

**Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) Policy – 2020**

An Autism Spectrum Condition (including Asperger syndrome) is a complex developmental disability that affects how the brain functions and how a person perceives, processes, understands and responds to information. It also affects how a person communicates and relates to people. The term ‘autism spectrum’ is often used because the condition varies from person to person.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies, including: Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy, **Behaviour Management Policy**, Child Protection Policy, **Communication Policy**, Inclusion Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy, Equality and Diversity Policy, Special Needs Policy, **Teaching and Learning Policy** and the Transition Policy **(key policies related to ASC)**.

**How do these difficulties affect children in school?**

Each pupil diagnosed with ASC, will experience variable difficulties. However, because all children with an ASC experience difficulty with social interaction and communication they find it hard to learn how to play and get on with others. Understanding facial expressions, body language and gestures can be extremely challenging.

Our pupils on the autistic spectrum are very different from each other, but they all have needs in the same four areas.

* Social understanding and social interaction
* Behaviour and thought that lead to repetitiveness and inflexibility
* Communication, both verbal and non-verbal
* Sensory perceptual difficulties

**Mission Statement:**

Foxfield School aims to be an autism friendly school. We believe that all children and young people with autism are entitled to access all aspects of school life. They have the right to learn to the best of their abilities and should not be disadvantage by their individual perspectives and experiences of the world. Foxfield School’s ethos celebrates diversity and recognises that equality does not mean treating all people the same.

**Roles and Responsibilities:**

Management Team

* To ensure all staff adhere to the ASC policy.
* To ensure that all staff have basic ASC training, including a range of ASC strategies as part of their induction.
* To have an oversight and understanding of the range of ASC strategies used in school.
* To identify funds for purchasing resources, equipment and for accessing relevant training.

ASC Co-ordinator

* To be accountable for standards of provision for pupils with Autism Spectrum Condition across the three departments in the school.
* To lead the school in a detailed examination of current provision using a external national kite mark or self evaluation system to assess the effectiveness of provision for pupils with an Autistic Spectrum Condition and to identify areas for development and improvement.
* To lead the staff and governors in undertaking ongoing whole school evaluation, planning and development of provision at Foxfield for pupils with an Autistic Spectrum Condition
* To devise, implement, monitor and evaluate school policies and procedures relating to Autistic Spectrum Conditions
* To undertake continuous professional development in order to maintain a thorough knowledge of current best practice in the field of education for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Conditions.
* To provide and facilitate staff training, advice and support in relation to Autistic Spectrum Conditions which extends their knowledge and skills, disseminates information and best practice and leads to improvements in provision.
* To liaise with other staff, parents and other professionals in relation to the school meeting the needs of pupils with an Autistic Spectrum Condition
* To monitor and analyse standards of achievement and progress of pupils with an Autistic Spectrum Condition both within school and where applicable in relation to the regional or national comparisons.
* To work with others to discuss issues in relation to the teaching and learning of pupils with Autistic Spectrum Conditions within their classrooms and lessons.
* To maintain comprehensive and current details of the provision for pupils with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder on the School’s website.
* To liaise with the school’s Assessment, Recording and Reporting Coordinator and Heads of Key Stage departments where appropriate.
* To provide advice, training and consultancy to partner organisations.
* To liaise with outside agencies, organisations and partners in relation to professional development and School practice in meeting the needs of pupils with an Autistic Spectrum Condition.
* To take a lead role in the preparation and presentation of information about the standards of provision, achievement, pupil progress, planning, staff training, teaching and learning for pupils with an Autistic Spectrum Condition at any whole school or subject specific Ofsted Inspections.

Class Teacher

* To adhere to the school ASC policy and other related school policies.
* To create an autism friendly classroom environment which is low distraction with differentiated areas *(see attached classroom checklist)*
* To integrate autism strategies throughout the school day.
* To provide a curriculum that is functional, meaningful, motivating and developmentally appropriate.
* To work collaboratively with the ASC support group and the Assessment, Recording and Reporting Coordinator to assess, set targets and integrate the **SCERTS**\* approach in relevant classes.
* To attend relevant training, and identify specialist training needed to integrate ASC strategies throughout the school day.
* To ensure that all relevant information and resources are passed over at transition, including the completion of annual transition plans for all pupils with autism.

Support Staff

* To adhere to the school ASC policy and other related school policies.
* To attend relevant training.
* To maintain an autism friendly classroom environment which is low distraction with differentiated areas *(see attached classroom checklist)*
* To ensure necessary resources are available throughout the school day.
* To support the class teacher.

\* **SCERTS** is a multi-disciplinary framework that focuses on building competence in social communication, emotional regulation and transactional support. It is not a specific approach but rather a way of assessing, goal setting and monitoring progress in the areas of social communication and emotional regulation. It also supports collaborative working between professionals and families. SCERTS is currently in place in identified classes across the three key stages in Foxfield School.

**Approaches to supporting pupils with ASC:**

The approaches used to support pupils with autism are individualised to each pupil’s strengths and needs. Training and support on using these strategies will be offered to staff on a needs led basis. There are also regular opportunities for staff to access autism related training through whole school and teacher staff meetings and in the annual Merseyside SEN schools training day.

How Foxfield School provides support with each area of need is outlined below:

**Support with communication:**

Communication is seen as a key area of learning for all pupils. The school provides a ‘total communication environment’, using sign-supported speech and symbols, as well as photographs and objects of reference if necessary, to provide clear and reinforced communication. Individual communication books may be developed to support conversation like exchanges and pupil’s communicative intent. The Speech and Language Therapists will develop this system along with the teachers and teaching assistants.

* Visual daily routines
* Breakdown of lessons and transitions
* Consistent use of signage around the whole school environment
* Consistent use of Makaton signing by whole school staff
* Use of BSL signing
* Effective use of PECS, PODD and Objects of Reference
* Support and liaison with Wirral Speech and Language Therapy Service when needed

**Support with social interaction:**

* Specific teaching of social skills and emotional literacy
* Social stories to target specific problem areas for individuals
* Use of visual prompts
* Specific teaching of independent living skills in the community and in the home

**Support with flexibility of thought:**

* The planned use of the ‘Surprise’ symbol to support changes to the expected routine
* Visual schedules to support lesson structure and timings
* Use of timers within lessons for different activities
* Visual timetables
* Effective transition planning for movement between year groups
* Close partnerships with feeder primary schools and further education

**Support with self-reliance and problem solving skills:**

* Use of TEACCH strategies, including a structured visual environment with clear areas for different tasks, predictable events, through the use of visual timetables and clear expectations through the use of TEACCH boxes.
* Use of symbols to label the environment.

**Support with sensory integration:**

At Foxfield we try to reduce environmental anxiety and distress by providing environments that are calm and comfortable with few distractions. Specific sensory support is provided to meet each pupil’s needs and to ready for learning.

* Sensory profiles will be made for relevant pupils, for information sharing between members of staff
* Blinds and temperature controls in classrooms
* Ear defenders for noisy environments
* Quiet rooms/areas defined within classrooms
* Sensory diets for pupils
* Pupil specific programmes in the Engine room, with activities to address specific issues
* Tangles, fidgets and appropriate sensory resources to support pupils in the classroom

**Other agencies**

Foxfield will liaise with, share information with, and seek advice and support from other agencies whenever appropriate for a pupil. Agencies may include:

* Paediatricians
* SALT (Speech and Language Therapy Service)
* Social Care
* CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service)
* Educational Psychology Service
* Sensory Support Service
* WAS (Wirral Autistic Society)

**Training**

The Autism Quality Action Group (AQAG) is run on a voluntary basis for all staff at Foxfield. The whole school coordinator of ASC Provision is responsible for creating this programme and overseeing the delivering of specific sessions. The AQAG aims to critically analyse identified issues within school which may impact upon learners with autism in our setting.

Staff members at Foxfield are able to request additional courses on supporting ASC to enhance their knowledge and understanding.