



Knowsley Central School

Autism Policy

Reviewed by: SLT

Date: March 2025

Last reviewed on: March 2025

Next review due by: March 2026 (Annually)



Knowsley Central School

Autism Policy

Vision

Knowsley Central School believes that all Autistic children and young people should have access to a high-quality teaching and a learning environment suited to their needs. Their families should have access to effective support from the school and staff should have the necessary knowledge and skills to work effectively. Autistic pupils are included in every class throughout the school. The primary characteristics of Autism are as follows:

Definition

Autism is a lifelong, developmental disability that affects how a person communicates with and relates to other people, and how they experience the world around them. The primary difficulties are as follows:

Difficulties in:

- Non-verbal and verbal communication
- Social understanding and social behaviour
- Thinking and behaving flexibly (rigidity of thought)
- Sensory perception and responses

Reference to 'a spectrum' of difficulties is made because there is a wide variation of difficulties and needs within the condition and as a child grows and develops these may change. In order to ensure that pupils on the autistic spectrum are able to access the broad, balanced and relevant curriculum offered throughout the school these additional difficulties characteristic of pupils on the autistic spectrum need to be taken into account.

This policy document sets out the school's aims, principles and strategies for the education of autistic pupils at Knowsley Central School.

Aims

Within Knowsley Central School there are 13 classes which meet the needs of pupils from

4 to 11 years old. All classes have children of mixed ages. Approximately 71% of the pupils on roll have a diagnosis of Autism with many more awaiting a diagnosis. All pupils on roll have an EHCP. In order to ensure that Autistic pupils are able to access the broad, balanced and relevant curriculum offered to pupils throughout our school their additional difficulties and characteristics are taken into account in all aspects of their school life, including the school environment, planning, teaching and learning objectives. The emphasis is on communication, social interaction, independence and the emotional well-being of the individual pupil.

To ensure the best possible education for Autistic pupils through:

- Knowledge and understanding of Autistic pupils throughout the school.
- Knowledge, understanding and implementation of established interventions and approaches.
- Knowledge and understanding of general and specific behaviours and behaviour management approaches.

Approaches

Communication

Autistic people have difficulties with interpreting both verbal and non-verbal language like gestures or tone of voice. Many have a very literal understanding of language, and have difficulty with abstract concepts for example: 'it's raining cats and dogs' the young person may think that is it exactly what is going to happen. Communication is essential in teaching and learning and therefore is seen as a key area of development for all pupils. Autistic pupils are supported by a range of communication systems and approaches taking into account the individual and their individual need.

Examples which may be used:

- PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System)
- Makaton
- TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication Handicapped Children)
- Speech and Language Therapist (SALT)
- Social Communication Groups
- 1-1 teaching sessions
- Intensive Interaction
- Curiosity Program

- Attention Autism
- Lego-based Therapy Groups
- Objects of reference
- Photographs
- Visual support through the use of Widgit

Behaviour

Behaviour is a means of communication and we endeavour to understand the function behind the behaviour. Specific strategies are used to reduce anxiety and promote feelings of well-being. Socially inappropriate behaviours are managed sensitively and more acceptable behaviours promoted.

Examples which may be used to support behaviour:

- Sensory Room
- Relaxation Time
- Sensory Circuits
- Rebound Therapy
- Do Jo
- Quite Spaces
- Positive Handling
- Team Teach
- Personalised Sticker Charts
- Sanctions/ Praise and Rewards
- Positive Reinforcement
- Social Stories
- 1-1 teaching sessions
- Inclusion Briefings

Systems used to record and analyse behaviour

- SLEUTH
- Do Jo
- Earwig

Flexibility of Thought

Pupils with Autism can often find it difficult to understand others feelings or emotions and can struggle with imagination and change. It is therefore important to acknowledge and plan in advance to ensure these individual needs are met.

Examples which may be used:

- Restorative Meetings (depending upon the pupils developmental understanding and needs)
- Visual Timetables with uniform symbols
- Objects of reference timetable with uniformed objects
- First and Then boards
- Transition days
- Social Stories
- Consistent staffing
- TEACCH

Sensory

Many autistic pupils have sensory difficulties which can result in unusual or uncomfortable perception of sound, sense, touch, sight and smell. This means that many children may be unable to focus upon teaching activities and can be distracted by noise, visual or other stimuli. This has a profound effect upon their ability to learn and impacts behaviour when sensory input causes extreme discomfort or pain. Therefore, we try to reduce environmental anxiety and distress by the following:

- An environment which is calm and comfortable with few distractions
- An environment with clear structures and routines
- The knowledge that they can ask for help and it will be provided
- Specific sensory support to match their needs, to help them learn

Examples which may be used at:

- SHINE Therapy -whole school approach and individual programs
- Sensory Trays/activities
- Attention Autism
- Sensory Room
- Sensory Circuits
- Movement Breaks
- Rebound Therapy
- Access to local soft play with range of equipment for sensory feedback

Specialist equipment may be:

- Ear defenders
- Sensory toys
- Body socks
- Weighted equipment
- Wobble boards
- Smell bottles
- Tactile tiles
- Different seating
- Different outside areas with a variety of equipment.
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Family/Carer Support

Working in partnership with parents/carers is vital particularly as the young people often struggle to generalise skills between the two settings. Information sharing is crucial and all pupils have a home/school diary which school staff write as often as necessary.

Parents/carers are encouraged to use the home/school diary to share information as often as possible. We aim to work together with parents and carers. Parents are encouraged to contact the school about any worries or concerns they have via the home/school diary or telephone.

School has an open-door policy and are happy to meet with parents/carers, when necessary, there are parent/carers evenings, annual reviews and coffee mornings we also provide training for parent/carers. There is support through professional clinics and school will signpost to external agencies for support as required.

Training

Staff receive Autism training as part of the programme of continuous professional development. All new staff to the school will receive introductory training to the key strategies used at the school. Staff also receive training from other professionals in relation to Autism. The school continuously reflects on its practice with support from the Autism Accreditation programme. The programme supports the school and offers feedback and areas for development in Autism. Staff are kept up to date with current research relating to the education and well-being of Autistic pupils.

Other policies to be read in conjunction with this policy are:

- **Speech and Language**
- **Behaviour Policy**
- **Wellbeing**

For further information on different aspects of this policy such as OT (Shine), Speech and Language etc please visit the school website.