**A Guide to Quality First Teaching Approaches for Pupils**

**Presenting with Social Communication Differences**

* **UNIVERSAL SUPPORT:**

Quality first classroom provision and teaching approaches for all learners with recognition that some learners may require very time-limited support to secure effective application of skills and increase their engagement and access. School would lead on this approach. The document below, references 4 key areas within Social Communication differences that would constitute reasonable adjustments if embedded within a classroom/class team as part of the Universal Support section.

* **TARGETED SUPPORT:**

Quality first classroom provision and teaching approaches for all learners with recognition that some learners may require increasingly individualised intervention programmes and advice/training may be sought from external agencies such as the Autism and Social Communication (ASC) service.

* **SPECIALIST SUPPORT**:

Quality first classroom provision and teaching approaches for all learners with recognition that a few learners may require significant amounts of additional to and different from provision to secure effective learning and secure access to personalised learning programme. This is likely to include personalised support from the ASC Team – illustrated within our Service Level Agreement 2022.

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| **Positive and Effective Relationship****UNIVERSAL SUPPORT - CLASSROOM STRATEGIES** **(SEN Guide to Reasonable Adjustments)** | **Enabling Environment** |
| * Use special interest to facilitate meaningful engagement and learning.

 <https://www.bild.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Davey-GAP-May-2020.pdf> * Know the pupil prior to arrival, effective co-production of what-one page profile with parents and previous setting is vital – what are the strengths/barriers and plan for these.
* Capture Pupil Voice. Talking Mats is visual, differentiated way of capturing Pupil Voice. We can support within our ASC team. Please find link to main website. [www.talkingmats.com](http://www.talkingmats.com)
* Mentoring – promote the use other pupils as emotional/social support.
* Behaviour Stars (3 bullet points produced with the pupil i.e. Don’t crowd me, Give me processing time, Allow a help card) to be completed and followed. This helps with all pupils.
* Visual emotions scale - daily ‘check-in’ to gauge how pupil is feeling [zonesofregulation.com](https://zonesofregulation.com/index.html) /5 Point scale.
* Explicitly model social skills and class rules - do not presume understanding.
* Consider buddy programmes, circle of friends, structured social skills lessons, commenting on social play as it happens, disability awareness lessons.
* Teach making mistakes, coping with losing and conflict resolution by: dramatize your own mistakes, help identify emotions, label feelings both recognised, discuss publicly scrutinised wins/losses in the news e.g., sports. Keep conflict resolution factual - emotional pleading will not work. Stick to the facts. Talk through games/activities before it starts – prepare responses for winning and losing.
* Support in unstructured times, develop understanding reflectively with the use of Social Stories/Comic Strip conversations/role play for immediate feedback when things go wrong. Remove immediate as sounds like they need to address after an incident <https://carolgraysocialstories.com/social-stories/what-is-it/>
* Make use of roles/responsibilities (displayed visually).
* Have fun, play and laugh with a pupil. Show you care!
* Teach pupil social scripts (what to say) in tricky situations.
* Consider how your pupil spends break and lunch times and what support might be needed with this.
* Provide lunchtime clubs linked to interests.
* Agree a silent signal that your pupil can use to indicate if they are becoming overwhelmed in class.

 | * Ensure pupil is drinking, eating and toileting regularly – make a chart.
* The classroom is organised to emphasise open space.
* Pupil is supported to organise their belongings and sit at a low stimulus table/workstation.
* Learning areas are clearly defined throughout the classroom.
* The white board is free of visual clutter – for 1m around the circumference.
* All resources are kept in labelled drawers/cupboards.
* Surfaces are free from clutter.
* Pupils own work is displayed and labelled appropriately.
* A class visual timetable and if necessary, an individual timetable is used and referred to consistently.
* Background noise levels are managed consistently so that pupils and adults can hear one another.
* Transition times are managed effectively, so that noise levels are not excessive, and pupils know what to expect. This could mean pupil leaving 5 mins earlier to and from lessons.
* Resources (such as stationery) are available to develop independent skills.
* There is good natural light.
* Physical Environment:
* Consider the child’s sensory profile when considering: Visual input (lighting – fluorescent lighting can be debilitating for some autistic learners/colour on walls – different colours can have different effects/patterns can cause visual distortion, auditory input; try to reduce internal (clocks ticking, bells, projectors) and external noises (traffic, other children playing).
* Touch and pressure – is there an area for tactile experiences, are there items to provide different feelings on the skin such as sand, water – are there items to provide pressure if needed e.g., wooden massager.
* Smell – are there smells that cause distress e.g., perfumes, cleaning products, food).
* Taste – is choice available and clear e.g., snacks, drinks, dinners.
* Balance (vestibular) Space (proprioceptive) - are there opportunities to balance, climb, bounce, exit routes.
* Physical movement breaks which will work the muscles and joints (proprioceptive input) such as running, jumping, carrying heavy books are planned in often prior to a child reaching crisis point.
* Complete Sensory Checklist <https://www.sheffieldchildrens.nhs.uk/services/child-development-and-neurodisability/sensory-processing-difficulties>
* Offer a range of sensory equipment wobble cushion, stress ball and fiddle ball.
* Sensory Circuit twice daily <https://youtu.be/4EpBSD3dJnM> if deemed necessary.
* Create a Monday Morning Plan – as this can be an especially difficult time.
* Use the environment to engage your pupil including aspects of their special interests? e.g., Shiny, dangling items near carpet to hold attention whilst sitting with peers.
* Be prepared to move child’s desk so they can spend time looking out of a window (sensory break) or away from glare of others - many girls become upset at others looking at them and need to face away.
* Social environment (attitudes, expectations and actions within the classroom and wider school).
* Opportunities in the class and whole school to develop understanding and awareness of autism through class assemblies/talks.
* Use of positive language and approach.
* Consider developing a network of pupil autism champions in settings.

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| **Access to Learning** | **Communication** |
| * Make use of structured TEACCH approach to support independence.

<https://www.bing.com/search?q=TEACCH+approach&form=ANNH02&refig=968709155fc54286ad4bb04227d31e8f>* Avoid changing seating plans/classroom layout without prior warning - this can cause huge anxiety.
* Give instructions in lists, breaking down the task into manageable chunks.
* If the pupil finds open-ended questions difficult then make it more concrete for them. Blanks Levels is a differentiated questioning scheme, Level 1-4 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w-EFnokgHW4&t=48s>
* Executive functioning, the brain’s ability to organise, plan, predict and monitor, can be an area of difficulty for some pupils (discreetly double check understanding of next task) and break down into chunks.
* Pupils need time to process information and do not put them on the spot by asking questions publicly (unless you know that they are comfortable with this).
* Use visuals and structured tasks, incorporating the student’s own interests wherever possible.
* Pupils who ‘Mask’ have difficulty with energy levels, so consider this during afternoon lessons.
* Some pupils cannot follow the fast pace of verbal information so backing it up with a written account, list, picture, or Task board can help enormously.
* Integrate interests and provide meaningful experiences for pupils.
* Build your own resilience, you will not always get it right!
* Create agreements around children’s preferences e.g., homework, assemblies, playtimes, pens to use. Avoid conflict.
* Homework: Email the parents so they know what the homework is. Type the homework on a sticker and place in planner/communication book, include when it is due in. Recognise homework can do more harm than good…
* Skills taught in isolation will need to be observed/practised in different environments/settings to ensure they are fully understood. e.g., addition - weights and measure, money - make the links for pupils.
* Consistency of approach amongst staff – rewards, sanctions, routine and language will help enormously.
* Assess social skills development (Learning Behaviours) in addition to academic. Value them as an equal in progress measures.
* Provide a **HELP PLEASE** pass on table (or agree a secret code such as red dot displayed on ruler).
* Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO). If they have written information of the pupil, this will be your most useful document. It could include:
1. What the child may struggle with.
2. What strategies help them most.
3. What should be avoided.
4. What the child’s interests are and any other useful information.

 | * Ensure your child feels welcomed and supported upon arrival at school.
* Ensure there is an emotionally available adult to ‘check-in’ throughout the day.
* Always say pupils name first to gain attention.
* Allow 7 seconds processing time (then repeat same words if necessary).
* Say things in the order they will happen.
* If a pupil presents ‘behaviours that challenge’, it is important to remember that this is often communicating a need or difficulty.
* Have a clear ‘escape route’ for pupil (offer pre-planned safe base of their choice).
* Clear, reduced, and consistent language.
* Give positive directions and minimise the use of ‘don’t’ ‘stop’.
* Use descriptive praise to build desired behaviours e.g. ‘I like the way you put your wrapper in the bin’.
* Allow pre-agreed ‘flow activities’ to occur (such as mindful colouring, drawing) <https://youtu.be/iUsOCR1KKms> include on visual timetable?
* Greet the pupil by name at the door, but don’t expect a reply (continuously drop in modelling of appropriate social skills).
* Use the word ‘stress’ instead of behaviour and acknowledge it.
* “Quieter voice please” is a positive re-direction.
* Consider your own level of stress when dealing with dysregulated pupils, ask for and accept help!
* Give choices A and B – anymore could overwhelm.
* Lower demands if [individual] is showing signs of stress (offer work at a lower academic rate than you believe they are capable) therefore removing pressure and limiting overload.
* Offer distractions if [Individual] is showing signs of stress “Can you pop to the office for me with this message”.
* Ignore secondary behaviour [if you have asked pupil to come and sit and they do it, albeit while chuntering] thank them for following your first instruction. Autistic pupils are often very literal so make sure the first instruction is not too open ended…
* A pupil who does not understand emotions cannot regulate them!
* Blame the ‘higher being’ – This isn’t my rule…it was set by the Academy/Government/Police/Part of displayed classroom rules.
* Traditional’ techniques such as sanctions do not always work. Does the child understand the link between the sanction and their behaviour? Try to use positive reinforcement to teach desired behaviours.
* Don’t presume some behaviours are a purposeful attempt at breaking rules – if a pupil swearing is it an attempt to regulate emotions? Better than lashing out!
* Movement breaks will be your best friend…at first signs of stress a pupil will need proprioceptive input to help de-stress (sense located in muscle and joint). Offer physical activity to allow them to expel energy/stress.
* Low Arousal Approach [www.studio3.org](http://www.studio3.org) has free webinars and support.

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