



Social and Emotional Understanding Policy

Approved by:	The Proprietors	Date: Jan 2024
Ratified by:	Board of Governors	Date: Feb 2024
Document created on:	July 2021	
Last reviewed on:	Jan 2024	
Next review due by:	Jan 2026	
Document Reviewed by:	K McCarthy	N Purcell

GOAL: To foster a school environment where all students with SEN, regardless of their individual needs, develop the social and emotional skills necessary to become confident, resilient, and well-rounded individuals who feel valued and empowered to contribute positively to their communities.

1. Introduction

Individuals with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) have a neurodiverse brain, which means that their brains develop differently from those of neurotypical people. This difference means that many people with autism have incredible gifts, skills and passions that can lead to the development of new technology and breakthroughs in science. However, many people with a diagnosis of ASD often encounter specific challenges in navigating everyday life. This is often largely due to the core impairments affecting social interaction and communication or as a result of restrictive and repetitive patterns of behaviour and sensory overload. As a result of these challenges, many people with a diagnosis of ASD experience times when they are confused about the world around them and as a result suffer from anxiety related issues.

Specifically, individuals who have a diagnosis of ASD may experience:

- Difficulties understanding unspoken social rules: These are the subtle cues and expectations that govern social interactions, such as turn-taking in conversation, interpreting facial expressions, and understanding humour.
- Difficulties understanding the behaviour of others and predicting what others may do next.
- Challenges with empathy: Empathising involves recognising and understanding the emotions, thoughts, and perspectives of others. This can be challenging for individuals on the spectrum, leading to difficulties comprehending how their actions or words might affect others.

It is important to remember that individuals on the spectrum exhibit a wide range of strengths and weaknesses, and generalisations should be avoided. While these areas often present some of the most significant challenges for many individuals with ASD, focusing solely on deficits can create a negative and inaccurate portrayal of this diverse population.

2. Vision

Our vision is to empower all students, regardless of their individual needs, to develop the social and emotional skills necessary to become confident, resilient, and well-rounded individuals. We believe in fostering a culture of empathy, understanding,

and acceptance, where students feel valued and empowered to contribute positively to their communities.

ARTS Education staff recognise and acknowledge that many of our students:

- Have a fundamental impairment of the innate biologically driven need to communicate.
- Have issues with understanding verbal and non-verbal communication.
- Have difficulty using verbal and non-verbal communication.
- Have issues in understanding the messages other people wish to convey when these are not fully verbalised.
- Issues when taking part in reciprocal conversation.
- Experience difficulties verbalising feelings and emotional states, regardless of how able they are academically.
- Have issues interpreting basic emotions such as sadness, happiness, anger and fear and many are unable to express these feelings in words, even if they have good vocabularies.
- Have difficulty in predicting the CONSEQUENCES of their actions.
- Have the inability to imagine what goes on in other people's minds.
- Find new events frightening because they are unpredictable.
- 'Find 'safety' or 'Comfort' through repeating the same actions and resisting change.
- Experience an OVERSENSITIVITY to various kinds of sensory input, particularly sounds and touch.
- Have impairments of motor coordination (dyspraxia, now known as Developmental Co-ordination Disorder or DCD).
- That to a student with ASD/C, the world can be a chaotic muddle. This can at times result in them exhibiting challenging behaviour because they feel scared and unsafe.

By acknowledging and understanding these difficulties, ARTS Education staff work in a nurturing way, understanding that every learner is an individual and will require specific strategies at different times to help them develop their skills and prepare them for adulthood.

3. Key Strategies

- Explicit teaching of social and emotional skills: We integrate social and emotional learning (SEL) into the curriculum and provide dedicated lessons focusing on skills such as self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

- The use of social stories for specific situations, helping our students understand them better and help them stay safe
- Demonstrate inclusion for all: build a classroom/school community where every one's differences are recognised and celebrated.
- Positive behaviour management: We implement a consistent and positive behaviour management approach that promotes positive choices, recognises strengths, and addresses challenging behaviours constructively.
- Differentiated support: We provide individualised support based on each student's needs, which may include individual or group interventions, access to specialist services, and emotional regulation strategies.
- Partnership working: We collaborate with families, external professionals, and the wider community to ensure a coordinated approach to supporting students' social and emotional needs.
- Safeguarding and wellbeing: We prioritise the safety and well-being of all students, providing clear channels for reporting concerns and access to appropriate support services.
- Staff training: We commit to providing all staff with regular training on SEN, social and emotional development, and relevant safeguarding procedures.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation

We review the effectiveness of our policy and practise every two years through student feedback, parent feedback and staff reflection.

5. Conclusion

This Social and Emotional Understanding Policy is a living document that will be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect the evolving needs of our students and the wider educational landscape. We are committed to working collaboratively with all stakeholders to ensure that our SEN students thrive socially and emotionally, reaching their full potential.

6. Additional Information

- Latest information regarding autism, the dyad of impairments, diagnosis, support available and other information can be found here at [The National Autistic Society Website](#).
- This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's overall SEN policy, Autism policy, safeguarding policy, and behaviour policy.

- We encourage feedback on this policy from all members of the school community.

7. Links to Other Policies

- SEN policy,
- Autism policy
- Safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Online safety policy