



Communication and Autism Team (CAT) – Parent Information

Who are the Communication and Autism Team?

- The Communication and Autism Team (CAT for short) is part of Access to Education who are a group of services supporting children and young people with additional needs in schools in Birmingham.
- Every mainstream school and academy has a Communication and Autism Team professional assigned to the setting.

How does the Communication and Autism Team support schools?

- We work together with schools to build their knowledge, understanding and skills to support children/young people with autism or significant social communication differences.
- We support schools through the delivery of a package of training including Autism Education Trust Training; and through a School Partnership Plan based upon the Autism Education Trust Autism Standards. <https://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/>
- We work with schools to ensure improved outcomes for autistic children and young people throughout their school.

How does the Communication and Autism Team support individual children/young people?

- We work in partnership with the school to embed good autism practice within the school community.
- We may look at your child's access to their classroom environment; their relationships with teachers and peers; their communication skills; their access to the curriculum; and sensory differences.
- We may observe and/or work one to one with pupils in school. The work we do is dependent upon the child/young person needs.
- We may use tools that we have developed such as our "All About Me" tool and our "Anxiety Tool" to gather your child/young person's view of their experience in school.
- We suggest strategies and model ways of working with children/young people to support them within their classrooms. Sometimes these do not work straight away so we will monitor with schools to help support your child/young person.
- We support the child/young person to have their say about their school experience.

How is my child registered with CAT?

- We support children and young people with a diagnosis of autism and those on the pathway towards a potential diagnosis of autism. We also support children with significant communication and interaction differences.
- The SENCo within the school or setting will ask you if you are happy for your child to be registered with our team.
- Your child will only be known to our service following receipt of your signed consent.

How do I contact my child's Communication and Autism Team professional?

- Email CATParentEnquiries@birmingham.gov.uk with your child's name and school.
- A message will be sent to your CAT professional who will contact you as soon as they are able to.



Do the Communication and Autism Team give support to parents?

CAT PAC (Parent Awareness Course):

- We have developed a 6-week course for parents/carers called CAT PAC to support understanding around autism as well as giving parents/carers a chance to talk with others.
- The course looks at different aspects of autism such as: communication and interaction; sensory differences; eating, sleeping and toileting differences; and supporting anxiety and emotional distress.
- CAT PAC courses are delivered each term and invitations are sent to SENCOs to pass onto you if you are interested in attending a course.
- Courses are delivered remotely via Microsoft Teams or face to face at a school.
- CAT also run coffee mornings within schools and across the city for parents to meet up and discuss experiences.

Webinars:

- We deliver webinars and sessions around specific issues in addition to the CAT PAC. Information will be sent via your school SENCO and can be found on the Local Offer website:
<https://www.localofferbirmingham.co.uk>
- Previous webinars which you can watch and listen to can be found via this link:
<https://www.localofferbirmingham.co.uk/webinars/>

Will I meet my Communication and Autism Team professional?

- Sometimes you will meet your Communication and Autism Team professional in school.
- You are the expert on your child, and it is important that we work together to support your child/young person to reach their goals.
- Sometimes contact will be via email, phone call or Microsoft Teams. We will try to keep in touch with you.

Communication and Autism Team

Access To Education

Education and Skills Directorate

Birmingham City Council

Office: PO Box 17843, Birmingham, B2 2JR

Birmingham Local Offer: www.localofferbirmingham.co.uk

Access to Education: <http://accesstoeducation.birmingham.gov.uk>

Birmingham Local Offer: www.localofferbirmingham.co.uk

To contact CAT: CATParentEnquiries@birmingham.gov.uk

Please note: Provision and support may change due to COVID restrictions.
