

Generic Ideas

Commenting

- Indicate “finished”
- Indicate “more”
- Indicate that they want something e.g. “That one please”
- To reject an idea e.g. “I don’t want to”
- To ask for help
- Indicate how they are feeling (using a few switches)
- Say what the weather is like (using a few switches)

Requesting

- To ask to go to the toilet
- To choose a toy or musical instrument
- To ask for something in a shop
- To ask for something needed in an activity
- Ask for help e.g. in a shop

Give Instructions

- Ready, Steady, ‘Go’ games
- Simon Says Games (using a few switches)

Retelling events

- Taking a message to another class
- Taking a message home to tell family about what has happened today

Greetings

- “Good morning” circle / answering the register
- “Good-bye”
- “Thank you”

Telling a Joke

- To tell a joke e.g. have a funny noise recorded on the switch

What is a Big Mac Switch?

A Big Mack Switch is a device on which you can record a single message to support a student to communicate.

Big Mack



Social Activities

Chanting

- Record a chant e.g. for School Sports Day

Games

- To activate voice activated toys
- Play snap (“snap” recorded on the switch)
- Simon Says

Participate in Concert

- To say something in a concert / play

Curriculum Ideas

English

- To repeat a repetitive phrase from a story e.g. “I’ll huff and I’ll puff...”
- To give instructions e.g. “turn the page”
- To confirm agreement / disagreement with something

Maths

- Data collection e.g. ‘could you complete this questionnaire please?’
- Vote (using a few switches)
- Boccia (e.g. throw two beanbags at numbered switches) Students then have to add the numbers.

Music

- To sing a chorus / verse of a song e.g. Happy Birthday
- To control music in a start / stop game
- To play music with friends

Group Activities

- To call someone over
- To gain someone’s attention
- Indicate “my turn!”
- To join in a role play game
- To name an object in Kim’s Game
- To tell another child / group of children to perform an action
- To confirm agreement / disagreement with something

Programming a Big Mack:

There are a range of Big Mack Switches and similar single message devices around school. Recording on these is similar across devices.

To record on a Big Mack Switch:

1. Switch the device on (volume button located on the back of the switch – turn it on)
2. Hold down the little button on the back of the device (labelled 'rec'); at the same time hold down the big button on top of the device. A red light should appear on the back of the device. You can now record your message.
3. Let go of the buttons once you have finished recording your message. The device should now be programmed! To check, press the button on the top of the device.
4. ***Always remember to turn the Big Mack switch off (using the volume control on the back of the device) when you have finished!!!***

Who can help?

- **Speech and Language Therapist** can support with suitability / consideration of other devices if necessary
- **Occupational Therapist** can support with accessibility and positioning of the switch

Why Use a Big Mac Switch?

- Simple to programme and use
- **Versatile** – can be used throughout the day in a variety of situations
- Non-verbal students can **be included** into activities
- They are **easy to transport** so can be taken and used in different environments
- **Promote independence** – a student is able to give a message without relying on an adult

Big Mack



Who can use a Big Mack Switch?

- The student needs to be able to activate the switch
- Students who are non-verbal
- Students who may be verbal but too shy to communicate in a group situation
- Students who may be verbal but too shy to communicate with unfamiliar adults

Big Mack Golden Rules

- **Labelling:** Always have an object / photo / symbol / tactile material placed on top of the switch to support the student to understand what they are communicating.
- **Accessibility:** Ensure that the switch is accessible to the student using it. Think about which hand / body part they will use to activate it and where it should be positioned.
- **Consistency:** Switches should be used consistently throughout the day. Students relying on these as a form of communication, should have access to them regularly throughout the week. Responses to the student pressing the switches should be consistent as with other forms of communication.
- **Generalisation:** Students should be given opportunities to use the switches throughout the school day and to generalise skills e.g. a Big Mack Switch with "more" recorded on it could be used at snack time, lunch time, during a game and during a music lesson etc. This should support the student to generalise the meaning of what has been recorded onto the switch.
- **HAVE FUN!!!**