

Our School

Welcome to The Bridge SEN School Newsletter

As lockdown restrictions ease and we enter Tier-2, though this may not be a normal Christmas by anyone's standards, there is perhaps a glimmer of hope on the horizon. The 95% effectiveness of the vaccine should give us cause, if not yet to celebrate, then at least to breathe a welcome sigh of relief. At the same time, there is no room for complacency, and we at The Bridge School will not relax any of our Covid-19 measures until it is absolutely safe to do so – the safety and well-being of our learners and staff is paramount. Nonetheless, I am confident an end is in sight, and that 2021 will be a brighter, healthier and happier year than the one we're about to leave behind.

Edith Eneanya-Bonito – Principal

Fortnightly News: 04 December 2020



Educational

This month the learners have been studying Remembrance Day, using sensory activities and various others with the common theme to learn about the sacrifice of the soldier's in the First World War. This also allows them to gain a better understanding of what happens on this day so that they can participate in it with others. They have also spent time focussing on community rules and recognising common signage that are familiar to people out in the community to help build their independence and keep them safe.

Helping Young People with Autism Deal with Winter Weather

The changing of the seasons and the advent of winter can be difficult for anyone and is not always welcome for young people with Autism Spectrum Disorder. As there can be a number of challenges, here are some suggestions that might help you:

1. Autistic children do best with routine in their lives, and winter weather changes that routine. The first and most obvious change is in the clothing they wear. They may not like the feel or weight of bulky clothing. So, it's wise to get the child used to the idea that he or she has to dress differently. Practice putting on coats and hats and gloves in the house so leaving won't cause big delays.
2. Any autistic young person with a tendency to abscond can be risky in regular weather but can be even more serious in winter so it's important to be vigilant.

3. Many young people can be reluctant to go outside due to the cold so consider planning some interesting outdoor activities like building a snowman or even going tobogganing if there's a slope near to your house.

4. Other young people with special needs have a high threshold for the cold so may not dress appropriately on cold days. They should be helped to recognise the weather each day and associate it with certain clothing.

5. The winter blues can have an effect on our mental health too and depression, anxiety, oversleeping, loss of energy and lack of concentration can occur. You can support your child's mental health by ensuring they maintain their regular routines, eat well, exercise regularly and participate in activities they enjoy.



The Bridge SEN School runs an **ASD Activity Club** on **Saturdays**, 10am to 4pm. There are lots of activities available for young learners within the ages of 16 to 25 years. These activities range from bowling, snooker, photography club, Art and Crafts, Museum visits, Cooking, Interior Decoration, etc. We receive referrals from members of the public and local authorities; please contact the school on admin@thebridge-school.co.uk or Tel: 02077038587

Arts&CraftsIdeas

Don't Wait For the Snow!

Christmas without a snowman is like sausages without mash potato, Torvill without Dean, or Wimbledon without a broken ankle.

Snow might not be forecast for the 25th December this year but fear not because you can still have a snowman. How? With fake snow! Did you know that fake snow is actually very easy to make? Here's how:

First you need some baking soda, second you need some white hair conditioner. And that's it! Yes, that's right: just two, easy to find ingredients and you're ready to go. And the process is simplicity itself: take a mixing bowl, pour in three cups of baking soda, then mix in with your fingers enough hair conditioner till you end with a crumbly powder, one which looks just like snow. If your mixture's too gooey, like cream, simply add more baking soda. Once the texture's right, start building. You can roll out a ball for the snowman's head, another for his body, two oblongs for his arms, push some raisins into his face, some orange-coloured paper for a carrot, and hey presto – you have a snowman. If you want to go further, sprinkle more snow across a tray and place your snowman on top – you'll soon have a winter scene which you can add all kinds of things to – model animals, houses, anything you think of.

Christmas and Sensory Overload

Christmas is a special time which year which families, especially children, look forward to, but for some children, those on autistic spectrum, Christmas can be challenging. With so many bright lights, decorations, school activities, so much music in shops, it's easy for those on the spectrum to become confused and distressed. But, there ARE ways you can make things a little easier. Here're five strategies to help you out during this potentially stressful time:

1. Keep a routine as much as possible. Using visual schedules can be helpful so they know what is next
2. Enjoy short and simple activities;

and place your snowman on top – you'll soon have a winter scene which you can add all kinds of things to – model animals, houses, anything you think of.

This is a fun arts and crafts activity which can help build up your child's **motor-coordination skills** as well as their confidence. Here's a link to some more detailed, visual instructions:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AZbjrYcNpPs>



3. Remember it's ok to have a personal, family only Christmas.
4. If you do go out for Christmas, explain sensory challenges to everyone ahead of time;
5. Have a quiet room or space available for your child to be alone when they get overwhelmed.

For a more comprehensive list, see [here](#) and [here](#).

Our Activities Centre

Over the last two weeks, the activity centre has been focusing on the client's Interactive skills through numerous games and group activities. We have been using Uno cards, playing Black Jack, Ludo and snakes and ladders. This has allowed them to practice turn-taking, and basic numeracy. To help build their computer skills, we have also assisted the clients in searching the Internet for recipes and let them carry out the cooking method for the meals they have chosen.

- Geovnessa Wedderburn Activity coordinator

The Bridge SEN School admits students all through the academic year between the ages of 14-25. If you are interested in placing a student at the school or obtaining more information, please contact admin@thebridge-school.co.uk

THE BRIDGE ACADEMIC CALENDAR

EDUCATION

END OF TERM – 18th December 2020

START OF TERM – Monday 4th January 2021

Please visit our website: www.thebridge-school.co.uk for full Academic Year 2020/2021 Calendar)

ACTIVITY CENTRE

Our activity centre in Thornton Heath is open throughout the year, except on Bank Holidays.

COVID 19

We are in regular contact with the local authorities to ensure that we react appropriately and in a timely fashion to any development. We observe the most up-to-date rules concerning COVID 19.

- Social Distancing measures are in place
- Regularly handwashing is mandatory
- Tracing apps are in place
- Face masks are worn throughout classes

Our Full Policy is available on our Website

Drawings/Pictures of the month



OPENING TIMES AT LIRAL VEGET COLLEGE LONDON

Liral Veget College is the sister company of Right Support Management, under which The Bridge SEN School is now operating. We offer a variety of **English language courses, After School Club** and **Life in the UK Preparation classes**. Our current opening times are 8.30am – 18.00pm Monday to Friday and 10.00am - 14.00pm on Saturdays. **Academic Manager** - James Nuttall.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“What is hope but a feeling of optimism, a thought that says things will improve, it won't always be bleak [and] there's a way to rise above the present circumstances”.

—Wayne W. Dyer (Motivational Speaker)

We publish our newsletter fortnightly. Copies will be emailed to you and made available on the school's website (<https://www.thebridge-school.co.uk/our-school>). Thank you for your feedback. If you would like to contribute to our newsletter, please email me at admin@thebridge-school.co.uk - Maryanne Orakah.