



Archers Brook SEMH Residential School

**Meeting the Needs of Pupils with Autistic
Spectrum Condition Policy**

Context

Archers Brook SEMH Residential School is a 9 to 16 day and residential special school. Children and young people attending the school all have statements of special educational need for behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. A significant number have additional difficulties in communication and interaction, cognition and learning and of a physical, sensory or medical nature. This policy reflects the necessity to respond positively and effectively to this diverse and complex range of needs.

Vision

“We are learning today to be successful tomorrow” by:

- The school community developing socially, emotionally, spiritually and healthily.
- The school community feeling safe and secure.
- The achievement, enjoyment and celebration of success.
- An increasing desire to part of our community.
- Pupils being equipped with the skills to be lifelong learners and achieve economic well-being.

All Archers Brook staff members are committed to upholding these values through the school’s core principles of; consistency, conviction and care applied to all duties undertaken at the school.

We are proud to have such a positive community which stretches well beyond the school site. Together, through the consistency of our actions, the schools’ partners and the staff ensure that all pupils receive equitable and valuable learning experiences each and every day of their school career.

Together we share a commitment to the young people with whom we work to ensuring that they have the learning opportunity today to be ready to be successful tomorrow.

Rationale

At Archers Brook we maintain a policy on meeting the needs of pupils with Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC). Over thirty percent of pupils at Archers Brook having a diagnosis of ASC. The fundamental premises of this policy are:

- Pupils with ASC have the same rights and entitlements as any other child
- The School aims to ensure that children with ASC access a provision that is autism-specific and responsive to the way in which pupils with ASC think and learn.

This policy supports and is supported by the following Archers Brook policy statements:

- SEN policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Behaviour Policy

Definition of ASC

Autism is a lifelong condition, which affects how a person communicates, interacts socially, and can present difficulties or differences for the person in their thinking, imagination and sensitivity of their senses. As a spectrum condition, individuals with autism will share similar difficulties; however the way in which autism will impact on the individual is unique.

Language and Communication Skills

Difficulty understanding and using non-verbal communication such as gestures, body language, facial expressions. Can also impact specific aspects of language such as expressive or receptive language skills.

Social Development

Lack of awareness and understanding of interacting with others. Difficulty understanding 'social rules and expectations'.

Thought and Behaviour

Ritualised and/or obsessive patterns of behaviour, unable to interpret literal meanings, difficulty with demonstrating imagination.

Sensory Difficulties

Sensory difficulties are becoming increasingly prominent in pupils with ASC and communication needs. Some children with autism can be more sensitive than usual to environmental stimuli such as noise, light, clothing or temperature. Other children with ASC and communication needs can have lowered sensitivity levels.

Autism Awareness

Pupils with ASC are supported by staff across the School. Staff receive regular basic training in supporting pupils with ASC so awareness is shared across the school. Some staff have received further training in specific areas such as TEACCH, ELKLAN and ABA. Staff have also completed a staff audit to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of Autism which identified any gaps in training.

All staff have access to ongoing learning in relation to Autism as part of their continuing professional development and are encouraged to request further consultation if desired. There is a well-resourced library of materials and periodicals which is updated on a regular basis.

As well as staff development on understanding of Autism, specialist teaching staff at Archers Brook ensure the awareness of autism is shared amongst all pupils. Pupils have an understanding of what is meant by autism and have acknowledged tools and strategies they can adopt to support their peers.

Approach

In order to meet the needs of all pupils across the spectrum at Archers Brook, we use a wide-ranging range of established and recommended approaches and interventions, drawing on best practice and continuously monitoring and evaluating their use.

When working with pupils with ASC it is important to have:

- A clear understanding of autism
- A good understanding of the individual needs of the pupils
- A wide range of interventions and strategies to meet the individuals needs
- An understanding of potential sensory barriers to learning and ways of addressing them
- Monitoring systems that ensure pupils with ASC progress and develop across the curriculum

Structure, visual support and individualised strategies appropriate for each individual are provided to aid a pupil's access to the curriculum. Every pupil has a pupil profile which sets out their areas of support needed for each difficulty within the Autism Triad of Impairment. Some pupils have opportunity to contribute to their profile which is put together by a familiar adult, profiles are stored electronically but a printed copy is located in the staffroom.

Underpinning all teaching and learning is a focus on developing pupils' life skills in areas of independence, social understanding and access to unfamiliar opportunities. We aim to develop pupil's engagement with 'real-life' experiences through educational visits and outdoor pursuits to reduce their rigidity response and develop social skills amongst peers and the community.

Strategies that are adopted by staff to support these pupils with ASC include:

- adopting TEACCH strategies
- Boxall profiles to create individual development plan
- Lego therapy to develop language and communication skills
- sensory circuits to focus on sensory development
- Social stories to teach and understand social expectations and rules.
- Using the 5 point scale to encourage recognition and communicating feelings

Provision

All pupils have the opportunity to access the following additional support interventions whilst at Archers Brook based on their individual needs

- Nurture Group – ‘The Base’
- Art Therapy
- Counselling
- Holistic Therapy
- Learning Mentor
- Literacy Support
- Numeracy Support
- Speech, Language and Communication Support

Some pupils with ASC need additional support to develop their strategies to manage their own needs and responses due to complex needs such as sensory processing, anxiety, mental health needs. Therefore some pupils have access to the ‘Link’ with highly trained staff to support their transition whilst reducing barriers to learning as well as increasing their time to a more inclusive learning environment amongst their peer group, The time a pupil with ASC spends in the Link prior to being taught with their peer group depends on their individual needs.

Autism Friendly Environments

Archers Brook recognises the diverse range of needs pupils with ASC present, particularly in regards to sensory difficulties. Pupils may become anxious, distracted and/or react with negative physical behaviours to their perception of the learning environment, we therefore try to reduce any anxiety or discomfort in the environment we offer our pupils. We aim to provide an environment that is calm and comfortable with few distractions. We promote environments that ensure clear structures and routines. We encourage and support pupils in being able to effectively communicate their needs and to develop their confidence in staff in ensuring support is forthcoming. Specialist staff work directly with pupils to review the learning environment across the school by completing sensory classroom audits.

Signed:
Mrs Myers-Whittaker
Headteacher

Date:

Signed:
Mr R Crompton
Chairman of Governors

Date: