



Guidance Booklet

**Supporting a Pupil's Understanding and Acceptance
of an Autistic Spectrum Disorder Diagnosis**

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The 'Celebrating Me' Programme consists of six short videos which explore the different aspects of having a diagnosis of an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) from the pupil's perspective. The programme aims to educate the pupil on the dyad of impairment while encouraging the pupil to explore what each area means to them. Learning about a diagnosis of autism doesn't change how much the pupil is valued and respected in our schools and families, rather it should empower the pupil to be able to fulfil their potential.

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| 1 | Being Unique |
| 2 | Autism |
| 3 | Communication |
| 4 | Social Interaction |
| 5 | Flexible Thinking |
| 6 | Sensory |

Guidance Notes

- Parent/Carer consent must be sought and agreed before implementing the 'Celebrating Me' Programme.
- When deciding if this programme is appropriate for the pupil consider their ability to process and manage new complex information.
- The programme is designed to approach the topic in a positive manner, whilst acknowledging any challenges the pupil may have.
- It is important to complete the accompanying activities which with adult support will help guide the pupil through various aspects of having a diagnosis of ASD.
- As all individuals on the Autism Spectrum are unique, you are encouraged to have an explorative discussion about each area and discover how it is relevant to the pupil.
- To ensure your own knowledge is up to date you can avail of the online training programme provided by the Autism Advisory and Intervention Service (AAIS).

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Getting Started

- Familiarise yourself with the programme before introducing it to the pupil.
- Ensure to print the booklet and any other relevant materials you may wish to use during a session e.g. a visual prompt card.
- Consider the best time and place to allow for an open discussion on this private topic.
- Prepare the pupil in advance that this activity is going to happen.
- There are 30 activities throughout the programme.



- This symbol will prompt when it is time to complete an activity



- This symbol will prompt when to pause the video to allow for an activity to be completed

- Where there are two activities on a page it may be beneficial to use a blank page to cover over the activity not currently being completed. This will help with concentration, focus and motivation.
- Scribing for the pupil is appropriate if the pupil dislikes or finds handwriting difficult. This allows the pupil to focus their energy on processing the complex concept of understanding ASD.
- Allow time for processing information and questions, you may need to watch each episode more than once before the concept is fully understood. Remember to offer reassurance as required.
- The pupil may require several movement/sensory breaks throughout a session.
- Most importantly try to create a positive atmosphere around this learning experience as this will set the tone for their personal acceptance of an ASD diagnosis.

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Points to consider

- It may be beneficial to discuss with the parent/carer and pupil who they may wish to share this information with (if anyone) as once they share, they can't take it back.
- Try to remain positive and avoid highlighting any negative personal opinions or experiences.
- Consider the learning pace. It will usually take several sessions to complete the full 'Celebrating Me' programme. This allows the pupil time to process the information between sessions. However, ensure to schedule sessions close together to avoid the pupil feeling overwhelmed with unanswered questions.
- The pupil may require support to initiate and maintain the discussions throughout.
- Some sections might be more significant to the pupil than others.
- During self-reflection sections the pupil will review their strategies. It may be useful for you to review in advance the current strategies in place.
- During self-reflection the pupil will consider what strategies adults use to help them. It's important to be open to the suggestions the pupil may have about what other strategies might be helpful.
- Self-reflection can be difficult, where possible try to have fun and maintain a positive atmosphere.
- If at any point the pupil becomes distressed, pause and allow for emotional regulation to be supported. Note it may be appropriate to reassess the suitability of the programme.

Please do not hesitate to contact your local AAIS Office for any further support or guidance.

| Office | Telephone No |
|------------------|---------------|
| Armagh Office | 028 3831 4471 |
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| Belfast Office | 028 9078 4230 |
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