

A Specialist Residential
and Day School for Boys
on the Autism Spectrum



Welcome

“ All individuals with autism are entitled to a good education and a good quality of life. ”

The Autism Education Trust

Welcome and thank you for taking the time to read our prospectus. Let me tell you a little bit about what we offer to our students and their families.

At Swalcliffe Park, we believe that **different thinking** is needed to improve the lives of our students and their families. So, we take a Quality of Life (QoL) approach to our work and this drives everything we do.

We want all of our students to be happy, healthy and empowered young people. So, we think it is essential to ask them about what matters to them, what makes them happy and what they would like to do with their lives. We listen to what they tell us and we support them to work towards their personal goals.

We also think it is important to work closely with families. So, we ask them about the impact of autism on family life, about what they would like to do but currently can't and about what is important to them. We listen to what they tell us and try to find ways to help.

We know that working together in this way leads to **brighter futures** and a better QoL for our students and for their families. This is why we do what we do.

We are now being asked to share our work in a number of ways. We are presenting at national and international conferences and we have created a QoL network for other schools, colleges and organisations to join us in developing this approach.

We are proud to have been awarded Advanced Level Autism Accreditation for our QoL work. Alongside this, we offer a range of outreach services which include autism assessment and diagnosis, training, resource sharing and consultancy.

Naturally, there is only so much we can put into a booklet like this, so if you would like to know more about anything you have read, please visit our website www.swalcliffepark.co.uk or better still, give me a call on **01295 780302**.

We hope you like our prospectus and look forward to hearing from you soon.



With best wishes,
Kiran Hingorani
Chief Executive Officer



Rob Piner
Principal

Why Swalcliffe?



With the right education and support, children on the autism spectrum can **achieve great things** and their families can live **full and happy lives**. Without it, families are left to struggle alone and children can miss out on years of education, putting them and our society at a huge disadvantage.



The National Autistic Society

The starting point for helping our students to “**achieve great things**” is getting a sense of who they are and who they want to be.

This involves finding out about their personal strengths and difficulties, as well as their hopes and aspirations, so that we can help them to prepare themselves for adulthood.

However, we believe it is also very important to ask them, regularly, how things are going in their lives and to achieve this all students complete termly ‘QoL’ surveys.

This gives students regular opportunities to evaluate their feelings about themselves, their relationships, their emotional and psychological well-being and their personal circumstances at the time. By sharing this information, each student is giving us his personal perspective on what is going well in his life and, conversely, what is not.

We believe this is essential information and we use it to plan our support for each student in 4 key areas, namely:

- **Communication (C)**
- **Self-Management (SM)**
- **Independence (I), and**
- **Achievement (A)**

Our approach also involves working closely with families. Obviously, student lives are interconnected to, and influence, family lives and in order to “**live full and happy lives**”, we recognise that some families will need direct support and guidance. This makes it essential for us to know how autism affects each family's life.

So, we ask families to tell us how things are going through termly ‘QoL’ surveys and these provide us with up-to-date information on what issues families are facing so we can see how best to support them.

We then focus our support to families in 4 main areas, namely:

- Support for school-related issues (S)
- Family-to-family support (F2F)
- Support for home-based issues (H), and
- Training (T)

The systematic collection and evaluation of QoL information from students means that we are able to ensure that each student's outcomes are personally meaningful and have a positive impact on his daily life. Parental information also enables us to measure the impact of our work on family QoL.

According to past students, families and Ofsted, we have a proven track record over many years in providing outstanding education, therapy and care to boys aged 10-19 who have an autism spectrum diagnosis.

We have a proud history of ensuring that all our students are well supported as they move on to a variety of destinations in further education, training, apprenticeships or employment.

The school is developing a local, national and international reputation for its innovative, evidence-based practice and is committed to sharing best practice with like-minded organisations, through our QoL network.

Swalcliffe Park is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), which means all income generated by the school is used for the sole purpose of supporting our students and their families.

For more information and additional resources on QoL please refer to the school's website www.swalcliffepark.co.uk.

“The school provides life-changing opportunities for all students”
Ofsted





Working with students

“ Collaborative work between care, education and health professionals has provided young people with the best possible opportunities to grow and develop and reach their full potential. ”

Ofsted



All our students have a primary diagnosis of ASD, are of broadly average ability, and have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) identifying their needs.

Our rigorous admissions process allows us to maintain a safe, welcoming and autism-friendly environment for our students and we work hard to ensure that all student transitions into the school are planned and managed sensitively.

Strong safeguarding principles are embedded within our daily thinking, behaviours and practices.

Student Voice is heard through a variety of channels including keyworking sessions, school council meetings, tutor group surveys, residential house meetings, and informal day-to-day discussions with staff and between students.

Student Voice is personalised and amplified when students complete their termly 'QoL' surveys to tell us how they are doing. Each student has a dedicated keyworker who uses the QoL information as the basis for a weekly

timetabled discussion. This also provides an opportunity for each student to contribute to the formulation of his own learning plan, based on personal aspirations, individual needs and quality of life issues at the time. This plan helps us to target support across each of the 4 main core elements – [Communication, Self-Management, Independence and Achievement](#).

Our curriculum intent is for all students to follow a pathway, which promotes their QoL and takes account of their needs, interests and aspirations in preparation for adult life. We offer a 'waking day' curriculum to all students, which includes the school's bespoke independence curriculum as well as a range of on and offsite activities. These tap into special interests, promote social inclusion and provide structured support for the generalisation of independence and life-skills.

Our integrated therapeutic model with inputs from Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Clinical Psychology and Massage provides holistic support for developing students' knowledge and skills



“Young people’s
views are key to
developing the
care provided to
them individually
and as a group.”
Ofsted

and for improving their well-being and QoL. All our therapists are registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

Highly skilled staff are able to support students in a number of specialist areas including sensory integration, social learning and specific literacy development. They work within the school day and after school.

As most of our students have a previous history of disrupted schooling and join us in Key Stage 3, we plan and manage transitions into school carefully and sensitively in collaboration with families. Predictability and stability for Key Stage 3 students are provided through small class groups (maximum 6) with a dedicated classroom, teacher, learning support assistant and therapy support.

The curriculum in Key Stage 3 is broad, balanced and places specific emphasis on developing confident and resilient learners. Throughout Key Stage 3, students are supported to develop increasing levels of independence in preparation for their transition into Key Stage 4.

The majority of our students in Key Stage 4 and the Sixth Form have made the transition from our Key Stage 3 classes. However, some students join us for this phase of their education and their admission into school may require even more sensitively managed transitions, due to their individual circumstances.

The curriculum in Key Stage 4 and Sixth Form (14-19) continues to emphasise the 4 core elements but also introduces more flexibility and personalisation. We offer 3 learning pathways, which are matched to students' abilities, interests, talents and ambitions.

These are described, in detail, in our Curriculum Policy, which can be found on our website www.swalcliffepark.co.uk.

We offer a range of courses leading to GCSE, BTEC and Functional Skills accreditation. Our flexible approach allows students to be entered for formal qualifications when they are ready rather than at prescribed times determined by age. We also have links with 4 local FE colleges and schools to provide additional vocational options, apprenticeships and further breadth to our curriculum. Class sizes remain at a maximum of 6 throughout a student's time at the school.

The Sixth Form curriculum includes dedicated time and specialist therapy support for considering future options and preparation for 'moving on' through such things as interview practice, CV writing and visits to a range of potential destination choices.

In the residential setting, students are supported by a dedicated team of experienced and highly qualified residential staff. The waking day curriculum offers all students a range of experiences and opportunities for them to develop attitudes, values, knowledge and skills that they will find most helpful in dealing with daily life situations and in preparing for their futures.

Students are able to work towards certification in such things as the Duke of Edinburgh award, driving, swimming, climbing, sailing, football coaching and cycling. After school and weekend activities are open to day students as well as residential students.

We have a proud track record of ensuring that all students are well supported into their next destination and course of their choosing.

Working with families



Communication between the school and parents is excellent, both before students' admission and throughout their school careers.



Ofsted

Direct support for families begins before students join the school and continues throughout the admissions process, which we know from experience can be lengthy, complex, emotional and contentious.

When students join Swalcliffe Park School, we make a genuine commitment to improving their QoL. We do not think this is possible without an equal commitment to their families. We need to know how autism impacts on each family's life so that we can offer support.

Also, we are interested in how we may be able to help families do some of the things they would like to – things we may take for granted – such as sitting down to a family meal together, things that would improve their quality of life.

To achieve this, we encourage Family Voice and ask families to tell us how things are going through termly 'QoL' surveys. These provide us with up-to-date information on what issues they are facing so we can then see how best to support them.

The named keyworker for each student is also the family's main link for regular home school communication. Keyworkers personalise communication arrangements to suit each

family's preference. Our commitment to improving family QoL means that home school communication is often about the impact of autism on family life and how the school can support in any of the following ways:

School support (S): issues relating to school admission, provision and destination planning

Family-to-Family support (F2F): putting families in touch with others for social support

Home support (H): routines and environmental management within the home

Training (T): specific training on aspects of autism such as anxiety management, sensory needs, and social learning

Other aspects of parental engagement and ways of hearing Family Voice include:

Providing secure online access to general information about each student's curriculum, his progress and weekly activities. This enables families to access information at times which are convenient to them. The website also provides a channel for families to communicate with each other and the school.

“Staff go above
and beyond the
call of duty.”
Family



We also invite families to a variety of social, training and information-sharing events throughout the school year and try to link parents together where they have identified that they would like some family-to-family support.

In addition to this, we share information with families via our half-termly 'Headlines and Footnotes' newsletter, to which families are encouraged to contribute.

In terms of governance and strategic planning, we always have 2 parent governors to support all aspects of our work with families. All governors take an active role in helping us monitor and develop our work in supporting families.



“Swalcliffe is
almost perfect in
every single way.”
Student

Our autism-friendly environment



This is ultimately a fantastic school.



Student

Our school is located in the beautiful Oxfordshire village of Swalcliffe, which is approximately 5 miles from the market town of Banbury.

The school and residential facilities are set within 20 acres of parkland with a fishing lake, woods, and sports fields. We actively promote physical well-being and our students particularly enjoy spending time outdoors on our bike trail, zip wire, outdoor fitness facilities and play equipment.

Students feel safe and take advantage of the tranquil school grounds to relax, self-calm and have fun.

Our school building has been refurbished with advice from specialists and our students, to ensure it provides an autism-friendly learning environment. We have a range of specialist classrooms including a Science lab, Art studio, DT workshop, Food Tech kitchen, ICT suite, Gym, Library, Sixth Form centre and separate Expressive Arts studio.

We have a fully equipped Occupational Therapy room including a climbing wall and sensory integration resources. Some students prefer to work in individual working-bases, which are situated amongst the classrooms within the school building.

There is a central café area with indoor and outdoor seating which our students use for relaxing, socialising, and entertaining guests and visitors.

Resident students live in 1 of 5 houses based within the grounds and are supported by a dedicated group of staff assigned to each house. Students have their own bedroom with en-suite facilities and digital key access. The kitchens and lounges in each house are designed to encourage independence and social living.

In addition to this, 1 house is used to prepare students for 'moving on' by allowing them more independence, while supporting them with transition planning.

Working with partners

“ The staff are passionate about making a difference to their students’ lives and we have been honoured to work alongside them in this endeavour. ”

Professor Hazel Bryan, University of Gloucestershire



Swalcliffe Park is an outward-looking school and we put significant amounts of time, energy and resources into working with a range of partners.

Our partnerships include:

- Oxfordshire Teaching Schools Alliance (OTSA)
- Warriner Schools Partnership
- University of Gloucestershire
- University College London (UCL)
- University of New South Wales (UNSW)
- South and West Leaders in Special Schools (SWALSS)
- National Association of Special Schools (NASS)
- National Special Education and Disability Forum (NSEND)

Working with partners: Swalcliffe Park Services



“ Thank you for your excellent workshop yesterday. It was informative, practical and enjoyable. We have plenty to think about when we go back to school and we are excited about how we can now move forwards. Thanks again! ”

Training workshop participant

In addition to providing school places, we offer a range of services for parents, professionals and organisations. These include:

Autism assessments and diagnosis: for children and young people between the ages of 5-19 years.

Our assessments incorporate the use of the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule-2 (ADOS-2) and can be carried out at our assessment centre, at your home, or at a school or college.

Bespoke training for schools and colleges and other organisations. Topics include: autism awareness, safeguarding and autism, autism and mental health, social learning, anxiety management, developing independence, sensory integration, and managing the classroom environment for students on the autism spectrum.

Outreach advice and support: this includes whole school support, as well as advice to organisations on a range of topics related to autism.

Resource sharing: we have developed a number of resources which we are happy to share including our Quality of Life framework for schools and colleges, a classroom skills checklist and an Independence curriculum.



Working with partners: Quality of Life



“ The emphasis placed on improving the quality of life experienced by children, and their families, produces significant improvements for all. ”

Ofsted

QoL network

We have presented our work on QoL at national and international conferences and in response to these we have had a lot of interest from schools and colleges enquiring about how they might implement a QoL approach in their settings. This has led to the establishment of our QoL network to share best practice and to support schools as they embark upon their QoL journey.

We also host regular workshops at Swalcliffe Park and publish a monthly QoL newsletter. A list of participating schools is on our website.

For more information on QoL and the QoL network please visit the school website or get in touch by email or telephone.





Contact us

If you would like to ask more about anything you have read, then please get in touch.

We are happy to hear from parents and Local Authorities interested in a place at our school or from professionals interested in joining our multi-professional team.

We hold regular open afternoons throughout the year.

The school offers assessments for admission throughout the year, subject to place availability, and does not operate on a September only intake.

For more information on our referrals process, partnership-working or opportunities to join our team, please visit our website www.swalcliffepark.co.uk or contact us via email:

Rob Piner, Principal:
rpiner@swalcliffepark.co.uk

Kiran Hingorani, CEO:
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Or telephone [01295 780302](tel:01295780302) to speak to either of us.





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