



Same but Different

Date: 14th Dec 2020

Inclusion Bulletin for Biggin Hill Primary School

Issue:2

EXTERNAL SUPPORT



If you feel you need some support at home, Bromley Children's Project may be able to help. You can self refer at www.bromley.gov.uk



Bromley Y is a local service offering therapeutic support for young people between the ages of 0 - 17 years.



Bromley Mencap provides a range of services and activities to improve the lives of people with disabilities, their families and carers.

If you would like any information on the above services, please contact a member of the Inclusion team here at BHPS.

Mrs Lawrence

A MESSAGE FROM MRS LAWRENCE

I would like to start by saying thank you to all of you for your kind words of encouragement in the run up to Mrs Freeman and I leading the school after Christmas. We are very excited! My role as Acting Deputy Headteacher will be in addition to my role as SENCo and I am very lucky to have Mrs Sargeant and Mrs Helps by my side to support me, our children and our families at BHPS. Christmas is coming and this can ordinarily be a difficult time for some children with additional or special educational needs. With the current situation, anxieties are already heightened and it is more important than ever to reassure our children the best we can. Please take a look at the following page for tips and advice on how to reduce anxieties over the Christmas period for children with anxiety, social communication or ASD. I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy new Year! Stay safe, stay well and I look forward to seeing you in January.

Mrs Lawrence

Assistant Headteacher & Inclusion Lead
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A MESSAGE FROM MRS SARGEANT



It has been an incredibly difficult year for us all and the level of resilience I have seen in the children throughout this forever changing landscape has been amazing. Having to isolate and learn from home and then return to carry on with their normal school life is not an easy expectation for young children and I am incredibly proud of the way each one of them has presented themselves. I wish you all a safe and happy Christmas with your families.

Mrs Sargeant

Family Support Worker and Inclusion Assistant
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LOCAL OFFER

[Bromley Parent Voice – Working in partnership to give parents and carers a voice](#)

[Information, Advice and Support Service \(IASS\) | Information, Advice and Support Service \(IASS\) | London Borough of Bromley](#)

[Children and young adults with disabilities and learning needs | London Borough of Bromley](#)

[Kent Local Offer](#)

[Surrey Local Offer](#)

[Croydon Local Offer](#)

Christmas with Anxiety, Social Communication Difficulties or Autism

Ho, Ho, Hold the Expectations!



Christmas is a wonderful time where we can see loved ones, exchange gifts and make memories. For some adults and children, Christmas can be extremely challenging especially if there are difficulties with anxiety, social communication or autism. Not only can it be tricky for the adult or child with the need, but also for the family members who are supporting them.

The Christmas holidays are a time of great excitement and anticipation. Holidays also mean changes in routine or schedule, visitors, crowds, socialising, noise, changes of food, clothing etc. plus many times where dealing with the unexpected becomes an expectation and reality. Many of the demands placed upon families and children with anxiety, social communication or ASD are those which usually would be avoided if not for the festive season.

How can Christmas be successful with anxiety, social communication or ASD?

Preparation is the key to success over the holidays and not only in being ready for the arrival of Santa! When preparing for Christmas, it is vitally important to think outside of the box - it is not only the children who need to be prepared.

Family: Prepare family members with what will and will not work with your children.

Manage time expectations i.e. is it better to spend the day or evening with family members? Does your child often need to spend 'down time' at home after being out of the house for a while?



It is possible that your children may not have seen a family member for a long time - do you need to explain to your children how they can behave around their grandparents or aunts and uncles? Can they give them a kiss and cuddle to say hello and goodbye? The current climate has filled our children's minds with conflicting and confusing information and as excited as they will be to see family members again, they may also be very nervous and unsure about how they can behave.

Routine: Try to maintain routine as much as possible. As difficult as this may be over the holidays, try to find parts of the day which you can keep the same i.e. meals. This will give your child something to focus on which stays the same and is predictable offering reassurance and security.

Food: If your child finds different foods challenging let your hosts or visitors know that offering new foods may cause anxiety. Family members often mean well and feel that children are missing out if they are not trying the Christmas treats. Let them know that it is ok not to offer and to wait for children to ask! Also....chicken nuggets is a perfectly acceptable Christmas meal if it brings joy instead of worry!

Presents: For most children, receiving and opening presents is full of excitement and joy. However, for children with anxiety, social communication difficulties or autism, receiving and opening gifts can be part of the holidays which causes distress.

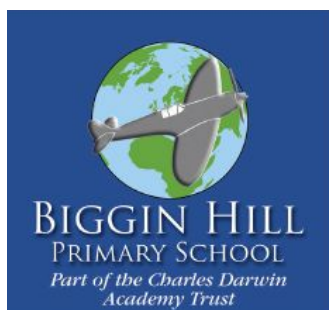
Did I get what I put on my Christmas list? Does Santa think I have been naughty because he didn't bring the gift I really wanted? What happens if I don't like my present from Nanny? What do I say if I really like my presents? Is Mummy cross with me because I am not playing with my gift? These are some of the questions which may be going through your child's mind before opening their gifts and anxiety over presents does not stop with them. Parents and family members often feel the anxiety along with their children - reassure yourselves and your children that it is ok.

Remind family members that the reaction they are hoping to see when they give their gift may not be the reaction they receive and that this does not mean your child is not grateful or appreciative - extend this to your children so that they do not feel under pressure to react in a certain way.



Most importantly: Have fun, see loved ones and make memories.

If you would like any clarification about the information above, or resources to support you and your family over Christmas (social stories etc.), please contact either myself or Mrs Sargeant. Merry Christmas to you all!



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