



How to improve your school for neurodivergent pupils in BANES: A toolkit

What is this?

This toolkit provides guidance on how to implement the BANES Youth Forum's recommendations for making your school more accessible for neurodivergent pupils.

Where possible we link to training and resources that are: produced by or with neurodivergent young people; delivered by local BANES organisations; time-efficient; and/or free.

To find out more about the research behind our recommendations, see our report:

<https://bit.ly/neurodivergent-pupils>



Many of the changes should help *all* pupils feel more comfortable and engaged at school. However, you will know if certain changes would work best if they are only applied to neurodivergent pupils.

Just remember that, in the words of one of our survey respondents: 'a lot of students will be nd [neurodivergent] but undiagnosed (especially girls)... nd students may mask well at school'.

You can find out more about BANES Youth Forum, or contact us, at www.offtherecord-banes.co.uk/participation-youth-forum

Recommendation 1: **More neurodiversity training for school staff**

- Ideally this training would be mandatory for all school staff, but it is especially important for teachers (including supply teachers). It needs to include awareness-raising of the school's support mechanisms for neurodivergent pupils, e.g. quiet areas and passports/time-out cards.

We recommend these trainings:

- <https://www.fossewayschool.co.uk/specialist-autism-support-service-2/sass-training-professionals> (free to professionals working with children in BANES)

- <https://thehub.bathnes.gov.uk/Page/35324> (a variety of training on BANES Council's HUB, including some free and online)

- <https://bit.ly/neurodivergent-pupils> (two free resources, designed by a BANES young person)

- <https://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/find-upcoming-aet-training> (in-person) and/or <https://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/house-cpd-programme-schools-trusts> (online)

- We are currently co-producing some new neurodiversity training for schools with the BANES Parent Carer Forum (BPCF), to ensure that neurodivergent pupils' lived experience is included. The training will be free. More information will be published at <https://banespcf.co.uk>



Recommendation 2: **Alternatives to punishment**

- Please be flexible with pupils whose neurodivergence causes them to do (or not do) something that the school would usually sanction. For example, if a neurodivergent pupil finds organisation very difficult, and forget their equipment, don't just give them a detention: come up with a plan together to help them have the right equipment each day.
- Remember that you won't always know if a pupil is neurodivergent. If any pupils are repeatedly struggling with a school rule/expectation, consider this when responding.

Here is some more guidance:

- <https://www.teachwire.net/news/behaviour-management-neurodiverse-children>
- <https://www.tes.com/magazine/analysis/specialist-sector/asn-support-schools-neurodivergent-pupils-inclusion> (requires a Times Education Supplement subscription)



Recommendation 3: Have quiet places that pupils can go to

- All schools should have quiet spaces that pupils can go to between lessons, and during lessons if needed. There needs to be more than one space, to avoid them becoming crowded.
- It's important that these spaces are not only quiet, but that they also feel safe (e.g. not just an empty classroom). It's also crucial to make them sensory (for example by providing fidget/stim toys, sofas, and blankets), without creating sensory overload. The spaces should be varied in style, to suit different needs.

Here are some more ideas and resources:

- <https://www.neurodiversityhub.org/enabling-spaces> (a simulation of what sensory overload can feel like for neurodivergent people)
- <https://www.senteq.co.uk/sensory-rooms-in-mainstream-schools>



Recommendation 4: Educate all pupils about neurodiversity

- This might fit best into PSHE and Biology, and/or it could be through assemblies during Neurodiversity Celebration Week. It needs to include awareness-raising of the school's support mechanisms for neurodivergent pupils, e.g. quiet areas and passports/time-out cards.

There are lots of high-quality, free lesson and assembly resources you can use:

- <https://salvesen-research.ed.ac.uk/leans>

- <https://www.neurodiversityweek.com/get-involved-schools>

- <https://mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/resources/neurodiversity-celebration-week-toolkit>

- <https://bit.ly/neurodivergent-pupils> (two resources for schools, designed by a BANES young person)

