

Supporting pupils with Autism

- Use clear, unambiguous language. Avoid idioms and metaphors.
- Create a visual timeline so that the pupils know what they should be doing now and what is to come. This can help to limit anxiety.
- Offer support for transitions and change. Prepare for what is to come by giving a clear timeline of when the change will happen and what the change will be. Offer visual support to prepare. Offer advance previews wherever possible.
- Remember that every individual with autism is different – their autism will impact upon them in different ways. Be prepared to change your approach and tailor your support to the way that their needs present for them.
- Where possible incorporate areas of interest into your lessons or as motivators. Time to explore a special interest can be used as a reward for when the pupil has completed work or followed instructions.
- Many learners with autism have difficulties in various areas of sensory processing. Being mindful of what difficulties an individual experiences, can help you provide the best support for them in your classroom and make any changes where necessary. For example, if a learner has sensitivities to auditory input, ensure they are sitting next to other learners who are not going to create high levels of noise. The learner may also pick up on noises, so sitting them away from objects that can create background noise is helpful. Learners with sensory processing difficulties can easily become overwhelmed.
- Offer a variety of methods for your learner to show/tell you if they are anxious. Worry boxes, worry monsters and drawing opportunities can all help!
- Give a clear role in group work situations so that the pupil knows exactly what is expected of them.
- Offer additional time for your pupil to process information and seek clarification if they are unsure.
- Try to understand how your pupil views the world and what matters to them so that you can adapt your practice. If you are able to appreciate why the learner may respond in a certain way, such as needing to sit at a specific table or have to eat their lunch in a certain way, then you will be more able to support them in navigating the school day. A high degree of empathy is needed.

