

Parent Wave 1 Quality First Teaching: Strategies for ASD

Quality First Teaching, differentiated for individual students, is the first step in responding to students who have or may not have SEND. All school members are routinely providing support and guidance as set out in the SEND Code of Practice 2015. Students' barriers to learning are identified early, quickly and correct support or intervention are provided. We monitor the impact and effectiveness of support and interventions through the graduated approach and publish this document so parents/carers will know what support they can reasonably expect to be provided.

Specific training has been provided to all staff on how ASD may manifest and how best to support a student with ASD in school. This additional document is given to teaching staff.

What we ask staff to do to support a student with ASD

1. Read the information on the dashboard and apply it in the classroom, the tutor base, around school and on school trips

- Make sure you note what the student says about themselves, or what their parent says about them, on the dashboard.
- Keep to your word - students will expect you to follow through with what you say you will do and can feel unfairly treated if you do not. This can be very true for a person with autism.

2. Make learning accessible

- ASD can breed anxiety: create a safe space where the student knows where they sit; what to do if they feel anxious; where the room is, what your expectations and boundaries are and try to stick with them.
- A cluttered noisy room is a distraction and can overwhelm a student with autism. So, clear rooms and shut the door if it is noisy outside.
- A student with ASD may often experience sensory overload: smells, noise, fabrics, too many people, bright lighting and too much to look at can be overwhelming

- Only allow one person to speak at a time.
- For changes known in advance, let the student know.
 - Information should be presented in steps - timings will help. If you use timings, make sure you stick to them. Put steps up on the board where all can see.
 - Don't present too much information at once. Cognitive overload can send the student into a shutdown mode.
 - Give clear instructions. Verbal communication is often the least effective way to communicate with a person with autism. Diagrams and pictures are much better.
 - Use key terms, but avoid jargon and be literal and specific.
 - Address the student by name and wait to check they are listening.
 - Give 'take up time' by moving away, rather than standing waiting for them to respond. That creates unnecessary pressure.
 - A person with autism may avoid eye contact and not like having anyone in their personal space.
 - A student may not like group work - ask them. Sometimes, you can give the whole class the option of group work or not group work: then you haven't singled them out. When you have created a safe space and good relationship, it is ok to gently push the outside of their comfort zone by carefully selecting a partner (or two). Think about why you want them to work in a group though, as the student with autism may not actually learn anything while trying to concentrate on (eg) turn-taking in discussion.

3. Sense of justice

A student with autism often has a strong sense of what is right or wrong by them. They are not always right and need help to see alternative views or how what they think or do impacts other people.

For example: a student with autism may finish first and you may wish to give some extra work to do. Some students may not understand this and be quite resistant. 'Why should I do extra work? Noone else is. I have already done my work...' They may then distract others. So it may be a case of offering alternative things to do that don't involve 'more work...'

4. Homework

- Students with ASD are often resistant to doing schoolwork at home. Make sure they understand the point of the homework - and maybe don't call it 'homework'.
- Put this on google classroom.
- Consider if the task can be related to the student's interests or involve less writing.
- ...or give them less homework, especially in KS3. Build it up slowly and make it successful.

5. Understanding behaviour

For a student with autism, behaviour is usually a form of communication. If it is an unhelpful behaviour, consider:

- Do they understand what you mean?
- Are they struggling with their peers?
- Are they overloaded with sensory sensations?
- Are they worried, anxious, fearful?
- Do they know how to organise that task?

6. Have high expectations

Read subject specific advice about teaching autistic students, get to know the students you teach and build a positive relationship with them. Encourage shared interests with other students, as shared interests often make the best friendships.

Useful Support: [Education \(autism.org.uk\)](https://www.autism.org.uk)