

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder is a condition that includes symptoms such as inattentiveness, hyperactivity and impulsiveness.

Students with ADHD may have the following specific problems:

- Lack of self-confidence
- Talkative
- Short attention span/easily distracted
- Appear restless or fidgety
- Act impulsively
- Make careless mistakes
- Be forgetful

Students with ADHD may have the following positive qualities:

- Good creative ability
- Good practical skills
- Fun with good sense of humour
- Spontaneous
- Energetic

Common indicators of ADHD include:

- A history of difficulties learning to read and write
- Reluctance to do tasks that require mental effort
- Miscopying, many crossings out, messy writing
- Persistent difficulties with spelling
- Problems remembering instructions
- Interrupting peers
- May forget what they need to bring to class
- Difficulties managing time, knowing how long things take
- Problems organising and putting things in sequence
- Student may be able to tell you the answer, but then not be able to write it down
- Aggressive or impulsive behaviour
- Frequent arguments with peers
- Often does not listen when spoken to directly
- Low self esteem

Students with ADHD can often have other conditions that co-exist such as autism, oppositional defiance disorder and mental health difficulties

Classroom support strategies

Allow Extra Time

- Accept that learners need more time for tasks than their peers
- Be positive and patient; use lots of praise and encouragement
- Keep instructions brief and uncomplicated

Writing and Taking Notes

- Provide step by step instructions and repeat the instructions
- Check on understanding
- Prompt regularly
- Chunk information into small manageable tasks
- Include a variety of activities in the lesson so the student is not just sitting still and listening
- Make task interactive – ask students to write on the whiteboard
- Allow time for short breaks to re-focus
- Provide checklists to be ticked as tasks are completed
- Do not expect student to ‘multi-task’ e.g. take notes and listen simultaneously
- Provide handouts for student in advance where possible

Practical Support

- Offer help with organisational problems
- Encourage student to sit near you & at the front of the classroom
- Have clear expectations for behaviour & be consistent
- Allow use of fidget toy whilst seated
- Agree achievable targets such as sitting still for 10 minutes
- Make good use of breakout rooms if the lesson is online
- Encourage use of apps such as “Stayontask”
The app periodically “checks in” with student to make sure they are on task. It’s random, so users can’t predict when it will check up on them. If student is off task when the app checks in, it provides a gentle reminder to put their mind back on track.