



Autism Policy

'I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.'

John 10:10

'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.' (National Autistic Society)

There are four areas of difference, they are:

- **Social and emotional understanding** – This may result in a child appearing withdrawn and there may be limited motivation to interact with others. Pupils may wish to interact with others but have problems understanding the 'rules' of social interaction.
- **Understanding and using speech and non-verbal language to communicate** – These problems with receptive and expressive communication mean that pupils may have difficulty in using and understanding verbally presented information as well as non-verbal communication such as gesture, body language and facial expression.
- **Flexibility of thinking and behaviour** – This will affect a child's ability to predict, understand and accept change, understand the thoughts, feelings and motivations of others and play and think creatively and flexibly. This may result in rigid and repetitive behaviours and thought patterns.
- **Sensory perception and response** – This problem with sensory stimuli could result in over or under sensitivity to movement, tactile information, sounds, smell, taste and visual stimuli. Pupils may have difficulty regulating their sensory system which may mean that under or over sensitivities to stimuli are not consistent.

At St. Edward's we understand that children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASC) find some situations and activities difficult and we strive to support our children in the best way possible to allow them to thrive and progress to the best of their potential in our school.

This policy outlines the reasonable adjustments we make at St. Edward's to support our children with ASC or those with difficulties similar to ASC and should be considered in conjunction with other whole school policies, including the inclusion policy.

All children with a diagnosis of ASC will have a personalised one page profile which will be created in conjunction with the child and will outline the most effective ways we can support them in school.

Homework

We expect children at St. Edward's to read at home regularly and learn spellings and times tables. Children will also be able to access Century Tech to complete English and Maths homework, this homework is not compulsory, therefore children will not be penalised for not completing it. We understand that children with ASC struggle to see links between home and school often making homework a difficult task, we will make reasonable adjustments for these children through discussion with parents and the inclusion manager.

Behaviour

We follow a behaviour system in school that incorporates praise through stickers, class dojo etc and also sanctions linked to unwanted behaviour. All of the children are aware of this system, however we do understand that this may need adapting for children with ASC. We will work together with parents and children to create an individual behaviour plan where needed and alternative strategies will be noted on children's learning plan. Social stories (Gray 1997) may sometimes be used to aid the understanding of the feelings of others and the consequences of a child's actions. At St. Edward's we focus on the cause of behaviour and work to find a solution so that a child does not react in that way again. Behaviour will always be dealt with as soon as the child is calm enough and consequences will follow the child's individual plan.

Unstructured times

Some children with ASC find unstructured times, such as play times and lunchtimes, very difficult. At St. Edward's we work closely with our lunchtime supervisors to put plans in place to support children at these times. This may involve a child having an 'early pass' to allow them to go first for lunch to avoid the noisy, busy periods in the dining hall. Quiet areas are always available for children who may find it overwhelming to be outside when the playground is busy.

Teaching and learning

We work collaboratively with external professionals such as speech and language therapists, education psychologists and Rochdale additional needs team to ensure that we are supporting children in the best way possible so that they are able to make good progress. Sometimes children with ASC have specific sensory difficulties and can become upset, distracted or react in an aggressive manner. It is important to remember that this is due to the discomfort or pain they are feeling in response to sensory processing difficulties.

Within the classroom, we will make reasonable adjustments to help any child achieve their full potential, including children with ASC. These reasonable adjustments may include, but are not limited to personalised visual timetables, now and next cards, sensory breaks throughout the day, quiet working areas when children feel overwhelmed, time out, sensory toys/fidget aids. These adjustments will be discussed with parents and will be noted on the child's learning plan.