



Harlington and Sundon Lower Schools
'A place to belong, grow and succeed'

A Parent/Carers' Guide to Stammering



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This guide is designed to help you support your child, whether they have a formal diagnosis or you simply notice some traits of dysfluency (stammering). At Harlington and Sundon Lower Schools, we believe that parents and school are on the same team, working together to ensure every child feels successful and supported.

What is stammering?

Stammering (sometimes called dysfluency) is a communication difference that affects the flow of speech. It is very common in young children as they develop their language skills.

Common signs include:

- **Repetitions:** Repeating sounds (b-b-ball), syllables (mo-mo-motor), or whole words (and-and-and).
- **Prolongations:** Stretching out a sound (sssssun).
- **Blocks:** When a breath or sound stops and no sound comes out for a moment.
- **Secondary Behaviours:** Tension in the face or body, or looking away while trying to get a word out.

What does the school do that supports children with stammering?

We use strategies in our classrooms to create a 'communication-friendly' environment where children feel safe to take their time:

- **Visual Timetables:** Reducing anxiety about the day's events, which can help fluency.
- **Wait Time:** Teachers and peers are encouraged to give children extra time to finish their sentences without interrupting.
- **Checking Understanding:** We use questioning techniques that allow children to respond in ways they feel comfortable.
- **Focus on Content:** We praise what the child says rather than how they say it to build confidence.
- **Structured Routines:** Consistent routines provide a sense of security, reducing the pressure that can sometimes increase stammering.

What else can the school do?

If your child requires more tailored support, we can offer further specialised interventions:

- **Alternative Communication:** Using visual prompts or 'Now/Next' boards to reduce the immediate pressure to speak.
- **Small Group Work:** Providing opportunities to practise speaking in low-pressure, quiet environments.
- **Personalised Motivators:** Using high-interest rewards to build self-esteem and confidence in communication.

What can I do at home?

- **Slow Down the Pace:** Try to slow down your own speech slightly; this often encourages the child to do the same without being told.
- **One-to-One Time:** Dedicate a few minutes of 'special time' each day to play or talk without distractions.
- **Listen Patiently:** Maintain natural eye contact and wait for them to finish their sentence. Avoid finishing their words for them.
- **Acknowledge the Struggle:** If they are having a particularly 'bumpy' speech day, it is okay to acknowledge it kindly (e.g., 'That was a tricky word to get out, wasn't it?').
- **Reduce Questions:** Try to make more comments rather than asking lots of questions, which can feel like performance pressure.





What might the next steps be?

- If concerns persist despite the strategies put in place, please arrange a meeting with your child's class teacher. They may then refer the child to the school's SENDCo (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator).
- We may then complete a referral to the Paediatric Speech and Language Therapy Team to seek specialist assessment and advice.

Where else I can get support?

- **STAMMA (British Stammering Association):** Extensive resources and a support helpline (www.stamma.org).
- **Action for Stammering Children:** Specialist support and information for families (www.actionforstammeringchildren.org).
- **Michael Palin Centre:** A world-leading centre for stammering support (www.michaelpalincentreforstammering.org).

We are on your team!

We know that seeing your child struggle to communicate can be overwhelming. Please know that we are here to support you just as much as we are here to support your child. Our shared goal is to see your child thrive.