



# Starting or changing schools?

## A checklist to support Autistic students



### Our purpose a different brilliant®

Understanding, engaging  
& celebrating the strengths,  
interests & aspirations of people  
on the autism spectrum.

## For parents

### Preparing your child

- Visit the new school and classroom together and take photos or short videos that you can look at again at home.
- Arrange for your child to meet their teacher ahead of starting, ideally in the classroom setting.
- Practise the route to school multiple times – whether by bus, train, walking or car.
- Introduce and practise wearing the school uniform and their school shoes in short bursts, especially if sensory sensitivities are a factor.
- Use social stories or visual schedules showing what a school day might look like.
- Practise routines such as packing a bag, lining up, or sitting on a mat.

### Sharing information with the school

Provide a clear profile of your child's:

- Interests and strengths.
- Communication preferences and styles such as vocalisations, gestures, pictures, speech devices or verbal language.
- Sensory preferences including responses to noise, light, smells, touch, clothing or movement.
- Learning preferences, for example visually supported learning, hands-on, reading, or videos.
- Stressors such as noisy or busy environments, group work, transitions between activities, or not knowing what is happening in their day or changes that may occur. Include strategies that support regulation.
- Share any strategies and tools that already work at home such as visual supports, routines, calming activities and comfort items.



## Request input from your early childcare provider

Request that your pre-school/day care pass on relevant notes and information to the new school such as:

- A summary of your child's developmental strengths and current skills in communication, social interaction, fine and gross motor skills, and problem-solving.
- Learning style preferences, such as visual, auditory, hands-on or step-by-step.
- Effective strategies for engagement and learning used successfully in their preschool.
- A sensory profile of your child including sensitivities and preferences, as well as adjustments or accommodations that have been successful for them at preschool.
- Regulation strategies that support your child, such as calming activities, sensory breaks or routines.
- Social information, including friendships, preferred play styles, and experiences with group work.
- Any stressors and known ways to reduce anxiety in those situations.
- Interests, passions or motivators that can be used to engage your child in their learning.
- Notes on functional skills, such as using the toilet, eating, or following daily routines.
- Any recent or ongoing supports, including therapies or specialist involvement, that may need to be continued or adapted in the school setting.

## Shared actions with the school

- After meeting with the school develop an agreed upon transition plan that includes timelines, visits, and key responsibilities.
- Discuss with the school which communication methods will work best, such as email, diary, phone, school app and agree on how frequently updates will be provided.
- Discuss with the school, which language, visual supports and strategies can help create consistency between home and school.
- Agree with the school to review the plan after a set period, such as two to four weeks, and adjust it based on the student's feedback and observed needs.



*"Taking time to plan the transition gave our child predictability – and that made all the difference."*

– PARENT



## Aspect schools

Creating an autism-friendly school environment is essential to ensuring that Autistic students feel supported, understood and empowered to thrive. Schools that embrace inclusive practices benefit not only Autistic students but the entire school community. At Aspect schools, we are leaders in autism education, providing dynamic, individualised learning tailored to each student's unique strengths, challenges and learning styles. A 'one size fits all' approach does not work in autism education, which is why individualised planning is at the heart of our approach.

To learn  
more about  
Aspect schools:



For more  
information on  
partnering with  
Aspect to create  
an inclusive  
classroom, visit:



## For educators

### Before the first day

- Read and discuss the student's profile with all staff who will work with them.
- Discuss who the student can go to for support, to connect with or to share news.
- Discuss the physical environment with the student and their family, including sensory considerations such as lighting, noise levels, seating arrangements, and movement needs.
- Create visually clear learning spaces which include areas with low visual stimulation.
- Use a visual schedule to increase predictability in the student's day.
- Include communication supports.
- Plan for multiple ways to present information, such as visual, verbal, demonstrations, hands-on, videos.

### During transition

- Provide gradual familiarisation visits where possible, with the length and number of visits tailored to the student's needs.
- Offer opportunities for peer connections, this could include having a "buddy".
- Use visual supports to clarify instructions and expectations.
- Check in regularly with the student's parents – not only when challenges arise – about how their child is going emotionally, physically, including energy levels, and how they are engaging in learning activities.

### Ongoing monitoring

- Be flexible – discuss adjusting the plan if the student is thriving sooner than expected or needs more time.
- Share wins and positive feedback with the student and their parents.
- Monitor for masking – check whether the student's behaviour at school matches how they feel at home.