

Graduated Approach for Neurodivergent Children and Young People



Contents

- 3 What learners and parent carers are telling us
- 4 Introduction
- 5 Autism Aware Schools and Settings
- 7 Autism Empowered Schools and Settings
- 9 Autism Enhanced Schools and Settings
- 10 Graduated Approach
- 13 Graduated Approach (summary)



What learners and parent carers are telling us

'I was lucky, my child went to a school where they weren't the one seen as having a problem. The environment was the thing that needed changing, not my child'

'I was able to get into school in the morning because one Teaching Assistant greeted me and made me feel like I belonged. If it hadn't been for her I would not have been able to go to school'

'I wanted to feel like I belonged and people understood me'

'I just wanted to work with the school to support my child, I wanted them to value what I know about how my child works'

'Education are good at making classrooms and buildings accessible for those who need to use a wheelchair, with wider doors and lifts, so find a classroom that can meet my neurological needs and prevent sensory overload'

Introduction

The aim of this document is to set out expectations in relation to support available for children and young people who have social, communication and emotional health needs. For some young people this will mean a diagnosis of an Autism, but the information is also relevant to those young people who are on the waiting list for Autism assessment, those whose communication and interaction needs are newly recognised and a referral for assessment has not been made, and those who have needs but choose not to seek further assessment. A formal diagnosis of Autism is not required to access reasonable adjustments and support.

This document sets out different levels of schools' reasonable adjustments and access to support in relation to Autism. to support our commitment to inclusion as outlined in the [School Inclusion Charter](#)

- As a minimum all schools and settings must be **Autism Aware** and there is free training and guidance to support this.
- All schools and settings should be aspiring to be **Autism Empowered** which includes having a lead practitioner for Autism and having received training to a greater depth and on co-occurring conditions relating to Autism.
- A small number of schools will be **Autism Enhanced** Schools. This will include the Communication and Interaction Resource Provisions and special schools where staff will have received training to a greater depth and have greater flexibility to modify the school experience in order to meet the needs of children and young people.

Autism Aware Schools and Settings

Expectation	What needs to be done	Resources	Outcomes
All staff will have a basic understanding of Autism. All staff will understand that need is the primary trigger for adjustments to be made i.e., diagnosis is not a requirement for support	Ensure all staff in the school receive Autism/Neurodiversity training.	Autism Education Trust (AET) Making Sense of Autism training (free to all Warwickshire schools)	An autism acceptance culture is created in school. Staff and pupils are aware of neurodiversity and the awareness of individuality and uniqueness within this. Staff recognise indicators of social communication and interaction needs (including in young people who are masking and may require parental/carer advocates) and make appropriate provision and referrals.
All staff will have accessed the free core offer of training and the SEND Audit.	Ensure staff are accessing training such as the free twilights by Specialist Teaching Service (STS) and the core training offer. Staff who attend will disseminate to other staff members.	The training brochure from Warwickshire details all the free training opportunities available to schools	Staff make environmental and social adjustments within school to support young people who may have needs in this area.
All staff will be accessing resources that enable them to provide appropriate support.	Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) to ensure all staff are aware of the resources available and support staff to access these.	www.warwickshire.gov.uk/send-inclusion-guidance (Warwickshire inclusion guidance) www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/ AET offer a SENCo guide to supporting autistic pupils.	Staff recognise when they need more support and advice and are able to successfully access this.
All staff know how to access the training and opportunities that are happening within Warwickshire and nationally.	Join local and national networks and charities.	SENCo network meetings Facebook page for AET www.facebook.com/autismeducationtrust/ Warwickshire Local Offer www.warwickshire.gov.uk/send National Association for Special Educational Needs www.nasen.org.uk/	

Expectation	What needs to be done	Resources	Outcomes
<p>An Autism Acceptance culture is created in school.</p> <p>Autism Acceptance week and Neurodiversity week are engaged with.</p>	<p>Promote peer awareness of neurodiversity.</p> <p>Neurodiversity posters around the school.</p> <p>Neurodiversity assemblies and presentations by neurodivergent individuals.</p>	<p>salvesen-research.ed.ac.uk/leans</p> <p>www.neurodiversityweek.com/posters</p> <p>AET have autism acceptance week resources each year.</p>	
<p>Reasonable adjustments are promoted and there is an understanding of the sensory environment; for example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to quieter or structured activities at break and lunchtime • Consistent use of class visual timetables • One page pupil profiles • Environmental audits. 	<p>A sensory environmental audit will be completed.</p> <p>Reasonable adjustments to be in place personalised to the individual, but may include adjustments that are environmental, sensory or learning based.</p>	<p>api.warwickshire.gov.uk/documents/WCCC-1090-124</p>	
<p>Restorative behaviour policy in place or Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) based policy which recognises individualised needs of SEND pupils.</p>	<p>Senior Leaders and/or SENCo to develop an understanding of restorative approaches</p>	<p>livesinthebalance.org/our-solution/</p> <p>api.warwickshire.gov.uk/documents/WCCC-1642278725-4899</p>	



Autism Empowered Schools and Settings

Expectation	What needs to be done	Resources	Outcomes
Key members of staff are trained in good autism practice.	Key staff to attend the AET Good Autism Practice training or equivalent evidence based training	Two places for each Warwickshire school on the Good Autism Training are provided free of charge (refer to current training brochure for dates and booking details)	Reasonable adjustments are a normal part of the school set up, for example routines and predictability, preparation for change, use of visual organisers as well as verbal cues, consideration and adaptation of the sensory environment, the use of physical and sensory breaks and demand avoidant strategies as appropriate.
Senior leaders have a clear understanding of their setting's provision in relation to Autism and have identified next steps.	Senior leaders/SENCo complete the AET Standards Framework and use this as a basis for further development	AET Standards Framework www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/framework-documents	All staff display an understanding of the experiences of CYP with autism and can be flexible in their approaches to accommodate these needs. Autistic CYP thrive in school and are able to access learning and make progress across the curriculum.
Schools and settings will have an Autism Lead Practitioner to support other staff and advocate for young people who have or may have Autism/ social communication differences	Lead practitioner to be chosen and attend the training detailed above and further training opportunities via Warwickshire Education Services and Community Autism Support Service (CASS)	Professional toolbox training available at: casspartnership.org.uk/training-and-education/	A member of staff (such as the autism lead practitioner) will be able to offer some small group or individual support to develop skills and understanding e.g. mentoring, use of social scripts to prepare, identity work, social skills, emotional regulation as required.
Staff will complete audits that will identify further staff training.	Staff will have completed the AET Autism Competency framework to identify further CPD e.g. demand avoidance, sensory needs, autism in girls, mental health and Autism.	AET Competency framework www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/framework-documents For further professional training: casspartnership.org.uk/training-and-education/ SEND and Inclusion Training Brochure schools.warwickshire.gov.uk/schools-training-catalogue	Parents/carers express confidence in the ability of the school to meet the needs of their CYP.

Expectation	What needs to be done	Resources	Outcomes
<p>There is a programme of peer awareness around neurodiversity in place.</p>	<p>Lessons and assemblies to be provided for CYP around neurodiversity</p>	<p>The LEANS Project www.ed.ac.uk/salvesen-research/our-projects/learning-about-neurodiversity-at-school Autism Education Trust www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-09/aet_promoting-autism-inclusive-attitudes.pdf</p>	
<p>All staff will have received training on sensory needs.</p>	<p>Training to be provided for staff, regular environmental audits to be completed and individual sensory profiles</p>	<p>api.warwickshire.gov.uk/documents/WCCC-1090-124</p>	



Autism Enhanced Schools and Settings

Expectation	What needs to be done	Resources	Outcomes
All staff will have had training in Autism equivalent to good autism practice and topic based training. For example, Anxiety and Mental Health, Autism in girls etc.	All staff to attend the Good Autism Practice training and topic based modules e.g. Autism and Anxiety	SEND and Inclusion Training Brochure api.warwickshire.gov.uk/documents/WCCC-1090-124 CASS training casspartnership.org.uk/training-and-education/	CYP are able to access and thrive within education with the support of staff who are skilled and knowledgeable about Autism. Staff are able to apply this knowledge about implementing reasonable adjustments to support young people in line with their individual needs.
Skill development in priority areas to be identified with parents/carers and tracked	AET progression framework or SCERTS will be consistently used to monitor skill development. Staff to have relevant training associated with the framework they use.	Progression Framework www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/framework-documents	
Appropriate neurodivergent intervention programmes will be in place and delivered by a trained member of staff e.g. lego therapy, Time for Talk, a CBT based intervention (e.g. Tony Attwood), Incredible Five Point Scale	Key staff members to have relevant training in neurodiverse intervention programmes	SEND and Inclusion Training Brochure External specialist support time (EPS, STS)	
Provision is developed flexibly to reflect the goals, strengths and needs of the CYP	Modification of curriculum content, curriculum deliver, teaching groups and environment to meet the individual needs of the CYP	SEND Inclusion Guidance www.warwickshire.gov.uk/communication-interaction-language-needs	

Graduated Approach

Progression through the Graduated Approach in line with the Code of Practice	Assess, plan, do, review	Actions	Who does what?
	<p>Step 1: CYP is displaying communication and interaction needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff to identify possible social communication and interaction needs and/or listen to and respect any concerns raised by parents even if the challenges are masked in school. • Staff will adapt the environment, curriculum content, and curriculum delivery based on the training they have received and with the support of the SENCo or Autism Lead Practitioner. The impact of adaptations will be evaluated using the graduated approach. • Individualised reasonable adjustments will be in place, these could include but are not limited to, adjustments around uniform, timings to avoid crowds, positioning within classrooms, the use of technology, relaxation of food rules etc. 	<p>SENCO will use Inclusion Guidance to provide support www.warwickshire.gov.uk/communication-interaction-needs</p> <p>All staff will be supported and guided by SENCO or a lead practitioner if available</p> <p>The new community autism support service includes a navigation function delivered by Autism West Midlands where people can contact for information, advice and signposting: casspartnership.org.uk/navigation/</p> <p>SENCo to signpost families to CASS webinars for further support. casspartnership.org.uk/training-and-education/</p>
	<p>Step 2: Specific challenges with aspects of school life e.g. sensory, social environment, learning, which do not respond to the above Quality First Teaching support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with specialist support services to identify additional areas for modification or support. This will include class teacher, Autism lead practitioner, SENCo, parents/carers and CYP. • Any further training needs for staff will be identified and training provided. • Progress will be monitored using graduated approach. • School SENCo makes relevant referrals in conjunction with parents. • Ensure one page profiles are in place. • Robust use of assess, plan, do, review process with all professionals involved and parents/carers 	<p>Consultation with external educational practitioners e.g. EPS, STS, IDS</p> <p>Staff to participate in training to support knowledge and skill development (SEND and Inclusion Training Brochure)</p> <p>All staff supporting a pupil should have accessed training opportunities available to them around specific issues e.g. CASS professional toolbox wmind.org.uk/cass-children-and-young-people/</p>

Assess, plan, do, review	Actions	Who does what?
<p>Step 3: Continuing difficulties despite development of teacher skills and knowledge and implementation of activities agreed at consultation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist Teaching Service or equivalent to observe classroom practice and use a coaching model to support training implementation. • Significant Adult or Inclusion Mentor support sought • Referral to other support available through Health and Social care e.g. Community Autism Support Service, Family Support Line, Family Information Service (FIS), speech and language therapy (SALT) 	<p>Classroom observation and coaching in the implementation of training is available through Educational Psychology Service. Educational Psychology Service (EPS)/Specialist Teaching Service (STS)/Integrated Disability Service (IDS)</p>
<p>Step 4: Continuing challenges which require further support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual assessment of the child/young person from specialist support services in order to understand needs and further develop personalised provision. • Pupil centred education plans to be put in place. • Appropriate training will be identified and delivered. Progress will be monitored using graduated approach. 	<p>Individual Assessment and support to schools in developing provision (EPS, STS, IDS) Referrals to external services e.g. RISE</p>

Assess, plan, do, review	Actions	Who does what?
Young person reluctant to attend school	Referral to the Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA) pathway	
Young person at risk of Permanent Exclusion	<p>All staff teaching the young person to be part of a Circle of Adults run by the EPS to problem solve regarding the adaptations and support necessary within school.</p> <p>Staff to work with specialist support services to modify the environment and curriculum according to need.</p> <p>Ensure staff have accessed the Autism Exclusion module of AET training.</p> <p>Access the Fair Access Panel</p> <p>Referral for Significant Adult Support/ Inclusion Mentor Support</p>	<p>Circle of Adults is available as part of the traded package.</p> <p>The Exclusion Module of the AET training is available as part of the traded package.</p> <p>www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/3626/law-students-put-school-exclusions-in-the-spotlight</p> <p>Head teacher/SENCo to refer for Significant Adult Support or Inclusion Mentor Support</p>
Young person showing signs of significant SEMH	<p>All staff teaching the young person to be part of a Circle of Adults run by the EPS to problem solve regarding the adaptations and support necessary within school.</p> <p>The SENCO (at least) should have completed AET Anxiety Module. Anxiety and wellbeing scales to be used to identify where to target specific support.</p> <p>Staff to work with specialist support services to modify the environment and curriculum according to need.</p> <p>Staff and parents/carers to use the Dimensions tool to signpost for further support/information</p> <p>School to ensure that Ross Greene CPS approach or restorative approach is in place</p>	<p>Circle of Adults is available as part of the traded package.</p> <p>The SENCO will make referral as necessary to CWRISE using the dimensions tool for support.</p> <p>Signposting to specific mental health support for children, young people and their families available here</p> <p>www.warwickshire.gov.uk/mental-health-wellbeing/emotional-wellbeing-mental-health-support-young-people</p>

Graduated Approach

- Schools and settings will identify possible social communication and interaction needs.
- Staff will understand 'masking' and listen to home experiences when parents are concerned.
- Training will be implemented so curriculum delivery, environment and curriculum content are adapted and accessible to all.
- Staff will make reasonable adjustments in all four areas of need: Communication and Interaction; Cognition and Learning; Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties; Physical and Sensory Needs
- SEND Inclusion Guidance will be used' www.warwickshire.gov.uk/send-inclusion-guidance
- The school/setting will have a behaviour policy based on the CPS model or restorative practice.

People involved - children/young people, parent carers, senior leaders, SENCo, all teaching staff, external trainers

STEP ONE

Child is displaying communication and interaction needs

- Staff identify further difficulties with specific aspects e.g. sensory needs, building relationships, environment, accessing learning through using tools such as individual sensory audits, C and I toolkit,
- Conversations with parents/carers and one-page profiles established
- Further training needs for staff identified by SENCo, Autism lead or external services through resources such as AET competency framework
- SENCo may make referrals to other services in consultation with parents.
- Progress monitored and assess, plan, do, review cycle robustly in place

People involved - children/young people, parent carers, senior leaders, SENCo, all teaching staff, external specialists in education and health

STEP TWO

Specific challenges with aspects of school life

- Referrals to be made to external professionals, such as Specialist Teaching Service (STS), to use a coaching method to ensure implementation of recommendations.
- Significant Adult or Inclusion Mentor involvement to be sought.
- Further referrals to be made where appropriate to SALT, Occupational Therapy (OT) etc, in line with communication and interaction differences and any co-occurring conditions

People involved - children/young people, parent carers, senior leaders, SENCo, all teaching staff, external specialists

STEP THREE

Difficulties continue even with thorough embedding of level two

- Individual assessment of the child/young person to establish further personalised provision
- Pupil Centred Education Plans to be put into place for the child/young person

People involved - children/young people, parent carers, senior leaders, SENCo, all teaching staff, specialist teaching support

STEP FOUR

Continuing challenges which require further support