

Inclusive strategies for autistic young people and those with social communication and interaction differences in an educational setting

This practical guide adopts the Autism Education Trust (AET) approach and links to the Schools Standards Framework.

This approach is based on autism as a difference and not a deficit, a different way of thinking.

This guidance applies to those with a diagnosis and those identified with possible social communication and interaction differences.

The AET model explains that autistic people will experience differences in three key areas:

- Social Understanding and Communication
- Flexible Thinking, Information Processing and Understanding
- Sensory Processing and Integration



Each autistic person will have their own unique profile within the key areas of difference. The key areas of difference influence the way autistic pupils learn and experience their educational settings.

The Schools Standards Framework is a tool to enhance and embed good autism practice across a school and is split into four themes. These themes run through the AET training packages and link to the universal provision we ask you to consider below.

✓ Understanding the Individual

✓ Positive and Effective Relationships

✓ Enabling Environments

✓ Learning and Development

The Communication and Interaction Team encourages you to use this guide to support autistic young people and those with social communication and interaction differences by:

- Reflecting on your current practice before making a referral. We will need evidence that universal provision has been consistently implemented over time. Please complete evidence of impact and return with your referral paperwork.
- Adopting universal provision as a consistent whole school approach to meeting the needs of this group of young people.

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<p>Before considering a referral, universal provision needs to be consistently implemented for at least 6 weeks as part of the young person's provision. If a referral is accepted this document is likely to be the focus of our initial visit. Please ensure a paper copy is available.</p>		
<p>Universal autism friendly approaches to embed at whole class level</p>	<p>Examples of what this might look like</p>	<p>What has the impact been?</p>
<p>✓ Physical environment is structured and uncluttered</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organised and tidy work areas • Labelling and accessibility of resources • Consider seating position • Clear walkways • Different areas visually demarcated – what happens where (internal and external spaces) • Choice boards; available not available activities 	
<p>✓ Whole class visual timetable displayed and actively used</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active use of objects of reference, photographs, symbols, and written word to communicate daily routines. • Display positioning considered to enable effective use • Timetables set up with class, talked through, items removed when the activity has finished and change to expected clearly indicated and discussed. 	
<p>✓ Quiet low arousal space within the class or another area of school</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sectioned off space of the classroom with mats/beanbags or desk space. • Access to another room as needed. • Reduced sensory display area 	
<p>✓✓ Language and communication adjusted to meet the developmental needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow for processing time. • Keep verbal communication short and simple. • Make the implicit explicit. • Show, model, draw and write it down. • Use of visuals to reinforce spoken language where possible. • Display new topic words and matching visual reference 	
<p>✓✓ Communication of clear expectations and social teaching</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break down instructions into small chunks. • Effective use of strategies to manage noise level. • Systems in place to manage busier times of the day e.g. collecting coats, transitioning between activities. • Incentives to encourage positive behaviours e.g. marble jar, house points. • Explicitly model social nuances and make the implicit explicit. • Specific and timely praise. • Use of positive language to direct the behaviour sought • Class expectations/agreed rules displayed and referred to 	

Universal autism friendly approaches to embed at whole class level	Examples of what this might look like	What has the impact been?
✓✓ Clear systems to support transitions and familiar routines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular reference made to class visual timetable. • Clear communication for an activity finishing and next lesson, activity or transition starting. • Consistent strategy to gain attention ahead of communicating a transition e.g. hand up/ wiggle fingers/ clapping rhythm/song/timer 	
✓✓ Visuals references to support all classroom aspects at an appropriate comprehension level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific learning areas labelled e.g. reading corner, quiet space, topic resources. • Hand washing/ lining up visual prompt posters. • Stop signs on fire exits, adult cupboards or other non-accessible areas. • How many children in an area system 	
✓✓ An emotional check in system with the language embedded in everyday conversations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smiley face system. • System based on text e.g. "The Colour Monster" by Anna Llenas. • Named lolly stick placed in labelled emotion jar. • Adults remind children to "check in" as part of morning and afternoon routine. • Colour coded/number-based system. • Linking of labelling an emotion to the bodily feeling and scenario. 	
✓ Consideration given to sensory aspects of the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systems in place to minimise effects of "crush" and noisier times. • Seating positions e.g. being aware of potential distractions such as open windows, sunlight and peer relationships. • Adjustments made for touch, noise or smell sensitivities in DT lessons. 	
✓ Environmental signage of whole school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photos of staff on doors and names, subject areas, office areas, no-go areas indicated by symbol and word. • Specific rooms clearly labelled. • Adult/ child toilets clearly labelled. 	
✓✓✓ Structuring learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task agendas • Model the process, show what finished looks like • Writing frameworks/graphic organisers – where to start, how to proceed, where to write, the pathway to completion. • Adjust outcome expectations to create success • Remove the need for unnecessary copying or writing • Provide visual reference material to prompt ideas and link thoughts and ideas. • Working walls display previous learning and active links are made prior to continued learning. • Signal clear end of a lesson and switch to new lesson/topic. 	
<p>✓ We also recommend that a one-page profile is completed. This could include strengths, what helps, what triggers, what motivates and special interests. Please include the child's voice in creating this profile either through direct input or observation by those that know the young person well</p>		