What are the Social Stories?

Social stories are a tool that help children and young people to understand specific situations, skills or concepts. They use pictures and words appropriate to a child's language level. They give specific information from the child's perspective.

Social stories can help children and young people:

- know what to expect
- understand what to do
- understand how to behave in an unknown situation
- feel less anxious about new places, situations, tasks or concepts

At Ysgol Ty Monmouth we use social stories improve social understanding, build trusting relationships and develop self-esteem and independence.

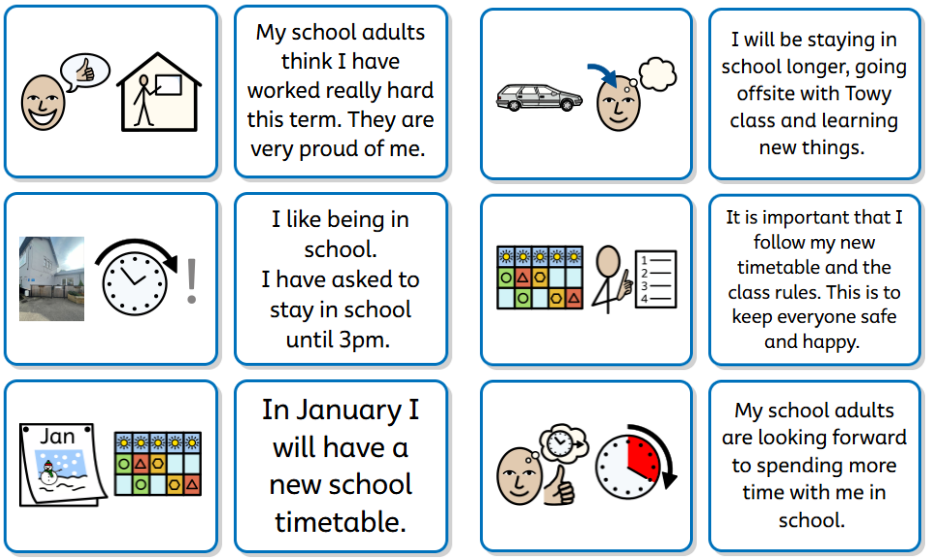
How we write social stories:

We are a **neurodiversity affirming** and **trauma informed** school. This means we recognise and respect individual differences and promote agency and autonomy.

Social stories are written in a particular way, using particular sentence types and language. They are reassuring and positive in tone and usually written from the young person's point of view.

Social stories are written in a factual way, free-from language that is judgemental or blaming in tone. We avoid demanding statements such as, *'I must'* or *'I will'* as these do not allow flexibility.

Example of a social story at Ysgol Ty Monmouth:



Examples of social story topics:

- Going to the dentist
- Changes to a pupil's normal routine (i.e. change in offsite activity, new taxi driver)
- Social skills (asking to join in with a game)
- Personal space
- Using technology safely
- Keeping safe in the school vehicles
- Personal hygiene
- Upcoming school events

How do we introduce a social story?

- Social stories should are shown to the young person at a time when they are feeling safe, calm and focussed, using a low pressure, straightforward approach:

  "I have written this story for you. It's about tomorrow's trip to the farm. Let's read it together"

- It can be helpful to find a consistent time to go over the story, such as daily before the situation occurs (e.g. before getting in the taxi)
- Once the social story is mastered, it can be kept as a visual prompt to remind the pupil.
- We monitor its effectiveness. If necessary, we can rewrite parts of the story to improve the young person's understanding.

If you have any questions about social stories or would like some support with creating a social story for your young person, a member of our school team would be happy to assist you.