



Our SEND [Special Educational Needs and Disability] and Inclusion Newsletter will be issued every half term and will include useful articles relating to SEND, links to a wide range of services and useful tips for parents/carers whose child has additional needs.

## What can I do if I think my child has SEND?

Mrs Claire Callaghan is the school SENDCo [Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Co-ordinator] and Inclusion Lead. If you have any concerns regarding your child, and would like to speak to Mrs Callaghan, please do not hesitate to contact me at [ccallaghan@st-leonards-stafford.staffs.sch.uk](mailto:ccallaghan@st-leonards-stafford.staffs.sch.uk) or via the school office. My working days are Monday and Tuesday.



Special educational needs, often referred to as 'SEN' or 'SEND' (Special educational needs and disabilities), is a term used to describe learning difficulties or disabilities that make it harder for a child to learn compared to children of the same age.

All children may experience challenges with their learning at some point and for most children, these difficulties overcome with support from teachers and home. However, children with SEND are likely to need extra or different help to be able to learn.

## How do you know if a child has SEND?

A child or young person has SEN if:

- They have significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of other children and young people the same age
- They have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 provisions

A child or young person has a disability if:

- They have a physical and mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out day-to-day activities.

## What types of difficulties are SEND?

Children may have difficulties in one or more of these areas:

**Cognition and Learning** - A child may find all learning difficult or have difficulties with specific activities such as reading or spelling. A child may have trouble understanding instructions and carrying out tasks. A child may have memory difficulties.

**Communication and Interaction** – A child may have difficulty in talking to others or understanding what others are saying to them. A child may have difficulty with interactions with others, such as not being able to take turns. A child who has speech and language needs will be classed as having communication and interaction needs.

**Physical and Sensory** – A child may have hearing or vision loss. A child may have difficulty with sensory processing, being under or over-sensitive. A child may have a medical condition which affects them physically.

**Social, Emotional and Mental Health** - A child may display behaviours such as having very low self-esteem or being very anxious. A child may display challenging, disruptive or distressing behaviours. A child may have underlying conditions which affect their mental health.

You can find further information about SEND on our school website

<https://www.stleonardsstafford.co.uk/page/?title=SEND&pid=37>

<https://www.stleonardsstafford.co.uk/page/?title=SEND+AND+INCLUSION&pid=22>

Don't forget to visit 'Staffordshire Connects' website: a one stop shop for children and young people who have SEND in Staffordshire.



<https://www.staffordshireconnects.info/kb5/staffordshire/directory/home.page>

**SENDIASS**  
Staffordshire Family Partnership

For confidential impartial advice, regarding the law relating to special educational needs and disability, then please contact SENDIASS on:

Phone: 01785 356 921

Email: [sfps@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:sfps@staffordshire.gov.uk)



### **Children and Families Single Point of Access (CaFSPA)**

The way Children and Families' services are accessed has been streamlined with the Children and Families Single Point of Access (CaFSPA).

We have introduced a single telephone number (0808 178 0611) and email address ([CaFSPA@mpft.nhs.uk](mailto:CaFSPA@mpft.nhs.uk)). This will ensure one place for children, young people, and families to find support for health and emotional wellbeing.

The initial services to be part of the Single Point of Access are CAMHS, Health Visiting and School Nursing, and Action for Children.

CaFSPA aims to simplify the way children, young people, their families or carers seek care, support, and guidance, while also streamlining how health and care professionals, alongside others can make a referral.

CaFSPA will triage information provided to understand the needs of the child, young person, and their families.

The team will make further contact with the young person or family if further information is required to identify a team best placed to offer appropriate support.

More teams will join the single point of access in the future.

Child and adolescent mental health services are accessed via the **Children and Families Single Point of Access (CaFSPA)**, bringing together children and young people's mental health services including school nursing and Action for Children.

- The **CaFSPA** can take telephone calls / referral forms from self-referral or from professionals.
- Referrals are screened and triaged by the CaFSPA.

Telephone: 0808 178 0611

Email referrals to: [CaFSPA@mpft.nhs.uk](mailto:CaFSPA@mpft.nhs.uk)

# **SPOTLIGHT ON – AUTISM**

## What is autism?

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

[What is Autism? \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=31201101384)

### **Being autistic**

Autism is a spectrum condition and affects people in different ways. Like all people, autistic people have their own strengths and weaknesses. Below is a list of difficulties autistic people may share, including the two key difficulties required for a diagnosis.

#### **Social communication**

Autistic people have difficulties with interpreting both verbal and non-verbal language like gestures or tone of voice. Some autistic people are unable to speak or have limited speech while other autistic people have very good language skills but struggle to understand sarcasm or tone of voice. Other challenges include:

- taking things literally and not understanding abstract concepts
- needing extra time to process information or answer questions
- repeating what others say to them (this is called echolalia)

#### **Social interaction**

Autistic people often have difficulty 'reading' other people - recognising or understanding others' feelings and intentions - and expressing their own emotions. This can make it very hard to navigate the social world. Autistic people may:

- appear to be insensitive
- seek out time alone when overloaded by other people
- not seek comfort from other people
- appear to behave 'strangely' or in a way thought to be socially inappropriate
- find it hard to form friendships.

#### **Repetitive and restrictive behaviour**

- With its unwritten rules, the world can seem a very unpredictable and confusing place to autistic people. This is why they often prefer to have routines so that they know what is going to happen. They may want to travel the same way to and from school or work, wear the same clothes or eat exactly the same food for breakfast.
- Autistic people may also repeat movements such as hand flapping, rocking or the repetitive use of

an object such as twirling a pen or opening and closing a door. Autistic people often engage in these behaviours to help calm themselves when they are stressed or anxious, but many autistic people do it because they find it enjoyable.

- Change to routine can also be very distressing for autistic people and make them very anxious. It could be having to adjust to big events like Christmas or changing schools, facing uncertainty at work, or something simpler like a bus detour that can trigger their anxiety.

## Over- or under-sensitivity to light, sound, taste or touch

- Autistic people may experience over- or under-sensitivity to sounds, touch, tastes, smells, light, colours, temperatures or pain. For example, they may find certain background sounds like music in a restaurant, which other people ignore or block out, unbearably loud or distracting. This can cause anxiety or even physical pain. Many autistic people prefer not to hug due to discomfort, which can be misinterpreted as being cold and aloof.
- Many autistic people avoid everyday situations because of their sensitivity issues. Schools, workplaces and shopping centres can be particularly overwhelming and cause sensory overload. There are many simple adjustments that can be made to make environments more autism-friendly.

## Highly focused interests or hobbies

Many autistic people have intense and highly focused interests, often from a fairly young age. These can change over time or be lifelong. Autistic people can become experts in their special interests and often like to share their knowledge. A stereotypical example is trains but that is one of many. Greta Thunberg's intense interest, for example, is protecting the environment.

Like all people, autistic people gain huge amounts of pleasure from pursuing their interests and see them as fundamental to their wellbeing and happiness.

Being highly focused helps many autistic people do well academically and in the workplace but they can also become so engrossed in particular topics or activities that they neglect other aspects of their lives.

## Extreme anxiety

Anxiety is a real difficulty for many autistic adults, particularly in social situations or when facing change. It can affect a person psychologically and physically and impact quality of life for autistic people and their families.

It is very important that autistic people learn to recognise their triggers and find coping mechanisms to help reduce their anxiety. However, many autistic people have difficulty recognising and regulating their emotions. Over one third of autistic people have serious mental health issues and too many autistic people are being failed by mental health services.

## Meltdowns and shutdowns

When everything becomes too much for an autistic person, they can go into meltdown or shutdown. These are very intense and exhausting experiences.

A meltdown happens when someone becomes completely overwhelmed by their current situation and temporarily loses behavioural control. This loss of control can be verbal (eg shouting, screaming, crying) or physical (eg kicking, lashing out, biting) or both. Meltdowns in children are often mistaken for temper tantrums and parents and their autistic children often experience hurtful comments and judgmental stares from less understanding members of the public.

A shutdown appears less intense to the outside world but can be equally debilitating. Shutdowns are also a response to being overwhelmed, but may appear more passive - eg an autistic person going quiet or 'switching off'. One autistic woman described having a shutdown as: 'just as frustrating as a meltdown, because of not being able to figure out how to react how I want to, or not being able to react at all; there isn't any 'figuring out' because the mind feels like it is past a state of being able to interpret.'

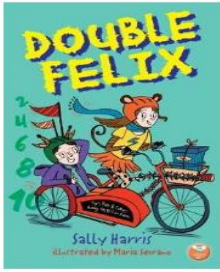
## How young people with ASC may present when feeling Anxious:

Children with autism can present very differently when experiencing anxiety. Some behaviours can be very subtle while others can be more extreme. Although they present very differently these behaviours are communicating that they need some extra support to manage their emotions.

Many children with autism can struggle to verbalise or even recognise how they are feeling.

They may withdraw, refuse, avoid or be unable to interact.

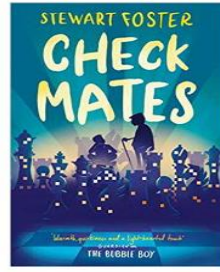




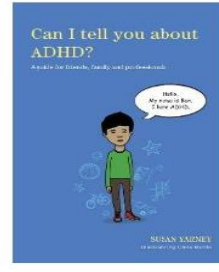
**Double Felix**  
Sally Harris, Maria Serrano



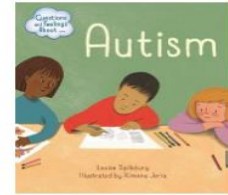
**M is for Autism**  
The Students of Limpsfield Grange School, Vicky Martin, Robert Pritchett



**Check Mates**  
Stewart Foster



**Can I tell you about ADHD?: A Guide for Friends, Family and Professionals**  
Susan Yarney, Chris Martin










**Questions and Feelings About: Autism**  
Louise Spilsbury

<https://reading-well.org.uk/books/books-on-prescription/children>

We have as a school worked hard to make sure we can give our Neuro Diverse Community the most positive experience of school possible.

Here are some of the things that can help and we provide:

- HOPE check ins
- OT support
- Access to sensory room
- Break cards
- Ear defenders
- Theraputty
- Walk and Talk
- Sand timers
- Class teacher email
- Safe Spaces
- Referrals to Autism Inclusion Team
- Zones of regulation
- Visual timetables
- Wobble cushions
- Concentration aids
- Now and Next
- SENDCo Parent support

Blue	Green	Yellow	Red
			
I can.. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• take a break</li> <li>• think of happy things</li> <li>• ask for help</li> <li>• have a hug</li> </ul> 	I can.. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• finish my work</li> <li>• listen</li> <li>• help my friends</li> <li>• share my happy thoughts</li> </ul> 	I can.. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ask for a break</li> <li>• talk to my teacher or friends</li> <li>• go for a walk</li> <li>• listen to music</li> </ul> 	I can.. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ask for help</li> <li>• ask for a break</li> <li>• go to a calm area</li> <li>• use my cool down resources</li> </ul> 