Factsheet for Autism Awareness Week

*Classes in our school*

We have three classes for autistic children in our school. The students could be between 6 and 12 years old. They may join your class for different activities such as maths, PE or art. They may also join you in the yard or for athletics or GAA. They do the same subjects as you in their classes. These students will go to secondary school when they finish their time in Scoil Cholmcille or they might go to a special school.

*What is autism?*

* Autism is a neurological condition that many people are born with. It affects how our brain works, how we experience the world and how we communicate with others. It affects different people in different ways.
* Autism can make it hard to communicate, make friends or understand what people are saying. Children with Autism may not be able to tell if you are sad or angry.
* Some children see, feel or hear things differently. A light in school might be too bright for them or the school bell might be too loud and scary.
* Children with Autism like their routine and surroundings to be the same. New or different things can be scary and upset them.
* Children with Autism may have unusual behaviours such as rocking, holding their hands over their ears or shouting. This can be because they find it hard to deal with or understand the world around them.

*Helpful tips*

* Accept our classmates’ differences. We are all different and that is okay.
* Be a good friend. Get to know students and find out what they like or dislike. Learn about the things that upset them and help to make them more comfortable.
* Use clear, short sentences for the students. Sometimes pictures or gestures can make it easier for them to understand.
* Include students in activities that you and your friends are doing. Students with Autism learn in a different way so take the time to explain games or activities.
* Use toys that they like or talk to them about things that they are interested in.

*Watch the clip*

**Amazing Things Happen by Alexander Amelines**

[*https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RbwRrVw-CRo*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RbwRrVw-CRo)