Inclusive language and making everyone feel welcome

Getting comfortable with inclusive language is about the mindset you take towards it. If you have curiosity and are open to learning, pairing that with humility and being prepared to accept a bit of discomfort - you will develop your inclusive language skills. Below we've included some simple suggestions to help you.

- Be respectful and mindful of the terminology you use – think about the possible impact your words may have before you speak. Could your words be misinterpreted or have a negative impact? If there is any chance it could cause offence, think about how you could say it differently or rephrase your sentence. If you're unsure, and it's appropriate to do so, you could politely ask about the most suitable terms to use.
- Remember language evolves – terminology is always adapting and changing, so try your best to learn as language changes.
- Be open and honest when you get it wrong – we're all human, we all make mistakes. Hold your hands up, apologise and learn from the mistake.
- Ask when you don't know – it's better to ask when you don't know and create room for conversation and education rather than assume and get it wrong.

Five top tips to creating an inclusive environment for neurodiverse students:

All students want to feel that they belong and are included, so as a teacher, it's important to take the appropriate steps to make learning more accessible to neurodiverse students:

1. Use positive statements within the virtual classroom, the physical classroom and on your website, such as, "We welcome students who think differently who might be neurodivergent or offer new perspectives". "We are committed to providing an inclusive educational environment that works for you".
2. Be aware that neurodiverse students may need additional support or opportunities so they can thrive in the classroom environment.
3. Audit your marking and assessment process and find points where you can be flexible in how students interact and engage with you, especially with practical face-to-face assessments, as some students may struggle with making eye contact.
4. Celebrate difference. Use a role model campaign or annual event to promote the positive differences neurodivergent students have made in your classroom. This will build awareness and acceptance, as well as boosting in individual morale.
5. Try to build neurodiversity into your school's diversity and Inclusion strategy. In addition to the protected characteristics, talking about neurodiversity is an effective way to bring everyone together.