Universal – See below Targeted – {Insert Web Link}

Specialist – [Insert web link]

**Quality First Teaching**

**Early Years**

**Pupils**

**Autism/Social Communication Differences**





**UNIVERSAL SUPPORT/SCHOOL BASED SUPPORT**

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

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| * **Positive and Effective Relationship**
 | * **Enabling Environment**
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| * Know the pupil prior to arrival, share EYFS learning journal with pupil, effective co-production of one page profile with parents and previous setting is vital – what are the strengths/barriers and plan for these.
* Capture Pupil Voice. Talking Mats is visual, differentiated way of capturing Pupil Voice.
* We can support within our ASC team. Please find link to main website.[www.talkingmats.com](http://www.talkingmats.com) . For social partner/preverbal stage use photos/video/EYFS learning journal to record pupil voice.
* Share a Special Interests Questionnaire with parents to find out what motivates the pupil.[<https://www.bild.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Davey-GAP-May-2020.pdf>](https://www.bild.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Davey-GAP-May-2020.pdf)
* Explicitly model social skills and class rules - do not presume understanding. Present them visually e.g.
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* Consider buddy programmes, structured social skills activities such as Time to Talk Alison Schroeder, commenting on social play as it happens.
* Teach making mistakes, coping with losing and conflict resolution: dramatize your own mistakes/use puppets to role play mistakes.
* Help identify emotions, label feelings in naturally occurring situations e.g. “Jack fell down.. he is sad “. Staff refer to basic emotions symbols on lanyards.
* Visual emotions scale - daily ‘check-in’ to gauge how pupil is feeling e.g. <http://www.zonesofregulation.com/index.html> / Simple 3 Point scale
* Adults model the use of toys / equipment . Teach simple play routines e.g., home corner
* Support in unstructured times, develop understanding reflectively with the use of Social Stories/Comic Strip conversations/role play <https://carolgraysocialstories.com/social-stories/what-is-it/> Comic strips can be more spontaneous and visual . Incorporates simple stick figure drawings , thought and speech bubbles .Can use large sheet of paper with younger pupils and make them interactive . Children can participate in drawing. And develop shared attention .Can share conversations with home.
* Have fun, play and laugh with a pupil. Show you care!
* Teach pupil simple social scripts. Model , role play and reinforce with visual prompt cards in naturally occurring situations e.g.,
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* Adults model simple social games to play at unstructured times . Provide lunchtime activities linked to interests. Introducing structured activities during free time can help autistic children develop interaction skills.
* Structured turn taking firstly with adult then peer – simple motivating activities e.g. bubbles , balls down tube personalise to reflect interests.
* Introduce a wait card. A wait card helps a child understand the concept of waiting. Practise in a range of contexts they learn that they will eventually have a turn. It’s ok to wait. Can be used for the whole class .
* Choosing activities independently may be difficult - offer visual support of objects ,symbols , photographs or drawings on whiteboard.
* Opportunities to develop social skills during general daily small group activities e.g. greetings , simple conversational skills , turn taking .
* Show children what you do want them to do rather than just what you don’t want . Say what you want the child to do e.g. “ Hands on knees “ rather than “ sit still “
* Fun , motivating activities which encourage pupils to initiate interactions and social communication e.g. Intensive Interaction , Attention Autism , Jabadao , action songs . Adults pause …. build up anticipation and give children space to communicate and interact. e.g. ready , steady …………..go activities .
 | * Ensure pupil is drinking, eating and toileting regularly – keep a log/make a chart and add routines.
* Learning areas are clearly defined throughout the classroom with clear visual support.
* Avoid changing classroom layout without prior warning - this can cause huge anxiety. Make the learning environment structured and predictable.
* All resources are kept in labelled drawers/cupboards. Surfaces are free from clutter. The white board is free of visual clutter – for 1m around the circumference.
* Pupil is supported to organise their belongings and sit at a low stimulus table.
* Low stimulation workstation available when needed.
* Whole class visual timetable should be discussed regularly . Can give pupil a role removing timetable symbols as day progresses.
* Developmentally suitable visual support used to support language throughout the day e.g. objects , photographs , symbols to increase understanding of task / instructions .
* Agree consistent language for all staff e.g. first …then ... or now…next … Just decide which as a team feels more comfortable and then use language consistently .
* Transition times are managed effectively. Clear warnings of finish e.g. 1-minute warning then “ 54321 ….Finish”
* ( With Makaton sign ), this will then lead to a clear prompt of what is next/then…
* Visual timers ( may need to be visible but out of reach ) .Visual Velcro count down strip .
* Developmentally appropriate visual supports used to help pupils independently make transitions between activities e.g. A pupil at Social Partner stage may hold object of reference for next activity .
* Flexible visual support may be used for some e.g. small whiteboard . Can be used quickly and spontaneously as first …then …

A picture containing text  Description automatically generated* Beginning and ending of activity always clearly defined by clear signals
* Use of positive language and approach.
* Consider the child’s sensory profile when considering: Visual input (lighting – fluorescent lighting can be debilitating for some autistic learners/colour on walls – different colours can have different effects/patterns can cause visual distortion, auditory input; try to reduce internal (clocks ticking, bells, projectors) and external noises (traffic, other children playing).
* Touch and pressure – is there an area for tactile experiences, are there items to provide different feelings on the skin such as sand, water – are there items to provide pressure if needed e.g., wooden massager, lycra sheet.
* Smell – are there smells that cause distress e.g., perfumes, cleaning products, food).
* Think about sensory preferences and build these into tasks e.g. preferred tactile materials around pencils/toys.
* Taste – is choice available and clear e.g., snacks, drinks, dinners.
* Add in sensory likes/preferences at snack and meal times – crunchy, sweet, savoury.
* Balance (vestibular) Space (proprioceptive) - are there opportunities to balance, climb, bounce, exit routes.
* Physical movement breaks which will work the muscles and joints (proprioceptive input) such as running, jumping, classroom jobs , push / pull movement , carrying heavy books throughout the day.
* Interoception ( internal state of body ) Hunger/pain/tiredness etc.
* Access to calm retreat space - no need for specialist equipment. May just like to snuggle in identified small space in classroom.

* Have a clear ‘escape route’ for pupil (offer pre-planned safe base of their choice).
* Complete Sensory Checklist <https://www.sheffieldchildrens.nhs.uk/services/child-development-and-neurodisability/sensory-processing-difficulties>
* Regular personalised sensory breaks incorporated into routines. They can be subtle e.g. classroom job ,carry equipment . hold open door .
* Offer a range of sensory equipment wobble cushion, stress ball and fiddle ball.. What helps ?
* Sensory Circuit twice daily <https://youtu.be/4EpBSD3dJnM> if deemed necessary.
* Create a Monday Morning Plan – as this can be an especially difficult time. Carefully planned transition activity and positive calm separation from parent / carer.
* Offer a range of opportunities in natural play spaces for use during free-flow provision and for movement breaks – types, balance, beams e.g. wooden planks and crates, sand play, water play, slides#, tunnels, bubbles, building blocks, trampette ect. Provision should offer a range of sensory stimuli.
* Consider your own level of stress when dealing with dysregulated pupils, ask for and accept help! A change of face can be really helpful.
* Use explicit language to label own emotions to model to children what’s being asked of them e.g. Zones of regulation.
* Movement breaks will be your best friend…at first signs of stress a pupil will need proprioceptive input to help de-stress (sense located in muscle and joint). Offer physical activity to allow them to expel energy/stress.
* Traditional’ techniques such as sanctions do not always work. Does the child understand the link between the sanction and their behaviour? . Highlight natural consequences to situations – eg a purposefully broken model means \*pupil ca no longer build.
* Try to use positive reinforcement to teach desired behaviours.
* If pupil becomes very agitated, understand that the usual strategies for calming a child may not be appropriate and he may benefit from having quiet time to calm down in a safe place without adult intervention.
* Don’t presume some behaviours are a purposeful attempt at breaking rules – if a pupil swearing is it an attempt to regulate emotions? Better than lashing out!
* Consider a small – steps approach to certain activities, starting at child’s level e.g. if sitting on the carpet is an issue start with a few minutes and then build up .
* Understand children may be trying to avoid a challenging situation – behaviour is communication e.g. shouting during carpet time . Co regulating, offering access to quiet space may lead to the pupil using this strategy independently at times of stress.
* Low Arousal Approach [www.studio3.org](http://www.studio3.org) has free webinars and support.
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| * **Access to Learning**
 | * **Communication**
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| * Make detailed observations in range of situations to gain a clear picture of a child’s strengths and needs.( See AET Early Years Observation Forms)
* Goals and activities should be developmentally appropriate and incorporate skills for maximising enjoyment success and independence.
* Skills taught in isolation will need to be observed/practised in different environments with different equipment to ensure they are fully understood and generalised.
* Assess social skills development (Learning Behaviours) in addition to academic. Value them as an equal in progress measures.
* Make use of structured TEACCH approach to support independence. <https://teacch.com/>.
* Consider structured work activities -start/ finish boxes Ensure tasks are motivating , clearly organised and have visual clarity e.g. everything for task in zip wallet . Teach the process initially leading to greater independence .
* Use visual prompts with clear beginning and end to activity.
* Model activities ‘Blue Peter’ style in a structured step by step process

* Define steps to activity e.g. forward and backward chaining.
* Break down the task into manageable chunks. At Social Partner stage adult may lay out materials from left to right then support child to place completed activity in ‘finish’ box
* Be consistent – all adults teach skills in the same way and consider language carefully. Liaise with parent / carers.
* Consistency of approach amongst staff – rewards, sanctions, routine and language will help enormously.
* Make sure success is built into the process – use simple reward systems e.g. reward jigsaw . working for …..
* If the pupil finds open-ended questions difficult then make it more concrete for them. Blanks Levels is a differentiated questioning scheme, Level 1-4 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w-EFnokgHW4&t=48s> .
* Use visual support to back up verbal information e.g. Objects, photographs , symbols, drawings.
* Natural routines across all environments provide contexts for learning e.g. Making requests at snack …choices during art activities ….
* Build your own resilience, you will not always get it right! But have a go !
* Support pupils to request help . Teach this specifically e.g. sabotage routines
* Pupils who ‘Mask’ have difficulty with energy levels, so consider this during afternoon lessons.
 | * Ensure your child feels welcomed and supported upon arrival at school.
* Greet the pupil by name at the door, but don’t expect a reply .
* Foster spontaneous, functional communication during naturally occurring situations during the school day
* Always say pupils name first to gain attention.
* Clear, reduced, and consistent language.
* Be consistent in the use of language for key times / activities in the session.
* Liaise with parents / carers
* Try to keep routine instructions as consistent as possible.
* Give clear and specific instructions e.g. instead of “Can you tidy away the Lego “ say “Put Lego in box “
* Do not rephrase instruction, break down if not understood.
* Give positive directions and try to minimise the use of ‘No .’
* Allow 7 seconds processing time (then repeat same words if necessary).
* Leave spaces / pauses for child to communicate.
* Encourage communication offering developmentally appropriate visual supports e.g. choice boards, communication mats for activities
* If a pupil presents ‘behaviours that challenge’, it is important to remember that this is often communicating a need or difficulty.
* Use descriptive praise to build desired behaviours e.g. ‘I like the way you put your wrapper in the bin’.
* Tell pupil what to do rather than what not to do e.g. child running in school corridor try \* Ben …stop , walk please “
* **SCERTS** model: Social Communication, Emotional Regulation, Transactional Support framework. <https://scerts.com/>
* **Commenting**- Watch pupil play and provide simple verbal commentary e.g. “Abdul jumping”.
* **Communication tempts** and sabotage routines To tempt a child to communicate. The adult creates a situation – the pupil has to communicate to solve a problem e.g. find missing shoe to play outside
* **Intensive Interaction** an intervention to develop early communication skills and validate a child’s communication skills. The adult follows the child’s lead , mirroring his or her actions and vocalisations. Dave Hewitt <https://www.intensiveinteraction.org>
* **Curiosity Programme** – Designed by Gina Davis, Specialist SALT to help children with social communication difficulties (particularly Social Partners ) develop early joint attention skills and help pupils feel motivated to participate , communicate and share interaction This approach often used prior to Attention Autism .
* **Attention Autism**  Gina Davies, it is a structured programme that encourages, inspires, and helps to motivate and build shared attention and communication in a fun small group situation. Uses highly motivating and visual activities. (All SCERTS partner stages)
* Attention Autism Stage 1 ‘ Bucket Time ‘
* <https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=attention+autism+stage+1>
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