

Queensmill School

Policy for Flexibility of Thought to Cope with Change

Aims:

We recognise that all of our children will have difficulties in coping with change due to their autism. We feel it is important that our pupils become as independent as possible, are able to make choices, are able to problem solve. We aim to constantly extend the choices they are able to make so that they are able to make choices, on which play activity to choose for instance, that will help them to be in control of their lives, reduce their rigidity and to manage their own changes.

Implementation:

We therefore use the following strategies at all times in the school for all children in order to help them to cope with this anxiety and to learn to overcome it as much as possible:

1. All staff have on-going autism training and so understand the triad of impairments, including the deficit of flexibility of thought to cope with change.
2. TEACCH structure
3. Use of PECS
4. SCERTS as a holistic framework for autism education designed to support young people in developing their social communication and emotional regulation skills
5. Whole staff use of Signalong , and Makaton symbols
6. Class timetables
7. Individual timetables
8. Regular routines
9. Consistent classroom management
10. Awareness of triggers and strategies for calming known for each child
11. Behaviour plans for children who need them and consistency of approach to behaviour for all children from staff
12. Autism focussed IEPs for all children
13. Speech and language goals incorporated into classroom practice
14. Occupational therapy goals incorporated into classroom practice
15. Agreed responses to children who constantly ask the same question, and not engaging in bargaining
16. Making children aware of what they are going to do before each activity and recapping at the end
17. Labelling of class, doors, furniture, stairs, etc with words and symbols
18. Teaching of "first. . . , then" and then "first. . . , then . . . , next"
19. Putting something different on the timetable – could be "surprise", "?", "special activity", "different".
20. Teaching that different can be good.

21. Symbols for everything in school, and also for trips out of school, eg getting on/off train.
22. Use of photos/visual prompts/objects of reference to prepare children and remind them of what they are doing.
23. Symbol and object of reference for "wait".
24. Consistency of language and symbols used.
25. Encouraging good communication between home and school and between school and the transport escort so that there are systems to let school know if the child has had a difficult night, any changes that have upset them, etc.
26. Notice board in staff room for teams to post notes about children and their behaviour management.
27. Preparing children for unusual events, or events that "mix" home and school, like mum coming in to school.
28. Using a lot of support at the beginning of a new activity and then withdrawing the level of support as it is no longer needed – eg: photo of Jan in the office to support children in taking the register in the office.
29. Repetition of activities for over-learning and for comfort of going over a known activity.
30. Use of pair work, group work and whole class work.
31. Encouraging pupils to manage new independent tasks
32. Increasing possibilities for making choices
33. Have a choice of experiences that will help pupils to find things for self-occupancy and relaxation
34. Pen portrait of each child, letting all who come into the class know what are their likes and dislikes, anxieties and ways of calming, etc.
35. Preparation for changes of adult in the room
36. Using PECS and other visual cues at playtime
37. Personalised transition programmes to support young people when moving between class groups, Queensmill to inclusion units (and vice versa) and key stages

Monitoring

SMT will monitor this policy when carrying out their on-going classroom monitoring.

Policy reviewed – January 2021

Reviewed byF Adu.....

Date for next review – January 2022