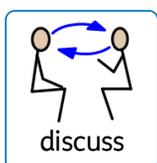
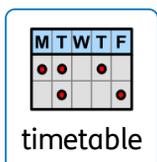
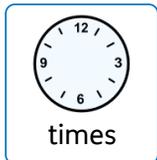
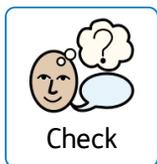


Online learning tips for autistic students.



1. Don't assume anything. This whole experience is new, and there still could be many uncertainties that are preventing the autistic pupil from managing online learning successfully. Talk to the parents and the child to see what DOES work and build up from that. Some autistic children LOVE being away from school too.
2. Structure. Let them know the times of the lessons, and when there will be breaks and when the school day at home will finish.
3. If possible have a TA collate all the days lessons and instructions that are on the online learning platform and send them to the pupil first thing (or the evening before). This has been very successful in one of my schools.
4. Space. Consider having a privacy screen, special mat or other visual indication that this is work time. Then it can be put away after the work session to show that this is now 'home time'.
5. Let them have adaptations to 'live lessons' such as being able to switch off their camera and communicate through the chat box instead of be seen and heard. Back up your instructions and questions visually through a shared screen or in the chat box. Many autistic students are really struggling not knowing who is looking at them, when they might be suddenly called on to answer a question and the stress of keeping track of all the information and instructions.
6. Clothing. Some may need to put on a piece of uniform to feel like they are at school, others may need to wear what is most comfortable for them. Rigid uniform rules for online learning are very unhelpful (and discrimination).
7. Have extra movement breaks and rests with minimal demands. It will be more exhausting for autistic pupils to cope with this unexpected and new way of doing school.
8. Know that some days are going to be harder than others. This is a huge stress on autistic children whose need for predictability, clear communication, structure and routine are an important part of meeting their needs.
9. A child with an EHCP still has the right to their adaptations and these may need discussion with the SENCO and parents as to how to support them with this right now.
10. Be mindful of 'hidden' or masked anxiety. Check in regularly with the family to see how things are going and acknowledge anxieties rather than dismiss them. Don't say "well everyone is worried right now" or "You don't need to worry about that," say something like "I can see that is worrying you, let's see if we can help you manage that."