



Welcome to our half termly SEND newsletter - Addressing all things related to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities!

In this issue of the newsletter, I have included a spotlight on Autism. This includes what autism is, referrals for diagnosis in Staffordshire and how you can support your child over the festive period.

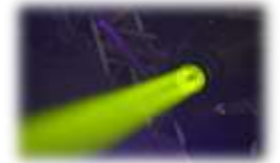
Mrs. Natalie Horler

SENDCO

Spotlight on Autism

Autistic people may act in a different way to other people. They may:

- Find it hard to communicate and interact with others.
- Find it hard to understand how other people think or feel.
- Find things like bright lights or loud noises overwhelming, stressful or uncomfortable.
- Get anxious or upset about unfamiliar situations and social events.
- Take longer to understand information.
- Do or think the same things over and over.



In Tamworth, autism assessments are carried out by the Children and Young Person's Autism Service. Once diagnosed, the service will then provide on going support up to the age of 25 years (if the child has an Educational Health Care Plan). The service is in place not just to diagnose, but to also equip families with the strategies to be able to lead a fulfilled life.

Referrals to the Children and Young Person's Autism Service.

Referrals into this service, can only be made by a professional who has met with the family (including SENDCO's). Once referred into the service, an NHS practitioner will triage the documentation and decide if an assessment is appropriate. If an assessment is not deemed appropriate, the practitioner may signpost to other relevant services.

It is currently taking between 18 and 24 months to complete an autism assessment. The service, however, is working with a range of external agencies to try and reduce this timescale. Whilst this may be frustrating, please rest assured that families will be contacted by telephone or letter as soon as an appointment becomes available.

If you require any further information about the service, it can be found by accessing the website on the following link: [Children and Young People's Autism Service :: Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust \(mpft.nhs.uk\)](https://www.mpft.nhs.uk/children-and-young-people-services/autism-service) The website also contains a wealth of useful videos and resources for parents.

Please speak to your child's class teacher in the first instance if you have any concerns about your child.

The Christmas period can be a very exciting but often stressful time of the year for many autistic people. It can be a time with lots of change, social interaction and expectations. Below is a brief list of resources that may prove helpful in making this festive period as special and stress free as possible for autistic people.

[Tips \(autism.org.uk\)](https://www.autism.org.uk) National Autistic Society. This website features a range of advice on preparing for Christmas, including some real-life stories and tips from autistic people and their families.

[Spaced Out & Smiling \(spacedoutandsmiling.com\)](https://spacedoutandsmiling.com) Jamie Knight. Jamie, an autistic adult, explains how he prepares for Christmas, including the need for quiet spaces and sensory considerations.

[Preparing for the Festive Season | Scottish Autism](#) – Scottish Autism. This article includes some advice on preparing for Christmas, as well as some information on how to approach the period after Christmas and the New Year.

SEND Individual Learning Plans

For pupils at Ankermoor who require additional support and are recorded on our SEND Register, Individual Learning Plans are in place. These plans will have focused and achievable targets which are personal to each individual child, enabling gaps to be closed and progress to be made. Sometimes, these targets may be linked to actions that have been set by professionals e.g., Educational Psychologist or Speech and Language.

When are the targets set and reviewed?

Targets will be reviewed, and new ones set at 3 points in the academic year. The dates for the remainder of this academic year are:

Week ending 15th March 2024

Week ending 5th July 2024

It is important that you as parents and the children are involved in this process, therefore you will be invited to meet with your child's class teacher at these points in the year to be part of the review process. If your child is on the SEND register and you have not yet received a copy of their current Individual Learning plan, please contact your child's class teacher.

I am worried about my child – what can I do?

If you have any concerns about your child, please share these with the class teacher in the first instance, as they may be able to put support in place. Where teachers share your concerns and support in place has not had impact, a Teacher Referral form to the SENDCO, can be completed leading to further observations and referrals to relevant professionals.

A Parent Referral Form is also available for you to complete and forward to SEND@Ankermoor.org (a copy is included below).

Did you know?

Staffordshire Local Offer provides information in one place for children and young people aged 0-25 with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, their parent/carers and professionals.

The Local Offer includes information on local services to help children, young people, parents and carers make choices about the support they receive.

Access the Local Staffordshire Offer here:

[Staffordshire Connects](#)



Parent Cause for Concern

Child's Name: **D.O.B:** **Class:**

Child's strengths and achievements:

Concerns at home:

Concerns at school:

Parent/Carer information:

A description of all available information about your child.

Areas of concern:

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Visual | <input type="checkbox"/> Auditory | <input type="checkbox"/> Communication/Speech |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional | <input type="checkbox"/> Behaviour | <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physical | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical | <input type="checkbox"/> Punctuality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social | <input type="checkbox"/> Eating | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please state): |

Signed: **Date:**

