Try to understand the difficulty and not see the student as awkward, perverse, cheeky, rude or naughty. Spend time talking to the student on their own and also observe reactions to different circumstances. Random bizarre noises, mannerisms, hand movements etc are just responses and coping mechanisms. To stop these and insist on silence, stillness etc will very likely add to stress and distress. The student may have some insight and be able to tell you what situations they find difficult and what helps and what does not help. Encourage peers to understand the difficulties and ensure that the student is not socially isolated.

Gain the students’ attention before speaking

Encourage the student to give some eye contact, but if they find this hard then do not persist.

Encourage an acceptable personal space between you and the pupil. For a non-family member this is usually one arms length away.

Keep language simple – break into manageable chunks, be precise and specific.

The order of the language you use should reflect the order that tasks should be carried out in e.g. ‘first run around the pitch one time and then pick up a tennis ball’  not ‘before you pick up a tennis ball run around the pitch one time’

Avoid use of polite question e.g. ‘Would you like to..?’ Tell the student what to do e.g. ‘I want you to….’

Use direct literal language. For example, avoid idioms and sarcasm.

Use the students’ interests and experiences to help them understand - relate the curriculum to real life situations.

Make clear associations between new and old information.

Model appropriate conversational rules, responses etc. For example, asking for help, requesting clarification, greeting peers etc. Be honest with the pupil when you do not understand their conversation.

Encourage interaction with peers whilst recognizing the difficulties of group work

Provide a suitable environment – calm, predictable and safe. Watch out for anxiety in crowds e.g. lesson changing time, lunchtime etc.

Give clear structure and set routines and ensure there is a policy for crisis situations.

Provide visual cues if helpful – you may need to provide a visual timetable.

Ensure that there are clearly defined breaks in lessons.

Have a clear system for rewards/motivation. You must be consistent with the use of this.

Develop good links between school and home to try to anticipate difficulties and manage problems promptly.