

Tips for Teachers: Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder

What is ADHD?	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder that affects attention, behavioural regulation and self-control. Approximately five percent of the population would meet threshold for a diagnosis.
How might ADHD present itself in class?	<p>Children with ADHD struggle to focus their attention and stay on task. Sitting still and being quiet in class can take a monumental effort, reducing the child's ability to process information in the classroom. Pupils with this condition may act on impulse and seem unable to learn from past mistakes.</p> <p>Children with ADHD often have learning difficulties. However, even children with above average skills will struggle to demonstrate their knowledge in school. Anxiety and depression are more common in children with ADHD.</p> <p>There is no cure for ADHD but treatment can reduce the symptoms. For example, behavioural support can increase the child's self-esteem, reduce anxiety and improve peer relationships. Stimulant medications can increase the child's ability to inhibit their movements and attend in class.</p>
What can you do in class?	<p>Arrange classroom seating with sensory needs in mind</p> <p>Children with ADHD may be distracted by corridor or playground noise and need to be in the middle of the classroom. Some may need to be at the front of the classroom near the teacher or situated in a group with access to a teaching assistant to help them stay on task. Other students benefit from a separate workstation at the back of the classroom.</p> <p>Try providing regular movement breaks</p> <p>Permission to move in class can improve learning outcomes for children with ADHD. The whole class would benefit from "five minute move" exercises in between writing tasks. Giving a child with ADHD a classroom job that involves movement, for example, collecting up books or handing out resources, will both give them a necessary break and boost their self-esteem. Fidget toys can also help, but as these are also distracting to other children they should be kept out of sight, e.g. in a pocket, and used only with staff permission.</p> <p>Break information down into smaller chunks or steps</p> <p>Children with ADHD will struggle to process and follow multi-step instructions. Learning tasks should be broken into discrete steps so that the student is not overwhelmed with too much information and can monitor their own progress. The use of visual timetables, timers, charts and now and next boards will improve the student with ADHD's ability to process information and stay on track.</p> <p>Work with a pupil's learning strengths and limitations</p> <p>Children with ADHD often have undiagnosed learning difficulties. If the student struggles to read or write, investigate reasonable adjustments that would allow them to access the curriculum more effectively. For example, students can use a</p>

	<p>scribe or voice recognition software for written work. Access to a laptop and remote access to lesson content may improve understanding and retention of the information.</p> <p>Offer organisational support</p> <p>Children with AD/HD can struggle to organise their belongings and navigate their way around the school. An online system for homework task recording will allow more effective communication between home and school. However, if this is not possible, assistance should be given to ensure that the homework is recorded accurately each day and the student has the necessary books for each task. A visual timetable at home will help with recording what books and equipment will be needed each day. The school timetable should be clearly visible in the classroom as well as copied into the student's planner and made available at home. A buddy system can be helpful for supporting students get to their lessons on time and with the right equipment.</p> <p>Notice and praise the pupil for getting things right</p> <p>Children with AD/HD often receive negative attention for low level, disruptive behaviour. This can erode the child's self-esteem, reduce their motivation and contribute to a negative cycle of challenging behaviour. They are more vulnerable to peer rejection and bullying which further compounds the issue. Staff can support the child by noticing triggers and early warning signs and intervening before the situation escalates.</p> <p>Regular supportive feedback can make a huge difference to a pupil's experience of school. By explicitly naming the positive behaviours and skills that the child has used, the teacher increases the likelihood of these being used again.</p>
Where to go for support?	<p>www.ADD_Vance.org www.ADDIS.co.uk hwww.ukadhd.com/support_groups.htm www.adhdfoundation.co.uk www.gosh.nhs.uk/medical_information/search_for_medical_conditions/attention_deficit_hyperactivity_disorder/attention_deficit_hyperactivity_disorder_information/ www.youngminds.org.uk/for_children_young_people/whats_worrying_you/adhd</p>

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