



Federation of
Westminster Special Schools
& Bi-Borough Inclusion Service



**COLLEGE PARK
SCHOOL**

NEURODIVERSITY AFFIRMING PEDAGOGY AND PRACTICES



**AUTISM
ACCEPTANCE
WEEK
2025**

COLLEGE PARK SCHOOL & NEURODIVERSITY AFFIRMING PEDAGOGY & PRACTICES A CALL TO ACTION!



We are proud to be Westminster's designated autism-specific school and invite you to join us in our journey toward becoming more neuro-affirming in both teaching and practices.

As a school, we understand the privilege of working with children and young people who experience the world in unique ways. We also recognise the responsibility to stay informed about the latest research and developments that can improve the lives of our young people.

Our goal is to create practices that not only support their educational and mental health needs but also challenge stereotypes and assumptions that marginalise their way of being.

While we are committed to supporting our students in our school, we also strive to advocate for positive change in the broader community.



We are committed to challenging assumptions in regard to our educational practices, and we ask you to do the same!

Our first step in the journey was to:

1. Understand what Neurodiversity-Affirming Teaching and Practices are.
2. Identifying these practices in what we already do, so we can highlight and build on them.
3. Challenging any assumptions that may limit our pupil's experiences.
4. Including the voices of neurodivergent individuals in our school culture.

WHAT IS NEURO-AFFIRMING PEDAGOGY AND PRACTICES?

Neurodiversity-Affirming practices focus on inclusion and acceptance. Instead of trying to change someone to fit a "normal" standard, it's about supporting and nurturing each person based on their own strengths and needs.

These practices celebrate neurodivergent individuals, recognising them as valuable members of society with unique skills and talents. It's about creating a space where everyone is respected and embraced for who they are.

WHAT ARE WE DOING ALREADY?

These are just some of the practices we're already using in our school that we encourage you to also adopt:

Choice and Agency: Allowing pupils to make their own choices and respecting their preferred communication style.

Positive Language: Using positive, affirming language and Makaton to communicate effectively.

Challenge Assumptions: We avoid pushing neurotypical behaviours (e.g., forced eye contact) and adapting adult behaviours to meet student's needs.

Active Listening and learning: Engaging with neurodivergent individuals to learn from their experiences and research.

Inclusive Language: Using inclusive language consistently and reflecting on how we communicate with parents/carers.



CHALLENGE ASSUMPTIONS

Challenging assumptions is a key part of creating an inclusive environment. From a young age, we are often taught to see disabilities as "different" or "other." Society tends to promote one idea of what is "normal," often favouring neurotypical and able-bodied ways of being.

Neuro-affirming practices help us question these ideas and recognise that everyone, no matter their abilities, has value and deserves respect.

By challenging these assumptions, we can create a more accepting and supportive school for all.

INCLUDE NEURODIVERGENT VOICES!

The neurodiversity approach teaches us that people with different ways of thinking and experiencing the world may be best understood by others who share similar experiences. That's why it's important to focus on individual experiences and encourage self-advocacy.

Inclusion works best when neurodivergent teachers and students are at the heart of the process, helping guide how we support and include everyone in the school community.



JOIN US & BE AN AGENT OF CHANGE BY....



1. Learn about Neurodiversity Affirming Practices. Understand what these practices are and how they support everyone.

2. Review What You're Already Doing. Look at your current practices to see what's already neurodiversity-affirming, and find ways to do more of it!

3. Challenge Assumptions: Open your mind and rethink old ideas about how things should be.

4. Listen to Neurodivergent People. Ask Neurodivergent individuals for their advice and experiences to help improve the way we support them.

5. Be an Ally. Stand with us and support people who identify as Neurodivergent.



USEFUL INFORMATION

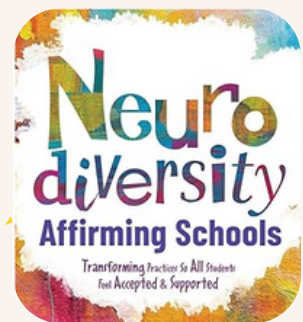
- **Resources Library - Neurodiverse Connection.**

<https://ndconnection.co.uk/resources>



Neurodiversity-Affirming Schools: Transforming Practices So All Students Feel Accepted & Supported

by Emily Kircher-Morris (Author),
Amanda Morin (Author).



- **Understanding Neurodiversity-Affirming Practices - Life Skills Advocate.**

<https://lifeskillsadvocate.com/blog/understanding-neurodiversity-affirming-practices/>