|  |
| --- |
| **SEND Service 0-25 Years****Autism in Girls Checklist** **For use in Primary Schools** |



|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Child/Young Person name:** |  |
| **Date of Birth & Year group:** |  |
| **School/Setting Name:** |  |
| **Name of person(s) completing checklist & role:** |  |
| **Date of completion:** |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Social Understanding:***Differences in understanding social behaviour, understanding the feelings of others, how to start an informal conversation and forming friendships.* To what extent are the following characteristics observed in the pupil at school?  | Always | Often | Sometimes | Never |
| Difficulties recognising the status/ authority of themselves *e.g., seeing a rule as applying to other children, but not themselves*.  |  |  |  |  |
| May present themselves as an adult, *e.g., role playing being the teacher or interest in more mature activities, such as cooking, cleaning, construction.*  |  |  |  |  |
| Preference for playing or socialising with boys, over girls  |  |  |  |  |
| Lacks a close friend, or has just one or two intense friendships |  |  |  |  |
| May appear to dominate other children during play or unstructured activities *e.g., wanting to control the rules during a playground game* |  |  |  |  |
| Can form friendships, but experiences difficulties maintaining healthy friendships *e.g., frequent fallouts on the playground* |  |  |  |  |
| May show a preference of spending playtime with school staff, rather than peers |  |  |  |  |
| May play more successfully with younger children |  |  |  |  |
| Imaginative play may lack the ability to predict the consequences of their actions and the actions of others |  |  |  |  |
| May struggle with group work, or show a preference for working solo |  |  |  |  |
| Experience difficulties asking for help *e.g., will persevere with work they find difficult without asking a teacher for help* |  |  |  |  |
| May be very loyal and trustworthy in friendships *e.g., will stick up for a friend in a peer conflict*  |  |  |  |  |
| Can appear very honest *e.g., commenting on a person’s appearance in a factual way* |  |  |  |  |
| Can appease others or say what they think others want to hear |  |  |  |  |
| May ‘camouflage’ their difficulties *e.g., saying they know what to do in a social situation when they are confused* |  |  |  |  |
| Appears exhausted from trying hard to socialise or ‘blendin’\* at school *\*Blending: an attempt to fit in with others*  |  |  |  |  |
| Strong sense of moral justice and described as seeing the world in ‘black and white’ |  |  |  |  |
| Finds it difficult to understand or accept another person’s viewpoint *e.g., becomes frustrated when someone disagrees with their opinion* |  |  |  |  |
| Struggles to understand the impact of their actions or comments on another person’s feelings *e.g., not understanding that a factual comment about someone’s appearance can be interpreted as rude* |  |  |  |  |
| Can be described as hypervigilant *e.g., acutely notices when a new or unfamiliar person enters the classroom* |  |  |  |  |
| May skilfully use doll play or imaginary friendships to decode social situations |  |  |  |  |
| May be described as good at following the school rules  |  |  |  |  |
| Further comments: *(Inc. parents’ views)* |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Social Communication:***Differences in understanding communication and language, jokes, sarcasm, tone of voice, facial expression, and gestures*To what extent are the following characteristics observed in the pupil at school?  | Always | Often | Sometimes | Never |
| Struggle to follow verbal instructions |  |  |  |  |
| Difficulty answering open questions |  |  |  |  |
| Overuse of stock/ learnt/ scripted phrases  |  |  |  |  |
| May successfully observe and copy behaviour *e.g., using a learnt script when meeting new people, or copying peers to follow an instruction in class*  |  |  |  |  |
| May possess skilled observation skills |  |  |  |  |
| Behaviour or communication appears analytical or learnt rather than intuitive  |  |  |  |  |
| Literal understanding of language *e.g., difficulties understanding metaphors or sarcasm* |  |  |  |  |
| Appears shy or passive in new or unfamiliar social situations  |  |  |  |  |
| May shows signs of selective mutism in certain situations or environments, despite talking at home |  |  |  |  |
| May not want to be the centre of attention or have the spotlight on them |  |  |  |  |
| May experience difficulties initiating conversations or maintaining conversations |  |  |  |  |
| Difficulties following another’s agenda in conversation *e.g., can talk eloquently about their own interests, but struggle to follow another person’s point of view* |  |  |  |  |
| Reluctance to answer questions in front of the class  |  |  |  |  |
| Difficulties with appropriate facial expressions and responses *e.g., her facial expression does not always match her mood or the situation* |  |  |  |  |
| Difficulties reading other’s body language and facial expressions |  |  |  |  |
| May be able to learn ‘scripts’ successfully |  |  |  |  |
| May appear to have good expressive language skills or ‘mature’ language for their age  |  |  |  |  |
| Inability to understand jokes or makes jokes that others do not understand |  |  |  |  |
| Further comments: *(Inc. parents’ views)* |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sensory Processing:***Differences in perceiving sensory information, hypo (low sensitivity), hyper (high sensitivity), touch, sight, hearing, smell, taste, vestibular (balance), proprioceptive (body awareness)*To what extent are the following characteristics observed in the pupil at school?  | Always | Often | Sometimes | Never |
| Hyper (high) sensitivity:  | Touch, *e.g., resistant to hugs or dislikes hair being brushed* |  |  |  |  |
| Sight, *e.g., sensitive to bright lights*  |  |  |  |  |
| Hearing, *e.g., overly sensitive to specific sounds or noise or cannot focus within a noisy environment*  |  |  |  |  |
| Smell, *e.g., dislikes the smells of specific foods*  |  |  |  |  |
| Taste, *e.g., restrictive diet due to flavours and/or textures*  |  |  |  |  |
| Vestibular, *e.g., avoids movement, such as feet being off the ground or may easily experience motion sickness or dizziness* |  |  |  |  |
| Proprioceptive, *e.g., difficulties manipulating small objects* |  |  |  |  |
| Hypo (low) sensitivity: | Touch, *e.g., enjoys deep pressure activities or is attached to touching a certain toy to calm herself*  |  |  |  |  |
| Sight, *e.g., attracted to flashing lights* |  |  |  |  |
| Hearing, *e.g., under reactive to loud or sudden noises or own name* |  |  |  |  |
| Smell, *e.g., does not notice or react to strong odours* |  |  |  |  |
| Taste, *e.g., prefers foods with strong flavours, such as spicy food* |  |  |  |  |
| Vestibular, *e.g., seeks movement involving rocking, swinging, or spinning without appearing dizzy* |  |  |  |  |
| Proprioceptive, *e.g., difficulties judging personal space and appear clumsy* |  |  |  |  |
| May experience sensory overload\**\*Sensory overload: when one or more of the body’s senses experiences intolerable or excessive over-stimulation from the environment*  |  |  |  |  |
| Further comments: *(Inc. parents’ views)* |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Interests & Information Processing:** *Differences in perception, planning, understanding concepts, generalising, and predicting, transitions and passions for interests.* To what extent are the following characteristics observed in the pupil at school?  | Always | Often | Sometimes | Never |
| May have intense interests that are specific and restricted. *These may be similar to most girls, e.g., books or fashion, but more passionate* |  |  |  |  |
| May have a love of technology, horses, animals, reading or friendships |  |  |  |  |
| May have a particular subject strength or specialist in-depth knowledge *e.g., in art or mathematics or music* |  |  |  |  |
| May perform better with more concrete learning *e.g., mental arithmetic, word decoding etc.*  |  |  |  |  |
| Differences in appearance to peers in terms of clothing *e.g., preference for wearing boys’ clothes* |  |  |  |  |
| May talk about one particular topic frequently and in a factual way *e.g., showing a specialist in-depth knowledge about a specific topic* |  |  |  |  |
| Difficulties starting work or stopping work that is unfinished  |  |  |  |  |
| Difficulties with change or transitions *e.g., experiencing anxiety when there is a change of staff or change to school routines* |  |  |  |  |
| Rigidity in daily routines or governed by time  |  |  |  |  |
| May engage in repetitive behaviours *e.g., tapping hands on desk or picking at their fingers* |  |  |  |  |
| May engage in repetitive questioning or commenting *e.g., asking the questions about an upcoming new event*  |  |  |  |  |
| Perfectionist, such as during work tasks *e.g., will become upset if piece of work does not go the way they planned* |  |  |  |  |
| May be a model student and produce work of a very high calibre  |  |  |  |  |
| May experience a fear of failure and making mistakes *e.g., preventing them from even attempting a task or activity*  |  |  |  |  |
| Difficulties processing lots of information at once *e.g., may need learning tasks to be presented one step at a time* |  |  |  |  |
| May become fixated on a mistake or upset and appear unable to move passed it |  |  |  |  |
| Further comments: *(Inc. parents’ views)* |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Emotional Wellbeing & Mental Health:** To what extent are the following characteristics observed in the pupil at school?  | Always | Often | Sometimes | Never |
| Presents symptoms typical for low mood *e.g., feeling sad, hopeless, trouble sleeping or changes in appetite*  |  |  |  |  |
| Presents symptoms typical for anxiety *e.g., dizziness, feeling lightheaded, frequent urination, feeling cold or blushing or stomach aches* |  |  |  |  |
| Presents symptoms typical for panic attacks *e.g., laboured breathing, sweaty or having chills, chest pains, sense of terror* |  |  |  |  |
| May experience ‘meltdowns’ *e.g., outward signs of extreme distress such as crying, shouting, exiting the classroom* |  |  |  |  |
| And/ or, experiences ‘shutdowns’ *e.g., internalising distress becoming silent, withdrawn and unable to communicate* |  |  |  |  |
| Expresses or shows feelings of worry or anxiety *e.g., will ask lots of questions, seek reassurance, repeats information.*  |  |  |  |  |
| May become emotionally distressed for apparently trivial reasons |  |  |  |  |
| Lack a sense of personal identity |  |  |  |  |
| May have low self-esteem  |  |  |  |  |
| May lacks certainty about gender, such as rejecting ‘feminine’ clothing or displaying a desire to present as male  |  |  |  |  |
| May ‘mask’ anxiety/ difficulties in one environment (i.e., school) and then appear to not cope in another environment (i.e., home)\*Masking = the ability to hide or hold in your anxiety so you appear calm  |  |  |  |  |
| Appears compliant and passive in school, but can demonstrate difficult behaviours at home |  |  |  |  |
| Further comments: *(Inc. parents’ views)* |

|  |
| --- |
| **References:**  |
| * Carpenter, B., **Happé, F. & Egerton, J. (Eds.), (2019)** *Girls and Autism: Education, Family and Personal Perspectives*. London & New York: Routledge
* Loomes, R. et al., (2017) ‘What is the Male-to-Female Ratio in Autism Spectrum Disorder? A Systematic Review & Meta-Analysis’, *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry,* 56(6), pp. 466-474
* NASEN, Carpenter, B. & Egerton, J. (2016), *Girls and Autism: Flying under the radar’*. Available at:<https://www.nasbtt.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/flying-under-the-radar-miniguide-autism.pdf> (Accessed: 19 March 2021)
* National Autistic Society, *Autistic women and girls*. Available at:<https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/what-is-autism/autistic-women-and-girls> (Accessed: 19 March 2021)
* National Autistic Society, *Women and girls online training module*. Available at:<https://www.autism.org.uk/what-we-do/professional-development/training-and-conferences/online/women-and-girls> (Accessed: 19 March 2021)
* Staffordshire County Council, *Autism in Girls Checklist.* Available at: <https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Education/Access-to-learning/Graduated-response-toolkit/School-toolkit/Communication-and-interaction/Social-communication-autism/SEN-support-in-school/Autism-in-Girls-checklist.pdf> (Accessed: 19 March 2021)
* The students of Limpsfield Grange School & Martin, V., (2015) *M is for Autism.* London & Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers
 |