

Some 'Top Tips' for working with students with ASD

- Get to know the pupil: they are all different! The nature of ASD means that pupils will not instinctively say what upsets or rewards them. Personal knowledge is invaluable
- Even very able students with apparently photographic memories can struggle with organisational skills. Provide spare equipment and train pupils using visual support.
- An increase in 'difficult' behaviours usually indicates that the student feels stressed. Plan for 'difficult moments': telling the student off will only heighten anxiety.
- Be aware of your own language. Try to avoid complex and non-literal speech. If a pupil reacts unusually, consider that they may have misunderstood. Do not use sarcasm.
- Remember that facial expressions and social cues may not work. Use cue cards for situations e.g. assembly where you may not be able to speak discretely to the student.
- Prepare the student for changes in environment/ routine/ personnel. Visuals allow checking back for reassurance.
- Be aware of the environment - reduce visual distractions and provide a quiet place to work.
- Social demands will impact upon work. If you want the pupil to work in a group, expect less content. If you want his/her best ideas, let the student work alone.
- Do not rely on the pupil to pass on important messages to parents/ carers
- Avoid asking pupils to 'choose' partners /groups if the student may be left out.
- Assume nothing - skill in one area does not necessarily mean equivalent knowledge in another.
- Avoid getting into repetitive arguments. The pupil may benefit from writing down his question. You can then write your answer. Remember the question is very possibly a symptom of feeling anxious, not the cause.

Keep smiling! Your help and understanding can make a huge difference.