



Student Support Handover notes (Sample)

Child's name:

Date:

Participants

Parents/Carers:

School personnel:

Child's conditions and medications:

These notes can be created over several sessions. Participants may wish to draft notes on their own or in pairs and then have one teacher collate the information. An example for Jake, a child transitioning from Year 1 to Year 2, has been completed below. The aim is for teachers and parents/carers to highlight the child's strengths, and identify challenges, triggers and upsets. Adjustments that have made a positive difference for Jake and supportive peers and friendships should be included in the handover notes.

Student support goals can be suggested for further discussion and planning in the new year.

SAMPLE HANDOVER MEETING NOTES FOR JAKE

1. Strengths

a. What has worked well in the classroom?

- Having a space in the breakout room.
- Having a consistent place to put things on arrival.
- Starting and finishing the day calmly.
- Teachers greeting Jake and saying good-bye.
- Having a supportive teacher aide who likes Jake.
- Embedding social thinking language into classroom practice e.g., body and mind in the group.
- Consistent routines and thoughtfully planned micro-transitions.
- Jake has better accepted peer assistance and has slightly improved peer relationships.
- Supporting writing skills development towards independence.



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- Jake recognising signs when he's not coping and asking for a break. Teachers accepting this and allowing him to de-stress, as needed.

b. What has worked well in other spaces, such as the playground.

- Having a Year 6 playground buddy and a roster of buddies.
- Managing Jake's interactions with peers. Helping him to be tolerated and accepted.

c. What are Jake's strengths?

- Articulate. Likes talking.
- Calculation, number and most other maths concepts (about 12 months ahead of expectation).
- Strong interest in solar system, trains and planes.
- Responds to routines, reason, logic and personalised rewards.
- Likes to be with people (although social skills are not a strength).
- Connects well with teachers and other adults.
- Likes to see self as achieving.
- At times Jake may appear to be distracted or inattentive, but he may be engaged and listening. He can mostly retell what has been discussed or been taught.
- Can read well when motivated.

d. How does Jake perceive self?

- Jake thinks he knows a lot about some things (e.g. 'I'm a maths expert').
- Has a growing understanding of being different in learning and playing. He knows he is autistic.
- Sees self as a bit of an outsider, on the periphery of peer and school activity.
- Sees self as liked by some specific children – a few girls.
- Sees self as liked by specialist teachers (and really enjoys specialist classes), so can be upset when they are changed, or classes are cancelled.
- Proud when he achieves something, especially proud of maths, artwork and writing.



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2. Challenges

a. What has Jake found difficult in the classroom this year?

- Casual relief teachers and routine changes, especially if forewarning is not possible.
- Sudden loss of the social inclusion teacher especially in the playground for a term.
- The teacher aide's unavoidable absence for about 10 days.
- Cancellation of specialist classes.
- Being put on the spot by others.

b. What has Jake found difficult in other spaces, such as the playground this year?

- Feeling that there was no-one to play with, nothing to do at recess.
- Sibling not wishing to have Jake follow or play with them.
- Not being able to find his playground buddy to chat with if there's recess or lunchtime issue.

c. When Jake is faced with a challenge, how is it best to respond?

- To have 'escape' strategies for Jake, e.g. if he feels anxious or overwhelmed, let him move away from the group to de-stress – but have a pre-planned routine that Jake is aware of so he can do it for a set time and place.
- Use reminders, visual charts, hand signals, short instructions, cue words.
- Help Jake to put things in perspective and not get things out of proportion.
- Be patient and calm.

3. Triggers and upsets

a. What situations trigger stress or anxiety for Jake?

- Sudden loud noises and loudness of school assembly activities.
- Others being in his face (even though he can lack awareness and do this to others).



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- Jake has trouble managing body movement, so he can be awkward and unintentionally create problems for others in group work. He does not know how to redress or solve the problem.
- Being told what to do, when he has not been consulted in planning the activity and has no sense of ownership.
- Being put on the spot.
- Having to do something he finds difficult – but he can be persuaded to give things a go.
- Jake's thinking can be different to others, and he can get stuck on thoughts or ways of doing things, or the order that things need to be done.

b. How can these situations be minimised or avoided?

- Giving verbal warnings about what tasks are about to happen, using and referring to visual timetables. Jake likes to place the timetable of activities in order on the whiteboard at the start of each day.
- Suggestions to get Jake started for tasks he perceives as difficult or tasks he is not interested in.
- Monitoring and coaching, stating what Jake has done well.
- Explaining why a task is important, tapping into interest areas e.g. the pilot of a plane would need to know how to do this.
- Giving Jake a place to sit with an invisible bubble around him and giving him a role in group work.

4. Adjustments that made a difference

a. What supports strategies and adjustments have worked well this year for Jake?

- Using handover notes from last year's teachers.
- Consistent classroom teaching strategies, charts, and routines.
- Calm thoughtful caring teachers prepared to accommodate as appropriate.
- Teacher aide.
- Break-out room, learning tools, and several brain breaks each day as needed.
- Providing extension in mathematics.
- Learning via video clips and films.



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- Supportive and well-liked teacher in the next-door classroom.
- Social thinking program and key concepts embedded into the classroom program.
- Use of outside psychologist to suggest strategies to help him to calm and return to work reasonably quickly e.g. 90-second walk around or sip of water, and to talk with Jake to help him and teachers, parents/carers to manage his anxieties and fixed or 'stuck' thinking.

b. What did not work?

- Insisting on Jake complying with an instruction when he feels he has no voice.
- Not aware of anything major here – most strategies and adjustments have been well discussed and thought through before being implemented.

c. Other suggestions for next year?

- Use of a laptop, and other digital technologies, with clear boundaries for what Jake can/cannot do – e.g. for learning not play, not for opting out of class activities.
- Extend or enrich one or two academic areas (e.g. maths and/or science).
- Tap into the Jake's love of art, music and other specialist subjects – consult with the specialists to see if they have suggestions about what works for them.
- Have learning tools at hand to assist self-regulation e.g. visual timer, 'I need a break card', 'special interest' request card.
- Teacher reading novels/chapter books to the class to help all children increase the capacity to engage in floor time, build concentration time, and increase world view through literature.
- Somewhere to do things at lunchtime – engaging outdoor activities that can be done with peers, social inclusion teacher or older students; calm room/place.
- Access to the library or other designated room may also provide emotional relief.
- Support the speech therapist to liaise with the social inclusion teacher to do short 1 to 1 and/or small group social thinking sessions with Jake and others who would benefit.
- Continue to build social skills such as how to interrupt a conversation and wait but be ready to speak when invited.
- Help Jake to accept compliments such as during circle time and other informal times.



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d. What strategies might be important for the first five weeks of term?

- Lots of supportive warnings about what is to happen, clear consistent positive routines.
- Clear set of classroom rules and agreements, stated as positive behaviours, that are revisited regularly.
- Visual timetable, where Jake might like to order the sequence of sessions each day.
- Positive responses to build rapport.
- Linking new learning or ways of doing things to present and past interests, past ways of learning or doing things.
- Liaising regularly with the social inclusion teacher, learning social skills and social thinking to build peer acceptance.
- Positive reinforcement – naming achievements and congratulating Jake – however small the achievements might be.
- Checking in with previous teachers, teacher aide and specialists if unsure about a behaviour or strategy.

e. What can the family do to prepare Jake for changes a new school year might present?

- Conversations with Jake and his siblings about different and equally good ways of doing things.
- Talking about the fun of meeting new teachers and classmates, hosing down any anxieties.
- Holding Jake's birthday party over to March (birthday late December) and thinking about how to make it an inclusive, fun way to connect with new and past peers.

5. Supportive peers and friendships

a. Who does Jake connect well with? What can peers do to support Jake?

- Quite a few girls connect well but more on a moment-by-short-moment basis. Jake does not get invited to playdates only whole grade invitations.
- Jake is part of a basketball team but finds the game and training challenging. He has no concept of planned or strategic gameplay and at times finds the game overwhelming, and then he gets distracted and resorts to ritualised actions. He finds some of the boys' responses to him challenging but gets on with one child for short bursts at basketball. However, it does provide some connection to peers, and some learning about gameplay and teamwork. It enables parents to connect with other parents and to explain his issues. The other boys' parents are then quite tolerant of Jake's attempts to join in and give him supportive feedback.



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- Continue to promote inclusion and acceptance of difference, e.g. awards at assembly for children who are kind, considerate and tolerant of difference in the classroom and playground – you don't need to name who they supported or helped. Highlight and celebrate successes and talents (no matter how small) of all children across a year.
- Consider [Playground support plans](#) to reduce Jake's anxiety and to guide Jake and others in regulating feelings and emotions, and increase engagement with play at break times.
- Encourage Jake to participate in a supervised structured activity for half of lunchtime. Structured activities could include four-square games with a bigger ball than a tennis ball, or drawing club.

Key goals for next year

1. Develop Jake's comprehension and application of social skills in the classroom and playground.
2. The leadership team and social inclusion teacher to support next year's teacher and teacher aide to embed social thinking skills into the classroom program and the playground.
3. Support Jake to continue to develop emotional regulation, self-calming techniques and skills to re-join the group reasonably quickly after an upset or need for time away.
4. Help with friendship development and peer acceptance.
5. Support writing development. Help with how to get started, and how to write two sentences of connected thought. Assist with a focus on making writing a positive experience.

May 2023