

## ASD with Demand Avoidance

### Strategies for transition during the Coronavirus pandemic

- Allow them to continue with an activity they are absorbed in for as long as possible before transitioning to a different activity or place.
- If the pupil is finding the change in movement of children between activities and areas difficult, plan a quieter activity in a different area until the child is able to move.
- Give warning prior to change of activity. An electronic timer may be useful, so the time warning isn't coming directly from a person.
- Avoid direct demands e.g. instead of 'you need to wash your hands' try 'are you going to wash your hands in this sink or that one?'.
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- Try engaging the child in conversation about something of their interest whilst moving from one place to the other so the focus is on their interest rather than the transition.

### Dealing with meltdowns:

- Avoid approaching a child from opposite them if possible, approach from the side.
- Use visuals rather than verbal instruction and reduce the language when a child is in a state of high anxiety as they will be less able to process it.
- Remember the pupil may take language very literally, avoid 'off the cuff' remarks or saying something will happen that might not. Be honest with them, trust is very important for a child who is demand avoidant.
- Avoid direct demands – use a non-direct approach. 'I wonder if you could...' 'I need help with this...' 'How do I...'
- Give choices.
- Always empathise with the child when sorting out grievances 'I understand why you felt angry if you thought he did that to you'.

### **Coming into school:**

- Transition into school can be difficult, can the child come in 5 minutes earlier?
- Allow for a transition activity when the child comes into school that they enjoy.
- Give choice when possible 'which activity would you like to do first?'
- Distract if needed 'I couldn't get the tap to work this morning, can you come and help me?'
- If possible, give the child a responsibility when coming into school.

### **Strategies to use during whole class teaching**

- Reduce demand by using other children as a prompt 'Thank you Tom for washing your hands'.
- Once you give a request or instruction look away from the child to reduce the demand. Be aware of demanding body language e.g. crossing your arms.
- Most children with demand avoidance like to be helpful, use this to your advantage e.g. let the child go first to wash their hands and to be your helper checking there is soap.
- Use the whole class visual timetable to reduce demand and anxiety, ensure you regularly refer to it and update it. Remove cards when the activity has been completed.
- Conceal demands by using class timings 'oh look at that, it's time for maths'. This can make a subtle, yet effective, difference.
- Use indirect language 'I wonder if..', 'how could I...'
- Some pupils with demand avoidance struggle with direct praise, know the child and praise accordingly e.g. instead of 'well done for writing the story' use 'I like the bit in the story that went....it was really exciting.'
- Make wording less direct e.g. instead of 'when you have finished the writing' use 'when the writing is finished.'