

**St. John’s School and College ‘Autism Buster’ Factsheet**

There are a number of things you can do to make an autistic person’s experience in the community a safe and less daunting one. Here at St. John’s we immerse our young people into the community, taking on work experience, shopping trips and days out to walks in the park. We want to work closely with our local communities and businesses to ensure you are autistic aware so we have made this fact sheet of simple and affordable things you can do to support an autistic person when entering your services.

* **Lighting** – keep lighting soft and make sure there are no flickering lights. Lights on a dimmer switch can be good as it can be adjusted to suit a range of needs
* **Music** – Using relaxation type music (spa music!) quietly in the background can be calming but be aware not to have too much other noise going on at the same time. Music can also be a distraction and/or create sensory overload
* **Sensory toys / items** – Have a sensory tub available for people to explore, use as a calming tool or something to help focus – you can have stress balls, water beads, squishy items, fidget toys, different squares of materials –silky, fluffy, rough etc, different scents)
* **Safe space** – having a designated safe space that can be used at any time can help people coming to visit. Provide a photo of the space, keep it uncluttered, comfortable and peaceful space, with easy access
* **Longer appointments** –enabling someone more time to process what is happening, to have a break/breaks as needed
* **Invite -** families / individual in before event / performance / meeting so the person knows the space, or send photos if too far to travel
* **Early entry** to events / shows – to allow access at quieter times, less crowded, more preparation time, more time to process what is happening
* **Nominate an autism champion** in your team –ask what the individual needs are, this will really help support staff and families, promote inclusion, promote equality and diversity and generally enrich many people’s lives
* There are many **cheap sensory items** you can make for your space (sensory bottles, sensory bags, cloud dough, scented playdough, scent jars, material key rings – a lot of ideas on Pinterest!)
* **Contact** St. John’s 01273 244 000 if you require more information on how to support someone with autism and ask for Emma Millar.

**Warning – Remember all young people with autism or related conditions are unique! What works for one may not** work for another! -