be an invitation to listen, learn and improve. We welcome constructive professional criticism, including findings that parts of the approach are unclear, difficult or unsuitable.

Four next actions

- Send the invitation letter and one-page summary to a school lead.
- Offer to share age-appropriate examples of your teaching pack and Passport.
- Agree the pilot route and local safeguarding / privacy processes first.
- Collect a signed-off feasibility summary and improve the resources accordingly.

Author and project

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Neurodivergent author and creator of Tom Tom Universe
www.tomtomuniverse.co.uk
Email contact preferred. No partnership, endorsement or evaluated outcome is claimed in this resource.

Four Pillars. One child. Their voice, identity and world.