



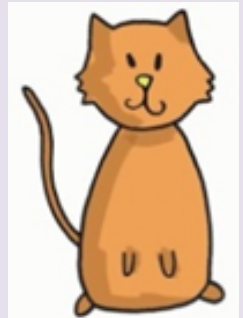
# Communication and Autism Team

## Transition Back to School After Lockdown for Parents of Pupils with Autism

Communication and Autism Team  
2020



@A2Education





# Communication and Autism Team

## Aims

- To consider the needs of pupils with Autism in relation to Transition
- To understand the specific difficulties for these children returning to school after Covid-19 lockdown
- To consider how strategies can be used to support this critical transition



# Communication and Autism Team

Transitions are difficult for individuals with autism:

- The four key areas of difference
  - Psychological theories

**autism** Research Trust  
**training hubs**

The individual pupil | Building relationships | Curriculum and learning | Enabling environments

### What are the four key areas of difference that need to be taken into account in the education of pupils with autism?

**Social communication**  
Differences in understanding communication and language, jokes, sarcasm, tone of voice, facial expression and gestures.

**Social understanding**  
Differences in understanding social behaviour, understanding the feelings of others, how to start an informal conversation and forming friendships.

**Interests and information processing**  
Differences in perception, planning, understanding concepts, generalising and predicting, transitions and passions for interests.

**Sensory processing**  
Differences in perceiving sensory information hypo (low sensitivity), hyper (high sensitivity), touch, sight, hearing, smell, taste, vestibular inner ear (balance), proprioceptive (body awareness).

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## Communication and Autism Team

# Communication

- Now having to process more instructions with less familiar vocabulary
- Less access to communication support and 1:1 attention when required
- Having to process more complex instructions
- Change in the amount of sustained communication with fewer breaks





## Communication and Autism Team

# Prepare Your Child

- Transition /Photo book with relevant information
- Consider updating school website to include photo or video walk around the school
- Consider photo's of key staff and/or videos where staff talk about the positives of return and what is coming up
- Photos of planned activities and areas
- Opportunities for the cyp to ask any questions via email
- Preparation groups for core pupils
- Consider sending the Pupil Profile out to parents for review and update this for staff



# Communication and Autism Team

## Passports


Why use Passports?

- Shares information about the child
- Used to provide a positive message to staff
- Information is gathered from the pupil about what will help/what works re. self-advocacy
- Ensure consistency of approach as we return
- Let other's know about a child's interests concerns and difficulties
- Suggest strategies about how staff can support



# Communication and Autism Team

## Passports and Single Page Profiles

<u>Language &amp; Communication</u>	<u>Sensory Considerations</u>	<u>You can help me by</u>
<u>Attainment</u>	<u>Name</u>  Insert picture here <u>Medication</u>	<u>Likes/ Social</u>
<u>Lesson I find difficult:</u>	<u>Learning style</u>	<u>Things that I find difficult:</u>



## Communication and Autism Team

# Social Interaction

- Struggle to cope with impact of everyone talking at once about their experience and the amount of sudden uptake in social interaction
- Going back in a room with 30 when you have been in a room of 2
- Out of social skills for a long time
- Friendship grouping changes
- Lack of understanding of proximity and social distance







## Communication and Autism Team

# Information Processing

- Leaving the house on a regular and daily basis.
- More than one setting transition a day: Home to school/school to home.
- Increased adult demands
- Routines would have been different and managed differently
- Recalling relevant information
- Making choice's and decisions
- Considerable potential of second Covid 19 wave in/out disruption Applying skills in different settings





## Communication and Autism Team

# Sensory

- Are likely to be more sensitized to the noise and commotion having had so long out
- Learning in a space with increased numbers of people
- Completing one task to another with fewer breaks
- Will not have worn an uniform
- Sleeping at different hours
- Become tired more quickly/blood sugars affected as not able to snack at the level and frequency
- Hand washing and hygiene are problematic in Autism at the best of times





## Communication and Autism Team

# Cognition and Learning

- Have effectively had one to one support for a long time
- Struggle to manage school anyway and now been out for extra length of time. Speed of learning has been altered to suit them
- Having to do what you are told and cope with direct demands when you have had this reduced to a greater extent
- Doing several things almost simultaneously





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## Emotional

- Had a long time out of stress
- Stress about health anxiety coming back with lots of people and picking things up again
- Increased propensity to OCD
- Managing their emotions aroused by the situation.
- Some will have worked for exams and not had that happen
- What if there has been a loss and their reaction to it?



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# Communication Strategies

- Use your child's name first so they learn to give attention on demand
- Reduce your language
- Work on building up understanding of more complicated instructions
- Give your child practice in communicating their

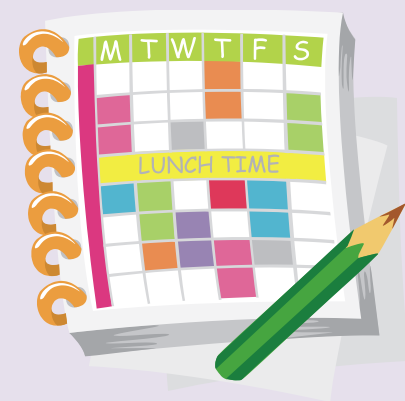
ideas



# Communication and Autism Team

## Strategies for Predictability

- Prepare your child for the return to school
- Re-familiarise your child with morning routines
- Re-familiarise your child with journey routine to school
- Re-familiarise your child with the school environment and routines
- Re-familiarise your child with staff





## Communication and Autism Team

# Sensory and Physical Strategies

- Re-introduction to the sensory environment
- Re-introduction of school uniform
- Prepare for changes to Lunch and eating arrangements
- Changes to toilet routines may need to be planned
- Consider re-introduction of supports



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## Relationship Support Strategies

- Photo-books and other methods of visual support i.e. video/email/PowerPoint might be needed to remind your child about relationships
- Does your child need planned play dates?
- Will your child need any of the following if they are provided by the school:
  - Lunch Club
  - Circle of Friends
  - Buddy Systems
  - Having known friends and preferential groupings
  - Mentoring System-older pupil at the school







## Communication and Autism Team

# Cognition and Learning

- Following an adult agenda
- Pre-tutoring
- Focusing on their learning and new tasks
- Manage in social learning groups, learning to be one of a group again and turn taking
- Be as independent as possible.
- Knowledge and understanding



# Communication and Autism Team

## Emotional

- Make a list of positives about school:
  - activities
  - positive relationships (adults)
  - positive friendships
- Make a plan for something nice/trip or visit to look forward to at the end of the first day back/first week back/in the future
- Use the word 'excited' and take care with your language/body language when talking about going back to school
- Remember and be prepared for the escalation of anxiety
- School staff support



## Communication and Autism Team

# Be Prepared for After school

- Behavioural changes
- Calm down space
- Reduce expectations
- Accommodate changes to sensory needs: tiredness/hunger etc





## Communication and Autism Team

# Next Steps

How do we sell coming back into school to the child?

Activity: Make a Plan

- How and when will you contact school?
- When do you start the transition for your?
- How will you reduce/introduce the flexibility of routine and begin to establish timed routines back?
- How will you practice going out for a specific purpose?
- How will you reconnect with friends?
- Who needs to be involved?





# Communication and Autism Team

## Resources

Transition Toolkit-Autism Education Trust

Broderick, K. and Mason-Williams, T. (Eds.) (2005) *Transition toolkit*, Kidderminster, BILD.

Casey, J. (2002) *Changing Schools*, Bristol, Lucky Duck.

*Talking About...Secondary School* (2003), Keighley, Black Sheep Press.

Thorpe, P. (2003) *Moving from primary to secondary school: guidelines for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders*, London, National Autistic Society.

Snedden & Whithorn (2004) *Moving Up. Ready or Not*.  
Educational Printing Services Ltd. Blackburn



# Communication and Autism Team

## Websites

- [www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk](http://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk) *Autism Education Trust*
- [www.blacksheep-epress.com](http://www.blacksheep-epress.com) (*Talk About School/Secondary School/Friends Pack*)
- [www.thegraycenter.org](http://www.thegraycenter.org) (*Social Stories and comic strip conversations*)
- [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk) (*Mental Health*)
- [www.autismwestmidlands.org.uk](http://www.autismwestmidlands.org.uk) (*Autism Support/Resources and Helpline*)

