



Inclusive, Independent, Invaluable

Full Testimonial 1 - parent:

My son joined Alex's class in January of 2017 and I couldn't have been happier, finally knowing he would be nurtured and educated in an educational setting with his autistic condition taken into account. Almost immediately he felt very comfortable and settled within the class dynamic Alex created, and while I knew there'd still be issues ahead for him, I could finally relax knowing he was safe and happy.

My only concern was that as I knew my son better than anyone else, and I clearly knew what he could and couldn't cope with, some of the expectations placed on him seemed unlikely. Alex, however, encouraged me to take a step back and to let her work with him a little closer so we could see where my son's strengths lay. This challenged my thinking but I agreed to her plans, letting my son take the lead and exert more independence. I thought he wouldn't be able to cope with many of the new experiences she had in store for him, but he flourished: he flew into his new-found independence and adulthood and actually thrived in spite of me. I was astonished that anyone could have had a better instinct about my son than myself, but Alex really knew how to bring the best out of him.

I can't thank Alex enough for everything she's personally done for my son, but for also standing firm in her belief of him, even against my own opinions and for coaxing me to allow him to take more control. Without her care, her support of and belief in my amazing son, he wouldn't be as vibrant, independent and courageous as he is now, comfortable in the outside world and ready to tackle his future.

My young man is about to enter into college life, something that once seemed so incredibly unlikely.

I couldn't recommend Alex's knowledge and support of the children and young adults in her care more.

C-L, a parent



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Full Testimonial 2:

I would love the opportunity to explain how Alex changed my daughter's life. My daughter is high functioning autistic with social anxiety. She became a school refuser during year 7 and ended up in specialist provision during year 9.

She had been let down by the system and had very little education. She was anxious and unhappy, completely isolated and rarely left the house. She was totally dependent on me (her mum) and very controlling.

When Alex became my daughter's teacher, she was 15. She had had a string of teachers in her new setting before Alex arrived, and she didn't want to engage with another. Alex quickly recognised that my daughter was very bright but suffered emotionally and socially so she approached her role as teacher with calm authority and connected with my daughter remarkably quickly using various techniques.

Walking was one way she managed to get my daughter to open up, and this led to Alex giving her the confidence to do the Ten Tors Jubilee Challenge! It's hard to put into words how much of a big deal that was to my husband and me: not only did it create a regular opportunity to talk and explore thoughts and feelings during training, it also sparked a love of exercise for the first time in years.

My daughter devised an exercise and diet plan completely by herself and lost a great deal of weight. Her mood swings calmed and for the first time in years our house didn't feel quite like the 'war zone' we were used to. My daughter has since gone on to do Ten Tors again, earning her Silver. She would have achieved Gold if not for Covid.

Alex managed to bring my daughter's education level up rapidly, not only getting her through Functional Skills Level 1 Maths and Level 2 English, but also she helped my daughter to discover a passion for science. The school was not set up for science but Alex bought textbooks and worked with my daughter individually, helping her grow in confidence.

Alex gave my daughter a future. No one could have possibly envisaged her leaving home alone and now she was talking about college! Alex laid the foundations for my daughter's incredible leap into college through patience, understanding, education, mindfulness techniques and through gently but persistently challenging my daughter's limited thoughts and beliefs.

As a parent, one thing that meant so much to me at a time when chaos ruled my life, making me feel overwhelmed and really low, was that Alex created time during the class to allow parents to come in and chat informally as well as view their children's work while the students served us tea. Alex involved me and created a chance to spend positive time with my daughter. Alex listened without ever crossing any boundaries and helped me just as much as she helped my daughter.

My daughter trusted Alex and with that trust established, Alex took her and her class on a residential camping trip. A massively successful camping trip! Which led to another even longer camping trip and both times my daughter didn't want to come home!

Alex built my daughter's confidence to a level that meant she was able to visit Petroc College multiple times and was able to do some sports taster sessions at the college with Supported Learning. This was definitely a big help in making college less scary.

Alex was finally able to help my daughter choose her college course: this was with the Supported Learning department and her class included some of the same students that she'd met during the sports sessions. Although it took a long time, this really helped my daughter settle in and I'm so thrilled that she is now about to start a mainstream college course and do her A-levels as part of her journey to becoming a forensic pathologist! She's waiting for her results as I write this!

Not only does my daughter now attend college, but Alex organised travel training and apart from her very long college days, she now gets the bus to and from college independently. This takes a little over an hour each way and would never have happened without Alex.

Alex is still an incredibly important person in my daughter's life even though she isn't really part of it anymore. My daughter still likes to update Alex on her progress - she almost could not wait to share her GCSE results with her last year. Many conversations in our house are still peppered with Alex's name.

If it had been possible, I would have wanted Alex to teach or guide my daughter for years more. I often wonder where my daughter would be now if Alex had been her teacher from an earlier age but I'm so grateful for the time we had.

M, a parent.