

THINGS TO DO

A weekly newsletter from SEND Supported



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We have seen Year 10 and Year 12 students across the country returning to their schools to have some face-to-face interaction with their teachers ahead of their GCSE and A-level examinations next year. Schools ensured that a number of measures were put in place, working hard to make sure they could welcome their students back to a safe environment. This has been much appreciated by all. We'd love to hear more about young people's experiences of return to school via enquiries@sensupported.com

Warmest wishes, Joanna and team



EMOTIONAL WELLBEING - Kate Griffiths

Once again I wanted to highlight a selection of the best resources I've come across and been recommended this week to save you trawling through the ever increasing amount that appears to fill my inbox and twitter feed!

Although I'm sure everybody is familiar with the [Anna Freud website](#), I thought it would be worth reminding everybody to check in and have a look at their website. They are adding resources on a weekly basis and have just added some excellent resources around supporting young people's mental health during times of disruption.

Also worth another look is the [MindEd](#) resilience hub. At present we are quite rightly focusing on the wellbeing of the young people we work with but it's also important that we look after our own mental health and wellbeing and support colleagues where they need us to. This web site has selected the best advice and tips from international experts, so you know the advice and guidance you are getting is the very best.

For staff wanting to explore the theories behind supporting transition and reconnecting with others the [BPS](#) has produced this paper. It provides a psychological perspective on how to manage this significant transition compassionately and in a way that takes account of the needs of all individuals within a school community and also outlines how key psychological theories can inform the process and provides practical advice about how these can be used to support school communities become more resilient as they reconnect and recover.

Freebie Alert! Fox and Bear is available free on [Amazon](#). This is a really lovely picture book for little ones to share with their parents. The themes explored will help little ones who are struggling to open up and express themselves when they are upset.

A really interesting secondary PHSE resource I came across this week is from [the Army](#). It's a set of 5 lessons that I think with a bit of tweaking could be an excellent use of any pastoral time students may have in school over the coming weeks and could be used to emphasise the differences and similarities in the situation we are all going through. To give you a flavour this is the introductory description:



Blackout! A cyber-attack has cut off all power across the UK. Shops have run out of food. Black market prices for water and the cost of bread doubles by the hour. There is no end in sight. Public order is breaking down. Should you do the right thing? Or should you do what it takes to survive?

The five immersive films follow two young people navigating a national crisis and brings to life the importance of building character. The accompanying classroom resources and broad variety of curriculum-linked activities encourage peer-to-peer learning and help your students develop vital life skills such as communication, working under pressure, working as part of a team and problem solving, all of which will last a lifetime.



LEARNING - Clair Cole

Assessment and Universal Provision;

I know my colleagues in SEND Supported would agree that we are privileged to be able to work with pupils on a one-to-one basis. As a cognition and learning specialist teacher, I regularly carry out a range of formal assessments with pupils to explore their underlying skills (eg memory) as well as reading, spelling, writing and mathematical skills. The scores we get from those tests are helpful and indicate whether a pupil has skills in the average, above average or below average range for their age. Those scores provide the outside pieces of the jigsaw but in order to build the complete picture of an individual pupil, we use that valuable one to one time to observe how the pupil learns, what strategies they use if they are finding an activity difficult and how well they can concentrate on a task for example. We learn a lot by talking with the pupil, asking questions and listening to them. Classrooms are busy places, often with deadlines for completing activities; in our role, we are fortunate that we can offer the pupil the time they need to share their thoughts and ideas. Class and subject teachers also provide important information about the pupil's learning and, wherever possible, we value being able to talk with parents to help build our picture.

When we put all of that information together, we then make recommendations to support that pupil's learning. In past issues, I have provided information about developing specific skills; this week, I want to think about some of the more general principles which we recommend for many of the pupils we work with. These principles are designed to support pupils who experience difficulty with understanding, processing and remembering information as well as reading and writing, but they can be equally helpful for all pupils. They form part of the 'Universal Provision' in schools but can also be used by parents at home.

For example, an evaluation of research by the Manchester Metropolitan University highlighted that visual supports can reduce anxiety and frustration, help pupils remember what they have to do, enable them to persevere, maintain their attention and complete tasks effectively. Research in Swansea which asked dyslexic pupils what they thought, found that they liked teachers to: read information out to the class rather than expecting them to read it independently; provide support materials such as word mats, alphabet strips, special dictionaries and tables squares; be prepared to repeat instructions and make worksheets easy to follow by highlighting important information.

Please go to the *Things to Do Issue 14 Resources Folder* for further ideas.

AUTISM - Jules McLean



It has been several months now since the world was turned upside down due to COVID-19. Life has changed a great deal with social distancing, hand sanitising, new rules in public places, and constant, unpredictable changes. As society begins to open up again, there will be new challenges to face. It is important in this new environment to think about teaching calming and relaxation strategies before anxiety escalates. While predictability can go a long way in decreasing anxiety, it may not always be possible in a rapidly changing world.

See these [calming strategies](#) to support a person with Autism.



There is lots of advice regarding lockdown but what about coming out of lockdown? Clinical advisor Consultant clinical psychologist Dr Judy Eaton and PDA Society enquiry line lead and trustee Paula Webb answer a question from a parent about [Preparing children for life after the Coronavirus outbreak](#). See the rolling series of [Q&A videos](#) about PDA during the coronavirus pandemic. So far topics include: education; siblings; preparing children for life after the coronavirus outbreak; managing video calls and transition tips; helping PDA teens & young adults understand lockdown rules.

The [PDA Society](#) continue to collate and create specific resources to support the PDA community during the Coronavirus pandemic.

FAMILY & CHILDREN AT HOME - Clare Viney



On the 11th June, the [Department for Education](#) provided updated guidance which includes information for parents and carers to help prepare for the wider opening of nurseries, schools and colleges.

The [Local Authority](#) has made available the following to support parents and children as they return to school. This short video is a useful tool for parents to provide reassurances to younger children as they begin the phased return to school.



[Warwickshire Family Information Service](#) continue to have lots of useful advice, guidance and weekly newsletters on their website.

[CAMHS Resources](#) was created for young people, carers and professionals to pool together lots of helpful resources from across the internet that are available to help support your mental health and well-being. I hope that you find it helpful.



Heart-warming good news stories

The [Remembering Wildlife charity](#) picture book series announced its 10 winners from their cheetah photography competition, and some of these shots are truly stunning...



Also, this week, activist Malala Yousafzai graduated from Oxford University, celebrating alongside her family and a big cake!

Finally, since we've been updating you virtual tours of galleries and zoos, now you can visit in real life as Chester Zoo reopens to visitors this week!

If you would like to connect with other families of children or young people with SEND, please email enquiries@sendsupported.com to join the next online Parent 'Drop-in'. For dates, go to the [What's On pages of our website](#).



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