

# SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH HIGH ANXIETY OR AUTISM THROUGH A MELTDOWN

## Structure and Security

- Ensure that familiar routines are followed as much as possible.
- Let families know in advance if there will be different leaders or a different activity being run.
- Provide anxious children with the opportunity to ask questions.

## Silence and Space

- When a child is becoming distressed, give them permission to move away from the group and do not ask them questions.
- Give the child a chance to calm their emotions without noise and movement around them.
- If the child becomes significantly agitated, you may need to move other children to another space and leave two leaders behind to supervise the distressed child

## Stand back and Supervise

- If a child becomes aggressive, throws/punches/chairs etc **GET OUT OF THE WAY.**
- Do not restrain them.
- Do not run after them – watch them from a distance.
- Ensure their parents are advised as quickly as possible

## Support and Solve

- Once the child has sufficiently calmed down, check for any injuries.
- Offer them food, water and reassurance that everything is okay.
- When the child has recovered, debrief with them about what happened and how we could have done things differently to support them.
- Document the event and let the parents and your Senior Leader/Safe Church Rep know what happened