**EBSA and Autism** **: Support Guide**

Evidence and experience demonstrate that anxiety levels in autistic children and young people

can be reduced by adopting good practice approaches that are individualised to the child’s specific

needs including: visual supports, structure, managing change and generally increasing the

certainty of the school day.

Schools can seeks support from the [Educational Psychology Team](https://bso.bradford.gov.uk/schools/CMSPage.aspx?mid=166) or [SCIL Team](https://bso.bradford.gov.uk/content/scil-team), in relation to whole school and individualised provision.

Strategies for Autistic Young People and should include all adults working with a child being made aware of the affect their communication style can have.

**All adults working with the child:**

* Use child’s name before delivering any instructions so that they cue into you speaking to them and recognise the instructions applies to them.
* Allow additional time for the child to process verbal information and instructions (at least 10 seconds) and avoid repeating verbally within this time.
* If repetition of the information/instruction is necessary use exactly the same wording as initially used.
* Use explicit, concise language when addressing the child as this is likely to enable them to process the information correctly
* Use short simple instructions. Give them in order that they are to be completed. Check for understanding. Ask the child to repeat them back to you

**Steps to Support Reducing Anxiety**

**Step One: Awareness and Understanding of Autism**

Ensure that all adults working with the child understand autism, communicate appropriately

implement general autism ‘good practice’ strategies e.g., the child uses and is engaged with a

visual timetable, relevant visual supports, calm space – (refer to [Bradford’s Matrix of Need](https://bso.bradford.gov.uk/userfiles/file/EPT/Bradford%20Matrix%20of%20Need%20v2_2%20RD260421.pdf))

Ensure too, that peers have an age-appropriate understanding of difference and neurodiversity

and how to offer effective peer support to their classmates.

Useful resources for schools include:

* Learning About Neurodiversity in Schools [(LEANS)](https://salvesen-research.ed.ac.uk/form/webform-for-downloadable-resourc) resources produced by University of Edinburgh
* [Belonging in School](https://inclusion.mrc-cbu.cam.ac.uk/) resources produced by University of Cambridge
* [Anxiety-in-Autism-Guide-021219.pdf (city.ac.uk)](https://www.city.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/557201/Anxiety-in-Autism-Guide-021219.pdf)

**Step Two: Assess**

Key to the effectiveness of any intervention is having a sound understanding of the child’s

strengths and support needs, including those related to their autism. Consider using tools such

as:

• [Pupil Progression tool - Autism Education Trust (AET 2017):](https://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/resources/progression-framework)

• Autism from Diagnostic Pathway to Intervention by Kate Ripley, 2015

• One Page profile templates from [Helen Sanderson](http://helensandersonassociates.co.uk/person-centred-practice/one-page-profiles/one-page-profile-templates/) and [Resources (sheffkids.co.uk)](https://www.sheffkids.co.uk/resources/)

**Step Three: Plan and Implement**

Plan and implement individualised, strategies to utilise the strengths and support the needs

identified in step two. These may include those identified for children in previous chapters of the

guidance or more specific strategies such as those included in the resources section.

**Step Four: Review**

Review the impact of the interventions using the Pupil Progression Tool (AET) or similar. It may

be that, despite the good practice and interventions, the child’s anxiety continues to increase

placing them at risk of EBSA and additional interventions will need to be implemented.

Please note that the advice in previous chapters regarding Action Planning are also relevant here

and should be followed.

If there are indications that the child is at risk of EBSA it will be important to build up a clear

picture of exactly what elements of attending school are increasing their anxiety in order that best

endeavours can be made to alleviate the anxiety. Tools from the Early Identification and Assessment toolkit should be used, in particular, the ‘School Mapping’ activity

Schools should also consider incorporating supports based on modified cognitive behaviour

therapy (CBT). CBT is based on the notion that our thoughts mediate our emotional and

behavioural response, implying that it is not external events such as people or situations that

cause our responses, but rather our thoughts about those events. NICE (2013) recommend that

CBT is considered for autistic children and young people with anxiety who have the verbal and

cognitive ability to engage and there is emerging and growing evidence that CBT could reduce

anxiety in these children.

Schools could consider using resources such as:

* The Homunculi Approach to Social and Emotional Wellbeing: A Flexible CBT Programme for Young People on the Autism Spectrum or with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties by Anne Greig
* Starving the Anxiety Gremlin by Kate Collins-Donnelly

It may also be appropriate to seek specialist, outside agency support such as from the [The Education based Emotional Wellbeing practitioners (EEWP) Team](https://bso.bradford.gov.uk/content/mental-health/healthy-minds/education-based-emotional-wellbeing-practitioners-%28eewp%29-team) or [The Mental Health Support Team (MHST)](https://www.healthyminds.services/services/mental-health-support-team-281)