



Hindlip First School  
Tibberton First School



# Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

This guidance has been written by our partners at  
Perryfields Primary PRU.



**Perryfields Primary PRU**

## **Definition**

**Autism spectrum disorder, also called ASD, is the name used for a specific set of behavioural developmental problems and the challenges that go with them. A diagnosis of ASD means that your child's communication, social, and play skills are affected in some way.**

## **Challenges That Autistic Children May Face**

**Children on the Autism spectrum are reported to have two main areas of difficulty:**

### **Social communication and social interaction**

**Children with Autism may find it hard to begin or carry on a conversation, they may be lacking in social skills, for example knowing how far to stand away from somebody else, struggle to listen to others, or read expressions. These can then contribute to difficulties in developing and maintaining friendships.**

### **Restricted, repetitive patterns of behaviour, interests or activities**

**These children may develop an overwhelming interest in something, follow inflexible routines or rituals, make repetitive body movements, or they might be hypersensitive to certain sounds.**

**Children on the Autistic spectrum often need routine in order to help them understand the world around them. This means that they can find unstructured times such as lunch and break times particularly difficult.**

**In contrast to their peers, children and young people on the Autism spectrum may not enjoy break and lunch times. This could be because they:**

- Find the lack of the structure and routine that they need difficult**
- Are daunted by noisy, busy and unpredictable environments, such as the dining hall**

- **Can lack the fast processing of conversation and social interaction skills that are needed**
- **May be fearful of bullying, including social isolation**

**Children with Autism need longer to process information and can also find socialising and communicating challenging. Many want to make friends, but find it hard as they lacking the expected social skills. They are often bullied due to their peers lacking Autism awareness and acceptance.**

**Some may have intense interests or lack organisation and planning skills that can affect their ability to take part in the school day.**

**In addition to this, many will have difficulty processing sensory information. This can occur in one or more of the seven senses. Their senses can be intensified (hypersensitive) or under-sensitive (hyposensitive). The degree of difficulty will vary from one individual to another and according to other factors such as mood and levels of stress and stimuli.**

**Trying to cope with the above during the school day can lead to anxiety, behaviour that challenges and meltdowns. Often, children with Autism will not show the stress they are feeling while they are at school, leading to different behaviours between school and home.**

### **Recognising Children with an Autism Diagnosis**

**The following behaviours could indicate that a child may have Autism however once these have been identified further medical opinion should be sourced.**

- **Not drawing attention with/to their parents, or others, to events or objects - for example – “Mum, look at that huge crane.”**
- **Activities completed in a repetitive way – for example playing a game repeatedly or lining up toys in a particular order**
- **Resistance to change or doing things differently**

- Difficulty with social interaction and social communication
- Behaviour such as biting, pinching, kicking or pica (putting inedible objects in the mouth)

***A diagnosis is the formal identification of Autism, usually by a multi-disciplinary diagnostic team, often including a speech and language therapist, paediatrician, psychiatrist and/or psychologist.***

## HELP ME



To understand social cues

Meet my sensory needs

Have repetition

Cope with my surroundings

Access my learning

# Supporting Strategies

## Communication

- Always use their name at the beginning of a request/instruction so that they know you are talking to them.
- Make sure they are paying attention before you ask a question or give an instruction. The signs that someone is paying attention will vary for different children. Use their special interest, or the activity they are currently doing, to engage them.
- Say less and say it slowly.
- Use specific key words, repeating and stressing them.
- Pause between words and phrases to give the child time to process what you've said, and to give them chance to think of a response.
- Don't use too many questions
- Keep questions short
- Ask only the most necessary questions
- Structure your questions, you could offer options or choices.
- Be specific. For example, ask "Did you enjoy your lunch?" rather than "How was lunchtime?"
- Try not to use non-verbal communication – For example, eye contact, facial expressions, gestures and body language when a child is showing signs of anxiety.

- Use visual supports for example -symbols, timetables, social stories
- Be aware of the environment (noisy/crowded) that you are in. Sensory input may be affecting how much they can process

## Supporting Strategies

### Classroom

- Use a routine they have created or which has been mutually agreed.
- Make sure that you prepare them for any change well in advance to their routine.
- Provide children with their own workstation in an agreed area of the classroom. Some children may like a small screen.
- Use visual supports to help them better understand their routine and the school day, this can include resources such as a timer and a visual timetable with times.
- Use a 'now and next' board linked to timers this provides children with clear expectations and a length of time for each task.
- Simplify communication and allow time for them to process information.
- Try social stories/comic strip conversations to develop greater social understanding.
- Consider the school environment and think about how you can make it more comfortable. For example, a pupil who struggles to block out background noise may benefit from wearing ear defenders.
- Review where they sit – are they surrounded by sensory overload – (noise, colours, smells or movement)

- Where appropriate support children to create an ASD PowerPoint 'All about Me' to share with chosen peers or class.
- Deal with any bullying promptly. If a child or young person is unable to say what happened then it may help to ask them to draw a picture of an incident, or have comic strip conversations.
- Think about how you can incorporate their intense interest into lessons - for example, Minecraft have an education edition.
- Keep a behaviour diary to try and monitor triggers of escalation (hot spots).
- Find a visual activity which enables them to explore their emotions and recognise emotions in others.
- Have an agreed safe and quiet place for children with Autism to go to when they feel their anxiety building or are overloaded with sensory stimuli. This needs to be a different location to where pupils are sent for inappropriate behaviour.
- The safe place could be a tent, bean bag or appropriate workstation outside the classroom.
- Some children may welcome a 'calm box' with chosen activities inside to help reduce anxiety (this is not a reward but a necessity when anxieties are heightened).
- Introduce social skills programmes such as "Time to Talk" or "Socially Speaking".
- Allow children with autism to have a time out card or exit pass to indicate to staff that they are feeling anxious and need to leave the classroom.
- Establish good communication with parents/carers, they may be able to offer some interventions to use.

## Supporting Strategies

### Playtime and Lunchtime

- Organise structured lunchtime clubs, focusing on shared interests.
- Find a suitable environment to eat – lunch halls can often be too noisy for children with Autism.
- Provide social learning opportunities.
- Try using social stories or comic strip conversations if a pupil is concerned about a particular situation.
- Ensure that there is good supervision by staff that have had “Understanding Autism” training.
- Teach Autism awareness and acceptance amongst peers.
- Have a zero tolerance ‘no bullying’ policy and ensure that all staff are aware of procedures.
- Use a buddy system or have a buddy bench in the playground.
- Encourage children to use an agreed card system to communicate their needs to an adult if they are finding some situations tricky.

## Supporting Strategies

### Organisation

- Visual supports – “now and next” boards
- Colour coding to help indicate significance of task
- Voice recording to enable them to re-play instructions
- Simple lists
- Well labelled task boxes and books

## Useful Resources



Some of the information provided in this pack was obtained from the National Autistic Society. Their website has a huge range of resources.

### Other information / support can be found at:

#### **Autism Education Trust**

[www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk](http://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk)

07827 283494

#### **Autism Helpline**

[www.autism.org.uk/enquiry](http://www.autism.org.uk/enquiry)

0808 8004104

#### **Autism West Midlands**

[www.autismwestmidlands.org.uk](http://www.autismwestmidlands.org.uk)

#### **Child Autism UK**

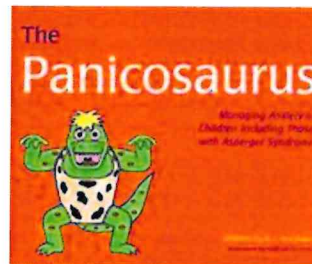
[childautism.org.uk](http://childautism.org.uk)

01344 882248

#### **CCN – Complex Communication Needs**

[Autism@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:Autism@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk)

## Suggested Reading

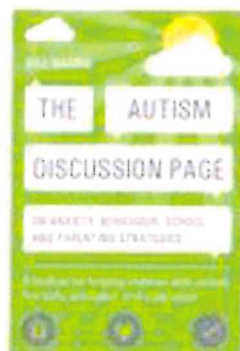


**The Disappointment Dragon**

**The Panicosaurus**

**The Red Beast**

**Author – K I AI- Ghani**



**The Autism Discussion Page**

**Core challenges of Autism**

**Anxiety, Behaviour, School and Parenting Strategies**

**Author Bill Nason**