

Differentiation Tips for staff working with Autistic Secondary Aged Students

"Everyone on the autistic spectrum is different. Everyone has different needs..."
(Robyn Steward, 2014)

Autistic young people may be struggling with emotional regulation during this period of significant and unplanned for change. **The emotional well-being of students and their families should always be paramount at this very difficult time. A punitive approach must be avoided** and safeguarding issues must be prioritised.

Differentiated teaching focuses on addressing the individual needs of students. All students have different strengths and needs. Liaise closely with your SENCO, support staff and other professionals who know the student well. They will be able to provide more personalised advice and information and can act as curriculum gatekeepers, so students and families do not feel overwhelmed with the amount of work set by different subject teachers.

Before considering the activities to send home for autistic students, please consider the following factors which may support home learning:

1. Timetable - where appropriate, families may need to be supported in developing a personalised, visual home learning timetable.
2. Task Checklist - where appropriate, ensure activities have a task checklist or are broken down into small steps
3. Student's interests or learning style - to be integrated into learning wherever possible. Suggest activities which are meaningful and purposeful for the young person.
4. Achievable - ensure that you are sending activities which are achievable because they differentiated and of interest to the young person.
5. Flexible - Be very flexible about your expectations and discuss this with families and young people. Any pressure may exacerbate the situation and cause unnecessary stress.
6. Connectedness - Can you conference call or call your pupil? Or provide a lesson video on a conference call or video? Seeing that familiar adults are well may relieve anxiety and increase motivation. Schools may wish to offer additional support to students, perhaps giving them 3 options such as support by text, telephone or e-mail, from a trusted adult.

Please contact the Autism Advisory Team on autism.team@barnet.gov.uk for further support.