



Inclusion Newsletter

15th December 2023

Welcome to this term's Inclusion newsletter.

The lead-up to Christmas can be a tricky time for many children, particularly those with additional needs like autism. Lots of things change at this time of year, both at school with lots of singing, rehearsals and special events that lead to changes in routine, and at home where everything looks different with the decorations up and there might be lots of visitors. Although it's hopefully exciting and fun, for some children all this change can lead to feeling unsettled and a little anxious. Social stories are a good way to help explain what's happening to children – we use these in school to help children feel prepared and to reassure them that it's all OK. The link below contains some good examples which you could adapt for your own family if you feel it may help:

<https://adayinourshoes.com/social-stories-christmas/>

There are also some useful tips about Christmas in general from the National Autistic Society here:

<https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/leisure/christmas/tips>

This term, we are taking a closer look at hearing impairments. Hearing loss can develop at any age for a range of reasons, including experiencing a head injury, over-exposure to loud noises, excessive ear wax, an infection or other health problems. Lots of children also experience glue ear, a build up of fluid in the ear which can lead to temporary hearing loss. Keep a look out for the following signs which may indicate mild or progressive deafness:

- Changes in behaviour, for example becoming withdrawn or frustrated.
- Red ears and/or pulling at their ears.
- Delayed speech and communication development.
- Mishearing things and/or mispronouncing words.
- Not hearing what's going on, especially if there's background noise.
- Not responding when called.
- Problems with concentrating, tiredness and frustration, which may affect behaviour.
- Wanting the volume of the TV higher than other members of your family.

If you have any concerns about your child's hearing, then arrange an appointment with your GP for a health check and ask for a referral to an Audiologist. Always share any concerns with us at school so that we can work together to support your child.

Your child's class teacher is always the best person to speak to first if you have any questions or concerns about your child's learning, but if you wish to discuss your child's needs further, or need additional support, please don't hesitate to contact me at the school.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year – see you in January!

Mrs Z Huggett
Inclusion Manager



Spotlight on.....

Hearing Loss

Hearing loss can affect any child at any time. It can be temporary, but may be a long-term or permanent hearing impairment.

There are more than 50,000 deaf children in the UK and half of these were born deaf. The other half become deaf during childhood. Every deaf child is different and may have different levels of deafness.

Lots of children will experience a condition called *Glue Ear* at some point during childhood. *Glue ear* is where the middle part of the ear canal fills up with fluid. This can cause temporary hearing loss and usually clears up within 3 months. *Glue ear* can cause symptoms such as earache, tinnitus (hearing buzzing/ringing sounds) and problems with balance.

Any concerns about a child's hearing should always be checked with a GP.

Did You Know?

1 in 6 people in the UK are affected by some level of hearing loss.

~ Face children when you speak. Most children with hearing loss can lip read to some extent. To help them, face them when you talk, talk slowly and clearly, and don't yell. As long as they have their devices on, you can speak in a normal tone.

~ Use lots of pictures, graphics, and text labels. Many children with hearing difficulties are visual learners. The use of pictures to support communication can be very effective.

~ Use technology to make learning easier. This includes having captioning (subtitles) on videos and using voice-recognition software on computers.

~ Minimise background noise when possible. This may mean finding quiet areas for a child to complete homework, read a book or have a conversation.

~ Make seating/position changes. Children with hearing loss may need to sit closer to the front of the class to speech read (read lips) or hear more clearly. At home, it is worth thinking about how standing and seating positions during conversations and activities can support a child with hearing loss.

~ Learn sign language. Many children benefit from learning to use signs to support their communication needs. Make learning signs fun and engaging as well as meaningful. This can be through using games, challenges and songs.

Helpful Tips

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/glue-ear/>

<https://thelisteningroom.com/>

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/ear-nose-throat/Pages/Hearing-Loss.aspx>

Useful Websites: