

I'M A PARENT, GET ME OUT OF HERE!

THE WEEKLY SCHOOL CLOSURE NEWSLETTER FOR PARENTS/CARERS OF CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE WITH AUTISM

Try S.O.S. to promote positive behaviour

Megan Williams – Autism Advisory Teacher Service

Contrary to popular opinion, S.O.S. does not actually stand for "save our ship" or even "save our souls!" As we know, it is an internationally recognised distress signal but according to Wikipedia it is not actually an abbreviation for anything.

I think every parent I've spoken to is definitely feeling the strain now and sending out S.O.S signals! Even the most compliant, able, motivated child (do they even exist?!) is starting to have enough of learning at home with structured timetables, online lessons, video workouts with Joe Wicks etc. So, I'd like to suggest a few tips on managing behaviour that might just keep the stress levels down for everyone.

Ask yourself why?

All behaviours are a way of communicating and the result of an unmet need. (Currently my unmet needs are for freedom, control, choice and chocolate – not necessarily in that order!). To get the behaviour you would like to see, start by using **S.O.S.** Stop and Observe the behaviour, then Switch to thinking, "Why are they behaving like that?" (This can be used with any member of the family!) The crucial thing is what do you do next.

Focus on what you want to see

Try to avoid phrases such as "No!" "Don't..." "You're not..." which can come across as confrontational. A strategy of partial agreement can be quite effective. For example, if your child asks, "Can I go on the X box?", a response of, "Yes, when you've finished your Maths" might be more effective than, "No chance! You've not even started on your Maths yet!" (even if that is what you're thinking!) If you are not getting the response you want, think about the way you are communicating. Try saying, "Thank you" rather



than please. Please can come across as a request (which can then of course be refused) or a plea.

Giving choices

Ideally offer choices so your child feels in control. Try a statement such as "The work needs to be completed by 1 o'clock. Would you like me to help you with it or work on your own? Or is there another way you'd like to complete your work?" Another useful strategy to try is giving two choices (the one you want them to take being the easier of the two). Remember for younger children, two choices is enough. For teenagers give a maximum of three.

Aim to focus on the behaviour you want. Be specific as you smile and praise: "Thank you for tidying your books away". Another useful phrase is telling your child, "You should feel really proud of yourself" (rather than "I'm really proud of you!"). This gives them more ownership and is also teaching them to build up their own-self-esteem rather than trying to rely on others to make them feel good about themselves. Modelling the behaviour you want can also have an impact and by teaching the behaviours you want to see and creating a sense of predictability and structure, we can still manage our way through this ongoing situation.

THE HIDDEN DISABILITIES SUNFLOWER SCHEME



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Autism is hidden. Parents of children and young people with Autism will be only too aware of the difficulties that others face in their ability to recognise, acknowledge and understand the challenges that you and your child/young person face. The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Scheme was started in 2016 at Gatwick airport. It has since grown nationally and is now recognised across the NHS, at all railway stations, at many supermarkets, leisure facilities and at a growing number of businesses and organisations.



By wearing the sunflower lanyard people with hidden disabilities can indicate to others, including staff, colleagues and health professionals, that they may need additional support, help or a little more time.

You can get your sunflower lanyard, find out more or register and organisation at the Hidden Disabilities website.

hiddendisabilitiesstore.com



Parent Top Tips

In this section we want to share your tips and advice. Have you got a great activity? Found a brilliant resource? We'd like to hear about it! Please share your top tips at:

SENandInclusion@Peterborough.gov.uk

"After a difficult start to the lockdown we are now in a routine. We definitely didn't 'establish' a routine, we kind of fell into it. It isn't perfect and I do worry that he is falling behind with school work but he is coping and so am I. School have been great and have been very supportive and I know they will do their best when the time comes to go back. If I've learned anything from this experience it is that, although I am concerned about his studies, I now place much more importance on his happiness."

Sarah – Mother of Sam (Age 11)

Check out our other weekly newsletters:

Cosy Crew – A newsletter for Primary Aged Children with Autism.

Lockdown Lift Up – A newsletter for teenagers and young people with Autism.

Available from our [Local Offer Page](#) each week.

Boredom Bashers

Resource:

Harry Potter fans will enjoy Harry Potter At Home: chapter readings, activities and everything Potter!

www.wizardingworld.com



Activity:



Readallcomics.com is a website with a huge range of free to read online comics. There is a huge range here best suited to older children or young adults.

Something for me:

After Life is a comedic drama that documents Tony's struggle to deal with the loss of his wife. Season 1 and 2 are on Netflix now.

