



WSCC Educational Psychology Service Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

Appendix 6 – Strategies for Young People with ASC



Appendix 6 – Strategies for Young people with ASC

General Strategies for Supporting Young People with Social Communication Disorder and Autism Spectrum Condition in the Classroom

All adults working with student should be made aware of the following:

- **Use student's name before** delivering any instructions so that they cue into you speaking to them and recognise the instructions applies to them.
- Allow additional time for the student to process verbal information and instructions (at least **10 seconds**) and avoid repeating verbally within this time.
- If repetition of the information/instruction is necessary **use exactly the same wording** as initially used.
- Use **explicit, concise language** when addressing the student as this is likely to enable them to process the information correctly.
- Use **short simple instructions**. Give them in order that they are to be completed. Check for understanding. Ask the student to repeat them back to you.
- **Do not insist on eye contact**, for many students with autism this can be uncomfortable and in extreme cases even painful. Instead consider agreeing a strategy with the student and all staff to enable them to indicate that they are listening.
- Be aware that direct answers from the student are often related to their **literal understanding** and lack of social awareness rather than due to **rudeness**.

Ideally consider developing a **pupil profile** to share with all staff, including office staff and mid-day meals supervisors to ensure awareness of the above.

Classroom Strategies to consider;

- Ensure the student understands how to use their planner; **colour coding the information including the map** will be beneficial. This will lower the anxiety levels associated with SCD/ASC and enable the student to predict what is coming next.
- Be aware that clear explanation needs to be provided, supported visually where possible, **to explain any unplanned changes of routine** to the student in **advance**.
- **Use visuals** to remind students of expected behaviours, classroom rules and routines for example, use symbols to indicate noise levels i.e. partner voices, group voices, classroom voice, social voices. This will also encourage independence.
- Provide the student with a **symbol card to display when he or she wants help**.
- Provide **an area of classroom** free from busy displays and distractions. Try to keep the area around the whiteboard / IWB 'clutter free'.
- Wherever possible provide the student with a **visual set of simple step by step instructions** that they can use as a tick list. This will also support independence.
- It is common for young people with SCD/ASC to be resistant to writing. There are numerous skills involved in writing from retrieving ideas/memories to fine motor skills. Therefore, consider **providing opportunities to complete learning objectives using alternative means of recording** e.g. scribe, keyboard, aural recording etc.
- Consider the use of **mind mapping software** to support students through visual learning. Various packages are available. E.g. Inspiration 9 from Inspiration Software Inc.
- Consider allowing the student to achieve the learning objective through writing about their own interest instead of the topic under consideration.
- The student will benefit from being given a clear indication of the expected outcome of a task before they start i.e. what finished will look like. **Set tasks with clear goals** e.g. "Write 'x' number of sentences on" rather than "Write about...", or the use of a green dot to indicate where the writing will start and a red dot where it will end or state the number of calculations etc.

Prevent repetitive questioning or commenting during class discussion by giving the students set number of cards (**talk tokens**) to give you each time they wish to contribute to discussion – when cards are gone, no more questions. Alternatively, use them to encourage participation from students who are reluctant to contribute

Managing sensory processing difficulties

- The student with sensory processing difficulties often struggles with the basic skills of managing his/her responses to ordinary sensations, of planning and organising their actions and of regulating their attention and activity levels. They may present sensory seeking or sensory avoiding behaviour. Completing a sensory checklist (available from the Autism and Social Communication Team) can help to identify such sensory responses.
- Sensory activities should be timetabled into the student's day reflecting the needs identified in the sensory checklist.

Motivating the Student

- Use **incentives based on an activity that is personally motivating** to the student/their interests e.g. I.T. based activities/games, Dr Who, Pokemon Go.
- Use **individualised reward systems** e.g. collecting a number of points or ticks that achieve a personally motivating reward. Earned points/ticks should not be removed for poor behaviour. The collection of point/ticks should not be linked to specific periods of the day.

Self-regulation

- The student who has difficulties with self-regulation may have difficulty managing/moderating their behaviour, their emotions, their sensory reactions or the focus of their attention (cognitive self-regulation).
- It is important to observe students and use tools such the **ABC or STAR behaviour charts** to unpick where they may have difficulties in self-regulation then begin working with them to develop strategies to manage their difficulty including **traffic lights, scaling and self-advocacy**. Consider using resources such as '**The Incredible 5 Point Scale**' – see below for details.

Developing Social Understanding

- A **small step target approach** should be taken using checklists/resources to set the targets and assess the Student (available from the Autism and Social Communication Team).
- Link any social target to a reward system that is personally motivating to the student.
- Use '**catch me cards**' to target specific social targets throughout the school day e.g. 'Catch me doing as I am asked', – each time an adult witnesses the student achieving the target they initial or stamp the card so they can see their progress and it can be rewarded.
- Develop the student's understanding of social rules and situations using **Comic Strip Conversations and Social Stories**; (<http://www.autism.org.uk/living-with-autism/strategies-and-approaches/social-stories-and-comic-strip-conversations/what-is-a-comic-strip-conversation.aspx>) These will help the student to begin to understand how other people feel in different situations and provide them with strategies to use.

- Consider including the student in a **social skills group** that uses explicit teaching of the skills required to achieve their social target e.g. **Lego Therapy**. The Autism and Social Communication Team can provide training for staff to implement this.

Recommended Resources Autism

Books:

- **Autism from Diagnostic pathway to Intervention: Checklists to support diagnosis, analysis for target setting and effective intervention strategies** by Kate Ripley published by Jessica Kingsley.
- **Autistic Spectrum Disorders – Practical Strategies for Teachers and Other Professionals** by Northumberland County Council Communication Support Services UK. David Fulton Publishers
- **Autistic Spectrum Disorders in the Secondary School (Autistic Disorder Support Kit)** by Lynn Pimley published by Sage Publications Ltd
- **Autism in the Secondary Classroom** by Joy Beaney and Penny Kershaw published by The National Autistic Society
- **Understanding How Children and Adolescents Think and Learn** by Paula Jacobsen. Published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- **Education and Care for Adolescents and Adults with Autism** by Kate Wall Published by Sage.
- **Exams: Guidelines for parents and teachers of young people with autism** published by The National Autistic Society
- **Autism: Supporting your teenager** by Caroline Hattersley published by The National Autistic Society
- **Understanding How Asperger Children and Adolescents Think and Learn** by Paula Jacobsen published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers
- **Sensory Strategies: Practical ways to help children and young people with autism learn and achieve** by Corinna Laurie. Published by The National Autistic Society
- **The Social Play Record: A Toolkit for Assessing and Developing Social Play from Infancy to Adolescence** by Chris White. Jessica Kingsley Publishers
-
- **Teaching children with Autism to Mind Read** by Patricia Howlin, Simon Baron-Cohen and Julie A. Hadwin. Published by Wiley-Blackwell
- **The Incredible 5-point Scale** by Kari Dunn Buron and Mitzi Curtis. Published by Autism Asperger Publishing Company
- **Starving the Anxiety Gremlin: A Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Workbook on Anxiety Management for Young People** (Gremlin and Thief CBT Workbooks) by Kate Collins-Donnelly
- **Starving the Anger Gremlin: A Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Workbook on Anger Management for Young People** (Gremlin and Thief CBT Workbooks) by Kate Collins-Donnelly
- **Banish Your Self-Esteem Thief: A Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Workbook on Building Positive Self-esteem for Young People** (Gremlin and Thief CBT Workbooks) by Kate Collins-Donnelly
- **Banish Your Body Image Thief** (Gremlin and Thief CBT Workbooks) by Kate Collins-Donnelly
- **Martian in the Playground: Understanding the Schoolchild with Asperger's Syndrome** by Clare Sainsbury. Published by SAGE Publications Ltd
- **The New Social Story Book** by Carol Gray. Published by Future Horizons Incorporated.

- **Comic Strip Conversations** by Carol Gray. Published by Future Horizons Incorporated
- **Time to Talk** by Alison Schroeder. Published by LDA
- **Talkabout: A Social Communication Skills Package** by Alex Kelly. Published by Speechmark Publishing Limited
- **Dealing with Feeling** by Tina Rae. Published by Lucky Duck
- **I am special** by Peter Vermeulon. Jessica Kingsley Publishers
- **A Volcano in My Tummy** by Elaine Whitehouse and Warwick Pudney. New Society Publishers
- **Emotional Literacy assessment and intervention** by Southampton Psychology Service. Published by GL Assessment Limited. (Available for both Primary and Secondary)

Subject Specific Top Tips for supporting students with Autism – available from the Autism and Social Communication Team.

- **Inclusion Development Programme:** <http://www.idponline.org.uk/>
- **Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning:** <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>

Websites:

- **Do2learn** - www.do2learn.com/
- **Setbc** - <https://www.setbc.org/students/Pages/PictureSET.aspx>
- **Resources for Inclusion:** www.resourcesforinclusion.co.uk/
- **The Gray Center (Comic Strip Conversations and Social Stories):** www.thegraycenter.org/
- **Visual aids for learning:** www.visualaidsforlearning.com

<http://autismteachingstrategies.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/CBT-Worksheets-Sets.pdf>