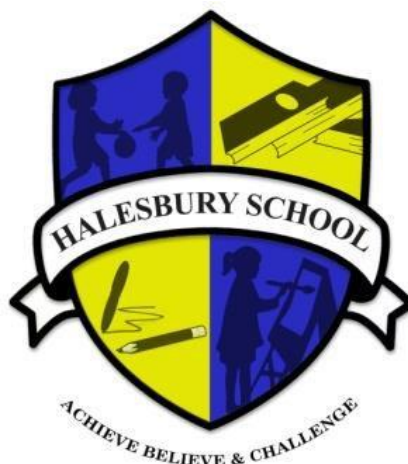


# HALESBURY SCHOOL



## AUTISM POLICY

Policy for the attention of			
Audience	Key Audience	Optional Audience	Additional/Notes
Senior Leadership Team			
Teachers			
Teaching Assistants			
Administrative Staff			
Curriculum support			
Lunchtime Supervisors			
Site Manager			
Cleaners			
Governors			
Parents			
Website			
Local Authority			

Responsibility of	
Review frequency	
This version agreed	September 2021
Next review date	September 2022



## **Halesbury School Autism Policy**

“Autism is a lifelong, developmental, disability that affects how a person communicates with and relates to other people, and how they experience the world around them.” (National Autistic Society)

As a school, we understand and recognise the challenges and difficulties that children with autism have but also recognise that every child is unique and offer strategies to support each individual child whilst enhancing their talents and achievements.

Halesbury School currently provides 4 bases within Primary and Secondary key stages to support children with autism who may find the main body of the school challenging. These bases are staffed with a high ratio of staff to pupil to ensure all pupils' needs are met. Staff working within the bases are highly trained and have a good understanding of the pupils within the classes. The base staff all work together to share strategies and good practice to support the children throughout their school journey. The base provision is set up to have small class sizes and their own curriculum to meet the needs of the pupils and to ensure social, communication, physical, sensory, academic and developmental progress is made. The bases use the TEACCH approach, which follows a structured, visual and independent work area for each individual child.

### **Training and professional development**

Staff are all trained by the Autism Education Trust, all members of staff (including administrative staff, kitchen staff and dinner supervisors) in the school are trained to level 1. All teachers and teaching assistants are trained to level 2 and 3 members of teaching staff are trained to level 3. Our Deputy Head Teacher also has a Masters in Autism (Children).

Any new members of staff are trained within the first year and any new training is attended by the relevant staff.

All teaching assistants have attended communication for all training to use with our pupils to support their communication targets.

Staff training is ongoing for Makaton, PECS, TEACCH, Intensive Interaction and these are shared with other staff members during professional development days and meetings to ensure all staff are up to date with training and work together to support all pupils in the school.

### **Environment**

At Halesbury School, we try to ensure our environment is suitable for our pupils. Pupils with Autism can become overwhelmed with too much stimuli through bright colours and loud noises etc., therefore we ensure the classrooms are low-arousal and calming places for our children to concentrate and learn in. We keep our displays to a minimum in the classroom and encourage clear spaces where the children are focussing their attention. We also try to keep our work areas tidy and organised.

Halesbury School have a sensory room and quiet areas for pupils to access when their levels of anxiety are raised and they need a chill-out safe space.



## Curriculum

All pupils at Halesbury School follow the National Curriculum, however we recognise that our pupils have additional difficulties in understanding and processing information and therefore we adapt the curriculum to suit the needs of our pupils.

Working alongside the National Curriculum we also provide opportunities for our pupils to develop their social, emotional, physical, sensory and communication skills. This is through differentiated activities that are specifically tailored to our individual pupils. We also work alongside speech therapists and OTs to support a well-rounded learning experience.

## Interventions

Interventions are used across the school to support the curriculum and each pupil's individual needs. We recognise that children may require a number of different interventions in different areas; we therefore offer a variety of interventions to meet individual needs. These interventions are discussed with class staff and SLT to ensure all areas are covered and supported. These will then be discussed with parents/carers.

Examples of interventions include:

- Speech Therapy: A speech therapist will assess each individual child and give targets to support their communication and understanding of language. These are then given to class teams to implement in class.
- Total communication approach – Systems across the school are assessed and used in relation to each pupils needs. These include symbol support, objects of reference, visual timetables and Makaton.
- SCERTs (Social Communication, Emotional Regulation and Transactional support) - targets are also assessed and given to pupils with Autism to support their communication needs.
- OT therapy – Pupils are assessed and given programmes to support their physical and sensory development. Movement breaks and specialised equipment is also discussed and used within classes for individual pupils.
- TEACCH approach – a strategy for routine, structure and to encourage independence is mainly used within the bases but also set up for individual children within classes that require extra support and structure.
- Intensive interaction – staff members are trained to deliver intensive interaction to support communication and early interaction.
- Social stories – are written and used to support a pupil's understanding or to prepare the pupil for upcoming events.



## Communication

Our pupils communicate in different ways and are supported to find their preferred way of communicating their wants, needs and information. When required our pupils have access to a speech therapist who can offer support and targets to enhance their communication skills. Some of our pupils with Autism find it easier to process information through a visual system. This is encouraged through teaching, sharing information and communicating needs.

Some examples of our communication systems are:

- PECS – picture exchange encourages the use of early language and exchanging a picture to communicate the pupil's needs.
- Makaton – the use of sign language to encourage communication.
- Objects of reference – to show visually the information that needs to be passed on.
- Visual timetables – to show visually what will be coming up in the day to prepare our pupils.
- Intensive interaction – copying behaviour and early sounds to encourage communication.

At Halesbury School, we recognise pupils with autism can take a literal understanding of language and can sometimes take longer to process information. Our staff are aware of this and ensure they keep their instructions to a minimum and only use appropriate language.

## Behaviour

Behaviour can often be a means of communication, frustration and anxiety. Our pupils sometimes need support in understanding how to show this appropriately. Specific strategies are put in place to support this and to reduce the use of unwanted behaviours. All members of staff are trained in positive handling (Team Teach) and where necessary pupils will have a behaviour plan. All staff will use de-escalation strategies to support the pupil's well-being and anxiety.

All classes follow the behaviour policy and each class have their own positive reward and motivation systems.

## Sensory

Many of our pupils with autism have sensory needs. This may be requiring more sensory input or reducing the sensory input they are receiving. Our pupils can have access to an OT who will assess their needs and provide a sensory diet for each individual pupil. This will then be passed onto the class teams and sent home to support the pupil both at school and at home. Different equipment can be purchased in school to support the pupil's sensory needs in concentration and engagement in lessons. Movement breaks also take place in classes to maintain engagement in lessons.

## Transition

Transition into a new school or class can be stressful for our pupils with autism so great care and consideration is taken in ensuring our pupils are prepared and happy.

All of our new pupils into Reception or further up the school will be invited to look around the school with their parents/carers and then attend transition days with initially either their parents or TA from



previous school. Transition booklets with photographs of staff members and the school/classroom are then given to take home to look at to prepare the pupils before starting school. Meetings will have been held with parents/carers/previous teaching staff to ensure all important details have been passed on. Passports on each individual child are made to show likes/dislikes/sensory needs/medical needs etc. to share with all relevant staff.

Pupils transitioning into a new class will also attend transition days and be given a transition booklet with their new staff members and classroom to take home and look through. Information sharing meetings are taken place within school to ensure relevant information is passed on to all staff working with that pupil. All of the bases within the school run daily with a similar structure to support the transitional needs of the pupils.

### Working with parents

At Halesbury, we recognise the importance of working together with parents/carers to have a whole pupil approach.

Parents/carers are invited to attend 'curriculum days' once a term to work with their child in school to witness the strategies used and offer support with learning.

Parents/carers are actively encouraged to engage in the school and their child's learning. An invite to attend 'workshops' are held every term to share the pupils work and any strategies that may be used to support their child. We update our website with photos from our days at school to share with parents/carers.

We encourage parents/carers to contact school if they have any queries or concerns or to share some news with the staff, as we are aware sometimes our pupils find it hard to communicate information.

Parent evenings take part every term to share the pupils work and any information between school and home.

Halesbury School have two family support workers who closely work with parents/carers and offer support and advice. Family learning sessions take place every Tuesday morning, which invites parents/cares to take place in workshops with their child in different fun activities. We also deliver Triple P courses for parents/carers to support with behaviour at home.

At Halesbury School, we have high expectations for all of our pupils and offer a personal approach to give a holistic learning experience throughout their school life. Our autism provision in school is constantly evaluated and adapted to meet all of our pupils needs.

### **September 2019**

Approved by Chair of Governors