



## Autism and Social Communication Team

### Exploring Autism for Parent Carers

A programme offering up to date thinking and links to evidence-based research for parent carers of autistic children and young people.



Sessions to explore Autism and strategies to support acceptance, empowerment, and relationships in family life.

**Are you a parent carer of a child or young person, aged 8-16 years, who is autistic or on the social communication pathway and have not attended this course before?**

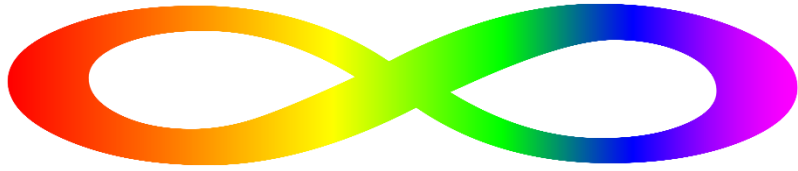
This programme has been developed to ensure that it is current and up to date to provide information for those new to Autism or for those requiring a little more in-depth knowledge. The programme is free of charge to families of children in West Sussex maintained schools and academies.

#### Course aims:

- to give a broad and balanced and positive view of how autism and social communication differences may impact on the child or young person's life and their family.
- to explore key practical strategies that can support autistic children and young people.
- to provide a forum for families to share their experiences and expertise together.

#### Course outline:

The six sessions focus on both theoretical and practical aspects of Autism including strengths, needs, and challenges. These recorded sessions are viewable when convenient to the family, followed by a weekly one hour online meeting. This online meeting provides opportunity to participate in discussions and ask questions with other families and the advisory teachers. There is no pressure to contribute or have your camera on, and we welcome input via the chat function. We ask that parent carers attend each of these weekly online discussion groups.



For participants to fully benefit from this course we ask that they attend **all** sessions.

**Topics covered by session:**

**Session 1: Autism Acceptance**

Develop understanding of Autism, discuss experiences of getting a diagnosis and identify how Autism can affect families.

**Session 2: Communication**

Develop understanding of communication differences and strategies to develop communication and interaction.

**Session 3: Sensory Needs**

Consider how sensory information and experiences may be processed differently by those who are autistic and share strategies to help with sensory differences.

**Session 4: Anxiety**

Improve understanding of the signs of distress that autistic children and young people may display and consider approaches to support regulation.

**Session 5: Social Thinking and Masking**

Explore the differences autistic children and young people may have with socialising and developing relationships. Look at ways to develop social thinking, explore the idea and impact of masking.

**Session 6: Adolescence and Independence**

Consider ways to encourage independence and manage adolescence challenges including puberty, sensory impact, and social differences.

**Exploring Autism Welcome Video:**

<https://youtu.be/JqGPImJH8Ms>

**Dates:**

Autumn 2: Every Tuesday 1-2pm from 5<sup>th</sup> November to the 10<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

Spring 1: Tuesday 6.30-7.30pm 7<sup>th</sup> January to the 11<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

Spring 2: Every Thursday 12-1pm from 27<sup>th</sup> February to the 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2025.

Summer 1: Every Wednesday 6.30-7.30pm from 30<sup>th</sup> April to the 11<sup>th</sup> June 2025 (excluding 28<sup>th</sup> May due to half term).

Summer 2: Every Thursday 1-2pm from 5<sup>th</sup> June – 10<sup>th</sup> July 2025.

Summer Holidays: 6.30-7.30pm Dates TBC

**To be added to the waiting list please contact:**

**Email:** [ASCT@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:ASCT@westsussex.gov.uk)

*Please note there are a limited number of places on this course.*