

Dear Parents/Carers

We are the Speech and Language Therapists (SaLTs) who are working at Talbot School. We work with young people and school staff in a range of ways to develop communication and interaction skills, and work closely alongside the school's communication team. The ways that we support are;

- Complete individual assessments or observations to establish communication strengths and needs. We then set achievable communication targets across the areas of attention and listening, language learning, social interaction and emotional literacy.
- Offer support to embed communication targets into class learning to meet EHCP outcomes. This may be through modelling specific therapeutic strategies or supporting staff to access relevant training.
- Set up Augmentative and Alternative Communication Systems either paper based, or on the Barnsley Assistive Technology pathway to work towards a powered aid.

We also assess the feeding and swallowing skills and create IDDSI diet plans to ensure safety at mealtimes.

The SaLT service now uses an episode of care model. This means your child will be open to us when they need specific support, but closed during times when their needs can be met by the support in place in school and at home. Please see the attached information leaflet.

If your child requires reassessment (due to change in skills/behaviour or having completed all their current targets) please do let school know as soon as possible so they can be re-referred back into SaLT and added to the waiting list.

Attached is a summary of the interventions SaLT may recommend. The QR codes link to the resource library that offers further information and videos. If you have any general queries around therapeutic interventions or communication needs please contact us via email.

Yours sincerely,



Sophie Holmes
Speech & Language Therapist



Louise Scott
Speech & Language Therapist

Whole School Communication Strategies

It is important that we support our young people to develop their communication skills, meeting them at where they are at and using their strengths to develop their communication and interaction skills. It is the responsibility of adults around them to utilise a total communication approach valuing all forms of communication to make the world more accessible. As communication partners we offer the Means, provide Reasons, and create Opportunities to interact. The universal approaches below support all students to communicate effectively.

Intensive Interaction – This low demand approach allows us to build rapport and give young people opportunities to experience social interaction in a way that is meaningful and fun to them. We offer regular 1:1 time when we join our students in their world, following their lead and mirroring actions and sounds. We can build in preverbal skills such as turn taking and joint attention which form the building blocks to communication.

For more information on Intensive Interaction visit the SCH Resource Library here:

<https://tinyurl.com/ybdqpn8s>



Core Vocabulary – We use Core Vocabulary boards to support both expression and comprehension throughout the day. This can be used in interaction and learning.

This approach enables us to support students to express a variety of communication functions – requesting, commenting, rejecting, and questioning. We encourage people to try to use this approach at home and boards are supplied to families.

A useful intro video to Core Vocab can be found here:

<https://tinyurl.com/2fj22q2w>



Visual Support– Using visuals helps young people understand and remember, as these last much longer than a spoken word giving extra time to process. It also offers a consistent message. Throughout school visual support (symbols, photos, and objects of reference) are on display to support understanding and expression. Each class has a visual timetable that helps orientate the students to what is happening in the day. Students have access to choose boards to help them have their needs met, or first/then boards to aid transitions between activities.

Zones of Regulation™ - is a visual approach used to support the development of emotional literacy and self-regulation in children. All the different ways children feel and the states of alertness they experience are categorized into four coloured zones. Children are encouraged to identify their zone and engage in activities to support them regulate.

See: <https://zonesofregulation.com>

This QR code has links to Communication and Emotional regulation.



Speech and Language Therapy Intervention – Targeted Approaches

These will be assessed and recommended by the Speech and Language Therapist. These interventions are usually delivered by trained school staff. If these are specified in an EHCP, and you would like to know more please contact your child's speech therapist.

Sentence Builder : A colour coded system to aid children in building grammatical sentences. It uses question words to elicit the component parts of a sentence. This can support children with SVO phrases (Subject Verb Object).

More information can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/2jxouukn>

LEAP (Language Enrichment Activity Programme) – This is a structured programme which aims to develop children's comprehension and expression. (Training available through Learn Sheffield)

VIP (Vocabulary Improvement Programme)– A structured program to expand and develop children's vocabulary and expressive language use. (Training available through Learn Sheffield)

Blank Levels of Questioning: This developmental structure teaches higher level language skills such as inferencing, abstract thinking and reasoning.

Social Stories - are short descriptions of a particular situation, event, or activity, which include specific information about what to expect in that situation and why. They are personalised to a child's needs and need to match to their comprehension level.



Makaton

Makaton is a signing system that supports verbal speech. The visual way of communicating helps children understand by giving an extra visual cue and can support language development, such as putting words together. Young people will only sign to us if we sign with them so remember to model this whenever you can.

There's lots of useful information on the resource library
https://library.sheffieldchildrens.nhs.uk/?sfid=199&_sf_s=makaton

