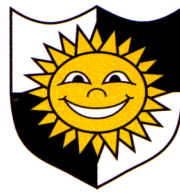


# **CAMPSIE VIEW SCHOOL**

## **Autism Policy 41**



**This policy was devised and written by the Policy Working Party  
2014**

**Updated by the Policy Working Party February 2018  
in consultation with staff, management and the Parent Council**

## Rationale

*Autism is a lifelong developmental disability that affects how a person communicates with and relates to other people. It also affects how they make sense of the world around them.* [National Autistic Society]

Campsie View recognises that many of our children and young people have a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and that particular consideration needs to be given to ensure that these pupils have their entitlements to education delivered in such a way that takes account of their autism and does not disadvantage their access to education.

'The current terminology of ASD is rooted in impairment. In such a context it can be easy to overlook the talents, strengths and competencies of individuals. It is therefore essential to consider ASD in a way that takes account of assets as well as challenges' (Dunlop et al, 2009, p.42 The Autism Toolbox).

The Curriculum for Excellence: Building the Curriculum 3 (Scottish Government 2008b, p.12) document promotes the following principle: "Our aspiration for all children and for every young person is that they should be successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors." For the pupils with autism achieving these goals will be immensely challenging, however not impossible. If those involved are aware of the impact that autism has on an individual then they can offer appropriate support to help them achieve such goals.

Autism is much more common than many people think. There are around 700,000 people on the autism spectrum in the UK – that's more than 1 in 100<sup>1</sup>. If you include their families, autism is a part of daily life for 2.8 million people. NAS website 2017

As the label suggests, Autism is a 'spectrum' disorder, so that while all people with autism share core difficulties, These will manifest themselves differently in each individual. Social and communicative development is particularly disrupted and these difficulties are exacerbated by rigid behaviour patterns, obsessional interests and routines (Lord and Rutter, 1994). Some people may experience severe learning difficulties whilst others may be superior in intelligence. See figure 1: Autism Spectrum Disorder and level of functioning (PHIS 2001, p11)

Individuals with ASDs may appear anywhere on the diagram.

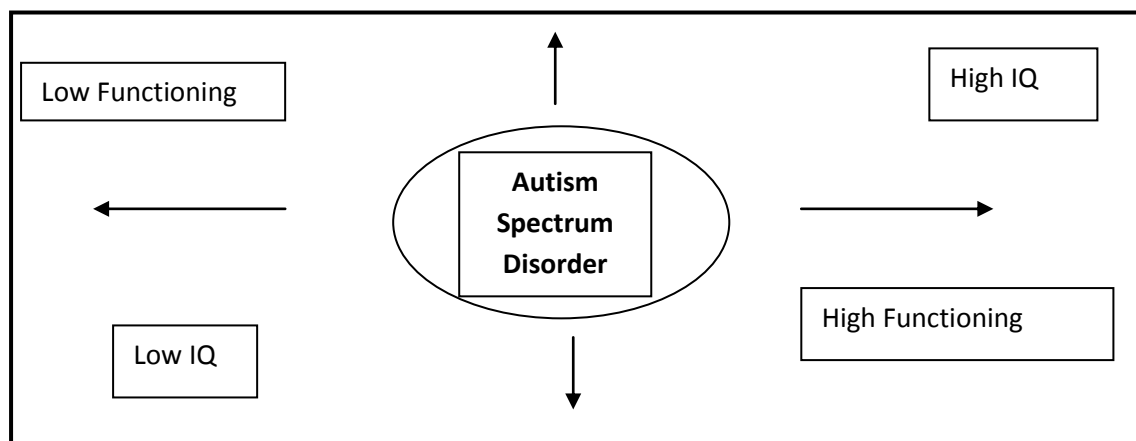


Figure 1

At Campsie View we recognise that pupils with ASD can have different degrees of learning disabilities which will affect all aspects of their lives from learning in school to developing personal hygiene routines or making a meal. Some pupils will be able to function fairly independently with minimal support in school, while others may need a higher level of individual adult support.

Pupils on the autism spectrum are known to experience high levels of anxiety that impacts on their ability to function appropriately in some contexts and be receptive to learning. These may present as behavioural issues but school staff members are trained to support children and young people by providing strategies that may help them to cope with their anxieties and will consult with other professionals for advice as required. Please refer to Positive Behaviour Care and Welfare Policy 16.

*If you have autism, the brain is like a kaleidoscope where the pattern never settles.*  
[Phoebe Caldwell- <http://www.phoebecaldwell.co.uk/>]

Pupils with autism have the same range of emotional experiences as in typically developing individuals. The difference is that they may not be aware of their own mental states and processes. They may feel angry, afraid or sad but not recognise or communicate this because they cannot reflect on it. They may know things but not recognise them until knowledge is triggered (Jordan and Jones, 1999).

## Aims

1. To ensure an appropriate curriculum is in place which supports the following aims.
2. To ensure that the children and young people are given every opportunity to develop their sensory systems to enable them to express themselves, interact and communicate with others.
3. To continue to develop staff skills in ASD through an ongoing commitment to staff development through In-service training, Workshops etc.
4. To work with parents and all relevant agencies e.g. Speech and Language therapists, liaison psychologists during the initial and ongoing assessment and diagnosis process for our children and young people and to continue this throughout the child's school career.
5. To create an environment where children and young people feel safe and not over stimulated in an autism friendly environment thereby enhancing learning opportunities
6. To provide children and young people with a wide variety of experiences and strategies to develop their understanding of the environment.
7. To provide a range of experiences which will help the children and young people to develop as much independence as possible.
8. To provide consistent strategies across the school to enable the children and young people to manage their anxieties and maximise their learning potential e.g. use of Core Vocabulary, Makaton, MAPA (Management of Actual and Potential Aggression.) etc
9. To provide a range of alternative and augmentative communication systems that support individual needs, e.g. PECS
10. To prepare children and young people to cope with transitions- from micro transitions that occur every day to macro transitions including transition to adult life.

## **Triad of Impairment**

Autism has commonly been typified by what is known as the triad of impairments, where people with ASD are affected by subtle impairments of social interaction, social communication and imaginative/flexible thinking thought. [Lorna Wing, 1996]. We recognise that the term 'triad' may be superseded as research begins to acknowledge a greater understanding of the complexity of autism.

- **Social Communication**

The whole range of communicative skills may be affected. A significant proportion of individuals with autism fail to develop useful speech. Even when the mechanics of language are mastered, the person with autism has difficulty using it for the purpose of communicating with others. Individuals on the spectrum may make comments or ask questions about subjects which interest them, often with little or no relevance to the specific topic under discussion (Kanner 1943). Others might incessantly repeat "learned" phrases in and out of context. Intonation is inclined to be abnormal and the non-verbal aspects of communication such as eye-to-eye gaze, use of gesture, and facial expression can be impaired.

- **Social Interaction**

Social interaction and social communication go hand in hand. Social Interaction refers to the impaired ability to engage in reciprocal social interactions. People with ASDs are more likely to show an interest in objects rather than people. The most severely affected individuals seem aloof and uninterested in people. Others desire contact but fail to understand the reciprocal nature of normal social interaction. Some passively accept the attentions of others but do not initiate or reciprocate and are socially oblivious to all the factors and facets involved in appropriate social interaction. "For the non-autistic child learning about the social world of school is largely about finding out how to make friends and get on with others, for the child with autism it is trying to learn what friends are" (Jordan and Powell, 1995, p.42).

We depend upon our relationships with others and making such friendships is an integral part of life. For the person with autism, developing appropriate relationships with other people is immensely challenging.

- **Social Imagination and Flexible Thinking (See Flexibility of Thought Policy 44)**

Social imagination allows us to understand and predict other people's behaviour, make sense of abstract ideas and to imagine situations outside our immediate daily routine. Difficulties with social imagination mean that people with autism find it hard to:

- understand and interpret other people's thoughts, feelings and actions
- predict what will happen next, or what could happen next
- understand the concept of danger, for example that running on to a busy road poses a threat to them
- engage in imaginative play activities - children with autism may enjoy some imaginative play but prefer to act out the same scenes each time
- prepare for change and plan for the future
- cope in new or unfamiliar situations.
- Have difficulty taking on the views/opinions of others
- Understand that their behaviour can impact others

Difficulties with social imagination should not be confused with a lack of imagination. Many people with autism are very creative.

People with autism have great difficulty thinking imaginatively and this is demonstrated by pretend play which will be absent or repetitive in children with autism spectrum disorder. According to Wing (1996) they may display the following behaviours: simple repetitive activities-tasting, smelling, feeling or scratching different surfaces; elaborate repetitive routines that may include rigidly arranging objects. They may have a tendency to select for attention minor details in the environment instead of an understanding of the meaning of the whole scene and may possess a lack of understanding of social conversation, literature (especially fiction) and subtle verbal humour.

Children with autism often become fascinated by objects or will make collections of similar objects, anything from pieces of string to egg cups (Frith, 1989). These objects would be used for repetitive activities, not for imaginative play for example for 'spinning.'

This impairment can also make it difficult for people with autism to imagine or cope with activities that do not conform to their everyday routines. It can make it difficult for individuals to 'think flexibly', making it challenging to understand abstract ideas and distinguish between literal and non-literal meanings such as common idioms.

The lives of people with autism need to be predictable and the individual may become very anxious or even aggressive if change is introduced without warning. Routines are very important. Many people with autism need to be prompted about what comes next and such prompts/support strategies need to continue even when those around them think the individual knows the task well.

According to Olga Bogdashina (2006) the ways in which any of these features are manifested vary from one child to another and for the same child different aspects of the behaviour pattern may vary at different stages. Usually no one person has all the characteristics at the same time or at the same degree of severity.

## Other characteristics include:

- **Repetitive and stereotyped behaviours**

Young people with ASD may demonstrate repetitive behaviours and resistance to changes in routine.

They may demonstrate obsessive attachment to particular objects, interests, or routines.

- **Sensory Issues**

Young people with ASD often experience difficulties with sensory processing issues that may present in an obvious or subtle fashion. The impact of these sensory sensitivities can be significant and what can be perceived as bad behaviour may in fact be a sensory response to an uncomfortable stimulus.

[Autism Toolbox, page 57]

Those with ASD may also experience hyper-or hypo- (over or under) sensitivity to any or all of these senses:

- Vestibular (movement/balance)
- Proprioceptive (body awareness)
- Tactile (touch)
- Visual (sight)
- Olfactory (smell)
- Auditory (hearing)
- Gustatory (taste)

People with ASD may engage in self-stimulating behaviours (e.g. rocking, pounding ears, flapping, head banging). This may be an expression of anxiety or a coping mechanism, or a means of eliciting sensory feedback.

Staff in school should consider the consequences of impairments so that we can begin to understand why many pupils with autism could be left feeling alienated and frustrated. For information staff can refer to Sensory Profiles for individual pupils.

## Strategies

At Campsie View we work collaboratively with parents to ensure relevant information is shared and that the parents' knowledge is incorporated and valued. This information exchange takes place on a daily basis, at annual reviews, during case discussions, at parent evenings and social events.

We recognise that every child and young person is unique and that what works for one may not work for another. Any adults new to the school/class should take guidance from existing staff and make themselves familiar with the school's leaflets on autism, pupil penpic, MAPA sheet and (where appropriate) IEP. Any information within these documents that is **block highlighted in yellow** is autism specific information.

The following strategies may be helpful when dealing with children and young people with ASD:

### **Communication**

- Always gain attention first – say child's name
- Say less and say it slowly
- Speak calmly in a gentle tone
- Use appropriate modes of communication – objects of reference, visual timetables; and social stories; sounds; signing; demonstration etc
- Be concrete and specific – state the obvious
- Give one instruction at a time
- Don't give options if there are no options
- Be consistent
- Give the pupil time to respond
- Be aware of any pupil attempt to communicate and respond positively.
- The following social skills may need to be taught specifically:  
turn-taking; responding; waiting; joining others

### **Classroom environment**

- Use an easily accessible visual timetable to show what is happening throughout the day
- Now/next strip if required
- Keep the daily routines predictable where possible
- Reduce distractions and sensory overloads – noises, smells, vision, etc
- Prepare thoroughly and in advance for special activities, altered schedules or other changes (regardless of how minimal). The use of a 'surprise' symbol on the timetable may help children and young people to cope with changes to the usual routine in a planned manner. Introduce a social story if necessary.
- Provide accurate, prior information about change
- Equipment needs to be well labelled and kept in the same place.
- Keep wall displays simple and well ordered with uniform colour
- Use of symbol, sign and word 'finished'
- Ensure there are opportunities for calm time away from others



## Managing Behaviour

- Every pupil is unique. What you expect and is appropriate for one child or young person may be different for another
- Give the pupils time to get to know you and to accept changes of staff
- Do not expect eye contact and don't force it
- Watch for pupils who may upset others and adjust seating positions if necessary
- The pupil may be unaware of your personal space and be defensive of their own personal space
- Ensure a quiet space is available for a child to withdraw from class (IEP room, Calm Room)
- Ensure regular breaks are built into the timetable
- Minimise transitions by e.g. using toilet on the way to the playground

## Challenging Behaviour

All behaviours are a form of communication. These communications may present as refusal to do an activity, screaming, temper tantrums, throwing, hitting or kicking.

The underlying causes may include anxiety, fears and phobias, the need to indulge in obsessive behaviours, pain, hunger, tiredness and/or sensory sensitivity, confusion.

When dealing with a pupil, remember one adult at a time – don't help unless asked.

- Remember the **Care, Welfare, Safety and Security** of all. In particularly challenging or difficult situations, remove yourself and other pupils and contact the management team.

Don't take things personally.

## Transitions

There are a number of transitions that children and young people will experience throughout life such as:

- Major transitions in education e.g. moving between placements / establishments

- Life changing transitions e.g. new family member, loss of a loved one and moving house
- Daily transitions e.g. home to school, moving from one class to another and between activities within the classroom environment.

Children and young people with ASD can find transitions very difficult to understand and cope with. They need to be supported using a range of strategies and techniques including the use of visuals such as Boardmaker symbols, “first” and “then” boards, photographs, objects of reference, social stories, songs, sensory signifiers and simple language.

## **Learning Styles**

Children and young people with autism are in some ways just like those without, and may benefit from a range of learning styles:

*Visual learners* appreciate the use of: demonstration, visual timetables, interactive whiteboard, video, and computer.

*Kinaesthetic learners* appreciate the use of: drama and role play, modelling of activity, physical activity, change of activity regularly, learning by doing.

*Auditory learners* may appear disinterested and unfocussed and may benefit from additional repetition of spoken language which is, as always, slow and clear. They appreciate the use of: music, drama and role play, the opportunity to move about.

## **Things Autistic Children Need You to Know** [adapted from *Ten Things Every Child With Autism Wishes You Knew* by Ellen Notbohm]

- I am first and foremost a child.  
Don't assume if you know about autism, then you know about me.
- My sensory perceptions are disordered.  
The ordinary sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches of everyday that you may not even notice can be downright painful for me.
- Please remember to distinguish between "I won't" (I choose not to) and "I can't" (I am not able to).
- I am a concrete thinker. This means I interpret language very literally.
- Please be patient with my limited vocabulary.  
Although I may appear to have a lot of words, some of my language may be 'echolalic', and I may not understand the context or the words I am using.
- Because language is so difficult for me, I am very visually orientated.  
Please show me how to do something rather than tell me. A visual schedule may be helpful.
- Please focus and build on what I can do rather than what I can't do.
- Help me with social interactions.
- Try to identify what triggers my meltdowns.

**Keep in mind that autism is a spectrum disorder: no two (or ten or twenty) children with autism will be completely alike. Every child will be at a different point on the spectrum.**

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