Fred’s views on education

Me and Fred chatted a few times from 1st-9th December both online and face to face about his current situation.

Fred said that he likes school, but has really struggled to get into the building due to anxiety. When he has managed to go, it has been to see his friends outside over lunchtime.

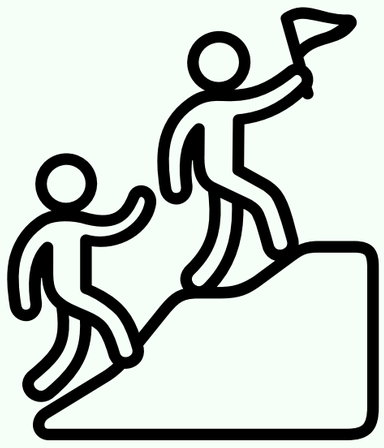
Fred is really keen to learn. He said that he feels bored almost all the time and wants to do more, but finds accessing school too tricky. He has recognised that school isn’t working for him but he is still keen to access learning, though he is unsure what this would look like. While he found it tricky to talk about this at first (because he wants to go to school but finds it hard), we talked about a few different alternative options that are available. Here are the main things he was interested in:

Online mentoring via gaming: Fred would like to access 1:1 online mentoring for 1-2 hours per week. Fred can find it hard to maintain friendships so would find this helpful to both build a trusted relationship with an adult, then use it as a space to talk about issues with friends and vent his frustrations, so that it is easier to connect with them more positively on an ongoing basis.

1:1 Therapy: Fred would like weekly access to a therapist, to focus on understanding why he is finding school so difficult to attend and what the right environment would look like for him.

It is important for Fred that the therapist:

- Can take time to build a positive relationship
- Is neurodiversity affirming - they don’t focus on teaching Fred to “cope” and recognise the barriers Fred can face as an autistic young person and how to overcome them
- Is able to be flexible in how they interact with Fred. For example, if he isn’t comfortable meeting face to face can they chat while gaming, or using text?



A face to face mentor

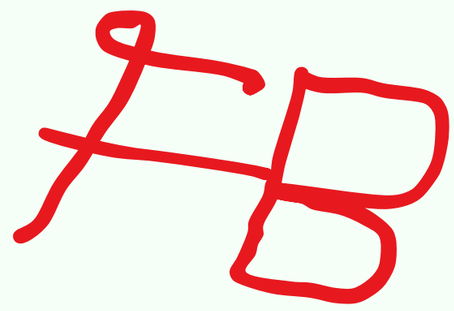
Fred would like to have the support of a face to face mentor, who can spend time building a positive relationship with him. Over time, in a low-demand way, they could then support him to access the community and eventually access some form of education, so that he can start to feel like he is learning again.

It is really important for Fred that:

- Relationship building and accessing other opportunities goes at his pace.
- That he has choice in who the person is. Fred's preference is for people to send one page profiles to him for him to then be able to pick a mentor, or to be able to say "no" to someone so that someone else can be offered instead.
- That the mentor is the right one. On the next page is a profile we worked together to create, which shows what the "perfect" person is like. He knows that it is unlikely anyone would meet all of this, but some things are crucial for Fred (like having shared interests and acting as a facilitator: knowing that Fred is motivated to do more, so if he is unable to do so, there are barriers stopping him from doing it, so it is important to not put on pressure.

Signed

Andy Smith
Mentor



Fred Baggins

What you should be like

I would prefer a male mentor

Understands sensory differences (I especially struggle with loud places)

Chill (not too energetic, but also not boring)

Is ok with doing lots of indoor activities rather than spending too much time outside

Authentic (don’t just pretend you like the things I do)

Be funny and like dad jokes

Be strong

Doesn’t pressure me too much (sometimes I can’t do things because of how I am feeling)

Be fun but don’t be too loud

Interested in:

- Gaming
- Anime
- Football

I don’t like people who shout