

Monitoring and Supporting Students with Specific Learning Difficulties (Autism) at

Penrice Academy

- Students are observed in all lessons to assess their level of need. The level of need can vary from one lesson to another depending on the learning environment.
- Building relationships with the students. It is imperative that relationships are established over time and not rushed.
- Devising strategies for teaching staff working with the students on the Autism Spectrum. These strategies are then given to teachers to keep in their classroom.
- Devising strategies for students on the Autism Spectrum to cope in times of uncertainty and anxiety. This can include providing stress balls, doodling with a pencil and paper, 'pushing a wall', squats, etc.
- Meeting cover/trainee teachers prior to them teaching certain students on the Autism Spectrum and sharing teaching strategies for the students to avoid anxieties and outbursts.
- Finding out about changes of classroom/teacher to prepare students on the Autism Spectrum. Any change to the regular daily routine can cause great anxiety for a student with Autism.
- Arranging 1:1 meetings with students on the Autism Spectrum. This is to support the student in whatever area of their life they are struggling with, whether this is social, emotional or academic.
- Delivering a series of group interventions for Year 7's with varying degrees of challenges relating to life skills. These included Road Safety, Planning and Preparing for a Tea Party, a trip to Tesco to put into practice Road Safety and a Treasure Hunt to discover prices of food required for the party, Food Hygiene, Baking, Hosting a Tea Party and a trip to Flashpoint.
- Providing 'Wake & Shake' sessions in the Gym every morning during Tutor Time for students on the Autism Spectrum. This assists in grounding the students, allowing them to get the deep muscle sensation and sensory input they require, thus alleviating sensory seeking behaviours during their first lesson of the day.
- Delivering a series of Social Skills interventions for students of all year groups. The groups are chosen based upon their age and the personalities of the students to ensure each member of a group interacts well with each other. The students all have varying degrees of social challenges and we work through a programme of interventions centred around emotional and socially challenging situations. The course runs for eight to ten weeks and we conclude with a party to celebrate the students' achievements.

Kerry Battisson, SEND Support (Autism)