

## How do you support a child with Autism in mainstream school?

We are very aware that every person with Autism is different. However, staff have a range of strategies that can support the different needs of all students:

- Be clear in verbal communication. Say exactly what you mean.
- Keep Language direct – no double meanings
- Allow processing time for take up of verbal instructions.
- Use visual aids and cues at every opportunity
- Write down classroom procedures and expectations
- Use lists and time frames to help structure activities in the lesson and throughout the day
- Don't insist in eye contact
- Ensure a planned exit strategy from the classroom or a quiet place within the classroom to withdraw to if stress levels get too high.
- Prepare students well in advance for changes in seating plans, classroom or teacher
- Use a calm, neutral tone of voice any many ASD students are highly sensitive to loud sounds. Equally prepare students for the possibility of strong lights or smells in the classroom (e.g. Science)
- Allow students to work in groups where there is empathy, allow students to observe effective group work, or role play situations to practice skills.
- Use a buddy system in class to develop confidence and to provide a listening ear when the teacher may not be immediately available
- Help reduce anxiety but allowing the use of a noiseless "worry toy"
- We often use Social Stories and Comic Strip Conversation to teach social understanding. A Comic Strip Conversation can be used to clarify a misunderstanding – it can show what was said and thought by the student and can also show the thoughts of others. An example of what we use can be found on the appendix below

**Be prepared to get to know the student with ASD as an individual, as the abilities and challenges of their disability will be very unique to them.**

Appendix 1

# Comic Strip Conversations

