

# "Stop Saying Bad Words" Socially Safer Speech Plan

Why It Happens · Replacement Phrases · Scripts · Data Log

*"School complaints and embarrassment are constant."*

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## WHAT'S INSIDE:

Complete boards · Scripts · Trackers · Guides · Editable templates

## Understanding Why This Happens

Children with neurodevelopmental differences often use unsafe or inappropriate language for specific reasons. Understanding the function is the first step to replacing the behaviour.

■ Why It Happens	■ Replacement Phrases	■■ Response Scripts	■ School Note Templates	■ Data Log
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## WHY IT HAPPENS — Function Checklist

Tick every reason that may apply to your child. This guides which replacement to teach.

<b>■ Attention-seeking</b>	The word gets a BIG reaction from adults and peers — which is exactly what the child is seeking
<b>■ Sensory / motor</b>	The word sounds, feels, or vibrates in a satisfying way — especially common in echolalia
<b>■ Emotional release</b>	'Forbidden' words carry emotional weight that helps release frustration or pain
<b>■ Social scripting</b>	Copied from media, peers, or family — child doesn't know it's socially unsafe
<b>■ Anxiety or OCD loop</b>	Compulsive repetition of a word or phrase, particularly in anxiety states
<b>■ Power / control</b>	Using the word gets a reaction and creates a sense of power in the child's environment
<b>■ Testing limits</b>	Exploring what language does and doesn't do — normal developmental behaviour taken further
<b>■ Expressing pain or distress</b>	Swearing can be a way of communicating 'I'm overwhelmed' without words to say so

## REPLACEMENT PHRASE MENU — Safe Alternatives That Work

Match the function (above) to the replacement below. Teach ONE replacement at a time.

Function	Strategy	Replacement Phrases
Attention	Use words that get positive attention	'Look at me!' / 'Watch this!' / 'Hey, [name]!'
Sensory/motor	Provide sensory word alternatives	'Boom!' / 'Splat!' / 'Zap!' / 'Crash!'
Emotional release	Teach body-based coping language	'I'm SO frustrated!' / 'Argh!' / 'Ugh!'
Social scripting	Directly teach safe social phrases	Practise greetings, games scripts, goodbye phrases
Anxiety loop	Replace with a calming mantra	'It's okay.' / 'I can handle it.' / 'Breathe.'
Power/control	Give appropriate power	Choice-making: 'Do you want A or B?'
Testing limits	Neutral response + redirect	Flat tone: 'We don't use that word. Say [X] instead.'
Expressing distress	Teach emotion labelling	'I'm overwhelmed.' / 'Too much.' / 'I need a break.'

## PARENT RESPONSE SCRIPTS — What to Say in the Moment

These scripts reduce the 'reaction reward' and consistently redirect to the replacement phrase.

<b>Situation: Child says the unsafe word at home</b>	
<b>Say this:</b>	<b><i>"Neutral, flat tone: '[Name], we say [replacement word] instead. Try it: [replacement]."</i></b>
<b>Avoid:</b>	<b><i>"Big reaction — any strong emotion reinforces repetition."</i></b>
<b>Situation: Child says it in public (shop, bus)</b>	
<b>Say this:</b>	<b><i>"Quietly lean in: 'We'll talk about that when we get home. Can you whisper [replacement] to me?'"</i></b>
<b>Avoid:</b>	<b><i>"Loud correction — this creates a scene and a social reward."</i></b>
<b>Situation: Child is in distress and swears</b>	

<b>Say this:</b>	<b><i>"First regulate: 'I can see you're really upset. Let's breathe first.' Then model replacement word."</i></b>
<b>Avoid:</b>	<i>"Demanding they stop mid-meltdown — communication teaching cannot happen in crisis."</i>
<b>Situation: School teacher reports the word</b>	
<b>Say this:</b>	<b><i>"Acknowledge to teacher: 'Thank you for letting me know. We're actively teaching replacement language. Please use [agreed script].'"</i></b>
<b>Avoid:</b>	<i>"Punishing at home for school behaviour — the connection is too distant to be effective."</i>
<b>Situation: Child uses it to test your reaction</b>	
<b>Say this:</b>	<b><i>"Zero reaction. Redirect immediately: 'Oh, did you want to tell me something? Say [phrase].'"</i></b>
<b>Avoid:</b>	<i>"Eye contact, laughter, or expressions of shock — these are reinforcers."</i>

## SCHOOL NOTE TEMPLATES — Share the Plan

These ready-to-send note templates help get everyone using the same response.

### Template A — General Teacher Note

Dear [Teacher's Name],

As you know, [Child's Name] sometimes uses language that is socially unsafe. We want to share our home strategy so we can work together consistently.

The word(s) we are currently working on: \_\_\_\_\_

What is working at home:

- When the word is used, respond with a flat, neutral tone — no big reaction
- Immediately say: "[Name], we say \_\_\_\_\_ instead."
- Praise any use of the replacement phrase within the same minute

Please do NOT:

- Send notes home about individual incidents without a follow-up meeting
- Remove privileges as a consequence (this increases anxiety-based language)
- Correct loudly in front of peers

If you have concerns, please email or message me: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your partnership. [Child's Name] is making progress.

Kind regards,  
[Parent/Carer Name]

### Template B — SENCO / Support Coordinator Note

Dear [School Support Coordinator / SENCO],

[Child's Name] (DOB: \_\_\_\_\_, Year Group: \_\_\_\_\_) is currently working on replacing socially unsafe language as part of their communication development plan.

Their diagnosis/profile: \_\_\_\_\_

SLP / therapist involved: \_\_\_\_\_

Current strategy:

1. Identify function of the language (we believe the function is: \_\_\_\_\_)
2. Teach and reinforce the replacement phrase: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Respond with a neutral, flat tone and immediate redirect

We would like to request:

- A meeting to align school and home strategies
- Adjustments to the behaviour support plan
- A note in the communication log when incidents occur

Thank you for supporting [Child's Name].

Kind regards, [Parent/Carer Name] | [Contact]

### DATA LOG — Incident & Progress Tracker

Date	Word/Phrase Used	Setting	Likely Function	Replacement Offered	Response

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Educational digital product. Always consult a qualified Speech-Language Pathologist for clinical assessment.