



St. Michael's School

**Pupils with a Diagnosis of Autistic
Spectrum Disorder Policy**

June 2026

Pupils with a Diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder Policy (ASD)- Autism, Sensory Regulation and Inclusive Practice

Introduction

St. Michael's School is committed to providing a welcoming, inclusive and supportive learning environment where every pupil is respected, valued and enabled to achieve their full potential. The school embraces a neuroaffirming approach which values diversity, promotes belonging and seeks to remove barriers to participation, learning and wellbeing. This policy outlines the school's approach to supporting autistic pupils through inclusive teaching practices, sensory regulation supports, relationship-based approaches, well-being promotion and collaborative partnerships with families and professionals, as applicable.

The policy reflects the school's ongoing commitment to:

- Inclusion
- Respect
- Belonging
- Participation
- Wellbeing
- Dignity
- Student Voice

The term ASD is used when referring to pupils, who have a definitive diagnosis of an Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

The selection for enrolment of pupils with a mild general learning disability and the associated difficulty of Autistic Spectrum Disorder is a matter for decision for the Board of Management.

Within our pupil population, we cater for a large number of pupils with a diagnosis of Mild General Learning disability and a dual diagnosis of ASD. Teacher allocation is within our quota of teaching staff.

Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to provide practical guidance to staff and parents/guardians on the provision of effective learning support for pupils with a diagnosis of ASD within the staff allocation and the requirements of all recent legislation.

This policy is informed by:

- Education Act (1998)
- Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (EPSEN) 2004
- Children First Act 2015
- Looking at Our School (LAOS) 2022
- Autism Good Practice Guidance for Schools, 2022
- Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice, 2018
- NCSE Relate Framework
- Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
- Understanding Behaviours of Concern and Responding to Crisis Situations, 2026
- Continuum of Support Framework, 2019
- Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, 2025
- St. Michael's School Self-Evaluation Wellbeing Plan 2022–2026

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

St. Michael's School is a welcoming and inclusive community where we seek to create a community based on Gospel values which are enshrined in all school policies and practices. (*School Ethos*)

We achieve this for our pupils by:

- recognising the needs and talents of each pupil (*Mission Statement*)
- fostering self-esteem, empowering each pupil to reach his/her full potential (*Mission Statement*)
- developing social, communication and imagination skills through our recognition of the particular needs/impairments of pupils with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

We recognise that all pupils bring unique strengths, talents, perspectives and ways of experiencing the world. Our role is to create environments, relationships and learning opportunities which allow each pupil to thrive.

We believe:

- Every pupil deserves to feel safe.
- Every pupil deserves to belong.
- Every pupil deserves to be understood.
- Every pupil deserves meaningful participation.
- Every pupil deserves access to high-quality teaching and learning.

Aims

We aim to:

- help pupils with ASD to develop to their full potential;
- foster positive relationships and belonging;
- offer a positive and appropriate educational programme;
- support access to curriculum through UDL;
- enhance the successful inclusion of pupils into age/peer appropriate classes;
- enhance the communicative, social and imaginative skills of the pupils;
- develop a calm, structured, sensory aware learning environment;
- support communication, independence and self-advocacy;
- promote emotional wellbeing and regulation;
- support the planning, organisation, teaching and assessment procedures;
- incorporate the use of appropriate resources and consistent approaches/strategies to meet the needs of pupils with ASD, across the school;
- strengthen home-school partnerships and encourage/ enable parental support in helping pupils to achieve their full educational and social potential; support staff through ongoing professional learning.

Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

- provide a framework for the assessment of skills/ needs of pupils with ASD;
- ensure appropriate provision throughout the school within staffing resources;
- monitor pupils progress systematically and use this information in decisions about curriculum planning;
- equip teachers with the knowledge, skills and resources to be able to support and monitor pupils with ASD;

- facilitate pupils' effective participation in the educational programme provided.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING (UDL)

St. Michael's School adopts Universal Design for Learning principles.

Staff provide:

Multiple Means of Engagement:

- Student choice
- Interest-based learning
- Motivation supports
- Flexible participation

Multiple Means of Representation

- Visual supports
- Augmentative Assistive Communications systems
- Demonstrations
- Concrete materials
- Technology supports

Multiple Means of Action and Expression

- Alternative recording methods
- Practical demonstrations
- Assistive technology
- Verbal responses
- Creative responses

STUDENT SUPPORT PLANNING

Support planning is informed through:

- Student Support Files
- Student Support Plans/Individual Education Plans
- Continuum of Support- Support for all, support for some, support for a few
- Teacher observation
- Parent consultation
- Student voice
- Professional reports
- Positive Behaviour Support Plans and accommodations
- Ongoing assessment

Support plans may address:

- Communication
- Sensory regulation
- Emotional wellbeing
- Social participation
- Independence
- Curriculum access
- Attendance
- Behaviour support

SENSORY REGULATION AND SENSORY ENVIRONMENTS

The school recognises the significant impact sensory processing can have on learning, participation and wellbeing.

To support pupils, the school provides:

- Sensory room
- Calm corners
- Outdoor sensory opportunities
- Sensory equipment
- Individual sensory supports

All classrooms participate in sensory environment reviews informed by NCSE guidance.

Classroom sensory audits may consider:

- Lighting
- Visual organisation
- Noise levels
- Seating arrangements
- Movement opportunities
- Classroom layout
- Sensory zones

INDIVIDUAL SENSORY PROFILES

Teachers complete and review the NCSE Classroom Sensory Screening Tool as part of classroom planning and School Self-Evaluation processes.

A "Getting to Know Me" profile is maintained for pupils where appropriate and forms part of the Student Support File. These profiles are developed collaboratively with pupils, parents, teachers and SNAs and support consistent understanding of individual strengths, interests, supports and preferences.

Each pupil may have an individual profile developed through:

- Observation
- Parent consultation
- Student voice
- Staff collaboration
- Professional reports

Information gathered assists staff in understanding:

- Sensory preferences
- Sensory sensitivities
- Triggers
- Regulation strategies
- Effective supports

This information may be documented through Student Profiles, Getting to Know Me templates and Student Support Files.

RELATE FRAMEWORK

St. Michael's School is committed to embedding the NCSE Relate Framework and are working with the NCSE on our 2 years Relate Explore journey. As part of our RELATE Explore journey, staff engage in Communities of Practice, Teach-Meets, professional reflection, classroom sensory audits, implementation of "Getting to Know Me" profiles and collaborative problem-solving approaches which support pupil wellbeing, participation and belonging.

Through Relate we seek to strengthen:

- Relationships
- Regulation
- Respect
- Inclusion
- Belonging

Relate informs:

- Classroom practice
- Environmental design
- Student support planning
- Staff wellbeing
- Family engagement
- School improvement planning

RELATIONSHIP BASED PRACTICE

The school adopts a relationship-based approach to supporting all pupils.

This includes:

- Connect RP- Restorative Practice
- Co-regulation approaches
- Positive Behaviour Support
- Trauma-informed practice
- Strengths-based approaches

Staff seek first to understand the needs underlying behaviour and to provide appropriate support and guidance.

COMMUNICATION SUPPORTS

Communication is recognised as a fundamental right.

Supports may include:

- AAC systems
- Visual supports
- Communication books
- Social stories and narratives
- Structured teaching approaches
- Technology supports

PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

Parents are recognised as experts on their child.

The school values parental input in:

- Student Support Plans
- Sensory Profiles
- Wellbeing planning
- School policy review
- School Self Evaluation processes

STUDENT VOICE

Student voice is actively encouraged through:

- Student Council
- Student profiles
- Classroom discussions
- Wellbeing consultations
- Individual support planning

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

The school is committed to ongoing professional learning.

Staff engage in:

- NCSE training
- Relate Communities of Practice
- Restorative Practice training
- Collaborative reflection
- Wellbeing CPD
- UDL training
- Neuroaffirming Practice
- Co-Regulation Approaches
- Positive Behaviour Support
- Trauma Informed Practice
- Sensory environment training

Organisation of ASD

The school structure facilitates inclusion within the regular class setting, according to the age and ability level of pupils with ASD. Where possible, pupils may receive support from an assigned teacher on an individual, small group and in-class basis, depending on the pupil's needs, abilities and timetabling/availability of staff.

In-class support assists the class teachers in the following ways:

- assess the needs of the pupil(s);
- provide recommendations about the classroom environment (light, noise, relaxation methods, etc.)
- team teach in lessons to provide the pupil with ASD with additional support within their usual classroom environment;
- give feedback from ASD courses attended;
- share knowledge of resources available in school and relevant website supports.

Long-Term Planning

Where necessary support teachers can set termly learning objectives rather than a yearly scheme. This could be to support pupils with ASD who may be experiencing a short-term behaviour of concern or anxiety. It is the responsibility of each teacher timetabled for ASD intervention to devise the termly/yearly scheme in conjunction with the class teacher as appropriate to the needs of individual pupils.

A programme of work for each pupil is based on the following:

- Consultation with class teachers, SNAs, Multi-Disciplinary Team members, parents, etc.;
- Previous professional reports;
- Individual Education Plans;
- Social and communication checklists;
- Continuous assessment – teacher observations and tasks;
- National Curriculum Guidelines.

Learning objectives for pupils with ASD should be appropriate and reviewed on a regular basis. They are shared with the class teacher. Classroom planning for pupils with ASD should incorporate both ASD specific and curricular objectives.

Short-Term Planning

It is the responsibility of each teacher timetabled for ASD support to devise the weekly/fortnightly plans for individual and group lessons, as appropriate to the needs of individual pupils. Planning for in-class support is to be devised in conjunction with the class teacher. The short-term planning should include a section for monthly progress reports which will aid the support teacher in further planning for each individual pupil. Short term plans may be disrupted if the class teacher indicates an urgent issue has arisen.

Content

During their time in St. Michael's School, pupils with ASD may be taught about and practice in greater detail:

-feelings, friendship, communication, social skills, personality and character, use of imagination, coping skills, growing independence, making decisions and being responsible, having a diagnosis of autism, appropriate school behaviours, social maths (time, money), social language (oral), online safety, Friends for Life Programme.

Assessment

Following a period of initial observation, a range of social and communication checklists will be used to monitor the progress of pupils, including a 'Detailed Social Skills Checklist' (Appendix 1). The checklists will be used to inform teaching and learning. The Detailed Social Skills Checklist will be completed by the ASD Support Teacher, in consultation with the class teacher and will be available to view on Aladdin by the class teacher /relevant teachers.

Where termly learning objectives have been set, they will be assessed at the end of each term and revised objectives set (Appendix 2). Assessment information may also be gathered through sensory profiles, student support plans, pupil voice, parent consultation and teacher observation.

Each teacher involved in support of ASD pupils is responsible for maintaining their own assessment file for the particular pupils assigned to him/her. (See Appendix 3). Files are kept for one year in the teacher's planning folder. Feedback is given to class teachers at regular intervals.

Resources

Resources to support ASD are available in the ASD press or in the Communication Press and the SPHE Press.

Support by Outside Agencies

Outside agency support is accessed directly by parents. Any reports/recommendations from such agencies should be provided to the school to inform our ASD support being provided for that child.

Behaviours of Concern

It is accepted that pupils with a diagnosis of ASD may display dysregulation and /or behaviours of concern. All efforts will be made by the school to understand the function and manage such behaviours using various Relate strategies to include a positive behaviour support plan. Parents/Guardians are expected to co-operate with school staff.

In exceptional circumstances where a pupil's needs cannot be adequately met within the resources available to the school, and impact in a negative way on the other pupils in the class to the extent that their constitutional right to an education is being

interfered with, the Board of Management may, following consultation with parents/guardians and relevant professionals, explore alternative educational placements or additional supports that may better meet the pupil's needs.

Success Criteria

- Evidence that pupils with ASD are engaging and making expected progress;
- Improved participation of pupils with ASD in all aspects of the educational programme;
- Consistent inclusive practice;
- Enhanced wellbeing outcomes;
- Staff feedback, confidence and capacity;
- Receipt of positive feedback from parents/guardians/pupils;
- Evidence of improved regulation and wellbeing;
- Successful implementation of Relate and sensory environment initiatives.
- Effective sensory environments and progress towards SSE targets.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if required.

Review will include:

- Staff consultation
- Parent consultation
- Student voice
- SSE findings
- New legislation
- NCSE guidance

Ratification

Ratified by the Board of Management at a meeting on 24th June 2026.

Signed:



**Chairperson,
Board of Management**

Date: 24th June 2026

Appendices

Appendix 1

Detailed Social Skills Checklist

Name: _____ D.O.B: _____

Please use this booklet to assess pupils who have additional needs in the area of social skills and to set and review targets. References: Socially Speaking – Alison Schroeder, The Social Play Record – Chris White, Staff of St. Michael's School.

Date of Initial Assessment: _____

Friendship Skills:	Initial Assessment	Update:	Update:
I know how to make a new friend by introducing myself.			
I know how to make a new friend by inviting them to play.			
I know how to show an interest in my friends by asking them questions.			
I know how to greet friends after a short time on a day-to-day basis.			
I know how to greet friends after a long time apart.			
I am a good friend to (1) (2) (more)			
I know what friends should do.			
I know what friends should not do.			
I can play games with others.			
I know what I look like.			
I can see things that are the same in myself and another.			
I can see things that are different between myself and another.			
I can give myself a compliment.			
Conversation Skills:	Initial Assessment	Update:	Update:
I can greet people.			
I can give compliments to people.			

I can look at the person who is talking briefly, for an appropriate interval.			
I can sit/stand at an appropriate distance.			
I can sit still.			
I show an interest in what others are saying by smiling.			
I show an interest in what others are saying by nodding.			
I show an interest in what others are saying by using verbal fillers.			
I can keep a conversation going by making relevant comments.			
I can keep a conversation going by asking relevant questions.			
I can introduce a topic of appropriate conversation to the situation.			
I can distinguish between fact and opinion.			
I can initiate a conversation/gain an adult's attention.			
I can ask simple questions.			
I can use my voice at the appropriate volume.			
I can use my voice at the appropriate speed.			
I wait my turn to talk.			
I can join in conversations.			
I can respond appropriately to how another is feeling.			
I can follow instructions.			
Feelings Skills:	Initial Assessment	Update:	Update:
I know what makes me happy.			
I know what makes others happy.			
I can show I'm happy by using my voice.			

I can show I'm happy by using my face.			
I can show I'm happy by using my body.			
I know what makes me sad.			
I know what makes others sad.			
I can show I'm sad by using my voice.			
I can show I'm sad by using my face.			
I can show I'm sad by using my body.			
I know what makes me excited.			
I know what makes others excited.			
I can show I'm excited by using my voice.			
I can show I'm excited by using my face.			
I can show I'm excited by using my body.			
I know what makes me angry.			
I know what makes others angry.			
I can show I'm angry by using my voice.			
I can show I'm angry by using my face.			
I can show I'm angry by using my body.			
I can recognise when someone else is angry and respond appropriately.			
Myself Skills:	Initial Assessment	Update:	Update:
I am preoccupied with my own body movements (e.g. flapping, spinning, rocking, flicking).			
I am preoccupied with objects.			
I am preoccupied with actions.			
I resist attempts to stop/change activity.			
I show a compulsion to complete tasks.			

I appear unaware of others.			
I talk to myself.			
I respond well to others attempts to join my activity.			
I observe others at play without participating.			
I play alongside others in parallel play.			
I play with others, sharing materials but play is still independent.			
I play co-operatively with others.			
I can cope with winning.			
I can cope with losing.			
I prefer to interact with peers in preference to adults.			
I know when to say please and thank you.			
I know when and how to apologise.			
I can take correction.			
I know how my behaviour affects others.			
I have a positive perception of how I get along with others.			
I have a negative perception of how I get along with others.			
I am unaware of how I get along with others.			

Appendix 2

(For when an alternative is needed to yearly plans due to the short-term needs of the pupil; In this instance, long-term planning is decided on from term to term only)

ASD Support Learning Objectives 20 -20

Name:

D.O.B:

Class:

Class Teacher:

ASD Support Times:

L.O. for Term One	Teacher
L.O. for Term Two	Teacher
L.O. for Term Three	Teacher

Review:

Appendix 3--Student Profile/Getting To Know Me Template

Getting To Know Me

What do I really love?	What do I like about school?
What activities do I enjoy at school?	What do I like about break time?
What activities do I enjoy at home?	What do I like about yard?
What makes learning easier for me?	Something you should know about me...
I like to show what I have learned by...	

The Understanding Element

Appendix 4- ASD Individual/Group Assessment:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Aim</u>	<u>Outcome</u>