



Supporting Autism Policy

Autism is a lifelong developmental disability which affects how people communicate and interact with the world. One in 100 people are on the autism spectrum and there are around 700,000 autistic adults and children in the UK.

National Autistic Society (2020). What is Autism? [online] Autism.org.uk. Available at: <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/what-is-autism>.

Introduction

At Carew Academy we strive to develop the full potential of everyone within our community. Carew Academy is an Autism Education trust training school and as such are able to practice the same beliefs that are followed through the Autism Education Trust

The Autism Policy has 4 main areas, that are learner focused which look at:

- The Individual Pupil
- Building Relationships
- Curriculum and Learning
- Enabling Environments

Following these 4 areas enables us to effectively consider each individual and to support their needs effectively to thrive during their time at Carew Academy.

The Individual Pupil

Before we are able to consider a student's learning path, we need to consider their individual needs. The EHCP document is a crucial document when working with all individuals and should give you an insight into who the student is and what behaviours and learning styles can be considered to support them.

If you have met one Autistic individual, you have only ever met one autistic individual.

Autism is a spectrum condition and affects everyone in different ways, so although you may meet people with similarities, each autistic individual should be supported as an individual. Students may express and experience things in different ways and some items to consider are:

Social communication and social interaction challenges

- Some students can experience communication difficulties, which can affect their development and understanding in learning and building relationships. Helping students to develop these skills are integral to them developing well in school and when moving on from school. Carew currently uses the **Blanks Model** ([Link Here](#)) to help gauge students' understanding as an initial aid to support their development.

Repetitive and Restrictive Behaviours

- Autistic people may use repetitive movements, such as hand flapping, rocking or pacing. These can be coping or sensory behaviours which can help to manage and deal with stressful and anxious situations. These behaviours may need to be considered when supporting students with Autism as the behaviours may be compulsive and uncontrollable to manage situations in the world around them.

Highly focused interested or hobbies

- Many autistic students have hobbies or interests, which many could be considered experts in that field. Interests should be

considered when planning for students to build engagement and motivation within their learning environment.

Building Relationships

Building relationships is an important part of students accessing education successfully. As well as students being able to build social circles and develop their understanding using the BLANKS model. Staff also need to be able to build relationships with these students to encourage them to work closer with us and build trust.

Many students can experience extreme anxiety in many situations and students wanting to seek safe people out within school to manage their anxiety, enables students to manage their anxiety and reduce escalations quickly allowing them to calm and return to their lessons.

As well as teaching students to learn curriculum subjects, it is of equal importance to help them to develop their social and managing skills, by using a variety of resources, such as communication aids, games and other individualised ways in which they can communicate and develop relationships with others.

Curriculum and Learning

All students at Carew Academy have an EHCP (Education, Health, Care Plan). The EHCP is to ensure students are receiving individualised learning that is suitable to their learning needs. As well as differentiated work and learning opportunities, we must also consider how students are able to access their learning and the support needed, this may be in the form of ICT equipment, quiet spaces to work and visual, written aids which can enable them to succeed. Students may require sensory diets or times to move away from the lesson for a short period before returning to learn.

Enabling Environments

The environments we offer in and out of the classroom are important to consider when expecting students to remain engaged within a lesson. Many autistic individuals may experience an over- or under-sensitivity to sounds, touch, tastes, smells, light, colours, temperatures or pain.

We need to ensure our environments are optimal to support those with Autism to reduce distraction and anxiety as well as developing their coping skills for when they are in situations which may induce anxiety and stress. Things to consider within school are:

Displays

- Ensure displays are kept minimal, but informative. Avoiding bright colours, instead using plain or pastel colours, to reduce distraction.

Smells

- Avoid strong smelling aromas in the classroom where possible, this can be extremely distracting for autistic people and could be a reason why students are disengaging when in certain classes.

Noise

- Encourage students to use quiet voices when talking in the classroom and avoid shouting, this is included when walking around the building especially during busy times, such as class transition.

Lighting

- Many students can find extremely bright rooms distracting, where possible can an area be darkened or other forms to help reduce bright lighting.

Sensory overload

- Many students need space to cool down. As a listed building this may be difficult at times as some rooms may not offer space for them to step away from a situation within the class,

so consider moving around the building during quieter times for a short period, waiting outside the classroom for a period of time or sensory diets to help students to cool down.