



# Same but Different

Date: 17th December 2021

**Inclusion Bulletin for Biggin Hill Primary School**

Issue:21/22 2

## A MESSAGE FROM MRS SARGEANT

Christmas is without a doubt one of the most exciting times of the year for children. Whether they're visiting a local grotto, writing their Christmas list, or dressing up for a party day, they live and breathe this time of year. Whilst it is an absolute joy to see our little ones so happy, this time of year does demand a lot from parents. When you're not running the children here, there and everywhere in December, we're buying presents, entertaining the family, and going to Christmas parties. It's a pretty hectic time and things can feel a little stressful. However, I've got some wellbeing tips to help you relax during this rather manic time.

- Try to maintain routine
- Plan ahead
- Take time for yourself
- Remove the pressure - no comparison to others!
- Talk to those around you.

Please make sure to take care of yourselves as well as your wonderful families. I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year!



Stay safe and stay positive,

**Mrs Sargeant**  
**Family Liaison,**  
**Mental Health Lead**  
**and Deputy DSL**  
[k.sargeant@bigginhillps.com](mailto:k.sargeant@bigginhillps.com)

## A MESSAGE FROM MRS LAWRENCE

I would like to start by thanking you for your support with our outreach sessions this term. It has been wonderful to see so many of you, both in school and virtually! Next term's sessions are Wellbeing & Anxiety (Wednesday 3rd and Thursday 4th Feb) and Autism & Sensory Processing (Wednesday 23rd and Thursday 24th March). Please register your interest at <https://forms.gle/yY6p4LE3rQE3d9tw5>

I am pleased to inform you that we have started our journey towards becoming recognised as a Makaton friendly school! The children have been fantastic and are using Makaton more and more in their everyday communication. Using sign is a fantastic way to communicate when we cannot find the words to do so. Remember to check the newsletter for our Makaton sign of the week!

On the following page you will find guidance and tips on how to support our children over the festive season. I will be accessing my emails over the Christmas period - please do not hesitate to make contact if you need further support.

Take care,

**Mrs Lawrence**  
**Deputy Headteacher & SENCo**  
[k.lawrence@bigginhillps.com](mailto:k.lawrence@bigginhillps.com)



## A MESSAGE FROM MISS KNOTT

Hello everyone,

I would like to introduce you to Singing Hands! Singing Hands is a fantastic YouTube resource which shows us how to sign to music. This is a great way to learn Makaton and I cannot think of a better time to do so than the Christmas season!

Be sure to check out their youtube channel and challenge your children to a signing session!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m9efYYaAeco&list=PLjT4XhijakZgU04Ff7nTZM7M11veE9nwN>

Have a lovely break, looking forward to seeing you all in the new year!

**Miss Knott**  
**Inclusion Assistant**  
[r.knott@bigginhillps.com](mailto:r.knott@bigginhillps.com)



## LOCAL OFFER AND EXTERNAL SUPPORT

[Bromley Parent Voice](#)

[Information, Advice and Support Service \(IASS\)](#)

[Bromley Local Offer](#)

[Kent Local Offer](#)

[Surrey Local Offer](#)

[Croydon Local Offer](#)

[Inclusion and Wellbeing at BHPS](#)

Follow the link above to use the BHPS Inclusion Padlet where you will find information, resources, strategies and self-referral forms.

# Support and Advice

## Christmas with Additional Needs...

*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, autism or sensory processing. 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 additional needs are those which usually would be avoided if not for the festive season.

### **How can Christmas be successful for families with additional needs?**

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!

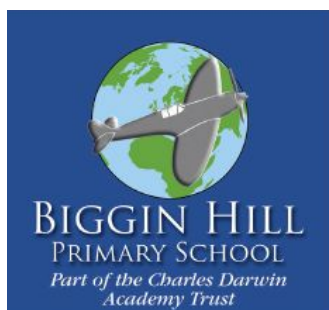
**Sensory Needs:** Children with sensory needs find this time of year particularly difficult. Lights, music, crowds, special clothing are some of the challenges which they may face. Think about everyday life and how your children manage their sensory needs or perhaps ensure there is a safe and quiet space for your child to use.

**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!



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