

<p>Key advice for mainstream class teachers/TAs on supporting girls with ASC in a class situation</p> <p>Learning – Social – Emotional</p> <p>“We are different from the boys”</p>	<p>Key advice for senior leaders on supporting girls with ASC in a mainstream setting</p> <p>Awareness – Girl Specificity - Home Liaison</p>
<p>Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make learning concrete, contextual and visual; • Like routine, dislike change; • Understand fears, triggers and sensory overload; • Enjoy reading; • Check understanding. May not ask for help, or be avoidant, to mask difficulty; • May be quiet, shy, awkward, compliant, passive; • Incorporate their special interests; • May have a good imagination; • May prefer touch typing; • Perfectionists. Build flexibility in making mistakes and re-drafting work; • Very determined and may like to be in control: offer guided choice; • Help with all transitions: eg after school holidays; • Praise and reward. <p>Social</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will mirror behavior; • May affect different personalities and may not have a strong sense of identity; • May be socially immature and vulnerable; • Need structured activities for social time; • Select partner/s to model behaviour; • Use video, role play, social scripts to show how to respond; • Encourage reciprocity to diminish scripted, controlling play. 	<p>Build whole school awareness of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating an ‘enabling’ school environment; • Presentation of ggirls with ASC, their strengths and special interests; • Analysing ppatterns, function and triggers of ASC behaviors; • Social imitation causing exhaustion during the day; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rising anxiety or mental health issues are indicated by increasing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ demand for routines or sameness ○ trouble sleeping ○ meltdowns ○ avoidance of social situations ○ reliance on obsessions and rituals ○ stimming ○ self-harm (head-banging, scratching skin or hand-biting) ○ poor attendance (‘illness’ allows control) ○ eating problems (due to sensory sensitivities, control or demand avoidance. Lack of nutrition prevents menstruation and physical development); <p>Specificity: Girl-Oriented Programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to build their own, age-appropriate, understanding of autism, sensory sensitivities and anxieties; • Extracurricular provision and resources match ASC special interests; • Social Language programme to navigate social rules, with peer mentoring schemes for friendship and bullying issues; • PSHE specificity to facilitate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SRE: adolescence is unpredictable. Menstruation, growth of breasts and body hair heighten anxiety due to perceived lack of control; ○ Independence, to reduce vulnerability; ○ privacy awareness, personal space and touching rules; ○ permission to say ‘No’: self advocacy; ○ e-safety and grooming: girls are more vulnerable to complying

Emotional

- Need to feel that someone “gets” them;
- May camouflage emotions or mask symptoms at school;
- Their ‘Social imitation’ mirroring exhausts them;
- Experience anxiety more intensely than others;

- May shut down or cry over small things due to sensory/emotional overload;
- Hate injustice;
- Use social stories and factual evidence to explain fears;
- Where appropriate, need to confirm that this is a “normal” reaction or feeling;
- Tell them it will be ok.

with a demand, more likely to respond to communication;

- self image, self esteem, assertiveness and confidence;
 - gender identity;
 - emotional wellbeing and mental health;
 - developing vocational interests and leisure activities.
- Careers IAG specificity: Girls, who are systematisers, can prefer male-dominated occupations, where need to follow rules is high;
 - Celebrate the right to choose their own path, despite ‘female’ cultural influences;
 - A big picture of careers pathway can ease current difficulty.

Liaison with Home

- How is anxiety being acted out at home?
- Support independence and generalisation of skills, building flexibility into challenges;
- Practise dealing with fears and rehearse difficult situations in a safe environment;
- Parent support group to share experiences;
- Signpost to specialist services and local ASC support: e.g. Cygnet, Early Bird, CAMHs, Mindworks etc.

