***Autism Educational Pack ***

<https://www.inclusivemindsco.tech/>

1. **Aims**

**🌟 Our Approach to Part-Time Education for Autistic Children (Ages 5–10)**

At **Bowlers Autistic Minds (B.A.M.S.)**, we provide a nurturing, part-time educational setting for autistic children aged 5 to 10 who are not currently attending school. Our programme is built around the belief that **every child deserves a highly personalised learning experience** tailored to their unique strengths, interests, and needs.

Each child will have a bespoke **Individual Plan (IP)**, developed in close collaboration with parents or carers prior to starting sessions. These plans are central to our approach and ensure that learning is meaningful, motivating, and appropriate for each child’s developmental profile.

Our key aims are to support progress in the following areas:

* **Communication**
* **Social Interaction**
* **Empathy**
* **Promoting Independence**

We recognise that autistic children often learn best through their special interests. These interests will be embedded into learning activities to **encourage engagement, confidence, and joy**.

If your child has an **Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)**, we will work closely to meet the needs outlined—particularly those specified in **Section F**. Our goal is to **work in partnership** with families to ensure every child is supported holistically and respectfully.

**DELIVERY**

At **Bowlers Autistic Minds (B.A.M.S.)**, we understand that many autistic children face communication challenges and sensory sensitivities. To ensure every child feels supported and safe, we take a **highly individualised, visual, and low-demand approach** to teaching.

**🧩 Communication Support**

All learning activities will be delivered using:

* **Picture cards and visual schedules**
* **Now and Next boards**
* **Makaton signing**
* **PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System)**

Verbal communication will be encouraged gently through interaction and picture exchange, always respecting the child's preferred mode of communication.

**👥 Small Group, Low-Stress Environment**

We are a **micro-educational provision**, with a maximum of **six children per class**, to reduce anxiety and support meaningful engagement. The small group size enables us to provide calm, focused, and individualised support, minimising sensory and social overload.

**🎨 Curriculum and Subject Areas**

All learning will be delivered through motivating, practical, and sensory-based activities. The curriculum includes:

* **🎵 Music**
* **🎨 Art**
* **🧠 Core Life Skills** (e.g., dressing, food prep, hygiene)
* **📘 Core Subjects** (English, Maths, Science – based on individual needs via IPs)
* **🌳 Forest School Experiences & Animal Care**
* **🧺 Sensory Play**

All academic and therapeutic content will be adapted and embedded through the child’s **Individual Plan (IP)**, based on their strengths, needs, and interests.

**⏰ Sessions and Structure**

* Each session will run for **2 hours**
* A maximum of **6 children per session**
* Staff-to-child ratio: **1 adult to every 2 children**

This structure enables high-quality interaction, care, and responsiveness throughout each session.

**📝 Daily Diary & Parent Communication**

Each child will have a **Daily Diary**, completed by educators after every session. This diary provides:

* A summary of the session
* Notes on progress, regulation, or behaviour
* A space for **parents/carers to give feedback**, share home updates, or express concerns

We believe strong communication with families is essential and actively encourage a two-way partnership.

**📦 Termly Reports & Work Sent Home**

All completed work will be sent home, and a **termly report** will be provided. This supports families with:

* Monitoring progress
* Evidence for **Elective Home Education (EHE)** records
* Understanding strengths and next steps

**🛡️ Safeguarding and Safety**

Safeguarding is of **utmost importance** at B.A.M.S.

* All staff and visitors are **enhanced DBS checked**
* **Risk assessments** are conducted for all sessions, venues, and activities
* A full copy of our **Safeguarding Policy** is available on our website

 **Music**

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**🧠 1. Supports Communication & Language Development**

* **Non-verbal communication**: Through rhythm, melody, and facial expressions, music helps children express themselves without words.
* **Encourages vocalisation**: Singing and humming can support speech development in non-verbal or minimally verbal children.
* **AAC support**: Music can be paired with visual supports or Makaton signs to reinforce understanding and expression.

**🎵 2. Regulates Emotions & Reduces Anxiety**

* **Predictable structure**: The repetitive and rhythmic nature of music is soothing and comforting.
* **Self-regulation**: Calming songs or movement to music can help with transitions, meltdowns, or overstimulation.
* **Emotional expression**: Music offers a safe way to explore feelings, which can be difficult to verbalise.

**👯 3. Encourages Social Interaction**

* **Shared experience**: Music-making in a group fosters joint attention and shared enjoyment.
* **Turn-taking and imitation**: Songs with actions (e.g., “If You’re Happy and You Know It”) promote key social skills.
* **Peer bonding**: Group music or drumming circles can build relationships without relying on verbal conversation.

**🧩 4. Enhances Cognitive and Motor Skills**

* **Memory and sequencing**: Musical games help children remember routines and follow multi-step actions.
* **Motor planning**: Clapping, dancing, and playing instruments aid coordination and body awareness.
* **Math and pattern skills**: Rhythm and beats help develop an early sense of time, counting, and sequencing.

**🎨 5. Boosts Self-Esteem and Creativity**

* **Success experiences**: Many autistic children excel in music, which builds confidence and pride.
* **Creative outlet**: Songwriting, improvisation, or choosing favourite songs empowers self-expression and choice-making.

**🌍 6. Supports Learning Across the Curriculum**

* **Multisensory learning**: Music can be used to teach numbers, letters, routines, or topics like emotions or the weather.
* **Engagement**: Children often stay focused and motivated longer during musical activities

**ART**

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**🎨 1. Supports Communication and Expression**

* **Non-verbal communication**: Art allows children to express thoughts, feelings, and experiences without needing to speak.
* **AAC-friendly**: Art can be used alongside picture exchange systems, Makaton, or other visual supports.
* **Emotional expression**: Drawing or painting can help children communicate complex emotions they might not have the words for.

**🧠 2. Encourages Sensory Exploration**

* **Tactile input**: Using materials like paint, clay, or textured paper helps with sensory integration.
* **Regulation**: Art activities can be calming and grounding, helping with emotional regulation and reducing anxiety.
* **Choice of materials**: Children can explore sensory preferences in a safe, controlled way.

**🧩 3. Builds Fine Motor and Cognitive Skills**

* **Motor development**: Holding brushes, using scissors, or moulding clay strengthens hand muscles and coordination.
* **Planning and sequencing**: Completing an artwork from start to finish supports executive function.
* **Visual-spatial awareness**: Drawing or collage-making helps children understand shapes, positioning, and perspective.

**👥 4. Supports Social Skills and Interaction**

* **Shared creativity**: Group art projects encourage turn-taking, collaboration, and joint attention.
* **Parallel play opportunities**: Art activities allow for social presence without requiring direct interaction.
* **Understanding others**: Creating or interpreting art helps children begin to understand different points of view.

**🌟 5. Fosters Confidence and Identity**

* **Autonomy and choice-making**: Children can choose colours, materials, and ideas—supporting independence.
* **Celebration of strengths**: Many autistic children excel in visual thinking and detail—art gives them a chance to shine.
* **Ownership and pride**: Displaying their art builds confidence and a sense of achievement.

**📚 6. Supports Learning in Other Areas**

* **Visual learning**: Art helps teach academic skills (e.g., numbers, letters, emotions) in a multisensory way.
* **Topic exploration**: Art can be integrated with themes like seasons, animals, or stories to support cross-curricular learning.

**CORE LIFE SKILLS**



**🧠 1. Promotes Independence**

* Life skills such as dressing, toileting, cooking, and managing money help children rely less on adults.
* This fosters **confidence**, **self-esteem**, and **a sense of achievement**.
* Greater independence can lead to a **better quality of life** in adulthood.

**👄 2. Supports Communication and Choice-Making**

* Learning how to express needs, wants, likes, and dislikes—whether through speech, AAC, signs, or pictures—is essential.
* It allows autistic children to **make choices**, say "no", and **advocate for themselves**.
* These skills reduce frustration, and the likelihood of behaviours linked to unmet needs.

**🧩 3. Improves Daily Functioning**

* Core life skills help children participate in everyday routines like:
	+ **Washing hands**
	+ **Following schedules**
	+ **Using public transport**
	+ **Preparing simple meals**
* These routines support better **organisation**, **self-care**, and **health**.

**🛡️ 4. Enhances Safety and Awareness**

* Teaching skills such as recognising danger, asking for help, or understanding personal space helps keep children safe.
* Children learn to **understand boundaries**, **stranger danger**, and what to do in emergencies.

**🤝 5. Builds Social Understanding and Relationships**

* Skills like turn-taking, greetings, and emotional regulation help children connect with others.
* While not all autistic children want or need friendships in the traditional sense, learning social life skills supports **community access**, **inclusion**, and **reduced isolation**.

**🌍 6. Prepares for the Future**

* Life skills form the foundation for:
	+ Future **education or employment**
	+ **Independent or supported living**
	+ **Engagement in the community**
* Without them, autistic children may face unnecessary barriers and dependence into adulthood.

**❤️ 7. Supports Mental and Emotional Well-Being**

* Mastering everyday tasks leads to feelings of **competence** and **self-worth**.
* Predictable routines and understanding the "how" of daily life can reduce **anxiety**

**CORE SUBJECTS**

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**🧮 Maths**

* Helps with understanding **time, money, size, quantity**, and **order**.
* Builds skills for real-life tasks like:
	+ Shopping and using money
	+ Telling the time
	+ Measuring ingredients
	+ Understanding calendars and schedules

**✍️ English (Literacy)**

* Supports **communication**, **reading signs or instructions**, and **writing** (including using AAC or symbols).
* Key for:
	+ Reading menus, labels, or social stories
	+ Understanding written or spoken instructions
	+ Expressing thoughts, needs, or preferences

**🗣️ 2. Enhances Communication and Understanding**

* Literacy gives autistic children tools to **express themselves**, whether through speech, symbols, or writing.
* Helps with **reading body language, instructions, or visual cues**—essential for navigating the social world.
* Phonics and vocabulary build the groundwork for **AAC, Makaton, or PECs** systems.

**🧠 3. Encourages Problem-Solving and Logical Thinking**

* Maths supports the development of:
	+ Logical thinking
	+ Pattern recognition
	+ Cause and effect understanding
* These skills can also reduce frustration by helping children make sense of routines and expectations.

**🧩 4. Supports Structure and Routine**

* Many autistic children thrive on routines. Maths and English can be taught with **clear steps, patterns, and visual supports**.
* This structure helps children feel safe, focused, and ready to learn.

**👣 5. Builds Confidence and Future Skills**

* Learning core subjects—at the child’s pace—builds **confidence, pride, and self-esteem**.
* They are stepping stones to:
	+ **Further learning**
	+ **Vocational training**
	+ **Everyday independence**

**🌍 6. Promotes Inclusion and Access**

* Core academic knowledge helps autistic children **participate more fully in society**.
* Understanding signs, prices, instructions, or reading stories allows for greater access to community and learning settings.

**OUTDOOR/ANIMAL CARE**

** Meet Adonis! B.A.M.S very own mascot!**

**Outdoor learning and animal care** can be especially powerful and therapeutic for autistic children. These approaches offer sensory-rich, low-pressure environments that promote wellbeing, engagement, and key developmental skills. Here's why they’re so beneficial:

**🌿 1. Reduces Anxiety and Promotes Emotional Regulation**

* Nature provides a calming, predictable environment with fewer social and sensory demands than indoor settings.
* Natural sounds, movement (like leaves or water), and fresh air can help regulate the nervous system.
* Children often show reduced stress and improved mood after spending time outdoors or with animals.

**🐔 2. Encourages Gentle Social Interaction**

* Animals offer **non-judgmental companionship**—they don’t require verbal language or eye contact.
* Interacting with animals can help children learn empathy, turn-taking, and gentle behaviour.
* Group outdoor tasks (like feeding chickens or planting seeds) encourage teamwork without pressure.

**🧠 3. Supports Sensory Integration**

* Outdoor learning naturally includes **safe sensory input**: walking on grass, digging in soil, water play, etc.
* This supports children with **sensory processing needs**, helping them explore textures, smells, sounds, and movement in a calm way.

**👣 4. Builds Practical Life Skills**

* Animal care teaches **responsibility, routine, and planning**—feeding, cleaning, observing, and nurturing animals.
* Gardening or outdoor projects teach real-world skills like:
	+ Following instructions
	+ Waiting and turn-taking
	+ Understanding sequences (e.g., planting to harvest)

**❤️ 5. Boosts Confidence and Self-Esteem**

* Completing a task outdoors—like planting a seed or feeding a rabbit—provides a **clear sense of achievement**.
* Children can **see the results of their actions**, which builds pride and ownership.
* Success in these areas can boost confidence, especially for children who struggle in traditional classroom settings.

**🌻 6. Supports Communication and Language**

* Activities like naming animals, describing what they’re doing, or using AAC to ask for tools all support **functional language use**.
* Outdoor learning also encourages **shared attention and joint experiences**, key for developing communication skills.

**🌍 7. Encourages Curiosity and Motivation to Learn**

* Nature is full of interesting things: bugs, plants, weather, and textures to explore.
* Autistic children may show **intense interests** in animals or natural patterns—outdoor learning embraces and expands these interests.
* Learning becomes meaningful and joyful when linked to real-world discovery.

**🧩 8. Inclusive and Flexible**

* Outdoor spaces can be **adapted to different sensory profiles**—quiet corners, movement spaces, or messy play areas.
* Children can move freely, take breaks, and engage on their own terms—**reducing sensory overload** and behavioural distress

**SENSORY PLAY**



**Sensory play is extremely important for autistic children** because it supports how they explore, understand, and engage with the world around them. Many autistic children experience the world in a highly sensory way—either being *over-sensitive* or *under-sensitive* to sounds, textures, lights, smells, or movement. Sensory play helps them regulate these experiences and develop vital skills in a safe, enjoyable way.

**🧠 1. Supports Sensory Regulation**

* Sensory play helps children process and respond to sensory input more effectively.
* It can be calming (like using playdough or water) or alerting (like bouncing or spinning).
* Over time, it helps **reduce meltdowns**, anxiety, and overwhelm by meeting sensory needs in a controlled environment.

**👐 2. Encourages Exploration and Learning**

* Many autistic children learn best **through touch, movement, and real-world experiences**.
* Sensory play builds curiosity and encourages active, hands-on learning—perfect for children who struggle with abstract concepts.
* It helps them **understand cause and effect**, problem-solving, and new textures or materials.

**🧩 3. Improves Communication and Social Skills**

* Sensory play often leads to **shared attention**, **turn-taking**, and **non-verbal communication** (e.g., facial expressions, gestures).
* It provides natural opportunities for AAC use, choice-making, and joint enjoyment.
* Activities like sand or water trays can encourage peer interaction without pressure.

**✋ 4. Builds Fine and Gross Motor Skills**

* Playing with beads, scoops, sponges, or dough strengthens hand muscles and coordination.
* Activities like jumping on a trampoline or crawling through tunnels support gross motor planning and balance.
* These skills are vital for dressing, feeding, and writing later on.

**❤️ 5. Supports Emotional Expression**

* Sensory materials can be used to **express emotions safely**, especially when verbal language is limited.
* Children might squash clay when angry, swirl paint when calm, or bury toys to process feelings.
* It provides a safe outlet for big emotions.

**🌟 6. Boosts Confidence and Independence**

* Sensory activities offer **open-ended success**—there’s no right or wrong, just exploration.
* Children gain confidence from taking control of their play, trying new things, and achieving outcomes (e.g., making slime or building with sand).
* They also learn **self-awareness**, understanding which activities help them feel calm or alert.

**🎯 7. Personalised and Flexible**

* Sensory play can be easily adapted to suit each child’s **preferences, sensitivities, and learning goals**.
* Whether a child is a sensory seeker or avoider, sensory play offers options that are both **comforting and challenging in a safe way**.

 **INDIVIDUAL PLAN (IP) (example)**

**Name of Child:**
**Date of Birth:**
**Date of Plan:**
**Review Date:**

**Setting/Provision:** Bowlers Autistic Minds (B.A.M.S)
**Key Staff Involved:**
**Parent/Carer(s):**

**🌟 Child Profile**

* **Strengths and Interests:**
(e.g., enjoys water play, visual learning, number puzzles, animals)
* **Communication Style:**
(e.g., uses Makaton, AAC device, gesture-based, verbal with support)
* **Sensory Profile:**
(e.g., tactile seeking, sound sensitive, benefits from movement breaks)
* **Emotional Profile:**
(e.g., becomes anxious during transitions, needs quiet space)

**🎯 Priority Learning & Development Goals (Term/Year):**

| **Area of Development** | **Target** | **Strategies & Support** | **Who Will Support** | **Progress Notes** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Communication & Language | e.g., use Makaton for 3 key requests | Visual supports, daily repetition, choice boards | Keyworker, SALT |  |
| Social Interaction | e.g., join group activity for 2 mins | Visual timetable, adult modelling, parallel play | Staff team |  |
| Sensory Regulation | e.g., use calm space when overwhelmed | Teach coping strategies, sensory breaks, fidget tools | SEN Lead |  |
| Life Skills | e.g., put coat on with support | Prompting, visuals, consistent routine | Keyworker |  |
| Literacy/Maths | e.g., recognise numbers 1–5 | Number songs, sensory trays, matching games | Educator |  |

**🧠 Strategies That Help Me Learn Best**

✅ Visual schedules
✅ First/Then boards
✅ Short, clear instructions
✅ Choice-based learning
✅ Consistent routines
✅ Sensory breaks

**🧷 Support and Provisions in Place**

* 1:1 or small group support as needed
* Access to calm/quiet zone
* Personalised visual resources
* Outdoor and animal-based learning
* Sensory activities integrated into daily schedule

**📝 Parent/Carer Input**

(Notes from parents on progress, concerns, priorities, or home strategies)

**📆 Review Notes**

(To be filled in at review date: progress updates, new goals, notes on what’s working)