



St Anne's School and Sixth Form College

Autistic spectrum policy

This policy was adopted in the Autumn term 2015 and updated September 2018

1. INTRODUCTION

All pupils at St Anne's School and Sixth Form College have an Educational Health Care Plan that defines them as having a Severe and/or Complex learning difficulty. In addition, many pupils also have a diagnosis of being on the Autistic Spectrum (AS). This policy is a whole-school / residence approach.

People on the AS have difficulties in:

- non-verbal and verbal communication,
- Social understanding and social behaviour,
- thinking and behaving flexibly (rigidity of thought) according to the situation.
- sensory perception and responses.

Pupils on the AS may experience unusual sensitivity to all senses including sound, touch smell and visual stimuli.

Although all people on the AS share certain difficulties; their condition may affect them in different ways.

This policy document sets out the school's aims, principles and strategies for the education of pupils on the AS at St Anne's School and Sixth Form College.

It will form the basis for the development of AS-specific practice in the school.

2. RATIONALE

To ensure that pupils on the autistic spectrum can access the broad, balanced and relevant curriculum offered to pupils throughout our school.

The additional difficulties characteristic of pupils on the AS need to be considered and this will include specific strategies about the learning environment, communication, sensory perceptions, planning, teaching and learning objectives.

3. AIMS

To enable the following key principles to underpin practice and the best possible education for

pupils with an autistic spectrum disorder we strive to ensure:

- Knowledge and understanding of autistic spectrum condition throughout the school.
- Knowledge, understanding and implementation of established interventions and approaches.
- Knowledge and understanding of general and specific behaviours and de escalation techniques.

4. APPROACHES AND INTERVENTIONS

To meet the needs of all pupils across the spectrum we use a diverse range of established and researched approaches and interventions; drawing on best practice and continuously monitoring and evaluating their use.

Interventions and approaches include;

- TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication handicapped Children),
- Total Communication Approach incorporating signing/symbols/photographs/written word/
- PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System),
- Sensory Assessments to establish sensory profiles leading to effective sensory interventions.
- Intensive Interaction.
- Team teach
- Sensory movement sessions/ Sensory circuits.
- SCERTS (Social Communication, Emotional Regulation and Transactional Support.)
- Visual support in the form of photographs/pictures/symbols and Now/Next boards to help Pupils to accommodate and manage transitions.

5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND INCLUSION

Pupils on the AS may be taught in specialist classes for pupils on the AS or may be included within the EYFS, key stage 1,2,3,4 or Sixth Form classes on a full or part-time basis. Where possible they will also access sessions in mainstream school settings.

The decision as to where a pupil is placed, and their degree of inclusion will be based upon individual needs and school resources which are assessed and agreed at entry to the school. Pupils are constantly monitored, and their progress and consequent placement reviewed annually.

6. SPECIFIC NEEDS AND REQUIREMENT

At St Anne's School and Sixth Form College it is recognised that pupils on the AS have specific needs and requirements that must be addressed.

These include:

- Structured teaching.
- Continuity and consistency of practice and provision
- Visual prompts and cues.
- Communication systems which are developed with the Speech and Language Therapist (SALT).
- Use of augmentative communication systems including PECs, objects of reference.
- Personalised timetables/schedules.
- Use of social stories.
- Sensory integration sessions from a specialist Occupational Therapist.
- Opportunities for independent learning.
- Opportunities for social integration.
- Continued approaches across the 24-hour setting.

7. CONTINUITY OF PRACTICE

At St Anne's School and Sixth Form College staff recognise the importance of generalising the skills that pupils learn across school, home and in the school residence.

Class teachers regularly liaise with other professional Agencies, key workers in the residence and parents/carers to ensure continuity of approaches in and out of school.

To ensure continuity every pupil on the AS at St Anne's School and Sixth Form College must have:

- Communication system tailored to their needs.
- Structured teaching
- Structured learning environment
- Visual cues.
- Sensory Assessment.

To ensure continuity, most pupils on the AS at St Anne's School and Sixth Form College will have access to:

- An individual timetable/schedule
- Individual work station.
- Social stories to support their understanding.
- Access to specialist approaches, by trained members of staff (such as TEACCH; PECS etc.)
- Opportunities for physical breaks.

To ensure continuity some pupils on the AS at St Anne's School and Sixth Form College will have:

- Specific plans to support emotional and behaviour needs.
- Appropriate levels of staff support.
- Specific sensory diet.
- Safe / calming spaces (both internal and external)
- Overnight stays within the residence

8. ENVIRONMENT

Many pupils on the AS have sensory difficulties which can result in unusual or uncomfortable perception of sound, sense, touch, sight and smell.

Consequently, many children are unable to focus upon teaching activities as they are constantly distracted by stimuli and sensory input which can cause discomfort or pain.

Pupils on the AS may also have difficulties with flexibility and require clear visual support to understand routines and expectations.

At St Anne's School and Sixth Form College staff work to reduce environmental anxiety and distress for pupils and students on the autistic spectrum by the following:

- Providing an environment which is calm, distraction free and has a low level of visual and auditory stimulus.
- Providing pupils with a high degree of visual and physical structure.
- Providing pupils with a means of requesting time out to a chill-out area (safe space) when their levels of anxiety become raised.
- Strategies to cope with highly stimulating environment / situations.

9. SENSORY ISSUES / SENSORY NEEDS

Sensory profiles may be used for pupils on the AS following a sensory assessment by a specialist qualified Occupational Therapist.

Sensory assessments will be monitored and reviewed at the Annual Review.

10. ASSESSMENT

All pupils are assessed for an Educational health care plan which is reviewed annually. B squared assessment is used throughout the school. The SCERTS framework assessment is used with some pupils.

11. CURRICULUM

The curriculum policy is followed within the school for each pupil/student.

12. BEHAVIOUR

Some pupils/students on the AS display behaviours that challenge. Team teach is utilised throughout the school. Safe areas are available for pupils/students who need time out of the main classroom.

13. TRAINING

- Many teachers are trained in autism-specific practices which will include TEACCH, PEC, s SCERTS.
- All staff have had training on autism-awareness.

Staff are kept up to date with current research relating to the education and well being of pupils on the AS.

14. DEVELOPMENT MONITORING AND REVIEW

St Anne's School and Sixth Form College are part of the NAS. St Anne's School and Sixth Form College and Residence have Autism Accreditation in the teaching of students and pupils on the AS. Provision for pupils on the AS is continuously monitored and evaluated as part of the school and sixth form self-evaluation process.

15. REVIEW AND RESPONSIBILITY

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Person Responsible for the AS Audit, Action Plan and development of specialist provision for pupils on the AS: Christine Lee – Assistant Head of Lower School

This policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies, including the following policies, documents and guidance: Curriculum Policies, Health and Safety Policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education Policy, Child Protection Policy, Positive Handling Policy.