**Children’s Speech and Language Therapy**

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Dear parents

Barnsley children’s speech and language therapy are running a campaign to support children in Barnsley who stammer. We want to make Barnsley a place where people say ‘Hey…it’s ok to stammer’.

Stammering is a neurological difference that affects the way a person talks. Stammering is very variable and can be affected by the situation a child is in. It means that a child might repeat words, or they might get stuck and no words come out. Some children hide that they stammer, by avoiding words and sometimes by avoiding talking. Children who stammer cannot help that they talk in this way, and they still have lots of interesting, funny and clever things to tell us.

Through our own charity, we have acquired funding to buy a book for every primary school in Barnsley. The Boy Who Made Everyone Laugh, by Helen Rutter is the story of a child who stammers who goes on lots of adventures and along the way he decides that it’s ok to stammer. We have provided schools with video resources and activities, which have been co-produced by children who stammer. The videos explain how children and teachers can help a person who stammers and also how it feels when people say negative comments about their talking.

The aim for the project is for everyone to be more accepting of the different ways that people talk. If people were more accepting that we all talk in different ways, then children who stammer could be more confident talking in the classroom without fear of teasing or bullying.

Your child’s class teacher may talk about stammering during this academic year, so if you would like to know more about when this will take place or if would like to know more about the video’s and activities, please contact your child’s class teacher or the special needs co-ordinator.

If your child stammers it would be helpful for you to talk to them about how they feel about participating in a lesson about stammering and to let them know that their class teacher will talk to them before any classroom discussions. You can also contact your child’s class teacher so that we can work together to ensure your child feels supported. You can also contact children’s speech therapy on barnsley.speechtherapy@swyt.nhs.uk with any questions.

Yours faithfully

Barnsley children’s speech and language therapy team