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Each half term, this bulletin will highlight what we are doing to make St Mary's even more inclusive for our children with SEND. It will also signpost you to resources and information that can support you and your family at home. In Spring term, there will only be one bulletin as it's such a short term!



Bulletin Highlights

In our '[Frequently Asked Questions](#)' section, we look at strategies to support with restricted diets and ARFID...

In our '[Resources and Support](#)' section, we share the following:

- Beautiful Minds Neurodiversity Support Group
- Navigating the Maze
- Appeer - for girls with Autism
- FACE Online training

Parent request:

SEND White Paper – can you explain what it all means?



Neurodiversity
Celebration
Week

**"Every individual matters.
Every individual has a role to
play. Every individual makes a
difference"**

- Jane Goodall, Primatologist /
Anthropologist

www.neurodiversityweek.com



In our '[SEND Spotlight](#)' section, meet our lovely SEND Support TA Mrs King!

For more useful resources and information, please visit the [SEND Provision](#) page of our website.



Neurodiversity Celebration Week

This week (16th March – 20th March) is Neurodiversity Celebration Week. We are celebrating the differences in our brains during PSHE this week in classes and are talking about inspirational people with Neurodivergent brains!

Supporting Neurodiversity at Home

On Thursday 22nd January, we hosted a parent coffee afternoon on Supporting Neurodiversity at home with our Neurodiversity Advisors, which was ever so helpful! Thank you to those parents who were able to attend. I am attaching the powerpoint to this email for anyone who was unable to make it but would like some great tips on supporting neurodiversity in the home!

Using Visuals to Support Neurodiversity at School

On 10th March and 12th March, our brilliant SEND Support/Neurodiversity Advisors came back to St Mary's. But this time to work with the Teaching Assistant team about the power of using visuals in the classroom and how these can be adapted to support pupils with a range of needs.

Autism Inclusion Award

We are currently working hard to prepare for an assessment with the National Autistic Society for an 'Autism Inclusion Award'. If you have a child with a diagnosis of Autism, please look out for the questionnaire that will be emailed to you. We would be so grateful for as many responses to this as possible. Thank you in advance for your time!



Parent



query

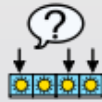
What does the SEND white paper mean for my child?

On 26th February 2026, the government published a white paper 'Every Child Achieving and Thriving' – in summary:

- As opposed to the current system of SEND Support for children on the SEND Register and EHCPs for the children with the most complex needs, there will be 3 layers of targeted support – Targeted, Targeted Plus & Specialist.
- Individual Support Plans will be a legal requirement for children with identified SEND.
- Every school will have an 'inclusion base' for targeted intervention or support.
- Specialist Provision Packages will be introduced for the children with the most complex needs.
- EHCPs will be retained and improved, with changes phased in from 2030 .
- **Nothing will change overnight & St Mary's commitment to inclusive practice remains constant.**

Have your say before the 18th May! The Department for Education is consulting on the proposed SEND Reforms & would like to hear from children and families:

[SEND reform: putting children and young people first - Department for Education - Citizen Space](#)



Frequently Asked Questions

**My child has a very rigid diet
and/or an ARFID profile (Avoidant/
Restrictive Food Intake Disorder)
How can we help?**

Children can eat a rigid or restricted diet for a number of reasons including anxiety, medical reasons e.g. reflux/allergies, past experiences or sensory sensitivities e.g. they react badly to the smell, texture or taste of certain foods. ARFID is strongly linked with neurodivergence, particularly Autism, ADHD and Sensory Processing Differences.

Parents have NOT caused this problem.

It is usual for toddlers & young children to go through phases of rejecting new or unfamiliar foods – children often grow out of this phase and learn from watching others about which foods are safe and ok to eat. Therefore, trying your child with school dinners is a positive step (especially whilst they are still free in infants!). Let's face it, once children 'discover' the wonder of beige foods like chicken nuggets, chips and crisps they will rarely choose the more varied options they used to enjoy!

Children with ARFID get stuck in this very restricted phase and are not able to move beyond their 'safe' foods, even with all the 'bribery' in the world.

For children with ARFID, DON'T:

- Withhold accepted foods
- Put new foods on a child's plate next to accepted foods
- Sit the child in front of new foods
- Make children feel guilty or pressurize them in to trying new foods

For children with ARFID, DO:

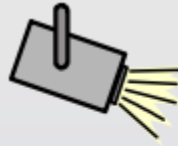
- Give them snacks throughout the day
- Give supplementary drinks/vitamins as required
- Model eating/enjoying new foods
- Put new foods on a plate near them & allow them control to explore

Next steps:

- Weight gain and growth are the priority – monitor this!
- Sensory desensitization is crucial – talk to your GP about a referral to a sensory food group or your child's teacher about sensory play in school.

Check out:

[Sensory Play Toolkit for Avoidant, Picky or Fussy Eaters 2.pdf](#)



SEND Spotlight

As well as our lovely teachers and teaching assistants, we employ some SEND Support Staff. Usually, these staff work with a number of children rather than as a 1:1 but this can vary according to EHC plans and pupil needs/risk assessments. I will focus on a different END Support TA each half term this year so you can learn a bit about them!



Mrs Carly King

- I have worked at St Mary's for the past 9 years as a Teaching Assistant and as a Send 1:1 supporting children individually. I have also worked in the Hive.
- I have mainly worked in Early Years, but recently I have started working with older children in the school, which I am really enjoying as a new challenge!
- Before I worked at St Mary's I was a Carer working with people with additional needs and disabilities.
- All three of my boys have attended St Mary's and my youngest is currently in Year One.
- I have completed several courses on Autism, ADHD and PDA. Two of my sons are diagnosed with ADHD and Autism so I feel I can bring personal experience to my role.
- I live in a neurodivergent household which can be crazy and manic at times, but I wouldn't have it any other way!



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Resources and Support



Support group for parents of
Neurodiverse children



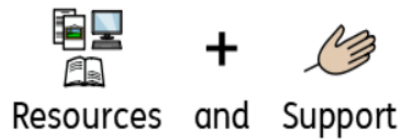
**COME JOIN
US FOR:**

- Cuppa & catch up sessions
- Information talks
- Events decided by you
- And lots more!

**WANT TO CHAT TO OTHER
PARENTS WHO JUST 'GET IT'?**

To find out about our
upcoming sessions and
events, please contact us on:

thebeautifulmindfamily@gmail.com



Mindworks offer a 6 week online workshop (pre-recorded so you can do it at a convenient time for you) which provides parents with a tool-kit of strategies to support neurodivergent young people.

Once you have completed this you can register for the Quarterly Question & Answer Forums to ask specific questions about your own child.

Navigating the Maze - online workshop

Navigating the Maze
Week 1

Navigating the Maze
Week 2

<https://www.mindworks-surrey.org/advice-information-and-resources/neurodevelopmental-needs/navigating-maze-toolkit-strategies-parents-neurodivergent-children/navigating-maze-online-workshop>

Appeer - What's On Flyer!



appear.org.uk/whats-on



Appeer are a Woking based Community Interest Company. We offer groups and sessions for autistic girls, women and those around them, including their parents and carers. We have been hosting groups for 6 years now and are so pleased to have more availability for new joiners. If you can get to Woking for our groups we look forward to meeting you.

Next Girls Group 22nd March



Monthly Girls Group

Our Monthly Girls Group takes place on Sundays in Woking. This is a social interest group for autistic girls aged 7-12 and their parents and carers.



10:30 am-12:30 pm for the older girls (rising 11s to 12 year olds)
1:30-3:30 pm for the younger girls (7-10 year olds).



Activities for the 22nd March 2026 Session will be Myths and Legends themed



Cooking: Fairy Bread



Crafts: Fire Breathing Dragons and Craft Stick Fairies

Indoor/Outdoor Games

Our Monthly Teen Group takes place on Sundays in Woking. This is a social interest group for girls aged 13-18 years and their parents and carers.



11am -1pm for the younger teens (13-15 year olds)
2-4 pm for the older Teens (15-18 year olds)



Activities for the 12th April 2026 Session will be "CHALLENGE YOURSELF" themed



Cooking: Fairy Bread



Crafts: Fire Breathing Dragons and Craft Stick Fairies

Indoor/Outdoor Games

Next Teen Group 12th April



Monthly Teen Group

Our Minecraft Sessions take place online. 7-12yrs and 13 -18 yrs on alternate weeks.



5pm-6.15pm

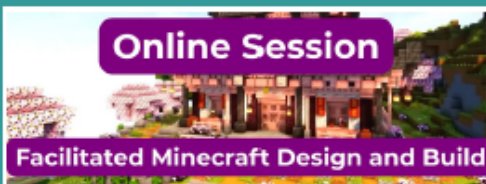


During the session the girls are given a build challenge and then conversation is gently facilitated by our staff to foster connections and share experiences.



Wednesday 18th March - ages 13 -18 years

Next Minecraft Session 18th March



Online Session

Facilitated Minecraft Design and Build



Book via COACHA

Not on COACHA? No Problem! - Join here: appear.org.uk/joinus





Resources and Support

Funded by St Mary's, please make the most of this free parent training!

Visit the **PARENTS** page of the FACE website (facefamilyadvice.co.uk) to view the 16 regular talks for parents.

Choose a topic and click through the booking calendar to find a date and time that suits you.

At the payment stage of booking, enter the code **SM010725** where it says **ADD PROMO CODE**. This will reduce the price from £24 to £0.

See April dates here: <https://www.facefamilyadvice.co.uk/supportforparents>



March 2026 Timetable

All sessions delivered live online via zoom. 90 minutes long

£24 each or FREE with School Membership

Book online at facefamilyadvice.co.uk

Recordings available for 48 hours (excluding Free Talk)

Improving Family Communication	2 Mar 10am
Autism - Improving Communication	2 Mar 7pm
Understanding Addictive Behaviour	3 Mar 10am
Supporting a Child with ADHD	3 Mar 7pm
Anxiety Based School Avoidance	9 Mar 10am
Understanding Anger	9 Mar 7pm
Supporting Healthy Screen Use	10 Mar 10am
Facing Defiance	10 Mar 7pm
Cannabis and Ketamine Awareness	16 Mar 10am
Anxiety Explained	16 Mar 7pm
Introduction to OCD	17 Mar 10am
What is ACT	17 Mar 7pm
Raising Self-Esteem	23 Mar 10am
Decreasing Depression	23 Mar 7pm
Supporting Healthy Sleep	24 Mar 10am
Understanding the Teenage Brain	24 Mar 7pm
FREE Anxiety Based School Avoidance	26 Mar 7-8pm