



Inclusion Newsletter

28th March 2025

Welcome to the Inclusion newsletter for Term 4. This year seems to be going by very quickly!

I am sure some of you will have heard of Club Ausome, a local charity which runs support groups, workshops and other events for the families of children with ASD and other additional needs.

One of the founders is the parent of a child who used to attend Riverside.

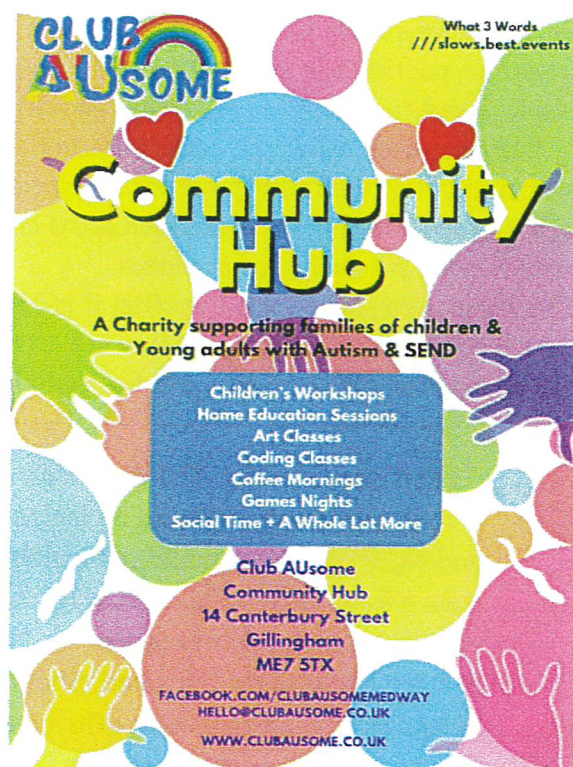
Club Ausome now has a new home in Canterbury Street, Gillingham. They will be running lots of events from this new Community Hub, so please do visit their website to see what is on offer.

This term's newsletter focuses on screen time, an issue that affects all children but which can be especially important for children with additional needs.

Using technology offers various benefits for children, with many apps, websites, and shows offering valuable educational content that can enhance learning. Interactive screen time, especially with educational games and apps, can help develop children's problem-solving, critical thinking, and hand-eye coordination. The internet provides a wealth of information that can inspire curiosity and allow children to explore various topics beyond what they might encounter in school, which can encourage independent learning and discovery. However, careful support and management from parents are required to support children to learn healthy habits, as excessive screen time is known to have many detrimental effects. You will find more information overleaf.

Please remember that 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. If you wish to discuss your child's needs further, or need additional support with an aspect of SEND, please don't hesitate to contact me at the school.

Mrs Z Huggett
Assistant Headteacher and Inclusion Manager



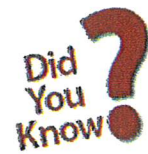


Screen Time

A report by the UK Parliament's Education Committee highlighted a 52% increase in children's screen time between 2020 and 2022, with nearly 25% of children and young people using smartphones at a level consistent with behavioural addiction.

A study published in the journal "Psychiatry Research" found a correlation between excessive screen time and mental health issues such as anxiety and depression, particularly in adolescents. Social media use has been particularly linked to feelings of loneliness and depression, with studies showing that increased usage can contribute to decreased well-being. Excessive screen time can impact speech and social development, as it can limit face-to-face interactions. Attention spans are also impacted by constantly flicking between apps or videos.

Whilst technology can have some benefits, it is important that healthy habits are taught from a young age. Below are lots of tips which can support you and your family to navigate the digital world.



It is important to avoid screens at least one hour before bedtime, as the blue light emitted from screens can interfere with the production of melatonin, the hormone responsible for sleep.

~ Limit screen time: The American Academy of Paediatrics suggests that for children aged 2 to 5, screen time should be limited to one hour per day, while for children aged 6 years and older, parents should set consistent limits on the amount of screen time.

~ Be a Role Model: Children often mimic the behaviour of their parents, so being mindful of your own screen habits is crucial. If you're spending excessive time on screens, your child is more likely to do the same. Show the importance of face-to-face interactions and balancing screen time with other meaningful activities such as outdoor play, reading, and family time. Encourage children to take breaks during prolonged screen sessions and limit the use of screens at social times, like when eating dinner. Ensure that children have opportunities to socialise with peers in real-life settings and not just online, such as through playdates, sports, or family gatherings.

~ Quality over Quantity: Focus on the quality of content your child is exposed to, rather than the quantity. Educational shows, games, and apps can be helpful in supporting learning, but it's important to avoid too much passive or entertainment-based screen time.

~ Age-Appropriate Content: Ensure the content is appropriate for your child's age and development level. Use parental controls to restrict inappropriate content and set guidelines around what apps, games and websites are okay. Be aware that even with filters in place, inappropriate content can sometimes get through and the more time spent watching online content, playing games or using social media, especially if this is unsupervised, the higher the risk.

~ Physical Activity: Encourage children to engage in physical activities. Apps that involve movement, like dance or fitness games, can be a fun way to combine screen time with physical activity.

<https://www.unicef.org/parenting/child-development/babies-screen-time>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/grownups/a-parents-guide-to-screen-time>

<https://www.childnet.com/blog/screen-time-guidance-for-parents-and-carers/>



Useful Websites: