

The SCERTS Approach

At Queen's Manor, we use the **SCERTS Framework** to support our autistic pupils' communication, emotional wellbeing and engagement in learning. SCERTS stands for **Social Communication, Emotional Regulation and Transactional Support** and provides a holistic, evidence-based approach to meeting the needs of children and young people with autism and social communication differences.



The framework is an evidence-informed approach developed by Dr Emily Rubin, specifically designed to support autistic children and young people. It helps pupils develop the skills needed to communicate effectively, build positive relationships, understand and manage their emotions, and participate successfully in everyday school activities. SCERTS recognises that every child is unique and focuses on identifying and developing individual strengths while providing personalised support where needed.

Social Communication

Social Communication focuses on developing meaningful communication skills, helping pupils express their needs, share experiences, interact with others and participate in learning and play. Within SCERTS, pupils move through developmental stages as their communication skills grow.

Stage	Description
Social Partner	Pupils communicate intentionally using actions, gestures, facial expressions, sounds or early words.
Language Partner	Pupils begin to use symbols, signs, pictures and words to communicate for a range of purposes.
Conversational Partner	Pupils use language more flexibly, engage in conversations and develop an understanding of the thoughts and feelings of others.

Examples of Social Communication Targets

Joint Attention	Symbol Use
Sharing attention with others and engaging in social interactions.	Using objects, pictures, signs or words to communicate meaning.
Initiating games, routines and interactions.	Imitating familiar actions and sounds.
Shifting attention between people and objects.	Using familiar objects appropriately during play.
Sharing experiences, ideas and interests with others.	Combining words, symbols or signs to express wants, needs and feelings.
Monitoring the attention of others and taking turns in conversation.	Understanding and using verbal and non-verbal communication in a variety of situations.

Emotional Regulation

Emotional Regulation supports pupils in understanding and managing their emotions, sensory needs and responses to different situations. When pupils are emotionally regulated, they are better able to engage in learning, maintain relationships and participate successfully in school life.

SCERTS recognises different levels of emotional regulation:

Level	Example
Behavioural	Using movement, sensory activities or calming strategies to regulate emotions and attention.
Language	Using words, symbols, visual supports or reminders to manage feelings and routines.
Metacognitive	Thinking about and independently choosing strategies to help regulate emotions and behaviour.

Transactional Support

Transactional Support refers to the strategies, environments and approaches used by adults to help pupils succeed. This includes adapting communication styles,

structuring learning environments and providing appropriate supports that enable pupils to develop independence and achieve their individual goals.

Examples of Transactional Support include:

- Visual timetables and schedules
- Adapted language and communication strategies
- Structured learning environments
- Positive behaviour support
- Sensory supports and regulation strategies
- Collaborative working between school, families and professionals