



Inclusion Newsletter

14th October 2022

Welcome to the first Inclusion newsletter of this academic year. My name is Mrs Huggett and I am the Inclusion Manager at Riverside, which means I am the main point of contact for parents of children with any additional needs. For those of you who are new to the school, this Inclusion Newsletter is sent out once a term to keep you up-to-date with developments either in school, Medway or nationally, related to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). It also provides information and advice related to specific areas of need, detailing the support we provide in school and how you can help your child at home.

Our focus for this term is ADHD, which stands for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. This is the most common behavioural condition in the UK and affects approximately 5-10% of children. Many of the strategies that work well for these children are also effective for others who may not have an underlying condition, but who struggle to manage their behaviour at times.

People with ADHD have difficulties that fall into three categories: inattentiveness, hyperactivity and impulsivity. Some people have issues with attentiveness but do not display hyperactivity or impulsivity, and this is often referred to as ADD. Many children go through phases where they can be restless or inattentive, but of course they don't all have ADHD. The more prolonged or severe symptoms which may indicate this condition are usually noticeable by the age of six. To obtain a medical diagnosis, the symptoms must occur for at least 6 months and be apparent in more than one situation, such as at home, at school, at play and when out and about.

If you have concerns about your child's behaviour, please talk initially to either your child's class teacher or Mrs Wood, our Home School Support Worker. We have lots of ideas, strategies and resources that can help, some of which are discussed overleaf. The school can refer you to Triple P, a parenting programme that you can complete online at your own pace, which will offer further guidance. If, having completed this and implemented the strategies advised, there are still concerns which may require further investigation, it may be appropriate to make a referral to the School Nursing team. They can offer additional guidance and parenting support and, if felt necessary, start the process towards a diagnostic assessment. Children have to be aged at least 6 for this to happen.

Medication is sometimes prescribed for ADHD, which can be very effective in helping children to concentrate and control their impulsive behaviours. However, it may not be the right approach for everyone and even with medication, children will still benefit from strategies and approaches like those mentioned over the page.

As always, if you have any queries related to SEND or Inclusion, or wish to discuss your child's needs further, please don't hesitate to contact me at the school.

Mrs Z Huggett
Assistant Headteacher/Inclusion Manager



Spotlight on.....

ADHD



The main signs of inattentiveness include:

- ~ having a short attention span and being easily distracted
- ~ making lots of seemingly careless mistakes
- ~ being forgetful, often losing things or being disorganised
- ~ appearing unable to listen or follow instructions

The main signs of hyperactivity and impulsiveness include:

- ~ being unable to sit still – constantly fidgeting or moving excessively
- ~ being unable to concentrate on tasks, particularly ones the child did not choose themselves
- ~ excessive talking – interrupting conversations or blurting things out
- ~ being unable to wait their turn
- ~ acting without thinking; having little or no sense of danger

If children experience several of these symptoms it can cause significant issues, such as underachievement at school, poor social interaction with other children and adults, and risk of harmful behaviours.

Children with ADHD often have many strengths such as being able to multi-task, being adaptable, creative, energetic, quick-thinking and good at problem-solving.

While ADHD is not caused by bad parenting, there are effective parenting strategies that can go a long way to help manage the behaviours. These also work well for children whose behaviour can be challenging, even if they don't have a particular condition.

Structure and consistency - it helps to have consistent routines for daily activities and tasks. These could be visual or written and could include checklists so the child knows exactly what is required and can make sure they've done every step.

Clear communication - try using the positively worded school language to remind children of behaviour expectations, such as "good listening, thank you", "kind hands" or "making good choices" (rather than using negative phrasing such as "don't hit"). Keep instructions short and precise so the child is not overwhelmed.

Rewards and consequences for their behaviour - some children respond well to instant rewards such as stickers, whereas others may prefer to build up to a longer term reward like a larger treat or a day out. In school we use 'First and Then' to motivate children to complete tasks, as in "First finish your maths, then you can play with the Lego." ADHD is not an excuse for poor behaviour, and appropriate sanctions such as loss of reward time or chosen activities are sometimes needed.

Careful nutrition - reducing the amount of sugar and processed foods and increasing healthier options can make a real difference to children's behaviour.

Regular exercise - try building in movement breaks when asking children to stay focused for longer periods. They could do 10 star jumps in between each page of reading or practise their times tables using a dance routine!

Sufficient sleep - limit electronic devices before bed and have a consistent bedtime routine to help children settle effectively and get adequate rest.



~ <https://www.ukadhd.com/top-tips-for-parents!.htm>

~ <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-adhd/>

~ <http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/adhd.html>

~ <http://adhdkids.org.uk>

Useful websites: