

## FAQ – Autism Spectrum Disorder

1. What is Autism spectrum disorder? (ASD)
2. What does “on the spectrum” mean?
3. What are some characteristics/behaviors that students with ASD may display?
4. What can I do to support a student with ASD?

**Autism spectrum disorder** – a neurodevelopmental disorder that impairs a person’s ability to;

1. Communicate and interact with others.
2. It can also include restricted repetitive behaviors, interests and activities.  
([www.mayoclinic.org](http://www.mayoclinic.org))

**“On the spectrum”** – refers to the wide range of symptoms and severity. All students with ASD are unique in how they may present symptoms. ([www.mayoclinic.org](http://www.mayoclinic.org))

### **Characteristics/Behaviors could look like:**

- Challenges interacting with others and working on a team
- Taking spoken/written word literally
- Struggles with starting a conversation or keeping one going. May only start a conversation to make a request
- Speaks with an atypical tone or rhythm — may use a singsong voice or monotone
- Doesn't always express emotions/feelings and appears aloof of others' feelings
- Social norms – passive, aggressive or disruptive behaviors
- Performs repetitive movements, such as pacing
- Develops a certain routine and becomes resistant to even small changes
- May become fixated with a subject or hobby

### **Ways to support the student**

- The student is always an individual first. Each individual presents differently
- If the student discloses to you and/or gives you a SAR form, ask the student how you can support them
- Ask them if they’re willing to share what is challenging and what works for them
- Don’t intentionally separate the student from other students
- When possible give information in advance, especially changes. Uncertainty creates anxiety and can lead to meltdowns and outbursts.
- If you are able to be more specific with assignments vs. abstract

**Please contact the Student Disability Office with questions or outreach needs.**

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