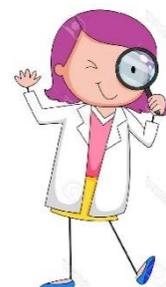


# I have **AUTISM**

## What does that mean?



If you have autism, you will not look any different to other children but will find certain things challenging. You will probably find it hard to understand and get along with other people easily. You might find it hard to “read” people’s body language or the expressions on their faces, and to tell what they are feeling. Many children with autism don’t really understand sarcasm, or idioms like “pull your socks up.” They may also find it tricky to play games with other children, as they have particular things they are really interested in and just want to do this – for example Pokemon. If you have autism you may forget that not everyone shares your interests, and you might not know when to stop talking about it! Sometimes, people with autism find loud noises or crowds overwhelming. They also usually like routines and dislike change. However, you will probably find some things in school easy, and be very good at some subjects – perhaps you have a super general knowledge, or are a whizz at science or reading! You will often know lots about your particular interest. People with autism are usually extremely honest, reliable, dedicated and determined too!



You will not be the only person in your school to have this challenge, and there are famous people who have or are thought to have had autism: Albert Einstein (scientist), Mozart (composer), Hans Christian Anderson (children's author), Jim Henson (creator of the Muppets), Woody Allen (actor and director), Robin Williams (actor and comedian).

Autism was named after a doctor called Hans Asperger who worked with children in the 1940s. No one knows exactly why people have it – it is something you are born with, that isn't usually noticed until you get a bit older. With help at home and school, people with autism can come to learn most of what comes naturally to most people. It does have some advantages – people with autism are often original thinkers, and can become experts in the subjects that interest them.

This is what some pupils at Rivelin said about Autism:

*"I found out that I had autism in Year 2, I am now in Year 6. I know a lot about it and don't mind talking about it, and children in my class understand about my difficulties."*

*"Sometimes it makes me feel a bit upset and wish I didn't have it, I'd like to be just like everyone else."*

*"I go to a club each month on a Saturday morning, where I meet up with other children with autism. We do things like computer games and art."*

We hope that this information sheet has helped you to understand more about autism.

