

**Definition:**

Autism is a lifelong developmental disability that affects how a person communicates with, and relates to, other people. It also affects how they make sense of the world around them. It is a spectrum condition, which means that, while all people with autism share certain difficulties, their condition will affect them in different ways. Some people with autism are able to live relatively independent lives but others may have accompanying *learning disabilities* and need a lifetime of specialist support. People with autism may also experience *over- or under-sensitivity* to sounds, touch, tastes, smells, light or colours.

*Asperger syndrome* is a form of autism. People with Asperger Syndrome are often of average or above average intelligence. They have fewer problems with speech but may still have difficulties with understanding and processing language.

**National Autistic Society**

**Characteristics seen in school:**

May exhibit repetitive behaviours eg always playing the same game in the same way, repeatedly lining up objects

May be resistant to change or doing things differently eg change to timetable

Emerging difficulties with social interaction, social communication and social imagination (3 main areas of difficulty known as triad of impairment)

Behaviours such as biting, pinching, kicking, putting inedible objects in mouth, or self injurious behaviour

May over- or under-react to sensory stimuli

**Where to go for help:**

- Educational Psychology Service
- LAB 21 – LSAT Service
- Woodlands Outreach Service
- Severndale Outreach Service
- Autism West Midlands
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Specialist Autism Teacher

**Communication and Interaction  
Autistic Spectrum  
ASD, Asperger Syndrome****Assessment and Diagnosis:**

If parents have concerns about a young child they may approach their GP or Health Visitor who may carry out a screening interview that will indicate whether there is an ASD. The child will then be referred for a formal assessment (diagnosis).

Information from Shropshire Community Health

For children (5 – 18 years) with an identified moderate or severe learning disability please contact the CAHMS Learning Disability Service for advice on referral and assessment.

For children without an identified learning disability, aged 5 years and above, referral for possible assessment should be initiated by the SENCo via a common assessment framework (CAF) usually completed by the school which the child attends.

**Frequently used Interventions:**

- Allow time especially for abstract concepts
- Social stories to support, explain, encourage appropriate social skills and play skills
- Visual timetables
- Quiet work area with little sensory stimulation
- Consistent classroom rules
- Carefully structured activities
- Support in the playground eg buddy system, circle of friends
- Language support - use simple language and visual clues or symbols. Avoid metaphors, idioms, sarcasm