

# Peer information sheet: ADHD

All students are unique. We all have strengths, and we all have areas where we are still learning. We are all born with our own unique combination of hair, eyes, personality, and our own very unique fingerprints.

Some students are born with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Just like hair, eyes or fingerprints, this is a part of them, but not who they are. When you take the time to get to know them, you'll find there are lots of things you have in common.

## What is ADHD?

Students with ADHD can be creative, enthusiastic and confident. Lots of students find paying attention, listening, thinking before acting and sitting still challenging some of the time. Students with ADHD find these things difficult a lot of the time. This can make it hard to study and be organised and can also sometimes impact friendships.

Being a teenager is often a time when our friendships become really important to us. We often want to spend more time with people our age who share similar interests. We might worry more about what other people think, because we want to fit in.

Feeling part of a group and feeling like you belong, is important for everyone. This includes students with ADHD.

### Paying attention

We all have times when we find it hard to pay attention. Some students with ADHD might be easily distracted, and it can be really hard for them to pay attention.

This might mean they sometimes tune out when you're talking to them and miss what you say, or they might miss important instructions in class. If they do, you can help by repeating the most important bits of what you said, one bit at a time, or talking with fewer words. They might rush their work and make mistakes because they weren't focusing. If they're distracted during class, you can help by reminding them of instructions so they know what to do.

### Lots of energy

Students with ADHD often have lots of energy. During primary school they might be really active and fidget constantly during class, whereas by secondary they've often learned to control this a little more. They still might tap things and move around a fair bit, because it helps them to manage their need to move. This can be a great thing in some situations like playing sport!

Students with ADHD might also sometimes act without thinking. They might yell out an answer, or interrupt you or others when you're talking, or interrupt the class to share whatever they are thinking about... even if it isn't the right time or place. They might take risks or break rules without stopping to think about the potential consequences.

### Stop bullying

Bullying and exclusion can have a negative impact on a student's life. This can be particularly difficult for a student with disability if they are excluded, picked on, laughed at and bullied because of their disability. If you see a student with disability being excluded or bullied, you can make a big difference in that moment. In fact, your help and support may make a difference or be remembered long after **you** have forgotten all about it!

If you see a student being bullied at school, and it is safe for you to speak out, speak up and tell those who are bullying to stop. Tell them that it isn't okay and it isn't cool. Standing up for someone else stops bullying more than half of the time. If you are still worried about exclusion or bullying, ask a teacher or another adult you trust for help, or help the student seek help and support. Speaking up and reaching out can help keep them safe, and can have a lasting impact on their life.



## Just like you

Students with ADHD have lots of ways in which they're just like you. They have their own interests, preferences and hopes and dreams, just like you do. They want to feel like their ideas, views and input is valued, just like you do. And they want to feel connected – like they belong – through having friends, going to parties, hanging out, and being included... just like you do.

**So remember, you probably have more things in common than you have differences!**

