Mansfield Send

Autumn Term 1a — October 2026

Welcome to Mansfield SEND!
Your newsletter for parents and carers of children and young people with Send.



We hope this newsletter gives some practical ideas, reassurance and useful signposting, Whether your child is thriving, finding things difficult, or somewhere in between, we hope you'll find something here that feels helpful.

Inside this issue:

* When big feelings come out at home.
  - What to look for
  - Practical ideas
* Helpful phrases
* Building Independence
* Parent and Carer Wellbeing

Welcome to the first edition of Mansfield SEND for the this school year.

Starting back in September often comes with a mixture of excitement, anticipation and a few worries. New classrooms, teachers, changing routines and growing expectations feels like a lot, particularly for children who experience the world differently. While we often focus on helping children prepare for these changes, successful transitions rarely happen overnight. This half term, your young people have taken their first steps of transition, but that will continue to build as we go through the year. Small conversations, a developing understanding of their routines and school's growing understanding of what helps each child to feel safe, will all help them feel settled as we move further into the year.

There is no single approach that works for every child, and that's okay. Our young people are all unique, with their own strengths, interests and ways of learning. This half term, we will focus on how we can help them to settle and thrive throughout the year.

Help your child get to know themselves

Many young people know what they find hard, but not what helps. This is information that you can pass on for them to any adults they are going to be working with, but it is also important to start building up their own understanding.



At a simple level, "I've noticed.." and "I'm wondering if.." language can really help. *"I've noticed that you're getting a bit fidgety, I wonder if the trampoline would help?"*

Notice when something helps, and name it for your young person, *"You seem more settled after spending time with the cat, I wonder if it helped?"*



If your child has a good day, ask them what made it good. After a hard one, help them to think about what would have helped.

None of this will be instant, but over the weeks and months, this will become a shared language between you and your child about how they work.

When Home Gets the Big Feelings

The first half term is difficult because everything is new and different, even when nothing has gone wrong, dealing with everything being new and different is hard. Lots of children run on adrenaline for the first few weeks, and then tiredness kicks in and the novelty wears off and we see the struggle.

What to look out for..

◊ **Home-time collapse**. Lots of young people hold it together at school, and collapse when they get home. This is not due to bad parenting, or them putting it on. They are coping with too much during the day, and when they get back to their safe place or safe person, it all comes out. It is exhausting for everyone, but it is normal and very common.

◊ **Small things seem huge**. Something that your young person may normally cope well with, such as forgetting their pencil case, can seem massive when everything else is new. They are coping with so much change, their tolerance for everything else will be smaller, and you may find them getting upset about things that would not normally bother them.

◊ "**I'm fine" doesn't mean they really are fine**. I'm fine may mean "I don't know how to talk about it, or I'm not ready to talk about it, but it doesn't always mean they really are fine.

◊ **Sleep, food and mood** may be affected. This should all settle back to normal after the first few weeks, but to start with, change can affect all these things.

Practical Ideas to support

Before anything else, your young person needs time to decompress. This could be;



- *Having a drink and snack*
- *Having some quiet time on their own*
- *Movement and outdoor play*
- *Having a connection with you without any expectations to talk etc.*
- *Screen time*



When the time feels right, think about asking your young person low pressure, specific questions rather than a general "how was school?" which can be difficult to answer.

- *What made you smile today?*
- *Who did you spend time with?*
- *Did anything feel tricky today?*

Trust your gut feelings.

Some difficulty is usual in the first few weeks, but there is a difference between settling in ongoing struggles that are not going to be sustainable for your young person.

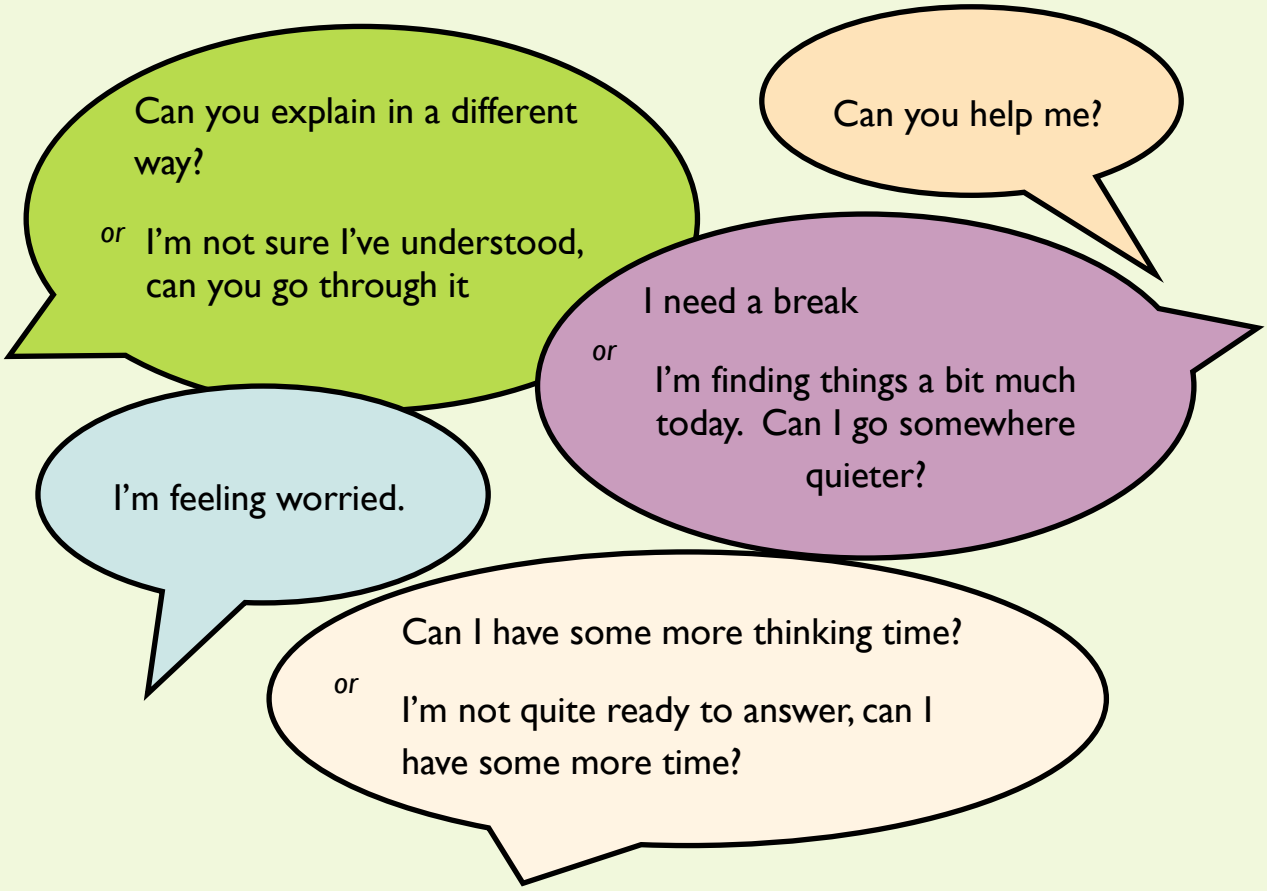
Parents often spot the difficulties before schools, and so if you are concerned, it is worth getting in touch with school sooner rather than later to discuss concerns.

A useful way in is a short email or message giving a clear picture of what is happening. From there you will hopefully be able to work with school to work out what is going on and how you can all help.

Practising Helpful Phrases

In the moment, asking for help can seem huge! I'm sure we've all been in situations where the words don't come quickly enough, the moment passes and the difficulty just ends up being carried.

Helping your child to practise the words at home in a low pressure situation, can make the words more easily available when they are really needed,



Building Independence

Building independence takes time, and lots of practice. You may need to start small and build up to bigger things. Using routines can also really help to support building independence.
If you can attach things to something that already happens, for example, after dinner, before screens etc, it becomes part of the day rather than another thing to remember.

Some ideas to try might be;

- ◊ Using a visual checklist to pack your school bag the night before. (A simple checklist is much more reliable than a memory!)
- ◊ Encouraging helping with a particular task at home, eg helping prepare a packed lunch or packing a PE kit.
- ◊ Set out school clothes the day before.
- ◊ Get dressed independently—or start building towards this by putting the final item.

Parent & Carer Wellbeing...

Supporting our young people to navigate school can be hard work, and your own well being is also part of the equation.

Your young person needs you regulated more than they need you to be absolutely on top of all the messages and emails and form filling. A parent or carer who is struggling themselves, cannot be that calm presence at the end of the day.

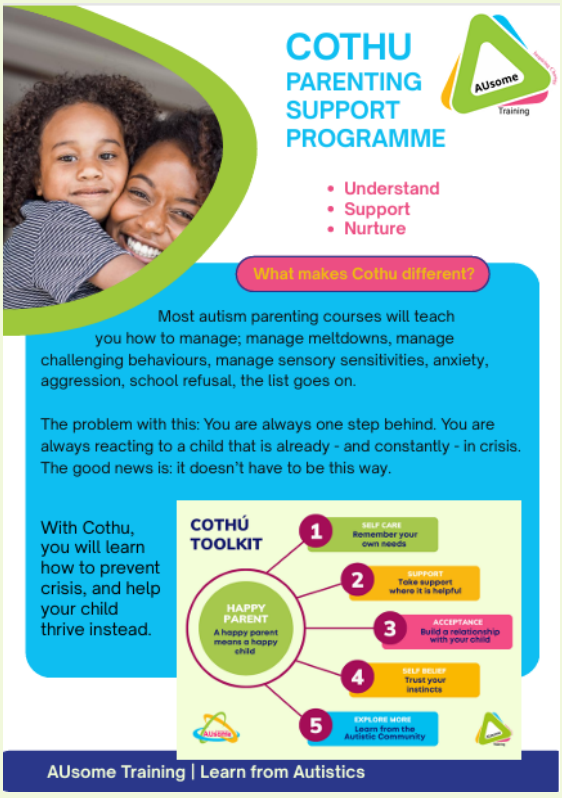


So whatever it is that helps you— taking the dog for a walk, sitting and having a cup of tea in silence before doing pick up or giving a friend a quick call on the phone, think of this as part of the work, not as a luxury.

It is always worth remembering;

- You don't need to have all the answers
- If your child is struggling, that doesn't mean you have done anything wrong. Things can be hard for our young people, and that does not mean anyone has failed.
- If your young person is thriving that is wonderful. Make the most of it and enjoy it.
- Seeking support when you need it is a strength, and strength can also be found from other parents who understand and may be going through something similar themselves. If you're tired, that's because this is tiring. Find your people and lean on them.

Rest, connection and feeling safe are just as important as doing.



The Mansfield C&I Team are really excited to be offering another Cothu training for parents at High Oakham School in November and December.
We will be offering more dates across all of Mansfield, so please keep your eyes open for when your school offers them.
Feedback from the first course was great, and it's really exciting to be offering it out more widely in Mansfield.

Quotes from Mansfield parents…

"Made me understand my child more"

"Thank you for helping me understand my child's needs and help me change the way I deal with her."

"Helping my child understand herself and be proud of who she is."

"Thank you so much for this wonderful course. Being part of a group of parents and professionals who understood my experiences and needs was extremely valuable. It made me feel supported, accepted and less isolated."

"This course has changed our family lives so much, more than anyone will realise for the better."