



Socialisation and friendship

Students with ADHD often find it difficult to make and keep friendships. This can be more of a concern to teachers and parents than even academic issues.

Social skills can be difficult for students with ADHD who cannot always wait to take their turn, blurt out inappropriate comments and may be overtly antagonistic and even aggressive. The following ideas may help to improve friendships and peer relations in schools:

1. Unstructured break time/lunch times can be tricky parts of the day unless careful thought is given to the amount of free time and groups that students with ADHD have access to. It is a good idea to create options for inside activities and clubs
2. Assign a student with ADHD a study buddy and/or peer mentor. Students with ADHD who have difficulties with study skills and socialisation should be assigned another student who could act as an 'auxiliary organiser' in the classroom and advocate in the playground. The peer mentor could be rotated on a weekly basis
3. Educate the other students about differences in learning styles such as ADHD. All students should receive information regarding issues such as Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and ADHD and how they affect people as part of Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PHSE) classes. 'Circle Time' is also an opportunity to discuss these issues
4. Have specific support and plans for situations such as field trips and sports, planning for these in advance will prevent situations occurring in terms of proactive supervision, groupings and activities
5. Plan groups carefully. Students with ADHD can often do well in 1-to-1 situations so often a group of two is the best arrangement. The other common issue is that students with ADHD often appear to socialise more effectively with older and younger students rather than their peers
6. Teach social skills. The issue of helping students recognise the need for impulse control and to listen more effectively does take time but this will pay long term dividends in the end in terms of helping to forge successful friendships