

RYEDALE SPECIAL FAMILIES

Newsletter



April 2026

RSF Alternative Education provision

What is Alternative Provision?

This is an education service for children and young people who cannot go to mainstream or special schools. This may be due to illness, behavioural or complex needs, or exclusion. RSF work with SEND pupils (Special Education Needs and Disabilities).

The young people attending our education provision take part in a wide variety of activities. We want to promote skills, independence and work opportunities as well as building self-esteem, trust and social skills. We also include activities to boost physical health, like going to the gym or swimming.

We put personalised programmes in place which help young people to progress. This can include academic work, cooking, travel training, physical exercise and work skills. We work with other local organisations like Butterwick Alpaca Park, The Woldies and The Bothies at Scampston where people have the opportunity to learn new skills.

RSF are SEND specialists, with lots of experience of working with young people who have disengaged with the school system. Our creative approach helps build interest in learning once again and leads to achievement. We will work closely with schools and colleges to provide flexi schooling and transition back into mainstream schools where possible.

Our provision is commissioned by North Yorkshire Council's SEN department or individual schools. If you are interested in knowing more about the service, please call or email us.

Lisa Keenan, Chief Officer



Wednesday 12th November 2025 was a very special day for RSF, the opening of our new building in Pickering. It was a wonderful day where friends, families and supporters joined staff and young people to welcome this new era for RSF.

We were delighted to be joined by Lord Lieutenant Jo Ropner to cut the ribbon, 2 years after she joined me to officiate our ground breaking ceremony!



RSF have been in our new building for 6 months - what an exciting time!

We have been settling into our new home and enjoying the wonderful facilities.

We have seen many young people come to the building who previously were not able, it is a huge improvement for accessibility.

Please read on to see what is taking place here for you and your family!

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Family Feedback Survey

Thank you to all who responded to our survey we sent out in January and February. We had 57 responses, 25%

What is working well

You told us about the impact on your children;

- increased confidence and independence
- social opportunities and friendships
- access to activities

"My son feels more confident and more relaxed when out with RSF"

"RSF has given my child valuable social opportunities where he can be himself"

"She loves the cooking and has a real sense of pride when she brings home a meal"

The impact on parents and families;

- the value of respite - time to rest or focus on other children
- RSF as a source of reassurance, encouragement and emotional stability
- appreciating the support with forms etc

"Just having time away and them being safe"

"I felt so stuck and overwhelmed. RSF supported me to move forward"

"Always respond super quick - I've never once felt judged"

Areas for improvement

You asked for more clarity about what RSF offers; *"I'm not clear what RSF offer"*

What RSF will do

We will look at our newsletters, leaflets, website and social media to improve the message about what services RSF offers to families.

Availability and gaps in support

"We were put on a waiting list and heard nothing"

What RSF will do

We are looking at ways to reduce our waiting lists for groups.

Sometimes we are limited in our support due to our funding. If there is a gap in support that you specifically need, please contact us directly.

Session handover and worker consistency

"It will be helpful if their key worker greeted them rather than being passed worker to worker"

What RSF will do

We absolutely appreciate the importance of this and aim to improve. Sometimes due to the logistics of transporting children, it is not possible to have immediate contact with the key worker. Please talk to us directly if this is a problem.

What RSF does well;

- Praise for our staff, for their warmth, flexibility and genuine care
- Fast, clear and supportive communication
- Valuing the range of activities and tailoring support to individual needs
- An inclusive, safe and non-judgemental environment

"Staff are always friendly and approachable"

"Zero judgement"

"Very welcoming and supportive"

Thank you for your suggestions for new ideas;

- Website links for useful contacts
- Booking system for the sensory rooms
- Smaller, more structured parties
- Evening/weekend information sessions

What RSF will do

We will start looking at implementing these ideas where possible, some will be dependent on additional funding.

How RSF Can Support You

Our Family Support Worker

'It is such a relief to have someone who I can reach out to that "gets it" so to speak. Heidi has helped me so much.'

Heidi can provide individual support to families on a wide range of issues, housing, benefits and of course EHCP and education support.

We offer home visits to new families - and those who have been with us a long time.



Heidi also delivers behaviour workshops throughout the year.

**New! Drop in to RSF Pickering
Fortnightly on a Monday morning
9am to 10.30am**

Drop in to see Heidi or Lisa
Have a cuppa, see our building, talk about a particular issue, a private meeting room is available if needed.

No appointment needed, just drop in, dates are on the back page.

Heidi also runs 'Care for a Cuppa' sessions along with Carers Plus at Kirkbymoorside Community Hub - see back page for dates.

Home Education Support Group

We now have monthly/ fortnightly meetings at RSF Pickering for families who are;

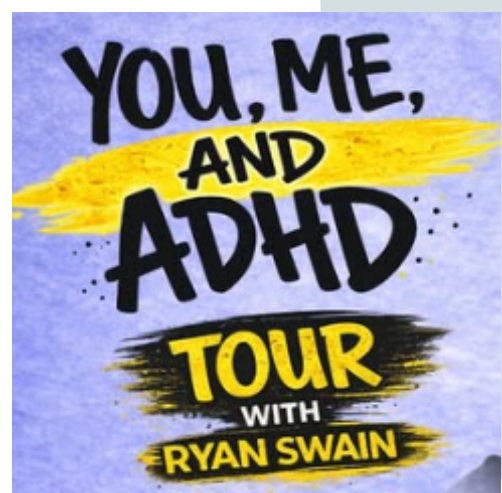
- currently home educating
- considering home education
- have a flexi-school timetable

This is a relaxed meeting where parents and carers can make connections and chat. The children can make friends and take part in some activities - they have started growing sunflowers and made Easter decorations. All welcome.



Ryan Swain Talk at RSF

We are delighted to announce that Ryan will be giving one of his renowned talks at RSF later this year, on Wednesday 28th October. This talk will be for the family, both parents and children are welcome to attend. More details to come!



How RSF Can Support You

Family Tickets

RSF have the following tickets which families can book and borrow for trips over the summer.

We have;

- 6 x Flamingoland tickets
- Castle Howard Family Pass - 2 adults and 3 children
- Dalby Forest car pass

Here are the rules;

- Tickets can be booked on Monday to Friday only and not on Bank Holidays
- Flamingoland can be booked once per year
- All tickets are collected from our Pickering base in the morning and returned in the evening
- Call the office to book these

If you have any particular circumstances that need to be considered (e.g. transport difficulties), please let us know, we may be able to help.



Sensory bags

Whilst you are using the family passes - or at another time - RSF have sensory bags to borrow. These contain a variety of small items which will help children and young people who need extra sensory input.

Call the office to book.

Kirkbymoorside Parent & Carer Group

We now have a regular group meeting at Kirkbymoorside Community Hub.

This is led by our Family Support Worker, Heidi and Kristy from Carers Plus Yorkshire. They provide a wide variety of support and guidance and have a wealth of useful knowledge between them!

This is a chance for you to meet up with other parents in similar circumstances who have children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

You are welcome to drop in without booking and all families are welcome, this is not just for those who attend Kirkbymoorside School.

The forthcoming session on Wednesday 15th April includes a talk by Helen Arnold-Jenkins, SEND Governor for several schools in the local area, who will chat about her experience as a parent and in her role.

The sessions run from 9am to 11.30am.



Local Support



Heslerton Junior Football Club
Physical and Additional Needs football sessions
SATURDAYS 9:30 - 10:30
Contact Carrie for further details
07983015519
Heslerton Sports Field, Sand Lane,
West Heslerton, Maltby, YO17 8SG

The poster features the Heslerton JFC logo, a photo of children playing football, a photo of a group of children, and the Comets logo.

Starting Saturday 11th April 09:30-10:30

Join our Saturday Football Group – a fun, relaxed, safe, and fully inclusive session designed for children aged 6 and over! It's the perfect opportunity for young people to make new friends, build confidence, and learn exciting football skills and drills in a supportive environment—no previous experience needed.

We're also working towards creating a team with the goal of playing against other disability teams, giving players something exciting to work towards.

*Best of all, the sessions are completely free!
For more information or to book, please get in touch with Carrie on 07983 015519.*

Seen some useful information?

Drop us an email or send us a message on Facebook or Instagram so we can share it.



AQUA-SENSORY
For children and young people with SEND
An SDSG project
SCARBOROUGH SPORTS VILLAGE
Saturday each fortnight
5:30 till 7:00pm
Find out more
www.sdsd.org.uk
Terms & conditions apply
From £2 per person

The poster features illustrations of three children swimming in a pool.



Parent Carer Voice North Yorkshire have lots of online and in person information sessions to help you navigate the world of SEND. Follow them on Facebook and Eventbrite to get the latest details .

This session in April will introduce the IMT - a guide to help discussions with schools about supporting your child in school.



NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL
Inclusive Mainstream Toolkit - IMT
Thursday 16th April
10.00am & 6.30pm

The poster features the North Yorkshire Council logo and a calendar icon.

RSF Fundraising

Meet Kirsty...

Kirsty Holtby joined RSF in February, taking on the role of Lead Fundraiser.

"I've lived in Pickering for 12 years now and very aware of RSF's incredible work locally, so I'm delighted to be joining the team and looking after all things fundraising!

Please get in touch if you have ideas for fundraisers or other ways to help, I'd be delighted to hear from you.



We will soon be launching our new **Supporter Newsletter**.

Scan here to tell us if you want to receive a copy instead of, or as well as, this Service Newsletter.



kirsty@ryedalespecialfamilies.org.uk

Charity of the Year

If your business or workplace are looking to support a charity for the new financial year, please consider Ryedale Special Families!

We can offer volunteer days and help you tailor support to suit your objectives and your team, with great opportunities for team building and some fun!



Thank You!



A Warm Welcome from Pickering's Mothers' Union

One of Kirsty's first outings has been to meet the Mothers' Union group, hosted at St Peter and St Paul's Church in Pickering. The group were our neighbours at the town's Christmas Lights Switch On event and wanted to find out more about RSF's services and charitable work.

We want to say a big thank you for their interest and for the kind donations made by individuals after the talk.

[Do you belong to a group, society or club that would like to learn more about Ryedale Special Families?](#)
[Get in touch with Kirsty to book in a visit.](#)

Fabulous Fundraisers!

With thanks to the following for their recent fundraising efforts too:

★ **U Tagghiu Anticu, Helmsley** for their Valentine's raffle and, with ongoing and generous help from Zena, for supporting us once more with an Easter raffle - tickets are available at the bar.

★ The wonderful quizzers at **The Peacock, Snainton** for the proceeds from their February quiz night.

★ Continued support from **The Filly & Flagon, Malton** - for hosting collection boxes and monthly quiz nights.

★ **Tyke 2000 Ltd, Norton** for donations from another full collection box.

Diary

Sunday 12 th April	Family Easter Party	RSF	Pickering	Please book
Monday 13 th April	RSF Drop In	RSF	Pickering	9-10.30am
Wednesday 15 th April	RAFT	RSF	Pickering	10.30am-12pm
Wednesday 15 th April	Care for a Cuppa	Kirkbymoorside Community Hub	Kirkbymoorside Primary School	9-11.30am
Thursday 23 rd April	Home Education Support Group	RSF	Pickering	12 - 2pm
Monday 27 th April	RSF Drop In	RSF	Pickering	9-10.30am
Wednesday 6 th May	RAFT	RSF	Pickering	10.30am-12pm
Thursday 7 th May	Home Education Support Group	RSF	Pickering	12-2pm
Monday 11 th May	RSF Drop In	RSF	Pickering	9-10.30am
Wednesday 20 th May	Care for a Cuppa	Kirkbymoorside Community Hub	Kirkbymoorside Primary School	9-11.30am
Wednesday 3 rd June	RAFT	RSF	Pickering	10.30am-12pm
Wednesday 1 st July	RAFT		Pickering	10.30am-12pm

If you would like information about these activities, please call the office or email: heidi@ryedalespecialfamilies.org.uk



01653 699000 (please leave a message)



post@ryedalespecialfamilies.org.uk



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preference for a
newsletter by
email or post

