

Autism and ADHD at Hillview School for Girls

We follow guidance and information from Kent & Medway Children and Young People's Single Point of Access as detailed below.

The Single Point of Access is a triage service for emotional wellbeing and mental health referrals for children and young people in Kent and Medway. The SPA also handles referrals for Autism and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder as part of NELFT services in Kent and Medway. The SPA has had to respond to increasing demand for requests for support and assessment over the last few years and with this in mind, they have recently changed and combined their referral processes for Autism and ADHD.

Referrals coming into the service requesting support or assessment for emotional wellbeing, mental health difficulties, Autism, and or ADHD require clinical screening.

If the primary concern is around a young person having traits of Autism or ADHD, and they are mildly impacted at home and school then a period of watchful waiting is recommended in-line NICE guidelines.

At Hillview School for Girls, we follow this recommendation by reviewing progress data 3 times a year, and by ensuring there is regular liaison between teachers, mentors and the pastoral team. All students will experience difficulties that they need adult support with, and we will use our student support systems to ensure that students are appropriately supported, and any issues are addressed as soon as is possible.

If it is felt that traits are having a moderate impact at home and school, then Kent & Medway Children and Young People's Service recommend targeted support for parents and implementing Mainstream Core Standards in school where appropriate before considering a referral.

In addition to the support previously mentioned, these students may be offered reasonable adjustments to help them manage any difficulties within lessons and unstructured times. These may include exit passes, positive reports, signposting to clubs and interventions, referrals to the school health team for emotional support, referrals to the Early Help team or other organisations and agencies available to families in the local area.

If we suspect that a learner may have Autism or ADHD we will immediately ask teachers to use our universal approaches, which are shown below,

Universal Strategies

- Clear Boundaries/Expectations
- Chunking (10- and 20-minute tasks)
- Check-ins (Checking understanding x 2/lesson in a learner preferred way)
- Task Planner/ Tick List
- Praise (Using positive praise and recognition)
- Movement (e.g. Handing out books or worksheets, allowing learner to doodle while listening, etc.)

Where we feel that the presentation may show some signs of Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA) we ask teachers to use the following, specific approaches,

PDA specific approaches:

- My anxiety response is 'fight' - use calm tone and indirect command
- I may not like you, don't take it personally - walk away and give me space and time to calm
- I don't like hierarchy and I need to feel 'liked', praise me 1:1 out of earshot of other learners or staff for specific things e.g. really good use of method for long division
- Clear boundaries / classroom expectations / limit change
- Use humour to diffuse a situation 1:1 with me if you know me well (it will not work well if you don't know me well)
- PACE approach

If the universal and specific strategies above are not enough to remove barriers to learning for the student, then we may offer targeted interventions to support social understanding through the 'Talkabout' and other approaches such as zones of regulation and keyworker sessions if there is a need. In some cases, we may use an external specialist such as an Educational Psychologist to deliver small group interventions to learners with these profiles.

Only when we have worked through our tier 1 (universal) and tier 2 (targeted) and tier 3 (specialised) support would we consider making a referral through the SPA. This is because these layers of support are usually sufficient for the student to make expected progress.

If you wish to make your own referral and school is contacted as part of this process, you will be added to our waiting list. The volume of requests the school receives to complete paperwork for autism and ADHD assessments has increased significantly, with the school receiving about two to four requests per week. In order to give a fair reflection of how students perform, information is gathered from student support managers, mentors and teachers. This is a time-intensive task that needs coordinating properly, and to give a fair reflection, we would normally allow at least 10 to 12 school weeks to complete and send it on. Please note that for some learners may not have a large amount of available information as they may not be presenting in class with high scores for the areas outlined in the referral.

In a few cases we may feel it is necessary to refer a learner and will have evidence to be able to provide a record of the student's difficulties, the support offered and its impact. Referrals will then be screened by a clinician looking at the whole needs of the child or young person with a holistic view: once a decision has been made to determine the child's needs/ difficulties and which service would be appropriate, the service will make contact, in line with their wait times.

Requests will be made by the service for further information/additional forms for referrals that indicate a need for further consideration of ASC or ADHD screening for a child or young person. Once additional forms are completed and all received, they will be scored and reviewed to consider the next steps for assessment and support.