

WHAT IS MASKING AT SCHOOL?

Masking means hiding how you really feel or who you really are so you can cope.

[SocialWorkersToolbox.com](https://socialworkerstoolbox.com)



This happens most often in neurodivergent children, including autistic children and those with ADHD, sensory differences, or communication differences. Any child can mask.

SOME CHILDREN MASK AT SCHOOL TO AVOID:

Getting told off



Standing out



Being bullied



Being seen as different



**Masking is not lying. It is not bad behaviour.
It is a way of staying safe.**

WHAT MASKING CAN LOOK LIKE

AT SCHOOL

- Seem calm and compliant
- Follow rules perfectly
- Never ask for help
- Copy what other children do
- Keep feelings inside all day



AT HOME

- Have meltdowns
- Be exhausted
- Be angry or withdrawn



This is not a coincidence.

WHY THIS MATTERS

When adults say:
"They are fine at school"
What that often means is:
"They are working very hard to hide their struggle"



Masking takes a lot of energy.
Over time it can lead to
anxiety, burnout, and poor
mental health.

WHAT HELPS

Children mask less when schools:

- Believe them
- Accept differences
- Reduce pressure to fit in
- Focus on wellbeing, not just behaviour



A child who feels safe does not need to hide.