

VOLUNTEER POLICY, 2026

Forming part of Giant Steps Tasmania's *Personnel Manual*

Policy Statement

Giant Steps Tasmania honours and is grateful to the volunteers who freely contribute their time and skills to help students and enrich the life of the school.

Purpose

Giant Steps Tasmania is committed to the health and safety of all those who learn and work at the school. The purpose of this policy is to ensure the safety of volunteers and those with whom they work, by explaining Volunteers' rights, responsibilities and the expectations placed upon them.

Implementation

Volunteers:

- provide their service of their own free will and without financial payment;
- comply with the relevant policies and procedures of Giant Steps Tasmania, including the Staff Professional Code of Conduct Policy.
- acquire a Working With Vulnerable People (WWVP) Card prior to volunteering at Giant Steps Tasmania;
- are dependable, reliable and committed to the students of Giant Steps Tasmania;
- continue to develop their knowledge of students with autism by participating in professional development opportunities or training if required;
- cooperate with other volunteers and staff in the day-to-day operation of Giant Steps Tasmania;
- respect the confidentiality of the students, their families and the staff of Giant Steps Tasmania;
- provide feedback to the teachers and Principal of Giant Steps as requested;
- provide at least 24 hours' notice to the Principal if they will not be available to volunteer;
- give at least one weeks' notice to the Principal if they wish to stop Volunteering;
- are responsible for acquiring and maintaining any vaccinations they feel necessary;
- respect the authority and decision-making of Giant Steps Tasmania's staff;
- follow the directions of the Principal;
- do what is reasonable to ensure that classroom staff are present while they are with the students;
- do not contact students outside of school, through social media or otherwise; and
- are mindful of the signs of sexual abuse and do not engage in any form of sexualised contact or conduct with students.

Prior to commencing as Volunteers at Giant Steps Tasmania, Volunteers will:

- have a meeting with the Principal to discuss their role and responsibilities;
- provide the Principal with the names and contact details of two people who have known them for at least 12 months and who can provide character references for them;

- Undertake online training in Safeguarding. The Department of Education Children and Young People (DECYP) have generously provided access to their safeguarding online training portal to all schools across the state. There are currently three training modules in the portal. Volunteers must complete the first of these: Your Obligations Training - this module provides staff with essential information on identifying, reporting and responding to child abuse.
- read, agree to and sign a copy of Giant Steps Tasmania's Code of Conduct.

Volunteers are never expected to:

- be solely responsible for any student of Giant Steps Tasmania;
- work on their own, without the assistance of a contracted member of staff, with any student of Giant Steps Tasmania;
- be involved in the positive behaviour management of any Giant Steps Tasmania student;
- be responsible for reprimanding any student;
- undertake any task that makes them feel uncomfortable.

While at Giant Steps Tasmania, volunteers:

- are covered by Giant Steps Tasmania's Public Liability insurance;
- have and are owed duties under the Work Health and Safety Act, 2012.

While at Giant Steps Tasmania, volunteers are not:

- covered by the Tasmanian Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988

Authorised by:	Paul Bowman
Position:	Chair of Board
Signature:	
Date:	
Original Policy developed by:	Chris Jacobsen
Position:	(previously) Education Administrator
Date developed:	March - August, 2016
Date of this review:	April 2026
Reviewed by:	Chris Jacobsen
Position:	Fairlight Educational Consulting
Staff consultation period:	March – April 2026
Date for next review:	April, 2029

Addendum 1: Induction Handbook for Volunteers and Visitors

INDUCTION HANDBOOK

for Volunteers & Visitors



Giant Steps Tasmania 2026

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Welcome to Giant Steps Tasmania. We are very happy to welcome you into our school community.

Giant Steps Tasmania is the only not for profit, independent school for children on the Autism Spectrum in Tasmania.

Our school was set up in 1995 by a group of dedicated parents and local community supporters who were passionate about providing focused and specialised education to suit the individualised needs of children on the Spectrum. Deloraine provided – and continues to provide – the perfect location for the school with its clean air, access to some of the most beautiful parts of the state and its welcoming locals.

Giant Steps Tasmania is organised as follows:

Green Room - Grades P-2

Red Room - Grades 2-5

Orange Room - Grades 5-9

Blue Room - Grades 9-12

There are usually around 8-12 students in each of the classes on any given day. Some of our students are with us every day, while others are dual-enrolled at other schools around Tasmania.

I hope that you will quickly feel part of our community and that you will enjoy interacting with our awesome students and the equally awesome adults who work with them.

I look forward to getting to know you and I am available if there's anything you want to talk to me about.

Kimberly Trebilco

Principal

THE INDUCTION PROCEDURE

TOPIC	PERSON
Welcome	Principal or delegate
Orientation to the facilities, introductions & emergency procedures	Principal or delegate
Policies & Procedures	Principal or delegate
Meeting with team	Appropriate team member

GIANT STEPS TASMANIA

WHAT WE ARE ALL ABOUT

VISION

To make a positive and powerful difference in the lives of students on the autism spectrum, delivering world class individualised education programs in specialised quality facilities based in our caring local community.

MISSION

To provide learning opportunities for students living with autism so that they can maximise their potential, foster authentic connections with others and gain independence.

WE VALUE:

- a safe, respectful and compassionate learning environment
- quality and specialised individualised programs that celebrate individuality
- engagement with our communities

GIANT STEPS TASMANIA

WHAT WE ARE ALL ABOUT

At Giant Steps Tasmania we have done a lot of work as a school community defining three core values and what those values look like in action in our school.

Our three core values are:

We are Safe



We are Respectful



We are Learners



School Values in Action - Staff

	We are Safe 	We are Respectful 	We are Learners 
Always and Everywhere	• We proactively check for hazards and report anything identified immediately. • We keep the school clean, tidy and free from hazards. • We use equipment safely. • We store potentially hazardous items and chemicals safely. • We move around the school & community safely. • We check in with each other regularly.	• We communicate professionally (language, tone, volume, right time/right place) and calmly, with the whole school community. • We are honest with each other in a respectful manner. • We support each other and seek understanding (of a situation or incident), rather than judging. • We value each other's opinion. • We follow policy to deal with any conflicts or complaints.	• We ask questions and seek clarification. • We actively listen to each other and our students. • We give and are open to receiving constructive feedback. • We know and provide feedback on policies and procedures. • We have a growth mindset. • Mistakes happen – we support each other to learn from them. • We engage in reflective practice to continually strive for improvement.

	• We follow all policies and procedures. • See it, say it, sort it! We report any concerning behaviours or concerns about students. • We have safe relationships with students and maintain professional boundaries. • We do not use our personal devices when working with students. • We are proactive in communicating and planning for student behaviour.	• We always show compassion and understanding towards students, colleagues and families. • We always maintain confidentiality. • We have professional relationships with our colleagues. • We always use neuro-affirming language and approach.	
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SOME KEY STAFF MEMBERS



Paul Bowman

Chair of Board



Karina Johnstone

Business Manager



Kimberly Trebilco

Principal



Angela Karpeles

Head of Learning &
Development



Siaren Lacangan

Occupational Therapist



Susan Drake

Admin Assistant



Leanne Osmond

Admin Assistant



Irene Singleton

Lead Teacher



Danielle Whatley

Blue Room Teacher



Antonio Zanchetta

Orange Room Teacher



Jenna Wallace

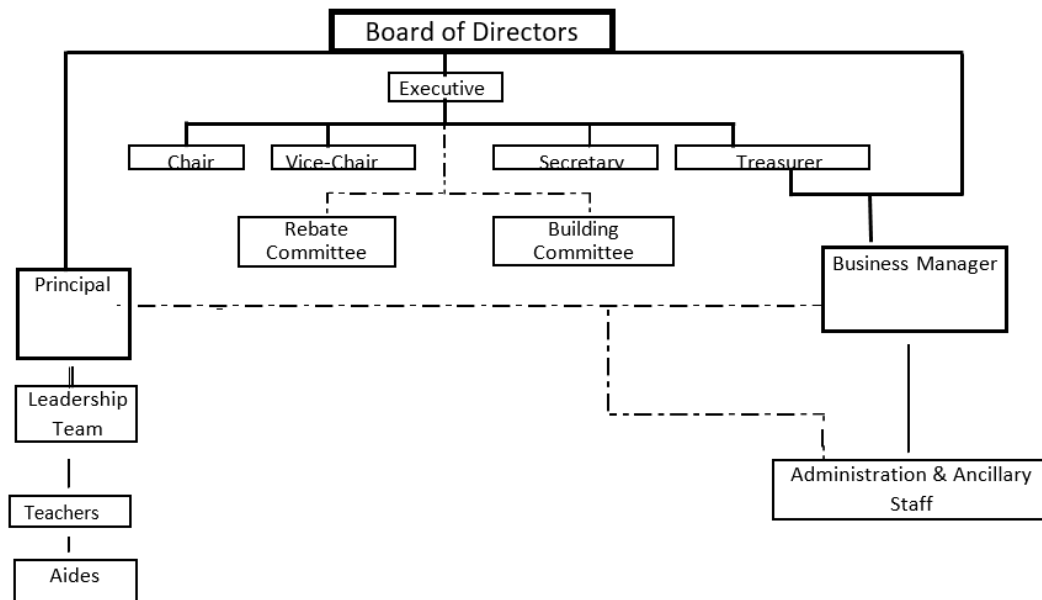
Red Room Teacher



Michael Bissell

Green Room Teacher

GIANT STEPS TASMANIA ORGANISATION CHART



GIANT STEPS TASMANIA LEADERSHIP TEAM

Our school Leadership Team is comprised of Kimberly Trebilco the Principal, Angela Karpeles who is the Head of Learning & Development, Siaren Lacangan who is our Occupational Therapist, and Irene Singleton who is our Lead Teacher. This group meets regularly to discuss school issues and manage all aspects of Giant Steps. Our team are a valuable resource that our staff and families can call on for advice and assistance.

ANGELA KARPELES

Angela works Monday-Thursday and supports staff across the school with all things teaching and learning including assessment, planning and curriculum development as well as with the development of student Individual Education Plans.

Angela also supports the principal with a range of things including staff rostering, staff mentoring and staff professional development.

As a member of our Leadership Team Angela is always available to talk to staff, and support staff with conversations with parents or other key stakeholders about our students.

SIAREN LACANGAN

Siaren works in individual and small group sessions with the students. She provides a variety of services for our children which support the many sensory, physical, social and proprioceptive issues they face.

As a member of our Leadership Team Siaren provides valuable advice to staff on the various sensory, behavioural and physical needs of our students.

Siaren is always available to talk to staff, parents and other stakeholders about the progress of our students.

IRENE SINGLETON

Irene works between all of our class groups with a focus on particular subjects and programs. This role has added some extra flexibility for our teachers and extra value for our students.

As a member of our Leadership Team, Irene supports with a range of things across our school including whole school wellbeing, safeguarding, sporting school's applications and organisation of our technology.

CONFIDENTIALITY

As a volunteer or visitor at Giant Steps Tasmania team, you may overhear conversations that address students' needs, abilities and family situations. Such information must never be shared with anyone outside the organisation. In particular:

- Visitors must ensure two-way confidentiality.
- Staff and visitors must not use personal devices when working with students.
- Staff and visitors must not take photos or videos of students on any personal device.
- Visitors must not discuss students or colleagues with anyone outside the organisation.

Some information cannot be kept confidential. If a student lets you know that they are experiencing abuse, or if you suspect that they are experiencing abuse or neglect, you have a responsibility to share this information with Strong Families Safe Kids and the Principal. You must not share this information with anyone else.

Workplace Health & Safety

Hazards and Maintenance Record Book	If you notice something around our premises that could cause an accident (e.g. loose carpet, broken step). Report this to a member of staff immediately. Our staff will write this in the Hazards and Maintenance Record Book. Our WHS Committee then makes sure that all matters are followed up and resolved.
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SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding Procedures for Volunteers

If a student lets you know they are experiencing abuse or neglect or there is reasonable reason to think a child is experiencing abuse or neglect the following procedure is followed:

- Notify the Principal. Meet with the Principal to discuss your concern and plan what steps need to be taken to address your concern.
- If a student lets you know they are experiencing abuse or neglect or there is reasonable reason to think a child is experiencing abuse or neglect, a report must be made to Strong Families Safe Kids.
- Do not discuss your concern or share any information with other members of staff or anyone outside of the organisation.

Safeguarding Training

The Department of Education Children and Young People (DECYP) have generously provided access to their safeguarding online training portal to all schools across the state.

There are currently three training modules in the portal.

1. Your Obligations Training - this module provides staff with essential information on identifying, reporting and responding to child abuse.
2. Reporting Obligations Training (advanced)
3. Child Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

All staff at Giant Steps, visiting allied health specialists and volunteers are required to complete the first module prior to commencing and then annually.

All classroom-based staff are also required to complete module 2 and 3 annually.

The link to the training portal is below. You will need to create an account and login to access the training. **Once you have completed a module please email your certificate to administration staff** who will be tracking staff completion of the training.

<https://decyp-safeguarding.mygo1.com/signup/email>

Trigger Warning

The content in the training modules may be confronting. If you start completing the modules and find it too confronting, please speak to a member of the leadership team.

DRESS CODE

Clothing must preserve the safety of the wearer and others. Dress, personal appearance and hygiene are also important elements of professional presentation, so clothing must be clean, tidy and neat and must not carry offensive logos or slogans.

Staff are expected to adhere to the following dress code.

The following items **are** appropriate for wearing at school:

- All items of Giant Steps Tasmania clothing;
- Trousers, jeans, tracksuit pants and leggings;
- Long-length shorts;
- Work shirts, collared shirts, skivvies, polo shirts, t-shirts;
- Covered shoes;
- Plain jackets, jumpers, coats, beanies, and gloves;

Broad or wide-brimmed hats must be worn by **all** staff members during outdoor activities including playground time and walks during Terms 1 and 4 and at any other time designated by the Principal.

The following items **are not** appropriate for wearing at school:

- short shorts, cut-offs and board shorts
- skirts and dresses
- singlets (vests) and crop tops
- ties and necklaces
- Scarves (unless part of religious practice)
- caps and visors
- open-toed sandals and thongs
- brooches and pins

Staff are advised:

- to wear studs in piercings to protect themselves from accidental injury when interacting with students (except when in the pool, when studs must be removed);
- to consider the length of their fingernails as there is risk of accidental injury to students and/or other staff and/or themselves if nails are too long.
- to consider whether the wearing of button-through shirts and blouses could cause embarrassment to themselves, students, or other staff if accidental damage occurred when they were interacting with students;
- for their own comfort, to consider keeping a change of clothes in school/ with them on excursions, if they think the activities, they may be involved in could result in their clothes becoming soiled.

KEY POLICIES

Giant Steps Tasmania has 36 policies in three Policy Manuals. Policies are reviewed 12 months after they are written and then at least once every two years. There are copies of all policies in the staffroom, on the Shared Drive and in each classroom. It is the responsibility of every member of staff to be familiar with the policies.

The Policy Manuals are organised as follows:

Health & Safety Manual	
Anti-Bullying & Harassment Policy	Personal Care Support Policy
Critical Incident Policy	Positive Behaviour Support Policy
Disaster Response & Recovery Policy	Privacy Policy
Emergency Policy	Safeguarding policy
First Aid Policy	Well-being and Pastoral Care Policy
Hazard Identification & Reporting Policy	Transportation Policy
Medication Administration Policy	Whistleblowing Policy
Drug & Alcohol Policy	

Curriculum & Learning Experiences Manual	
Admissions Policy	Off-Campus Activities Policy
Allied Health in School Policy	Pool & Water Safety Policy
Attendance Policy	School Improvement Policy
Curriculum Policy	Technology Policy
Assessment & Reporting Policy	Inclusion Policy

Personnel Manual	
Communication Policy	Staff Professional Conduct Policy
Conflict of Interest Policy (Board)	Staff Professional Learning & Development Policy
Complaints Policy	Staff Recruitment Policy
Cyber Security Policy	
Staff General Conditions of Employment Policy	Staff Termination of Employment Policy
Staff Induction Policy	Volunteer Policy

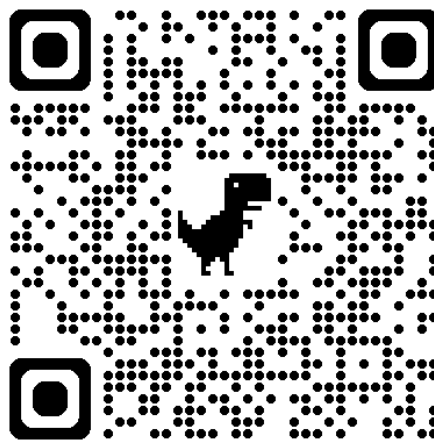
At Giant Steps Tasmania we are committed to making policies as accessible as possible for staff and families. To achieve this, we have started developing video policy summaries for key policies.

Hover your phone on camera mode over the QR code to scan the code and be taken directly to each policy summary video. Alternatively you can download a QR code reader app.

Curriculum Policy

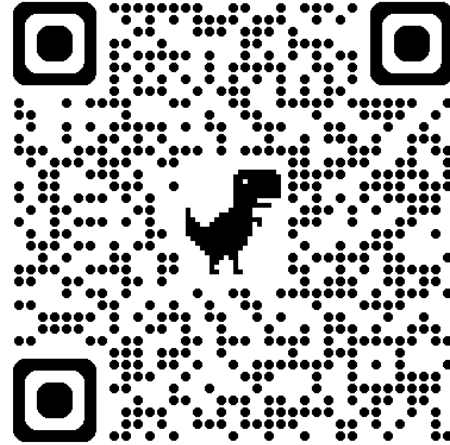


Safeguarding Policy



**Assessment & Reporting
Policy**

**Positive Behaviour Support
Policy**

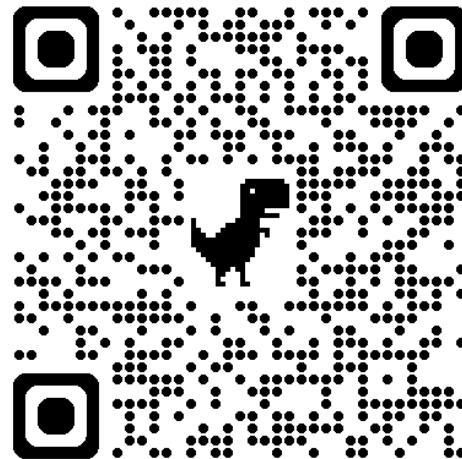


Pool Policy

Complaints Policy



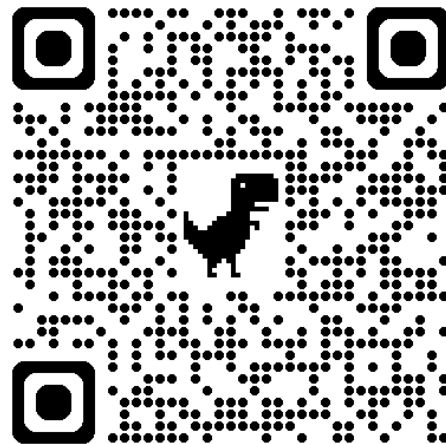
**Anti Bullying &
Harassment Policy**



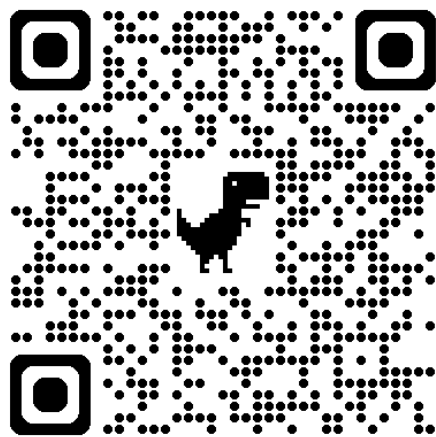
**Pastoral Care &
Wellbeing Policy**



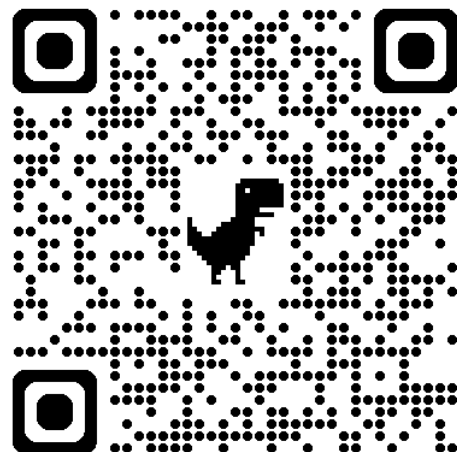
**Emergency Management
Policy**



**Medication Administration
Policy**



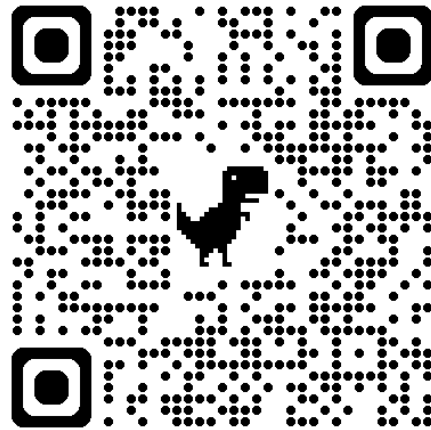
**Staff Professional Learning &
Development Policy**



**Allied Health in
School Policy**



First Aid Policy



**Off-Campus Activities
Policy**

Transportation Policy

Technology Policy

SUPPORTING THE STUDENTS

The Language We Use

We all need to be aware that the language we use around disability issues must be thoughtful and respectful. Here are a few things to think about:

Ability	Remember that a person may have one disability but they have many abilities. To refer to someone as <i>an epileptic</i> , or <i>an asthmatic</i> suggests that the condition defines them. A <i>student with epilepsy</i> , or <i>a person with asthma</i> is preferable.
Autism	Students at Giant Steps Tasmania have a clinical diagnosis of ASD. However, we try to avoid the use of the term <i>disorder</i> and generally refer to our students as being <i>on the Autism Spectrum</i> .
Defect	Not acceptable. Avoid using phrases like <i>birth defect</i> . <i>Congenital disability</i> is preferable.
Disadvantaged	Just because a person has a disability should not mean they are disadvantaged.
Normal	This should not be used about people who do not have a disability. Use instead <i>sighted</i> , <i>hearing</i> , <i>neurotypical</i> .
Patronising language	Avoid describing people as <i>brave</i> , <i>special</i> or <i>suffering</i> just because they have a disability.

You will hear a variety of acronyms and abbreviations at Giant Steps Tasmania. Here are some of them explained:

AAC	Augmentative and Assistive Communication devices. A number of different aids to communication used by our non-verbal students.
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder (see Autism above). This is the primary clinical diagnosis of the majority of the students at Giant Steps Tasmania.
DSM-5	The <i>Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition</i> . In Australia the DSM is used for the diagnosis of ASD.

IEP	Individual Education Plan. All students at Giant Steps Tasmania have an IEP, giving their academic goals and how they can be supported to reach them. All staff working with a student must know these goals.
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme. This finances provision for people with a disability.
OT	Occupational Therapist.
PECS	Picture Exchange Communication System. A type of AAC used by some students at Giant Steps Tasmania.
SEL/ SEAL	Social and Emotional Learning/ Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning. At Giant Steps Tasmania this area is just as important as academic goals. Again, it is important that all staff working with a student know about their Social and Emotional needs. These can often be found under their Personal and Social Goals on their IESPs.

Positive Behaviour Support

At Giant Steps Tasmania we ensure our approach to positive behaviour support is always respectful, safe and proactive.

We know that all behaviour is a means of communication and work to understand what the child is trying to communicate and any possible triggers for the child.

Staff read and follow Student Summaries and Behaviour Support plans to ensure that they are aware of triggers, prevention and de-escalations strategies and responding strategies for each individual student.

Staff at Giant Steps Tasmania:

- Focus on the positive in their interactions with students
- Use positive language about students
- Have a positive and supportive learning environment
- Prepare students for situations that might make them anxious (e.g. transitions, staff changes)
- Devise (or utilise existing) units of work, visuals and social stories that explicitly teach desired behaviours
- Understand that education and support is more effective than punishment
- Establish positive and supportive teacher-student relationships (while maintaining boundaries)
- Provide students with skills and strategies to replace challenging or undesirable behaviours with acceptable behaviours
- Catch students being good

If you observe student behaviour that is of concern, please notify a member of staff as soon as possible. They will assist in managing the situation.

10 THINGS EVERY CHILD WITH AUTISM WANTS YOU TO KNOW

<http://www.ellennotbohm.com/article-archive/ten-things-every-child-with-autism-wishes-you-knew/>

1. I am a child.

As a child, I am still unfolding. Neither you nor I yet know what I may be capable of. If you think of me as just one thing, you run the danger of setting up an expectation that may be too low. And if I get a sense that you don't think I "can do it," my natural response will be, why try?



2. My senses are out of sync.



This means that ordinary sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches that you may not even notice can be downright painful for me. My environment often feels hostile. I may appear withdrawn or belligerent or mean to you, but I'm just trying to defend myself. Here's why a simple trip to the supermarket may be agonizing for me.

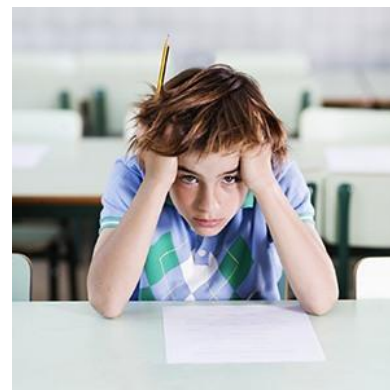
My hearing may be hyperacute. Dozens of people jabber at once. The loudspeaker booms music. The meat cutter screeches, babies wail, carts creak, the fluorescent lighting hums. My brain can't filter all the input and I'm in overload!

My sense of smell may be highly sensitive. The fish at the meat counter isn't quite fresh, the guy standing next to us hasn't showered today, the deli is handing out sausage samples, the baby in line ahead of us has a poopy nappy, they're mopping up pickles on aisle three with ammonia. I feel like throwing up.

And there's so much hitting my eyes! The fluorescent light is not only too bright, it flickers. There are too many items for me to be able to focus (my brain may compensate with tunnel vision), so many bodies in constant motion. All this affects how I feel just standing there, and now I can't even tell where my body is in space.

3. Distinguish between won't (I choose not to) and can't (I am not able to).

It isn't that I don't listen to instructions. It's that I can't understand you. When you call to me from across the room, I hear "*&^%\$#@, Jordan. #\$\$%^&^%\$&*." Instead, come over to me, get my attention, and speak in plain words: "Jordan, put your book in your desk. It's time to go to lunch." This tells me what you want me to do and what is going to happen next. Now it's much easier for me to comply.



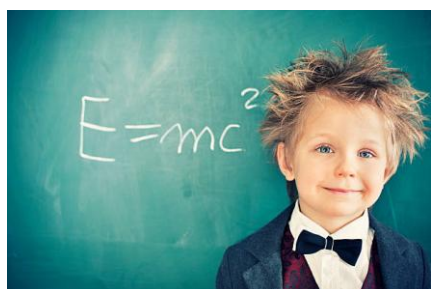
4. I'm a concrete thinker. I interpret language literally.

You confuse me by saying, "Hold your horses!" when what you mean is, "Stop running." Don't tell me something is "a piece of cake" when there's no dessert in sight and what you mean is, "This will be easy for you to do." When you say, "It's raining cats and dogs," I see pets coming out of the sky. Tell me, "It's raining hard."



Idioms, puns, nuances, inferences, metaphors, allusions, and sarcasm are often lost on me.

5. Listen to all the ways I'm trying to communicate.



It's hard for me to tell you what I need when I don't have a way to describe my feelings. I may be hungry, frustrated, frightened, or confused but right now I can't find those words. Be alert for body language, withdrawal, agitation or other signs that tell you something is wrong. They're there.

Or, you may hear me compensate for not having all the words I need by sounding like a little professor or movie star, rattling off words or whole scripts well beyond my developmental age. I've memorized these messages from the world around me because I know I am expected to speak when spoken to. They may come from books, television, or the speech of other people. Some people call it echolalia. I may not understand the context or the terminology I'm using. I just know that it gets me off the hook for coming up with a reply.

6. I'm visually oriented.

Show me how to do something rather than just telling me. And be prepared to show me many times. Lots of patient practice helps me learn.



Visual supports help me move through my day. They relieve me of the stress of having to remember what comes next, make for smooth transition between activities, and help me manage my time and meet your expectations.

I need to see something to learn it. I don't have instant-processing skills. Instructions and



information presented to me visually can stay in front of me for as long as I need and will be just the same when I come back to them later. Without them, I live with the constant frustration of knowing that I'm missing big blocks of information and expectations and am helpless to do anything about it.

7. Focus and build on what I can do rather than what I can't do.

Like any person, I can't learn in an environment where I'm constantly made to feel that I'm not good enough and that I need fixing. I avoid trying anything new when I'm sure all I'll get is criticism, no matter how "constructive" you think you're being. Look for my strengths and you will find them.

There is usually more than one right way to do things.

8. Help me with social interactions.

It may look like I don't want to play with the other kids on the playground, but it may be that I simply do not know how to start a conversation or join their play. Teach me how to play with others.

I do best in structured play activities that have a clear beginning and end. I don't know how to read facial expressions, body language, or the emotions of others.

Coach me. If I laugh when someone falls off the slide, it's not that I think it's funny. It's that I don't know what to say. Talk to me about feelings and teach me to ask, "Are you okay?"



9. Identify what triggers my meltdowns.

Meltdowns and blow-ups are more horrid for me than they are for you. They occur because one or more of my senses has gone into overload, or because I've been pushed past the limit of my social abilities. If you can figure out why my meltdowns occur, they can be prevented. Keep a log noting times, settings, people, and activities. A pattern may emerge.

Remember that everything I do is a form of communication. It tells you, when my words cannot, how I'm reacting to what is happening around me.

My behaviour may have a physical cause. Food allergies and sensitivities, sleep problems and gastrointestinal problems can all affect my behaviour. Look for signs, because I may not be able to tell you about these things.

10. Support me unconditionally.

I didn't choose to have autism. But view my autism as a different ability rather than a disability. Look past what you may see as limitations and see my strengths.

Without your support, my chances of growing up to be successful and independent are slim. With your support and guidance, the possibilities are broader than you might think.

Three words we both need to live by: Patience. Patience. Patience.

I rely on you. All that I might become won't happen without your help. Be my advocate, be my guide, respect me for who I am, and we'll see how far I can go.

