

I'M A PARENT, GET ME OUT OF HERE!

THE WEEKLY SCHOOL CLOSURE NEWSLETTER FOR PARENTS/CARERS OF CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE WITH AUTISM

Getting to Grips With 'The New Normal'

Rob Emery – Autism Advisory Teacher Service

Last weekend saw the biggest easing of lockdown restrictions and the first signs of what 'the new normal' might look like. The guidance is changing almost on a weekly basis and with some areas of the UK operating under different restrictions, the messages about lockdown can be a bit confusing. Here, we look at what the current guidance is and what it means for people with Autism and their families, in an attempt to get to grips with 'the new normal'.

Current Guidance

The current guidance says that you should stay at home as much as possible. You should try to stay 2 metres apart from people that are not in your household; however, where this isn't possible then try to stay 1 meter apart. From 4th July you are able to:

- Meet up with people who belong to one other household anywhere (in public, in private, indoors or outdoors) but you should try to maintain a 2 meter distance.
- Meet in groups of up to six people from different households outdoors at a 2 meter distance.
- Single parent households with a child under the age of 18 can form a 'support bubble' with another household. You can visit the other family in the 'bubble' indoors without keeping 2 meters apart and you can stay overnight. You cannot change the household in your 'bubble'.
- Restaurants, pubs, cinemas, visitor attractions, hotels, and campsites will be able to open. Other public places, such as libraries, community centres, places of worship, outdoor playgrounds and outdoor gyms will also be able to open. These may all operate a bit differently to try and keep distance between people.

These relaxed restrictions might cause anxiety and confusion for some of our young people with Autism. Go through the rules and talk through your trip before you leave the house with your young person and try not to do too much at once. Try



-going on smaller trips to less crowded places before attempting trips that could be potentially more stressful.

Shielding Guidance

Those who are at an increased risk due to underlying health conditions are required to 'shield' by taking extra precautions. From 6th July those who are required to shield are able to:

- Meet outdoors with groups of up to 6 people as long as you maintain a social distance of 2 meters.
 - Stop social distancing with members of your own household.
 - Form a support bubble with another household.
- As long as the infection rate doesn't rise, the government plan to lift the shielding restrictions in line with the restrictions for the general population.

Public Transport

You must wear a face mask when using public transport unless you have a good reason not to. Reasons may include:

- If you are younger than 11 years old
- If wearing or removing a face mask would cause severe distress.

'The new normal' will take time to get used to for all of us. Take things at your own pace, talk about the new rules and prepare the best you can. Hopefully, in time, we'll return to 'the old normal'.

Getting to know Claire Nunn, manager of the Autism Advisory Teacher Service (AATS).



How long have you worked for AATS? I started in April 2003 to begin the Autism Outreach service as it was known then.

What is the favourite part of your job? Working with children, young people their families and settings to make things better.

Have you always lived in Peterborough? No originally, I came from near York

What did you want to do when you were growing up? Lots of things but never a teacher!

What's your "go to" evening meal for the family when you're in a rush? Usually omelettes as we keep chickens and so we have a plentiful supply of eggs. But often as they are older, I now sometimes say it's a DIY dinner day.

Before lockdown, where was your favourite place to go in and around Peterborough? I like visiting Central Park. We used to go there a lot when my children were smaller, and I love the cakes from the café.

What's been your most unusual lockdown experience? Having everyone at home for soooo long and never having the house to myself!!!

What are you most looking forward to once we are through Covid 19? Being able to see and hug people.

What do you do/where do you go if you're having a really bad day? Like most of us I often just need a bit of time on my own and so I will go for a walk. If I can't escape, I often have a few minutes in my garden, and I must confess I have a secret stash of chocolate!!

What's the most helpful piece of advice you've been given as a parent? Always to treat my children as individuals and that being 'fair' is not necessarily giving them the same.

Parent Top Tips

In this section we want to share your tips and advice. Have you got a great activity? Found a brilliant resource? We'd like to hear about it! Please share your top tips at:

SENandInclusion@Peterborough.gov.uk

Last call before the end of term - is your child starting school in September or going to secondary school or college?

The Autism Team are working to support these transitions. If you would like us to support your child, we require email permission from parents to your child's current setting.

Check out our other weekly newsletters:

Cosy Crew – A newsletter for Primary Aged Children with Autism.

Lockdown Lift Up – A newsletter for teenagers and young people with Autism.

Available from our [Local Offer Page](#) each week.

Boredom Bashers

Resource:

Check out Blue Peter's 6 badges of Summer Fan Club. Download the wall chart online and you can then send in your creations.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/joinin/six-badges>



Activity:

Learn how to tie knots of any kind: functional (shoe laces and ties), decorative as well as for the outdoors. Learn the knot of the day.

<https://www.animatedknots.com>



Something for me:

Experience a safari with WildEarth. A qualified guide takes you on safari whilst the camera films from where tourists would normally sit. See broadcasts from previous day sunrise/sunsets.

