

9<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Dear Parents, Carers, and Families,

We hope this finds each of you well. We are so proud to share that our global showcase yesterday for World Education Week was a highlighted feature for inclusion. The audience was from numerous countries across 9 time zones! We were the only special needs school from the 100 schools selected and delegates highlighted the knowledge they gained on the role of technology to promote the independence and communication of your children. They were inspired by the commitment to parent partnership and the empowerment of teachers and teaching assistants through the Evidence for Learning technology.



Sadia  
(Parent Governor)



Matt  
(Teacher / Leader of Semi-Formal Curriculum)



Olivia  
(Teacher / Leader of Early Years Provision)



Roseanna  
(Teacher / Leader of Sixth Form Provision and Work-Related Vocational Learning)



Edward  
(Leader of Technology)



Vijita  
(Principal)



Dean  
(Marketing Officer)



You can view the feature here: <https://youtu.be/jsRQsBv8EGg>

## Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Month

October is dedicated to raising awareness about AAC: Augmentative and Alternative Communication. Our community includes a number of pupils across the Lower and Upper school that are pre-verbal or non-verbal. This means they use AAC resources, systems, and technology to communicate. We value the expertise of our staff, the NHS Speech & Language Therapists, and the organisations that are at the heart of research and developments.

The ACE Centre are sharing 31 AAC Tips for each day in October:


<https://acecentre.org.uk/news/aac-awareness-month-31-tips-for-31-days/>

CALL Scotland is an organisation that is running free webinars throughout the month:

<https://www.callscotland.org.uk/blog/international-aac-awareness-month/>

Communication Matters is also a UK organisation that supports anybody with communication needs. They are running a series of webinars throughout the month

<https://communicationmatters.org.uk/what-we-do/the-cm-sessions/>



**The CM Sessions:**  
A series of Twilight Presentations for AAC Awareness Month

*Every Thursday in October 2020 - from 3.30pm online*

Communication Matters relies on income from holding the annual conference and other events to help run the charity. We support AAC users, families, and professionals to get the most up to date information about Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC).

As all our events have been cancelled this year due to the pandemic, we have decided to run a series of virtual events throughout October (for AAC Awareness Month) to help raise awareness of AAC and vital funds for the charity.

**What are the CM Sessions?**


The CM Sessions will have both academic and social elements and will be held every Thursday afternoon in October: 1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>.

The first session (on the 1<sup>st</sup>) will be a short introduction followed by our keynote speaker and a much-loved CM quiz! The middle 3 weeks will be jam-packed with presentations each week from professionals in the AAC field, AAC users and AAC suppliers, with each night culminating in a fun activity. The final session (on the 29<sup>th</sup>) will be a panel session with AAC users and a celebratory finale from the wonderful Sign Out Loud!

**Speakers**

We are excited to announce that we have been lucky enough to secure Meredith Allan as a keynote speaker.

Meredith Allan is currently President of the International Society for AAC (ISAAC) and National Treasurer of ISAAC-Australia. Meredith worked for the Australian Public Service for almost 30 years. She is currently studying for a master's degree, by research, at Deakin University in Melbourne. Meredith works part-time as a Communication Assessor and Disability Educator with Scope in Victoria. Meredith uses AAC to communicate and takes great joy in watching other people who use AAC become more confident and take leadership roles.



[Click for more information.](#)

Eye Can Write by Jonathan Bryan is also an inspiring book that helps us understand communication through AAC.



We hope you have a good weekend and thank you for the ongoing partnership.

Yours sincerely,



Vijita Patel  
Principal



Becky Shaw,  
Vice Principal



Rima Blakaj,  
School Business  
Manager



Lucy Hall,  
Assistant  
Principal



Laura Fawcett,  
Assistant  
Principal  
(Lower)



Matthew Maguire,  
Assistant Principal  
(Upper)



The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are:

- a new continuous cough
- a high temperature
- a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)