

# autism

## What is autism?

Autism is a lifelong, developmental disability that affects how a person communicates with and relates to other people, and how they experience the world around them.

## A person with autism may:

- Take things you say literally
- Have anxiety
- Seem to talk at people instead of sharing a 2 way conversation
- Not be aware of personal space
- Be unable to adapt tone and content of speech to different social situations
- Rarely use hand gestures or facial expressions
- May have repetitive movements. Eg, hand flapping, finger clicking
- Develop a highly specific interest in particular subject or activity
- Get upset if routine is changed
- Have sensory processing difficulties
- Avoid eye contact

## Top Tips

- ✓ Avoid sarcasm
- ✓ Use visual prompts. Eg. Photos and symbols
- ✓ Have clear rules, structure and routine
- ✓ Help identify good and bad choices
- ✓ Praise and label good behaviour
- ✓ Prepare student for any changes to route. Eg, visitors, room change, supply teachers etc
- ✓ Allow to use fidget toys or stress ball to improve focus and reduce anxiety
- ✓ Model tasks so students can visually see how it is done
- ✓ Minimise distractions. Seat near the front
- ✓ Do not expect the student to give eye contact when talking to them
- ✓ Provide instructions orally as well as written
- ✓ Explain at every stage what you are about to do, what will happen next and why
- ✓ Give students time to process information. Wait a few seconds for a response
- ✓ Questions should be clear and direct using easy to understand language
- ✓ Give clear warnings and explain what they are for

## Useful Websites:

<http://www.autism.org.uk>

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Autistic-spectrum-disorder/Pages/Symptoms.aspx>