



# SEN & Wellbeing Newsletter

## Term 5 – Promoting Independence

### Promoting Independence at Lower Halstow School

At Lower Halstow, one of our key goals is to help all our children, including those with Special Educational Needs, grow into confident, independent learners. Promoting independence isn't about children doing everything on their own straight away. It's about helping them build the skills, confidence and problem-solving abilities they need to thrive both in and outside the classroom.

**Why independence matters** - For children with SEN, developing independence can:

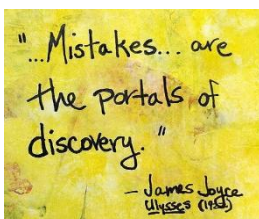
- Build **self-esteem** and **confidence**.
- Encourage **resilience** and a positive mind-set.
- Reduce **reliance on adult support**.
- Prepare them for transitions and life beyond school.

### **What we are doing in school:**

- **Using visual timetables** to help children plan their day.
- **Offering structured choices** to build decision-making skills.
- **Teaching routines** through repetition and positive reinforcement.
- **Encouraging self-help skills**, like organising personal belongings or asking for help when needed.
- **Breaking tasks into manageable steps** and celebrating each success!

### **Classroom Support**

Research has shown that excessive reliance on TAs for one-to-one support can negatively impact a child's progress. For this reason our Teachers and TAs have had training on ways to promote independence. We use 'scaffolds' in the form of resources, prompt cards or visual cues in order to minimise reliance on direct adult support. Teachers and TAs observe carefully and try to provide the right kind of support at the right time to optimise learning. We always try to allow children to attempt some tasks independently before stepping in to prompt, guide or re-model a task. Teachers emphasise that it is ok to find some things tricky because that's how we learn!



### What You Can Do at Home:



#### ✓ **Small Steps, Big Progress!**

- Encourage your child to **get dressed**, pack their bag, or make a snack with decreasing support.
- Use **checklists or visual prompts** to guide routines like getting ready for school.

#### ✓ **Give Time to Try**

- Allow extra time for your child to complete tasks — it's okay if it's not perfect!
- Use **praise for effort** more than outcome: "I love how you kept trying!"

#### ✓ **Offer Choices**

- Letting them choose between two outfits, snacks or bedtime stories builds autonomy and decision-making.

#### ✓ **Talk It Through**

- Encourage your child to think aloud: "What do I need to do next?" helps build planning, problem-solving and memory skills.

### Spotlight on Task Boards

Task boards support children to complete a task with greater independence. They break up bigger tasks into smaller, achievable steps. Task boards provide a visual prompt of what the pupil needs to do. Pupils with memory difficulties may find it hard to remember verbal instructions so having it written or visually represented will help. There are different styles and the way in which a task board is presented or completed will be different depending on a child's development stage.

