



SEND NEWSLETTER

No. 7: December 2024



www.nevillroad-jun.stockport.sch.uk/page/send



MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Can you believe we are already at the end of the first term of the 2024-25 academic year?! The Autumn term has flown by so quickly as we have welcomed in our new Year 3 pupils and seen all of our students settle into their new year groups. Each and every day, the children grow and flourish and it is a delight to see their progress and celebrate their many achievements.

Thank you for your attendance at this term's SEND review meetings - it was lovely to get the chance to meet with so many of you and to work together to ensure we are all supporting your fantastic children in the best way possible. If you were not able to make your appointment, please contact your child's class teacher to arrange an alternative date.

Wishing you all a happy and peaceful Christmas and a wonderful New Year,
Emma Boon, SENDCO



UPCOMING SEND PARENT COFFEE MORNING - 16.01.25

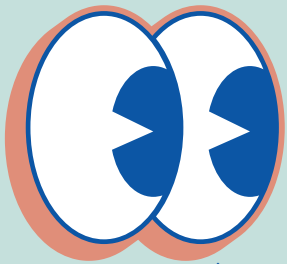
The next SEND Parent Coffee Morning will take place on Thursday 16th January, 9-10am. The focus will be 'sleep' (something I'm sure we could all benefit from more of!). We'll discuss problems with sleep (including how these can be linked to neurodiversity) and the benefits of sleep; we'll also discuss and share helpful tips for ensuring your children (and yourselves!) get a good nights sleep.

All parents are welcome to attend.

If you are planning to attend, please could you let me know via email (emma.boon@nevillroad-jun.stockport.sch.uk).



VISUAL STRESS



The term 'visual stress' can be used to describe differences in the way that some people see/process images. For some people, visual stress can make reading uncomfortable: the words may appear blurry on a page or even seem to move around, making it difficult to read and keep track of words. Some children may experience 'visual stress' and may not share this with anyone, or even realise that the way that they see things isn't the same as most other people.

Signs of visual stress may include:

- headaches and eyestrain related to reading and/or other near work
- text appearing blurred or going in and out of focus
- text appearing double or swapping between single and double
 - difficulty keeping place in text
 - difficulty tracking across lines of text
- discomfort with brightness of the page or contrast between text and background
 - text that appears to shimmer or flicker

In school, we have the tools to do a simple screening assessment for visual stress. The screening takes approximately 20-30 minutes and can indicate whether visual stress is present and if a child may benefit from the use of a coloured overlay when reading.

If you feel that a visual stress screening would be useful for your child, please get in touch and let me know. I will add them to our waiting list!

SEND COFFEE MORNINGS

Our half-termly SEND Coffee Mornings are open to all parents and carers who would like to find out more about supporting children with additional needs. They are an opportunity to share information, ask questions, and to get to know other parents in a relaxed and supportive atmosphere.

The dates for our Spring and Summer SEND Coffee Mornings are as follows:

- Thursday 16th January
- Thursday 6th March
- Thursday 8th May
- Thursday 19th June

It would be lovely to see lots of parents attending. The sessions are planned with a view to making them relevant to the needs of as many parents as possible at NRJS; if you have any suggestions of topics for our future SEND coffee mornings, please let me know.



Mindful Resilience

For Parents & Carers of
Neurodivergent Children & Adults

8-week course

Join us as we support you to:

- Use mindfulness in daily life to aid mental wellbeing.
- Understand how your nervous system responds to stress.
- Learn how to take care of yourself as a carer.
- Reduce anxiety, stress, depression and burnout.
- Learn how to work with your emotions.
- Develop skills to work with different types of thoughts.
- Experiment with a range of tools including meditation, gentle yoga and relaxation.

Mondays, 1.00 - 3.00pm
13th January - 3rd March 2025

Arthur Greenwood Community Centre, Hipleys Close,
Woodley, Stockport, SK6 1ES

Free
Courses

For
Stockport
Residents

Thursdays, 10.00am - 12.00pm
16th January - 6th March 2025

Online course via Zoom

To book a place, email: hello@yellowbeacon.org

Our courses are designed and delivered
by neurodivergent practitioners.

These courses are funded by the Stockport
Local Fund for Mental Health & Wellbeing



STOCKPORT
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL



Who we are

Kay is an experienced mindfulness teacher and yoga practitioner, who works for NHS England supporting autistic people through Care & Treatment reviews.



Kirsty



Kay

She has an active career as an autism trainer and Trauma-Focused Therapist, working with Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council, Manchester Metropolitan University, The Triple A Project and Next Chapter. Kay is the founder of HAPI CIC.

Kirsty is a mental health professional with ten years' experience in the charity sector in Greater Manchester. She is an experienced mindfulness teacher, specialising in trauma-informed practices for mental wellbeing, and is the founder of Yellow Beacon CIC.

Yellow Beacon is a mental health professional and lived-experience led organisation offering **trauma-informed mindfulness** courses, workshops and 1 to 1 sessions across Greater Manchester.

www.yellowbeacon.org

To book a place, email: hello@yellowbeacon.org

"This was the most informative useful course I have attended for some years. I learned so much about autism spectrum and neurodiversity, and how many symptoms can be managed better or eased with the practice of mindfulness and other coping strategies."

Feedback from our Restore & Recover Course for Autistic Adults



These courses are funded by the Stockport
Local Fund for Mental Health & Wellbeing



STOCKPORT
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL



MERRY CHRISTMAS!

On the following pages are some tips and hints that I've found and collected for preparing for (and surviving!) Christmas. I hope you find them useful.

However you celebrate the holidays in your household, I hope you enjoy the time with your family.

See you in the New Year!



Christmas brings change

Many autistic children struggle with change and the move into the festive season can bring lots of changes that can feel overwhelming.

Here are some tips for easing the transition:

- Consider putting up decorations in stages to avoid one big change in the house's appearance. For example, put up the tree bare and add decorations slowly over the next few days.
- Choose decorations carefully, avoiding flashing lights if your child is sensitive to lighting.
- Christmas scents like candles may be overwhelming to sensory sensitive children and can alter the smell of their home, which can be unsettling.
- Ensure there are areas of the house that remain unchanged and provide them with a break from Christmas.

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TIPS FOR SURVIVING THE FESTIVE PERIOD IN A NEURODIVERGENT HOUSEHOLD

The Christmas period is often jam-packed with exciting events and outings. This can be overwhelming for some people - especially those who are neurodivergent. Rather than stressing yourself out planning lots of fun activities and trips (and running the risk of your child shutting down or refusing to leave the house), why not work together as a family to plan only one or two special outings instead.

Building in 'rest'/'recovery' days after special events can also be extremely helpful!

Once you have planned out your plans for the holidays, try creating a simple timetable, use it to discuss plans and prepare your child and display it where they can see it.

Be prepared for quickly-changing emotions. The excitement of Christmas can be overwhelming for some children. When they are unable to communicate with their words, they might display behaviours others might see as 'naughty' or 'extreme' when your child may be trying to tell you that they need some quiet time or space.

Remember that your child may not feel comfortable showing or accepting affection from family members they rarely see. This is okay - even if others may perceive it as rude! Try not to be stressed or pressured by extended family members being disappointed or unhappy about this - stick to your guns!

Use social stories and visual prompts to help to prepare your child for any out-of-routine events and experiences such as carol concerts or pulling Christmas crackers.

You can download a free support pack from Widget by [clicking here](#).



Be kind to yourself!

As parents and carers, we often have high expectations of ourselves to make Christmas a magical time for our families. Keep Christmas simple and don't be afraid of straying from 'tradition'. For example, opening presents in front of others can be overwhelming - could the present opening be spaced out throughout the day? If your child has a limited diet and ends up having to have chicken nuggets for Christmas dinner, that's okay! Pick your battles and make sure that you enjoy Christmas too.

Christmas Dinner With ARFID



For many, Christmas dinner is the heart of the festive season. But for someone with ARFID (Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake Disorder), it can be a much more complicated experience.

ARFID isn't about being "picky" or just disliking certain foods—it's an eating disorder that can make eating new, unfamiliar, or certain types of food feel overwhelming, stressful, and uncomfortable.

Challenges Someone With ARFID Might Face

Limited Food Choices: Traditional Christmas dishes like turkey, stuffing, and pudding might not be foods that someone with ARFID is comfortable eating.

Changes to Familiar Foods: Holiday recipes, festive packaging, or even minor changes to texture, taste, or smell can turn a previously safe/preferred food into something difficult to eat.

Pressure to Conform: Festive traditions around food can create pressure to eat for someone with ARFID.

Feeling Judged or Excluded: Eating differently can draw attention, and having to explain or justify their needs can feel isolating and uncomfortable.

For more information, visit the AAUK website:

www.arfidawarenessuk.org

How to Make Christmas Dinner Easier for Someone With ARFID

Ask in Advance: Take the time to ask them about their safe foods and preferences beforehand. Showing you care about their needs can make a huge difference.

Consider Deconstructing What's Expected: Though many people have an idea of what a 'perfect' Christmas dinner looks like, families can do what is best for them that will bring everybody joy.

Respect Their Boundaries: Avoid suggesting that they try different foods. Trust that they know what works for them, and let them make their own choices.

Create a Judgment-Free Zone: Reassure them that it's okay to eat differently or bring their own food if it makes them more comfortable. The goal is to include, not isolate.

Shift the Focus: Christmas isn't just about the meal. Celebrate with a focus on other parts of the day, like playing games, exchanging gifts, or spending quality time together.

