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| **Communication and Autism Team (CAT) – Parent Information****Who are the Communication and Autism Team?*** The Communication and Autism Team (CAT for short) is part of Access to Education who are a group of services supporting children and young people with additional needs in schools in Birmingham.
* Every mainstream school and academy has a Communication and Autism Team professional assigned to the setting.

**How does the Communication and Autism Team support schools?*** We work together with schools to build their knowledge, understanding and skills to support children/young people with autism or significant social communication differences.
* We support schools through the delivery of a package of training including Autism Education Trust Training; and through a School Partnership Plan based upon the Autism Education Trust Autism Standards. <https://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/>
* We work with schools to ensure improved outcomes for autistic children and young people throughout their school.

**How does the Communication and Autism Team support individual children/young people?*** We work in partnership with the school to embed good autism practice within the school community.
* We may look at your child’s access to their classroom environment; their relationships with teachers and peers; their communication skills; their access to the curriculum; and sensory differences.
* We may observe and/or work one to one with pupils in school. The work we do is dependent upon the child/young person needs.
* We may use tools that we have developed such as our “All About Me” tool and our “Anxiety Tool” to gather your child/young person’s view of their experience in school.
* We suggest strategies and model ways of working with children/young people to support them within their classrooms. Sometimes these do not work straight away so we will monitor with schools to help support your child/young person.
* We support the child/young person to have their say about their school experience.

**How is my child registered with CAT?*** We support children and young people with a diagnosis of autism and those on the pathway towards a potential diagnosis of autism. We also support children with significant communication and interaction differences.
* The SENCo within the school or setting will ask you if you are happy for your child to be registered with our team.
* Your child will only be known to our service following receipt of your signed consent.

**How do I contact my child’s Communication and Autism Team professional?*** Email CATParentEnquiries@birmingham.gov.uk with your child’s name and school.
* A message will be sent to your CAT professional who will contact you as soon as they are able to.

**Do the Communication and Autism Team give support to parents?***CAT PAC (Parent Awareness Course):** We have developed a 6-week course for parents/carers called CAT PAC to support understanding around autism as well as giving parents/carers a chance to talk with others.
* The course looks at different aspects of autism such as: communication and interaction; sensory differences; eating, sleeping and toileting differences; and supporting anxiety and emotional distress.
* CAT PAC courses are delivered each term and invitations are sent to SENCos to pass onto you if you are interested in attending a course.
* Courses are delivered remotely via Microsoft Teams or face to face at a school.
* CAT also run coffee mornings within schools and across the city for parents to meet up and discuss experiences.

*Webinars*:* We deliver webinars and sessions around specific issues in addition to the CAT PAC. Information will be sent via your school SENCo and can be found on the Local Offer website: <https://www.localofferbirmingham.co.uk>
* Previous webinars which you can watch and listen to can be found via this link: <https://www.localofferbirmingham.co.uk/webinars/>

**Will I meet my Communication and Autism Team professional?*** Sometimes you will meet your Communication and Autism Team professional in school.
* You are the expert on your child, and it is important that we work together to support your child/young person to reach their goals.
* Sometimes contact will be via email, phone call or Microsoft Teams. We will try to keep in touch with you.

*Communication and Autism Team**Access To Education**Education and Skills Directorate**Birmingham City Council**Office: PO Box 17843, Birmingham, B2 2JR**Birmingham Local Offer: www.localofferbirmingham.co.uk**Access to Education: http://accesstoeducation.birmingham.gov.uk* *Birmingham Local Offer: www.localofferbirmingham.co.uk**To contact CAT:* *CATParentEnquiries@birmingham.gov.uk*Please note: Provision and support may change due to COVID restrictions. |