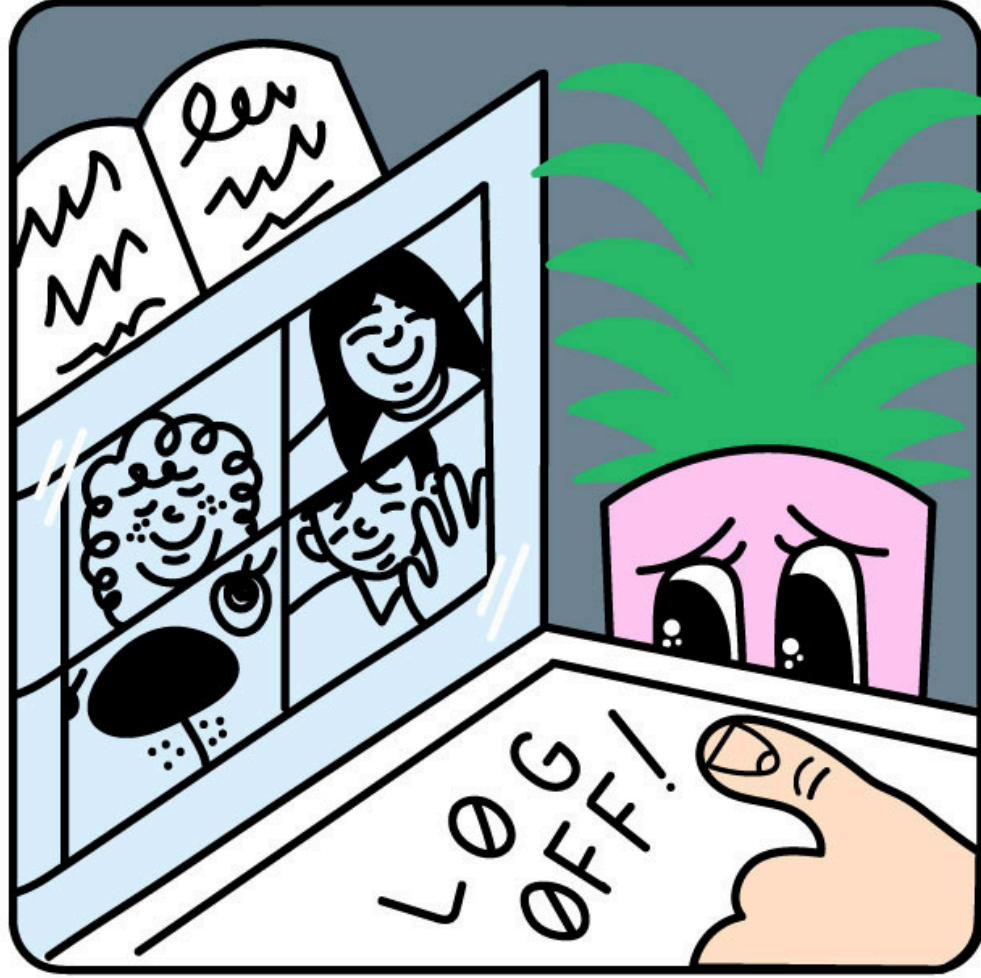


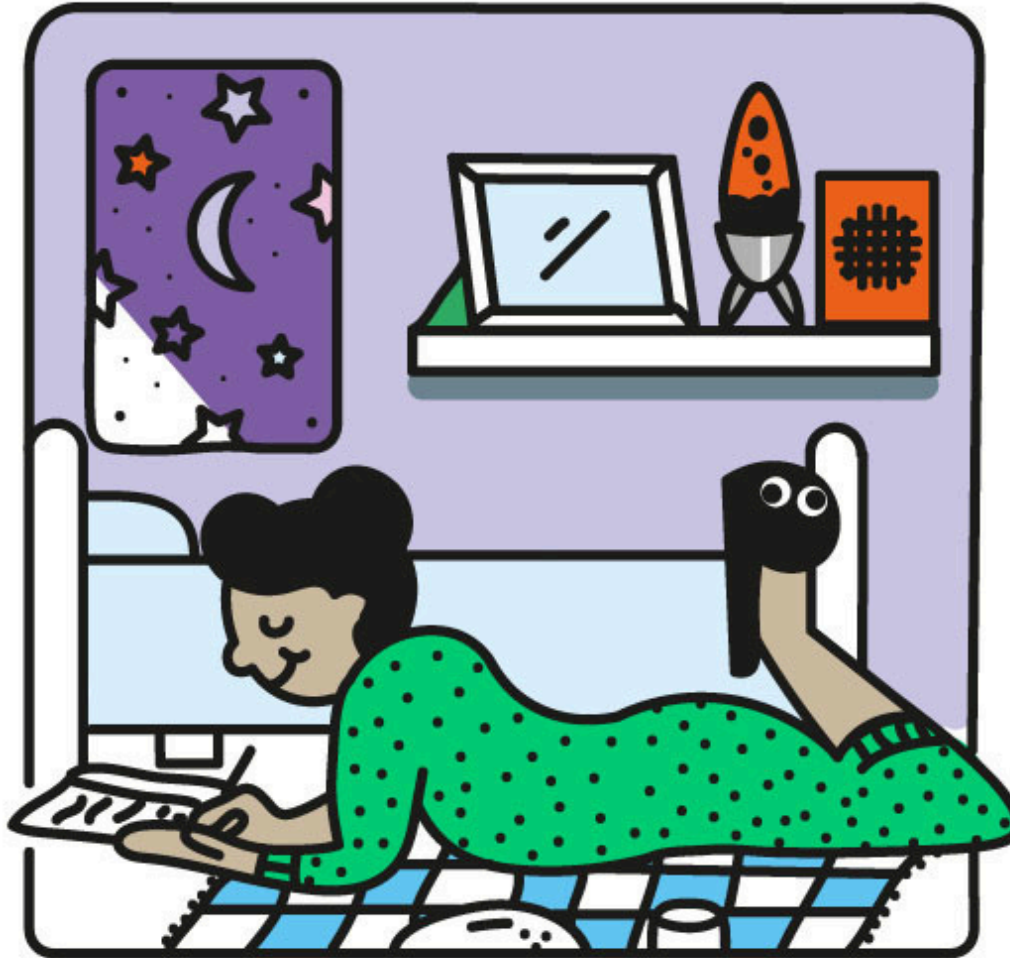
AUTISTIC YOUNG PEOPLE'S & FAMILIES' EXPERIENCES OF EDUCATION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

This comic strip represents 3 of the findings from a Sheffield Hallam University research project with autistic young people and their families. There is also a full project report and a digital collection of autistic young people's artworks.

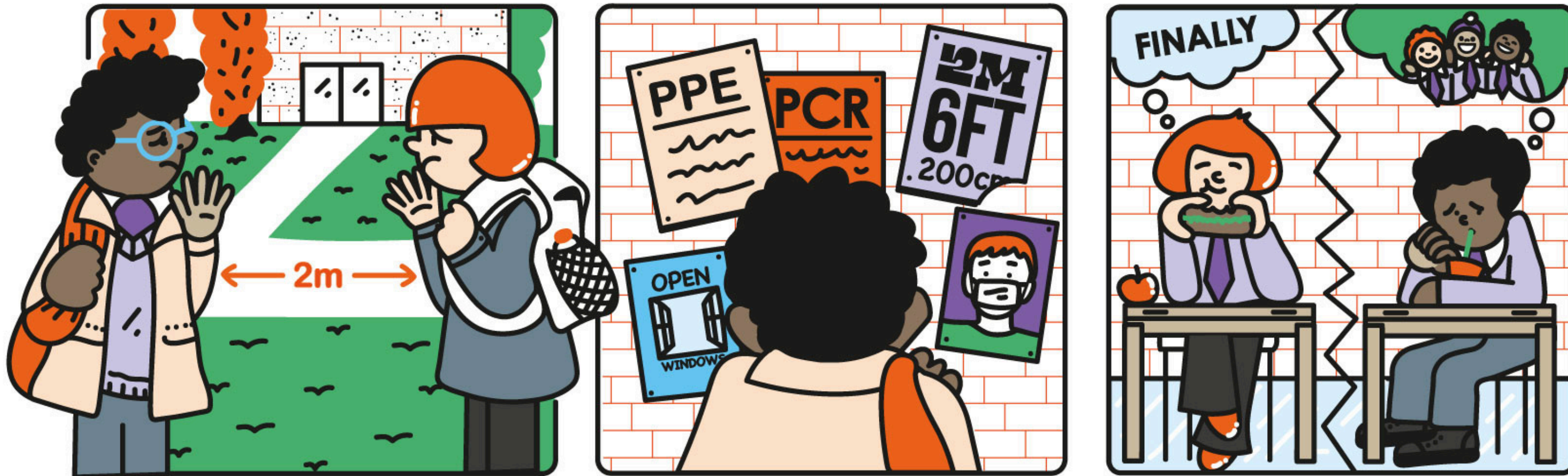




FOR SOME AUTISTIC YOUNG PEOPLE BEING AT HOME, AND TRYING TO LEARN ONLINE WAS VERY ISOLATING. SOME MISSED PHYSICALLY SEEING AND PLAYING WITH FRIENDS, OR FOUND SOCIALISING ONLINE REALLY DIFFICULT.



SOME AUTISTIC YOUNG PEOPLE THRIVED AT HOME FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS. BEING ABLE TO CHOOSE WHAT TO WEAR, WHEN TO EAT, WHEN TO LEARN, AND WHEN TO TAKE BREAKS, MEANT SOME YOUNG PEOPLE FELT THEY WERE WORKING WITH THEIR NATURAL RHYTHMS RATHER THAN AGAINST THEM. SOME HAD ALWAYS ENJOYED SOCIALISING ONLINE OR PREFERRED NOT HAVING THE PRESSURE OF FACE TO FACE RELATIONSHIPS.



WHEN AUTISTIC YOUNG PEOPLE DID ATTEND SCHOOL, COVID-RELATED MITIGATIONS (SUCH AS SIGNAGE, 'BUBBLES', AND PHYSICAL SPACE CHANGES) CHANGED DYNAMICS. FOR SOME THIS WAS CONFUSING AND OVERWHELMING, WHEREAS FOR OTHERS, THE INCREASED PREDICTABILITY AND SIMPLIFYING OF SCHOOL LIFE WAS A SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT IN THEIR EVERYDAY EXPERIENCES.

**THANKS GOES TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT AND TO LISA O'HARA FOR THE COMIC STRIPS.
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