



<b>Policy Name</b>	Consent and Assent Policy
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<b>Date Reviewed</b>	June 2023
<b>Date of Next Review</b>	June 2024
<b>E &amp; D Disclaimer</b>	This policy has been reviewed in line with the Equality Act 2010 which recognises the following categories as Protected Characteristics: Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Sex (gender) and Sexual orientation. We will continue to monitor this policy to ensure that it provides equal access and does not discriminate against anyone, especially any person/s listed under any protected characteristic.

## **Consent and Assent Policy**

### **Introduction**

School Avoidance Solutions (SAS) recognizes the importance of obtaining informed consent from parents or guardians for therapeutic interventions involving their children. This policy establishes guidelines for obtaining consent and addressing assent, which is the child's agreement or willingness to participate in therapeutic activities, based on their age and capacity.

### **Informed Consent**

#### **2.1 Parental or Guardian Consent**

SAS will seek informed consent from parents or guardians before providing therapeutic interventions to their children. Informed consent means that parents or guardians have been provided with clear and comprehensive information about the nature, purpose, risks, benefits, and potential alternatives to the proposed therapeutic interventions.

The information provided to parents or guardians will be presented in an easily understandable manner and will include details about the expected duration and frequency of the interventions, the qualifications of the practitioners involved, and any potential limitations or risks associated with the interventions.

Parents or guardians will be given sufficient time to review the information, ask questions, and make an informed decision regarding their child's participation in the therapeutic interventions. Consent will be obtained in writing, and a copy of the consent form will be provided to the parents or guardians for their records.

#### **2.2 Withdrawal of Consent**

Parents or guardians have the right to withdraw their consent for their child's participation in therapeutic interventions at any time. SAS will respect the decision of the parents or guardians and ensure that the child's well-being and best interests are the primary consideration. Any ongoing interventions will be promptly discontinued upon receipt of a withdrawal of consent.

### **Assent**

#### **3.1 Age and Capacity for Assent**

SAS acknowledges the importance of respecting the child's autonomy and involving them in the decision-making process to the extent appropriate for their age and capacity. Assent refers to the child's agreement or willingness to participate in therapeutic activities.

The age at which children are capable of providing valid assent may vary depending on their individual maturity and understanding. SAS will consider the child's age, developmental level, and ability to comprehend the purpose and nature of the therapeutic interventions when seeking their assent.

### 3.2 Assent Process

SAS practitioners will engage in age-appropriate discussions with the child to explain the therapeutic activities, their purpose, and potential benefits. The child will be given the opportunity to ask questions and express their preferences regarding their participation.

The practitioner will assess the child's level of understanding and capacity to provide assent. If the child is capable of understanding the information and voluntarily expresses a desire to participate, their assent will be sought.

It is important to note that assent is not a substitute for parental or guardian consent. However, the child's wishes and preferences will be taken into consideration when determining the most appropriate course of therapeutic interventions.

### Review and Documentation

This Consent and Assent Policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure its continued relevance and compliance with applicable laws and regulations. SAS will maintain clear and comprehensive records of all consent and assent obtained, including signed consent forms and documented discussions with children regarding their assent.