

## **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 [here](#)

**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.**