



ASHMOLE PRIMARY SCHOOL

SEN Newsletter

Autism PDA Profile

Resists and avoids the ordinary demands of life

Perceived loss of autonomy activates an extreme threat response

Doesn't perceive social hierarchy (in children, want to be co-teachers or co-parents)

Uses social strategies as part of their avoidance (e.g., distracting or becoming immobilized: "my legs don't work")

'Obsessive' behavior, often focused on other people (can show up as love or hate)

Appears sociable on the surface (less likely to be identified as Autistic for this reason)

FOCUS ON:
Pathological Demand Avoidance or PDA

End of another year.

It's June already and nearly time for our summer holiday. The year has passed so quickly. I have included some hints and tips for a peaceful break on the final page.

Thank you again for your continued support. Have a fantastic summer holiday, have fun and we'll see you in September.

Mrs Toal
SENCO

Useful websites.

SENDIASS - Special Education Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service
<https://www.barnetlocaloffer.org.uk/organisations/27214-barnet-special-educational-needs-and-disability-information-advice-and-support-service-sendiass>

SENDIASS is a free service to residents that provides high quality, bespoke, impartial and confidential support to ensure that our service users are at the heart of decision-making processes and are fully informed of their options and rights that affect theirs or their families lives.

www.autism.org.uk The National Autistic Society website, the main UK charity for supporting people with ASD and their families

www.attentionautism.com For more information on Attention Autism and how you can support your child to develop attention and turn-taking skills

www.iassnetwork.co.uk Advice and support for parents of children with SEN

www.autismuk.com Information on ASD

www.autismspeaks.org - A comprehensive site, with a useful resource library

www.oneplaceforspecialneeds.com/main/library_social_stories.html

A really useful set of social stories to share with children, covering topics ranging from coping with a new baby in the family to getting a haircut to making friends.

<https://www.pdasociety.org.uk/>

A useful website for families living with an Autism PDA profile

SEN Parent Meetings

Thank you to all the parents and children who were able to attend the new reception intake SEN transition visits this term. It was lovely to see you all and share the environment your child will be learning in for next year.

We really appreciate your time and support.

If your child is already at Ashmole Primary School and you would like to make an appointment with your child's new teacher in September please make an appointment through the office and we can discuss the new support plans and the transition to the new class.



The summer break is a time children often look forward to because it means a rest from school for a few weeks.

No strict schedules - no classes -no homework. However, for some children this change in routine can be difficult. Autism Parent Magazine have some tips to help the summer holidays be as stress-free as possible:

1. Plan ahead - This can often help children adjust to changes easier, and it helps to know what is going to happen next. Some parents provide a visual or written schedule and then try to stick with it as much as possible.
2. Use timers/alarms - Using timers that have a visual cue can be useful if children are not yet able to tell the time independently. For example, if you are leaving the house in 15 minutes, a countdown timer can help regulate the time left until the change in routine.
3. Use social stories - These are a great way to introduce and explain concepts and situations in a visual form. Social stories may increase the child's understanding of a social concept and can help the child understand what is going to happen. By letting your child know ahead of time what is going to take place, the potential anxiety and stress associated with the activity may decrease. For more information on social stories visit <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/communication/communication-tools/social-stories-and-comic-strip-conversations>
4. Allow extra time - When creating a schedule, it is important to remember that each activity/event may not start at the exact time, so it is useful to allow extra. If timing is problematic then times can be left out, with just a list of tasks/activities in order.
5. Introduce your child to new places or activities - If you are going somewhere new, it may be useful to introduce your child to these beforehand. For example, you could visit the place before, or if that's not possible, then look at the website and pictures together.



Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA)

How these difficulties might present

PDA (Pathological Demand Avoidance) is seen as a behaviour profile within the Autism spectrum.

There are key indicators:

1. Child resists and avoids ordinary demands of life.
 2. They seem under an extraordinary degree of pressure from ordinary everyday demands and expectations and attempt to avoid these to an 'obsessive' extent.
 3. The overriding state of the child's approach to school and learning is one of anxiety.
 4. Child has sufficient social understanding to be socially manipulative in their endeavours and will often adapt strategies to the person making the demand. Strategies may include distraction, giving excuses, delaying, arguing, suggesting alternatives and withdrawing into fantasy.
 5. Child displays surface sociability, but apparent lack of social identity.
 6. Child often shows swift changes in mood. Appears to be driven by the need to be in charge and can change in an instant when this isn't the case.
 7. Can be comfortable in role play and imaginative play. Unlike the child with Autism the child with PDA will be interested in role play. They can use this as an avoidant tactic. They often like to take the role of the teacher.
 8. Their use of language may mask their level of understanding.
- Key adults need to build a strong relationships with the child. It is important that they understand the child's difficulties and keep demands to a minimum. All adults will need to have an understanding of which strategies support the child and to consistently implement these strategies throughout the day.
 - Adults need to look at the day ahead and identify and prepare for possible triggers for the child.

Strategies to support

The key to supporting the child is to recognise and reduce their anxiety level, so that they can manage everyday demands.

- The use of structure, routine and behavioural principles of reward need to be adapted and personalised for children with PDA. The key element is to involve the child in developing any strategy, so that they feel that they have some control.

For example: for some children, displaying information in a visual format can create a sense of independence and choice which reduces anxiety e.g. visual timetables.



It is important that they are created and referred to *with* the child, and include an element of choice, rather than being done 'to' the child and that they are used in a flexible and non-confrontational way.

- Child and key adults to identify a space in the classroom or school where the child can go to feel calm.
- Because of the challenging nature of PDA in children adults need to keep calm and it is recommended that staff support each other at key points of the day when necessary, in a "tag team" manner.

REMEMBER



SEN PARENT COFFEE MORNINGS.

Thank you to those of you who came along to our first coffee morning on 9th June 2023. It was a great opportunity to share our stories openly and a place to build a support network.

The next meeting is scheduled for **FRIDAY 14th JULY 2023 at 9am** we would love to see more of you there to join us.



LET'S SIGN

In each newsletter we will include some BSL. We'd love to see this fantastic language used across all our school community.

Why not try these this term?



GOOD



MORNING



HOW ARE YOU?



Emotion coaching is a way of helping children cope with their feelings and learn to self-regulate. We use this approach across the school.

Emotion Coaching

Step 1: Empathize, Label and Validate

- "I see..." or "I notice..."
- "I hear..."
- "Are you feeling..."
- "Is there anything else that you are feeling?"
- "I imagine that feels..."
- "Tell me about that."
- "Are you saying that..."
- "It sounds to me like you feel _____, because _____. Is that right?"
- "How does that make you feel?"



Step 2: Deal with the Bad Behavior (if applicable)

- "It's okay to feel _____, but it's never okay to _____."

Step 3: Problem-Solve

"The best ideas come from the kids themselves, when they explore the problem from their own perspective and knowledge."

- "Tell me what happened to make you feel this way."
- "What can you do to solve this problem?"
- "What might happen if..."
- "Let's take a look at some different choices..."

