

# WORLD AUTISM ACCEPTANCE MONTH

1ST - 30TH APRIL 2026

## MASKING

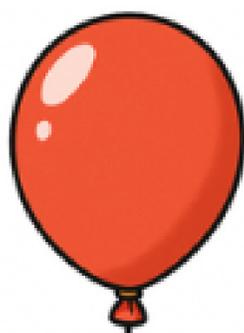


We have created this visual to support understanding around autistic “masking”. Masking or camouflaging can mean suppressing behaviours to appear neurotypical and fit in. This can be conscious or unconscious (Hull et al., 2019; Cook et al., 2021).

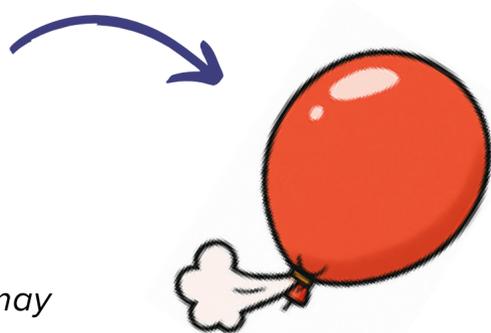
Children may mask at school because:

- They want to be seen as well behaved and coping
- They want peers to accept and like them
- They don't want to have focus and attention upon them
- They don't want to look different.

Research suggests that autistic females/girls mask more than males (Wood-Downie et al., 2021).



*Too much pressure may build at school.*



*We need to find a healthy way to let a bit of pressure out or this could present as distressed behaviour.*

An autistic child may seem calm and regulated at school, but at home they may behave differently, for example, displaying behaviours they have been suppressing such as exhaustion, frustration or distress.



*Waiting to let lots of pressure out at home can be exhausting and distressing.*

### How schools can help

- Home/ school communication books so parents and school can adjust expectations following challenging events.
- Staff training on neurodiversity.
- Promote relaxation techniques.
- Provide calm and safe environments, for example reduced stimulation spaces.
- Offer check-ins with trusted staff with time to talk.
- Support with the concept of energy accounting.
- Use programmes like the Zones of Regulation to help recognise emotions and use personalised strategies to regulate.

### How parents can help

- Offer low demand, calming activities and/or quiet space following the transition from school.
- Model acceptance and positive reinforcement of autistic traits (Cook et al., 2024).
- Allow a child's traits. Negative parental reactions can predict higher rates of masking (Cage & Troxell-Whitman, 2022).
- Consider using visuals to support discussion about emotions and energy levels, e.g. Zones of Regulation.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please visit the National Autistic Society (NAS): [www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk)



[www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/educational-psychology-service-eps](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/educational-psychology-service-eps)



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