



Where Autism
Professionals Connect

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Back to school

Returning to school, or indeed beginning school for the first time, is a time of enormous change for autistic pupils and involves new routines, environments and people.

Here we have gathered together a number of articles and resources for school staff on how best to support autistic pupils on their return to school. The document also contains some useful information for parents too.

This downloadable document includes links to:

- a school resource pack including information on behaviour and communication issues and useful strategies to use
- inclusion and autism awareness
- good practice
- gender and ethnicity considerations
- useful blogs and further resources

The National Autistic Society schools pack

The National Autistic Society have produced an information pack for school staff which includes information about autism, how it may impact on children and young people in education settings, information on strategies, interventions and useful resources from the NAS and other organisations.

It covers a range of topics including:

- planning the right support
- behaviour
- effective communication
- breaks and lunchtimes

Author: Chris Hunter
Organisation: Network Autism
Date of publication: 31 August 2016

You can download the school pack here: <http://www.autism.org.uk/professionals/teachers/in-your-school/pack.aspx>

Good practice

Victoria Hatton, ASD inclusion teacher in a mainstream school, explores how to support children and young people on their first day back at school.

- First day of school <http://network.autism.org.uk/good-practice/case-studies/first-day-school>

Victoria writes a blog celebrating differentiation in schools, and it includes lots of useful advice and strategies for being inclusive in the classroom.

- Differentiation is easy <https://differentiationiseasy.com/>

Jacky Wyatt, reception teacher in a mainstream primary school, has written an excellent article on pre-school to primary transitions. Children with a diagnosis should already be on a transition pathway by the time they start school, but Jacky also offers advice on what to do if you suspect a child has autism but has no diagnosis.

- Pre-school to primary transitions for autistic children <http://network.autism.org.uk/good-practice/case-studies/pre-school-primary-transitions-children-autism>

Promoting inclusion

The National Autistic Society has produced a two-lesson introduction to autism and Asperger syndrome. They include two case sheets and some games for introducing autism to a class

- Lesson guide <http://www.autism.org.uk/professionals/teachers/lessons-breaktimes/lesson-guide.aspx>

Riverside School in Stirling is a mainstream primary school with an autism provision. Their Autism Provision Gang are a group of P7 pupils raising awareness and understanding of autism within the school.

- Riverside AP Gang: raising autism awareness in a primary school <http://network.autism.org.uk/knowledge/insight-opinion/riverside-ap-gang-raising-autism-awareness-primary-school>

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The Autism Education Trust have produced a peer awareness pack for ages 9 to 12 year olds which involves a comic-strip adventure.

- Autism peer awareness lesson
<http://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/resources/autism%20peer%20awareness%20lesson.aspx>

Some important considerations from Sarah-Jane Critchley of the Autism Education Trust about whether to disclose a pupil's diagnosis.

- Disclosing an autism diagnosis in school or college
<http://network.autism.org.uk/knowledge/policy-guidance/disclosing-autism-diagnosis-school-or-college>

Andy Cutting, the NAS specialist exclusions advisor, offers some tips for overcoming the barriers to inclusion.

- Top 5 autism tips for professionals: overcoming the barriers to inclusion in education
<http://network.autism.org.uk/knowledge/insight-opinion/top-5-tips-autism-professionals-overcoming-barriers-inclusion>

Ruth Fidler discusses some of the difficulties facing pupils with pathological demand avoidance (PDA) and how staff can best support them.

- Meeting the educational needs of pupils with PDA
<http://network.autism.org.uk/knowledge/insight-opinion/meeting-educational-needs-pupils-pda>

In this interview Jude Ragan discusses how to spot signs of anxiety in autistic pupils and what staff can do to relieve the anxiety.

- Autism and anxiety in school: interview with Jude Ragan
<http://network.autism.org.uk/knowledge/insight-opinion/autism-and-anxiety-school-interview-jude-ragan>

Gender and ethnicity

Autistic girls may be better at masking their difficulties and tend to interact socially more often than autistic boys, leading to many being undiagnosed. The following is some information and advice on supporting autistic girls.

Author: Chris Hunter
Organisation: Network Autism
Date of publication: 31 August 2016

The NAS has some general information on how autism may present differently in girls.

- Gender and autism <http://www.autism.org.uk/about/what-is/gender.aspx>

Victoria Honeybourne presents the results of some research into the hidden difficulties of autistic girls at school.

- Autistic girls in the classroom: hidden difficulties and how to help
<http://network.autism.org.uk/good-practice/evidence-base/girls-autism-classroom-hidden-difficulties-and-how-help>

In this interview Dr. Jacqui Ashton-Smith discuss the ways educational professionals can best support autistic girls.

- Educating girls on the autism spectrum <http://network.autism.org.uk/knowledge/insight-opinion/talk-educating-girls-autism-spectrum>

Education professionals working with minority ethnic families with autistic children will have cultural differences to consider. In this article by Olatokunbo Bankole we find out how professionals can best support African families with an autistic child at school.

- Involving African families in the education of their autistic children
<http://network.autism.org.uk/knowledge/insight-opinion/involving-african-families-education-their-autistic-children>

Parents

Some advice and strategies from the NAS for parents whose child is about to begin or change schools.

- Starting or changing schools <http://www.autism.org.uk/about/in-education/transition/starting-or-changing-school.aspx>

Marks and Spencer have produced an Easy Dressing school uniform collection in collaboration with the NAS. Students from the Helen Allison School were involved in the design of the uniforms.

- Autism-friendly school wear <http://www.autism.org.uk/get-involved/media-centre/news/2016-07-21-marks-and-spencer.aspx>

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Useful resources

MyWorld

MyWorld is the NAS school and nursery resource programme that helps you support autistic children in your school or nursery. Sign up to receive free emails on a range of different topics such as socialising and autism, sensory and behaviour issues and transition.

- MyWorld <http://www.autism.org.uk/professionals/teachers/myworldhub.aspx>

Network Autism education groups

The following Network Autism groups are for professionals working in nurseries, primary and secondary schools. View school resources shared by other professionals, or why not add your own tools and strategies to share with others.

Group content is only available to Network Autism members. It's free and quick to register so please do join us!

- Nursery autism resources <http://network.autism.org.uk/group/nursery-autism-resources>
- Education professionals in primary schools
<http://network.autism.org.uk/group/education-professionals-primary-schools>
- Education professionals in secondary schools
<http://network.autism.org.uk/group/education-professionals-secondary-schools>

Autism Education Trust

The Autism Education Trust has a range of toolkits and good practice for education professionals, including a transition toolkit

- Autism Education Trust <http://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/>
- Transition toolkit
<http://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/~media/aet/assets/global/pdfs/transition%20toolkit.ashx?la=en-gb>