

# Autism

A resource pack for school staff



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## Introduction

Around 700,000 people in the UK may have autism. That's more than 1 in 100 people. In your school, it is likely that you will already have one or more children with the condition. You may teach or support a child or young person who you feel may be on the autism spectrum. The diagnosis process may have just started or the diagnosis may not yet be confirmed, but you want to increase your understanding of autism and appropriate interventions to use with that child or young person.

## What this pack covers

This pack can be of help to any member of staff working in an education setting. We include information about autism, how it may affect children and young people in education settings, information on strategies, interventions and useful resources from the NAS and other organisations. We hope our pack will give you greater confidence in working with pupils who are on the autism spectrum.

## Terminology

You have probably come across a variety of different terms for this complex condition. In this pack we have used the term autism or autism spectrum to encompass autism, Asperger syndrome, autism spectrum disorders and Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA), unless specified.

## What is autism?

People with autism have said that the world to them is a mass of people, places and events which they struggle to make sense of, which can cause them considerable stress and anxiety. In particular, understanding and relating to other people and taking part in everyday family and social life may be harder for them. Many people appear to know, intuitively, how to communicate and interact with each other, while people with autism might find this particularly difficult.

Autism is a lifelong developmental disability. It is part of the 'autism spectrum' and can also be referred to as an autism spectrum disorder, or an ASD. The word 'spectrum' is used because, while all people with autism share three main areas of difficulty, their condition may affect them in very different ways.

The three main areas of difficulty which all children and young people on the autism spectrum share are:

- > difficulty with social communication
- > difficulty with social interaction
- > difficulty with social imagination.

This is known as the triad of impairments.

Autism is an 'invisible' disability – you cannot necessarily tell someone has it from looking at them. Parents of children with autism often say that people simply think their child is naughty. Everyone with autism can benefit from a timely diagnosis and access to appropriate services and support.

## Difficulty with social communication

Children and young people on the autism spectrum may have difficulties with both verbal and non-verbal communication. Some may have a very literal understanding of language, thinking people always mean exactly what they say, or find it difficult to express themselves emotionally and socially. They may find it difficult to use or understand:

- › gestures, facial expressions or tone of voice
- › jokes and sarcasm
- › common phrases and sayings, such as 'Watch yourself!' which might be used to warn someone against a nearby hazard, but taken literally as an instruction telling the person to look at themselves.

Whilst some may be non-verbal and choose to use alternative means of communication, others may have good language skills but find it hard to understand the give-and-take nature of conversations. They may repeat what the other person has just said (known as echolalia) or not recognise when the other person is bored.

## Difficulty with social interaction

People with autism often have difficulty recognising or understanding other people's emotions and feelings, and expressing their own. This can make it more difficult for them to fit in socially. Many children and young people with autism will want to be sociable, but have difficulty with initiating and sustaining friendships. They may:

- › not understand normal social behaviour, which is intuitive for others – for example, they may stand too close to their peers or start what may be considered to be an inappropriate subject of conversation
- › appear to be insensitive because they have not recognised how someone else is feeling
- › prefer to spend more time alone than with others
- › not seek comfort in expected ways or become withdrawn, disinterested and appear aloof
- › appear to behave 'strangely' or not according to social expectations.

## Difficulty with social imagination

Social imagination allows us to understand and predict other people's behaviour, make sense of abstract ideas and to predict and adapt to change. Difficulties with social imagination must not be confused with a lack of imagination. Many children and young people on the autism spectrum can be very creative.

Difficulty with social imagination means that people with autism can find it hard to:

- › understand and interpret other people's thoughts, feelings and actions
- › predict what will or could happen next
- › understand the concept of danger, for example that leaving a safe playground and running onto a busy road may pose a threat to them
- › engage in social imaginative play and activities - children with autism may appear to be taking part in imaginative play, but could be repeatedly acting out scenes
- › prepare for change
- › cope in new or unfamiliar situations.

For further information please see [www.autism.org.uk/autism](http://www.autism.org.uk/autism)

## **Need for routine**

Children and young people with autism often prefer to have their own fixed routine as it helps them to make sense of the world around them.

It can be more helpful for them to use a routine they have created themselves or which has been mutually agreed, rather than one which has been imposed on them for convenience.

Rules and rituals can also be important and it may be difficult for a person with autism to take a new approach to something. Children and young people on the autism spectrum will cope better with change if they are prepared for it in advance.

## **Sensory sensitivities**

Children and young people with autism may experience some form of sensory sensitivity. This can occur in one or more of the seven senses – sight, sound, smell, touch, taste, balance and body awareness. Their senses can be intensified (hypersensitive) or under-sensitive (hyposensitive). The degree of difficulty varies from one individual to another and according to other factors such as mood and levels of stress and stimuli.

For example, a child or young person with autism may find certain background sounds, which their peers are able to ignore or block out, unbearably loud or distracting. This can cause stress and anxiety or even physical pain and may affect their behaviour in the school environment.

People who are hyposensitive may not feel pain or extremes of temperature. Some may rock, spin or flap their hands to stimulate sensation, to help with balance and posture or to deal with stress. This can make them appear odd and they stand out to those without understanding.

Some people may have a hyposensitive body awareness system, making it harder for them to navigate rooms and avoid obstructions or stand at an appropriate distance from others. They may appear to be clumsy and have difficulty carrying out 'fine motor' tasks such as handwriting and tying shoelaces.

Please see [www.autism.org.uk/sensory](http://www.autism.org.uk/sensory) for more information.

## **Highly-focused interests**

Many children and young people with autism have intense interests. These can change over time or be lifelong, and can be anything from Lego, animals or a particular TV programme to trains, music or computers. Some may eventually be able to work or study in related areas. Highly-focused interests can often be used to differentiate a given piece of work so that it motivates that child or young person to learn. They can also be used as a focus for a reward chart or system.

## **Learning disabilities**

People with autism may have learning disabilities, which can affect all aspects of their lives, from studying in school to learning how to carry out basic personal care. As with autism, people can have different 'degrees' of learning disability, so some may be able to live fairly independently with support, while others may require lifelong and specialist support. However, all children and young people with autism can, and do, learn and develop with the right sort of support.

## **Asperger syndrome (AS)**

Asperger syndrome is a form of autism. Children and young people with Asperger syndrome have fewer problems with language and are often of average, or above average, intelligence. They do not usually have accompanying learning disabilities, but may have a specific learning difficulty. Whilst not

necessarily needing academic support, children and young people with Asperger syndrome will need consistent and focused guidance with the social aspects of school life. For further information, see [www.autism.org.uk/asperger](http://www.autism.org.uk/asperger).

### **Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA)**

Children and young people with PDA share difficulties with others on the autism spectrum in social aspects of interaction, communication and imagination. However, the central difficulty for people with PDA is the way they are driven to avoid demands and expectations. This is because they have an anxiety-based need to be in control. Children and young people with PDA seem to have better social understanding and communication skills than others on the spectrum and are able to use this to their advantage. For further information please see [www.autism.org.uk/pda](http://www.autism.org.uk/pda) and [www.pdasociety.org.uk](http://www.pdasociety.org.uk).

### **Other conditions sometimes associated with autism**

These include attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) ([www.autism.org.uk/adhd](http://www.autism.org.uk/adhd)), dyslexia ([www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Dyslexia](http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Dyslexia)) and dyspraxia ([www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk/about-dyspraxia](http://www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk/about-dyspraxia)).

## **Recognising autism**

As an education professional working with children and young people, you will come across pupils who are on the autism spectrum, with or without a diagnosis. Take a look at this list of behaviours which children on the autism spectrum may have. There may be a wider range than you thought. Pupils on the autism a spectrum may:

- > have obsessions
- > experience anxiety
- > lack awareness of danger
- > show ritualistic or repetitive play and behaviour, such as always lining toys up in a particular order
- > have inappropriate eye contact
- > have difficulty with communicating (some children may not talk at all)
- > not draw others' attention to objects or events
- > have difficulty relating to others - making and keeping friendships
- > have difficulty with engaging in imaginative play (although this may not be the case for children with Pathological Demand Avoidance)
- > resist change or dislike doing things differently
- > be hypersensitive or hyposensitive to sound, light or other sensory input
- > enjoy spinning objects
- > flap their hands
- > behave in a self-injurious way, for example biting, pinching, kicking or pica (putting inedible items in the mouth)

- behave aggressively towards other children due to underlying anxieties or sensory sensitivities.
- appear to be of an average or above average intelligence, but unable to use it academically

A child does not need to show all these signs to be diagnosed as being on the autism spectrum and some children who do not have autism may exhibit some of these behaviours.

Children and young people with autism can display different behaviour at home to when they are at school. This is often because of underlying anxiety that has built throughout the school day. They feel comfortable within their home environment and know that they are fully accepted. Here is where they are able to release any frustrations they have been feeling at school.

Work closely with parents and carers, as they know their child best. They may have ideas on how you can help their child or young person to feel more comfortable at school, which will have a positive impact on their behaviour at home.

For more information and strategies to help please see [www.autism.org.uk/living-with-autism/understanding-behaviour/common-questions-answered/different-behaviour-between-school-and-home.aspx](http://www.autism.org.uk/living-with-autism/understanding-behaviour/common-questions-answered/different-behaviour-between-school-and-home.aspx).

Children and young people with PDA may present with a different set of characteristics. For more information please see [www.pdasociety.org.uk/education/recognising-autism-spectrum-conditions-in-the-early-years-ed](http://www.pdasociety.org.uk/education/recognising-autism-spectrum-conditions-in-the-early-years-ed)

Further information on spotting and understanding the signs of Asperger syndrome or high functioning autism can be found at [www.westsussex.gov.uk/media/5180/ws1632-autism-help-sheets-spotting-the-signs.pdf](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/media/5180/ws1632-autism-help-sheets-spotting-the-signs.pdf)

For more information, see [www.autism.org.uk/intro](http://www.autism.org.uk/intro)

## Planning the right support

Children and young people with autism are likely to have special educational needs (SEN) or additional support needs (ASN) and are entitled to extra help and support in school. It is important for a school to:

- ensure that all staff are aware of a child or young person's needs and the strategies and interventions to be used with them
- adopt a whole school approach
- have open communication with the child or young person and their parents
- be aware that each child and young person with autism will have their own particular needs and what works for one, may not work for another.

## Person responsible for children with SEN or ASN

Each education setting will have a person who is responsible for co-ordinating and monitoring the support given to children with SEN or ASN. This person is sometimes known as the school special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) or support for learning principal or department head. If you have concerns about a child or young person that you are teaching (either with or without a diagnosis of autism) then you should discuss this with the SENCO or equivalent staff member. They will be able to tell you the level of support that is currently being applied to this child. Some children and young people will be on school support level, while others may have a statement of special educational needs, education, health and care plan or coordinated support plan.

## Codes of practice

For information and advice on special educational needs, terminology and processes, please see the code of practice for your nation.

SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years (England)

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25)

Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (Northern Ireland)

[www.deni.gov.uk/special\\_needs-code\\_of\\_practice\\_pg](http://www.deni.gov.uk/special_needs-code_of_practice_pg)

Supporting Children's Learning Code of Practice (Scotland)

[www.educationscotland.gov.uk/resources/s/publication\\_tcm4510131.asp](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/resources/s/publication_tcm4510131.asp)

Special Educational Needs Code of Practice for Wales

[www.learning.gov.wales/resources/browse-all/special-education-needs-code-of-practice](http://www.learning.gov.wales/resources/browse-all/special-education-needs-code-of-practice)

## Changes you might make

For more help with identifying the sorts of adjustments you might need to make, see:

the Inclusion Development Programme from the Autism Education Trust

[www.aet-idp.org.uk](http://www.aet-idp.org.uk)

*Autism in the primary classroom*, Joy Beaney and Penny Kershaw, 2014

[www.autism.org.uk/NAS495](http://www.autism.org.uk/NAS495)

*Autism in the secondary classroom*, Joy Beaney and Penny Kershaw, 2014

[www.autism.org.uk/NAS658](http://www.autism.org.uk/NAS658)

Children and young people with PDA do not usually respond to the range of educational strategies that help others on the autism spectrum. For more specific advice on working with a child or young person with PDA please see [www.autism.org.uk/pdaatschool](http://www.autism.org.uk/pdaatschool) and [www.pdasociety.org.uk/education](http://www.pdasociety.org.uk/education).

## Homework

Children and young people with autism may have difficulties completing their homework. This may be because:

- > the child has problems with processing instructions and may not have been able to record their homework correctly or have it recorded for them - it may be unclear what work needs to be done when they get home
- > they have a very rigid thought process and are unable to adapt to the change in working environment
- > the homework you have set is too difficult or they may forget a concept that you have taught in school - this can lead to frustration and anger when trying to complete this work at home
- > the homework you have set is too easy or repeats what you have already covered in class - a child or young person with autism may not see the point in completing this homework and will lack motivation to complete it.

You can help by thinking how you may be able to differentiate the homework for a pupil with autism to make it more obtainable, giving them the feeling that they are able to achieve.

Good communication with parents around homework is also helpful, you could clarify homework tasks with a parent by email. Most importantly, try to be flexible with homework deadlines and consequences for late or unfinished homework.

## Effective communication

Here is a quick reference guide where we suggest strategies you might try for overcoming difficulties you have communicating with a child or young person on the autism spectrum in your school.

### They don't appear to pay attention when you are talking to them

- Always use their name at the beginning, when you are saying something, so that they know you are talking to them.
- Make sure they are paying attention before you ask a question or give an instruction. They may not be able to make eye contact, but may look at you or in your direction.
- If you are aware that they have an intense interest, then try to use this to engage them.

### They have difficulty processing the information that is said to them

- Reduce the amount of communication that you use (including non-verbal: eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, body language etc) when a child or young person is showing signs of anxiety. It can be difficult for them to process information if they have high levels of anxiety.
- Use visual supports (eg symbols, timetables, Social Stories©) to help them to process the information more easily.
- Speak clearly and precisely using short sentences. A child with autism can find it difficult to filter out the less important information. If there is too much information, it can lead to 'overload', where no further information can be processed.
- Don't use too many questions. A child or young person with autism may find 'where', 'when', 'who' and 'why' questions difficult.
- Be aware of the environment (noisy/crowded etc) that you are in. It may be affecting how much they can process.
- Wait for the child or young person to respond or complete the task before repeating yourself or giving further instruction. It can take up to 30 seconds for a child or young person with autism to process information.

### The child or young person takes things literally

- Avoid using irony, sarcasm, figurative language, rhetorical questions, idioms etc. If you do use them, explain what you have said and be clear about what you really mean to say.

### What can I do to help develop a child or young person's communication skills?

- Reward and praise any spontaneous communication or appropriate behaviours that they show eg "Good sharing". By rewarding them, you are increasing the likelihood of it happening again.
- Use role play. Role play can be a great way of showing appropriate frameworks for social interaction and exploring how things can go wrong/what to avoid.

Useful resources related to effective communication can be found at:

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

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

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

[www.do2learn.com](http://www.do2learn.com)

[www.asdvisualaids.com](http://www.asdvisualaids.com)

[www.pecs-unitedkingdom.com](http://www.pecs-unitedkingdom.com)

## **Behaviour**

The behaviour of some children and young people on the autism spectrum can be challenging. This behaviour is often due to an underlying anxiety, frustration or sensory sensitivity. It is not always clear what has caused them to behave in a particular way and it can be very hard to control the situation without knowing the trigger and having appropriate strategies to use.

Over time, it is helpful to monitor this behaviour to see if you and the child or young person you are working with can start to recognise when anxiety or frustration is starting to build within them. You can then talk to the child and young person about what would help them to feel more comfortable and put appropriate support in place.

Here are some strategies that you may find useful.

### **ABC chart**

On an ABC chart, you record the Antecedent (what happened beforehand, who was there, where the child was, were there any sensory triggers), the Behaviour itself, and the Consequence (what happened following the behaviour). This can be followed up with Communication – talking to all involved about how the situation may have been handled in a more positive way.

### **Stress scale**

Many children and young people with autism find it difficult to understand their emotions. The stress scale can help to turn emotions into more concrete concepts that are presented in a visual way.

You could use a traffic light system, visual thermometer, or a scale of 1-5 to present emotions as colours or numbers. For example, a green traffic light or a number 1 can mean 'I am calm'; a red traffic light or a number 5, 'I am angry'.

The incredible five point scale (a stress scale) is available from our online shop at [www.autism.org.uk/NAS823](http://www.autism.org.uk/NAS823)

### **Safe and quiet place**

It is useful for children and young people on the autism spectrum to have an agreed safe and quiet place for them to go to when they feel anxiety building or are overloaded by sensory stimuli. This may be within a school inclusion unit, library or calmer area of the school and may not be the same for all pupils with autism.

## Time out card/exit passes

These are cards or passes that a child or young person has to indicate to teaching staff that they are feeling anxious and need to leave the classroom. This strategy will have usually been agreed by the SENCO, support for learning principal teacher or whoever has responsibility for special educational needs or additional support needs in your school. It is important that the child or young person knows where their agreed safe and quiet place is.

## Moving around school

Some children and young people with autism find lesson changeover times particularly difficult. They can become anxious due to the unpredictability of this time and may find it difficult to cope with the noisy and crowded environment. It may be appropriate for you to allow a pupil with autism to leave the class a little earlier so that they can reach their next classroom before the crowd. It might also be useful to match them with a mentor or buddy who can accompany them.

## Circle of friends

Children and young people with autism can feel socially isolated. This may lead to low self-esteem and behaviour that can challenge. Circle of friends is an approach used with pupils with autism in mainstream schools to promote inclusion and interaction with their peers. For more information please visit [www.autism.org.uk/circleoffriends](http://www.autism.org.uk/circleoffriends).

## Reward charts and systems

For children and young people with autism, social praise may not be enough to motivate and promote acceptable behaviour. Whilst reward charts and systems are often used with younger pupils in schools, it is a good idea to base these around the child's interest, which can be intense in children and young people with autism.

## Children with PDA

Children and young people with PDA need interventions and strategies that differ from those suggested here. Please visit <http://www.pdasociety.org.uk/education/educational-and-handling-guidelines> for more information.

## Bullying

Children and young people have difficulty reading social situations, find it hard to predict other people's behaviour and can struggle to interpret body language and facial expressions. This can make them an easy target for bullies. For information on bullying and strategies that can be used to help prevent it please see *Bullying and autism spectrum disorders* at [www.autism.org.uk/NAS877](http://www.autism.org.uk/NAS877)

## Online bullying

Children and young people on the autism spectrum can find social networking, forums, emailing, instant messaging, texting and online gaming an easier way to socialise. All children may be bullied via the internet or mobile phones, however children and young people with autism may not be able to recognise cyber bullying as easily due to their lack of social understanding.

For more information on cyber bullying please visit [www.childnet.com/teachers-and-professionals/for-working-with-young-people/hot-topics/cyberbullying](http://www.childnet.com/teachers-and-professionals/for-working-with-young-people/hot-topics/cyberbullying).

## Breaks and lunchtimes

Children and young people with autism can find breaks and lunchtimes difficult because they:

- › lack the structure and routine that they need to help make sense of the world around them
- › are daunting due to the unpredictability of others and use of loud and noisy environments, such as the dining hall
- › focus on the use and development of social skills that children and young people with autism have difficulty with
- › are an opportunity for social isolation and bullying from others.

## Ways you can help

- › Create opportunities for all pupils to develop an understanding of medical conditions, special educational or additional support needs or disabilities that affect children and young people in your school.
- › Enforce a zero tolerance 'no bullying' policy and ensure that all staff (including those that provide lunchtime supervision) are aware of the procedures within it.
- › Offer autism awareness training to staff that will be looking after children and young people during these unstructured times.
- › Organise structured lunchtime clubs, focusing on shared interests.
- › Use a buddy system or have a buddy bench in the playground.

Some pupils on the autism spectrum may find social interaction too demanding. If you have tried to help a child or young person to form friendships through a lunchtime club or buddy system, but can see that they would rather be alone, then try to accommodate them having this time in a quiet and safe area.

For further advice on playground support please see [www.autism.org.uk/NAS553](http://www.autism.org.uk/NAS553)

For information on autism awareness training that can be helpful for break and lunchtime supervision staff, please visit [www.autism.org.uk/askautism](http://www.autism.org.uk/askautism)

## Transitions

Transition from one education setting to another can cause anxiety in children and young people on the autism spectrum, as can transition between year groups. Here are some tips that you may find helpful.

- › Be aware of your and your school's legal responsibilities in the transition process.
- › Personalise the transition process to meet the needs of the young person you are working with.
- › Plan in advance, involving the team around the child or young person and, most importantly, the child/young person and their parents.
- › Use visual aids such as videos and photographs of key people and buildings in the education setting or year group they are moving to.
- › Organise visits to the new education setting so that the child or young person can become familiar with the environment and teaching staff. If they are moving year groups then arrange for them to spend time with their new teacher or teaching assistant in addition to the general 'moving up' experience given to all pupils.
- › Organise peer support, eg a friendship group, buddy system or circle of friends.

- > For younger children, or those with greater communication needs, you may like to suggest to the parents that the child or young person create a personal passport. For more on this, see <http://w3.cerebra.org.uk/help-and-information/personal-portfolios>

### **Transition resources for England**

Transition Toolkit. The Autism Education Trust.  
[www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/resources](http://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/resources)

Education beyond 16. Contact a family.  
[www.cafamily.org.uk/advice-and-support/sen-national-advice-service/education-beyond-16](http://www.cafamily.org.uk/advice-and-support/sen-national-advice-service/education-beyond-16)

Finished at school. Ambitious About Autism.  
[www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/understanding-autism/new-guide-launched-to-help-school-and-college-staff-better-support-young-people-with-autism](http://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/understanding-autism/new-guide-launched-to-help-school-and-college-staff-better-support-young-people-with-autism)

### **Transition resources for Northern Ireland**

Transition service. Education Support for Northern Ireland.  
[www.education-support.org.uk/parents/special-education/transition-service](http://www.education-support.org.uk/parents/special-education/transition-service)

Preparing for adult life and transition guide - Northern Ireland. Contact a family.  
[www.cafamily.org.uk/media/597218/ni\\_transition\\_currentlastupdatedsep12.pdf](http://www.cafamily.org.uk/media/597218/ni_transition_currentlastupdatedsep12.pdf)

### **Transition resources for Scotland**

Supporting transition from school to university. Scottish Autism.  
[www.scottishautism.org/family-and-professional-support/information-resources/supporting-transition/](http://www.scottishautism.org/family-and-professional-support/information-resources/supporting-transition/)

Preparing for adult life and transition guide – Scotland. Contact a family.  
[www.cafamily.org.uk/media/379959/transitionscot\\_web\\_amended\\_11\\_feb\\_2014.pdf](http://www.cafamily.org.uk/media/379959/transitionscot_web_amended_11_feb_2014.pdf)

### **Transition resources for Wales**

Transition – Leaving school. SNAP Cymru.  
[www.snapcymru.org/help-for-families/transition](http://www.snapcymru.org/help-for-families/transition)

### **NAS Transition Support Service**

Our Transition Support Service is a free service for parents and carers in England of children in year 9 and above that can help young people with making the transition from school to adult life or further education. It provides confidential information, advice and support by phone or email and can help with things such as an explanation of rights and entitlements, assistance with exploring options and signposting to other services.

Tel: 0808 800 0027

Email: [transitionsupport@nas.org.uk](mailto:transitionsupport@nas.org.uk)

## School refusal

School can be a challenging environment for children and young people with autism and they can sometimes refuse to attend. School refusal may not just happen on one day. It may continue until the reason for school refusal has been identified and addressed. Reasons for a child or young person not wanting to attend school can include:

- they are being teased or bullied
- unstructured and/or noisy times are causing them anxiety
- something unpleasant has occurred and the child or young person on the autism spectrum doesn't want it to happen again
- they have a particular dislike or difficulty with a particular lesson which is on the timetable that day.

## Ways you can help

- Have someone that the child feels comfortable with meet them at the school gate or from their parent's car. This may be a teacher or a teaching assistant.
- Check that the child or young person with autism is getting enough and the right type of support. The SENCO, support for learning principal teacher or person responsible for children with SEN/ASN can give advice on this and start procedures for more support if needed.
- Allow them to use coping strategies such as time out cards and stress scales.
- Identify a quiet and safe place that they can use when things get too much.
- Arrange autism awareness training for all staff, including break and lunchtime support supervisors. For more information on training of this type please visit [www.autism.org.uk/askautism](http://www.autism.org.uk/askautism)
- Give the child an opportunity to discuss their feelings at the end of each school day. For example, you could go through the timetable and ask the child to give each lesson a mark out of 10. For those lessons they score low, ask them why.
- Have open communication with the child or young person's parents. Ask them what they think will help their child to feel more comfortable at school.

When supporting the child to come back to school after a period of school refusal, start off with the child attending for an hour and then build it up gradually. This is better than putting pressure on the child to attend for a whole day and them not coping.

## Resources for school staff

### The National Autistic Society

#### *Lesson guide*

A two-lesson introduction to autism and Asperger syndrome. They include two case study sheets and some games for introducing autism to a class.

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

#### *Safeguarding children with autism*

Safeguarding information for all professionals who work with children and young people with autism.

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

#### *Helping young children with autism to learn*, Liz Hannah, 2014

A practical guide for parents and staff in mainstream schools and nurseries.

[www.autism.org.uk/NAS392](http://www.autism.org.uk/NAS392)

#### *Autism in the primary classroom*, Joy Beaney and Penny Kershaw, 2014

Strategies and resources to support successful inclusion in primary schools.

[www.autism.org.uk/NAS495](http://www.autism.org.uk/NAS495)

#### *Autism in the secondary classroom*, Joy Beaney and Penny Kershaw, 2014

Strategies and resources to support successful inclusion in secondary schools.

[www.autism.org.uk/NAS658](http://www.autism.org.uk/NAS658)

#### *Sensory Strategies*, Corinna Laurie 2014

Practical ways to help children and young people with autism learn and achieve.

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

#### *MyWorld*

Sign for free MyWorld information, advice and resources for teachers.

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

#### *Ask autism*

The Ask autism online training modules have been developed by people on the autism spectrum. Over 70 autistic people have developed and tested the material, ensuring everyone who uses the training benefits from their unique insight.

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

#### *Network Autism*

A free online community for anyone who works regularly with children or adults with autism. Take part in discussions and groups, read the latest research and collaborate with others in the UK and internationally.

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

#### *NAS online shop and NAS library catalogue*

Find more resources at [www.autism.org.uk/shop](http://www.autism.org.uk/shop) and [www.autism.org.uk/library](http://www.autism.org.uk/library)

## SEND Gateway

An online portal offering education professionals free, easy access to high quality information, resources and training for meeting the needs of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

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

## Autism Education Trust

The Autism Education Trust (AET) helps raise awareness of the importance of appropriate educational provision for children and young people on the autism spectrum through a range of dedicated events, information sharing conferences, web-based resources and ongoing research and project work. The AET is a partnership of organisations (including the NAS) with an interest in autism and works to improve education for children with autism.

Inclusion Development Programme

[www.aet-idp.org.uk](http://www.aet-idp.org.uk).

Transition toolkit

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

Autism competency framework

[www.aetraininghubs.org.uk/schools/competency-framework/](http://www.aetraininghubs.org.uk/schools/competency-framework/)

## The Scottish Government and Scottish Autism

*Autism Toolbox*

The Autism Toolbox is a resource to support the inclusion of children and young people with autism in mainstream education services in Scotland.

[www.autismtoolbox.co.uk](http://www.autismtoolbox.co.uk)

## The PDA society

*Teachers guide*

[www.pdasociety.org.uk/education/teachers-guide](http://www.pdasociety.org.uk/education/teachers-guide)

*Education and handling guidelines*

[www.pdasociety.org.uk/education/educational-and-handling-guidelines](http://www.pdasociety.org.uk/education/educational-and-handling-guidelines)

*Simple Strategies for Supporting Children with Pathological Demand Avoidance at School* by Emma Gore Langton, an educational psychologist, and Zoe Syson, of Positive PDA. Available from the PDA society.

[www.pdasociety.org.uk/education/new-educational-strategies-booklet-from-positive-pda](http://www.pdasociety.org.uk/education/new-educational-strategies-booklet-from-positive-pda)

## Resources for peers

*My friend Sam*, Liz Hannah, 2014

A story about introducing a child with autism to nursery school.

[www.autism.org.uk/NAS692](http://www.autism.org.uk/NAS692)

*All cats have Asperger syndrome*, Kathy Hoopmann, 2006

<http://astore.amazon.co.uk/thenationalau-21/detail/1843104814>

*Pick a card to learn something new about autism*

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

*Can I tell you about autism?* Jude Welton, illustrated by Jane Telford, 2014

A guide for friends, family and professionals (suitable for readers aged 7-15)

<http://astore.amazon.co.uk/thenationalau-21/detail/1849054533>

*Can I tell you about Asperger Syndrome?* Jude Welton, illustrated by Jane Telford, 2003

A guide for friends and family (suitable for readers age 7-15)

<http://astore.amazon.co.uk/thenationalau-21/detail/1843102064>

*Can I tell you about PDA?* Ruth Fidler and Phil Christie, illustrated by Jonathon Powell  
A guide for friends and family (suitable for readers age 7-15)  
[www.jkp.com/uk/can-i-tell-you-about-pathological-demand-avoidance-syndrome.html](http://www.jkp.com/uk/can-i-tell-you-about-pathological-demand-avoidance-syndrome.html)

*Freaks, Geeks and Asperger Syndrome*, Luke Jackson, 2002  
A User Guide to Adolescence  
[www.jkp.com/uk/freaks-geeks-and-asperger-syndrome.html](http://www.jkp.com/uk/freaks-geeks-and-asperger-syndrome.html)

## Resources for children on the autism spectrum

*When My Worries Get Too Big!*, Kari Dunn Buron, 2013  
A relaxation book for children who live with anxiety.  
[www.autism.org.uk/worries](http://www.autism.org.uk/worries)

*The Red Beast: Controlling Anger in Children with Asperger's Syndrome*, K.I. Al-Ghani, 2008  
An accessible, fun book that talks about anger.  
<http://astore.amazon.co.uk/thenationalau-21/detail/1843109433>

*The Panicosaurus: Managing Anxiety in Children Including Those with Asperger*, K.I. Al-Ghani, 2012  
A fun, easy-to-read and fully illustrated storybook will inspire children who experience anxiety.  
<http://astore.amazon.co.uk/thenationalau-21/detail/1849053561>

## Help and support from The National Autistic Society

The NAS runs a wide range of services for people with autism, their families, carers, professionals, and others wanting information on autism and education throughout the UK.

### Autism Helpline

Our Autism Helpline offers impartial, confidential information, advice and support for people on the autism spectrum, their parents and family members.

Tel: 0808 800 4104. Open: Mon-Thurs 10am-4pm, Fri 9am-3pm.  
Enquiry form: [www.autism.org.uk/enquiry](http://www.autism.org.uk/enquiry)  
[www.autism.org.uk/helpline](http://www.autism.org.uk/helpline)

### NAS training

Our Training department offers courses on a range of educational issues, as well as accrediting external courses, many of which have an educational focus.

Tel: 0141 285 7117  
Email: [training@nas.org.uk](mailto:training@nas.org.uk)  
[www.autism.org.uk/training](http://www.autism.org.uk/training)

### NAS conferences and events

The NAS runs nationwide conferences and events for professionals.

Tel: 0115 911 3367

Email: [conference@nas.org.uk](mailto:conference@nas.org.uk)  
[www.autism.org.uk/conferences](http://www.autism.org.uk/conferences)

### **Education Rights Service**

Our Education Rights Service provides advice and information on education provision and entitlements to parents and carers of children on the autism spectrum.

Tel: 0808 800 4102  
Email: [educationrights@nas.org.uk](mailto:educationrights@nas.org.uk)  
[www.autism.org.uk/educationrights](http://www.autism.org.uk/educationrights)

### **NAS schools**

The NAS runs eight not-for-profit schools for children and young people up to the age of 25, with widely varying needs. We offer flexible placements to meet individual needs and circumstances. Our schools also offer outreach and short breaks services.

Tel: 0117 974 8430  
Email: [schools@nas.org.uk](mailto:schools@nas.org.uk)  
[www.autism.org.uk/schools](http://www.autism.org.uk/schools)

### **NAS community services**

The NAS provides a range of community support across the UK for children and young people with autism (from 5 years), their families and carers. Services include children clubs and holiday schemes.

Tel: 0117 974 8430  
Email: [services@nas.org.uk](mailto:services@nas.org.uk)  
[www.autism.org.uk/communitysupport](http://www.autism.org.uk/communitysupport)

### **NAS website**

Our website contains a wealth of information about autism (including Asperger syndrome and Pathological Demand Avoidance) and details the broad range of help and services offered by the NAS.  
[www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk)

### **NAS library catalogue**

The catalogue holds information on over 30,000 published research articles, books and multimedia on autism.  
[www.autism.org.uk/library](http://www.autism.org.uk/library)

### **Autism Services Directory**

The directory holds detailed information on education services including schools, nurseries and colleges, local authorities, parent partnerships and educational outreach services. It also provides details of training courses for teachers and other educational professionals.  
[www.autism.org.uk/directory](http://www.autism.org.uk/directory)

### **Network Autism**

Free online community for anyone who works regularly with children or adults with autism. Take part in discussions and groups, read the latest research and collaborate with others in the UK and internationally.  
[www.networkautism.org.uk](http://www.networkautism.org.uk)

## MyWorld

Sign up to receive **free** autism-specific school and nursery resources straight into your inbox  
[www.autism.org.uk/myworld](http://www.autism.org.uk/myworld)

## Publications

The NAS sells a wide range of resources about autism spectrum disorders aimed at parents, people with the disability and professionals.

Tel: 020 7903 3595

Email: [publications@nas.org.uk](mailto:publications@nas.org.uk)

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

## Membership

The National Autistic Society membership keeps you up-to-date with information and developments in the autism community. Our members play a vital role in the work of the charity and members receive benefits that include our magazine, *Your Autism Magazine*, delivered four times a year, regular e-newsletters, a 10% discount on NAS publications and up to £75 off NAS conferences.

Tel: 0808 800 1050

Email: [membership@nas.org.uk](mailto:membership@nas.org.uk)

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

**This resource pack was last updated in December 2015.**

**Compiled and edited by the Autism Information Team.**

**Copies can be downloaded from [www.autism.org.uk/teacherpack](http://www.autism.org.uk/teacherpack)**

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The National Autistic Society

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Registered as a charity in England and Wales (269425) and in Scotland (SC093427)

