



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

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

Back to School: Finding Certainties Among the Unknowns

Rob Emery – Autism Advisory Teacher Service

With the recent easing of the lockdown rules and the reopening of schools to some pupils, it may have become an increasingly anxious time for you and your child/young person. Will school be safe? Will the school day be the same? What will lessons be like? There are so many unknowns and schools are facing some unprecedented challenges in ensuring that they protect their pupils, their staff and the wider school community. Here we will look at some strategies to support our children and young people and try to find some certainties amongst the many unknowns.

What are the certainties?

The Government have begun the process of reopening schools to specific primary school year groups. That is not to say that all primary schools are open to all pupils in those year groups on a full time basis. Schools are undergoing the incredibly difficult task of adapting their learning environments, changing their practices and assessing the risks in order to open in a safe way. Schools will therefore vary in what they are able to offer and they will differ in how they operate. The only **certainty** for pupils is that, when they return, school will be a little bit different. Group sizes are likely to be smaller, there will be more handwashing, the timetable might be different, teaching staff may change and even the hours of the school day might vary. Schools are not taking these decisions lightly and are doing their best to support families and staff safely.

As safety remains the primary concern for schools, they will **certainly** only open their doors to pupils when the measures they have taken mean that it is deemed safe to do so. Equally parents who do not wish to send their children/young people in to school during this time will not be penalised for this. Schools should continue to send learning tasks home and continue with regular remote contact for those pupils who have not yet returned.

Helping to Highlight the Certainties

Making things as certain and predictable as possible is the best way of supporting pupils to transition back into school. Unfortunately, this is made very difficult with the many circumstances that are currently beyond our control. A resource such as the 'Big World, My World' resource (Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust) can clearly illustrate what is within our control, and therefore predictable or **certain**, and what is beyond our control and therefore uncertain.

			
Not in my control		In my control	
Big World issue:	Whose job is it?	My World issue:	What can I do?
Stopping Covid-19 from spreading	The Government Doctors Scientists Drug companies	I need to help my family keep it out of my house	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wash my hands and Stay at home most of the time Keep 2 metres away from people I don't live with

Getting used to the idea of going back to school can be difficult after such a prolonged period. A visual daily countdown may help some pupils to get used to the idea. For others this might increase anxiety as the countdown gets closer to the end. Some schools might send out timetables, photos of the new learning environment, details of lunchtime arrangements and other details to prepare the pupil for returning to school. The pupil can then visualise what the new routines and environment will be like. Focussing on the **certainties** rather than the unknowns will help to ease underlying anxieties.

Accessing Support

Resources such as the 'Big World, My World' resource above, which has many applications, can be found here: www.hacw.nhs.uk/sltcovid19
Our parent hotline operates weekdays 10-11am. Please call **07961240384** or **07816597785**.
You can also contact your school for support.

Hair Quiz time!!

I think we're all struggling without access to hairdressers and barbers so here's a light-hearted quiz how many celebrities barnets and coiffures can you name?! Answers next week.



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

Is your child starting school in September or going to secondary school or college?

The Autism team are here to support but we need permission emailed to their current setting giving your permission and their current setting need to complete a Request for Involvement form.

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:

Futurelearn.com offer free courses on a wide range of topics as well as suggestions on what activities you could do if you have to cancel your summer holiday.



Activity:

Couch to 5K is a free and easy way of getting fitter and healthier. It is a clear, structured activity you can do outside whilst social distancing with a friend.



Something for me:

BBC Sounds "A point of View" 10 minute reflection. "Waiting" (29.05.20) by Rebecca Stott is particularly thought provoking and relevant.

