

On Body Signing at Curnow.



On Body Signing is a form of communication designed primarily for use with students with profound and complex needs, some of whom will have a visual impairment. It is a touch/speech based system which is used to support understanding of routines and functional words. At Curnow School we use a scheme called TaSSeLs – Tactile Signing for Sensory Learners. Within TaSSeLs there is a core vocabulary and an 'alert' sign that is used to prepare the learner that a sign is about to be used.

On body signing can help children and young people to –

- Develop a relationship between themselves and their communication partner through touch.
- Enhance attention and interaction.
- Feel secure, by giving the learner notice of what is coming next.
- Develop their conceptual understanding.
- Begin to make choices.
- Develop their understanding of key words.

The system is a specialised method of using touch based signs to develop understanding of key events during the day and is accessible to all. There are some learners that will require adapted, personal signs due to physical or sensory needs. These will need to be communicated with everyone who works with that learner to maintain consistency.

Opportunities for use –

- Use regularly in routine activities to support the learner to understand what is going to happen.



- During learning sessions to support engagement eg the teacher may use the 'alert' then 'loud noise' signs to prepare for an event in a sensory story.



- To prepare a learner for medical procedures. There are many specific signs linked to medical procedures such as taking your temperature, or suctioning.



Key points to remember –

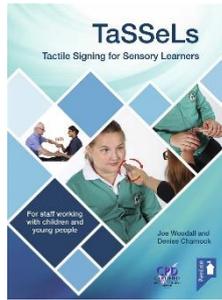
- Tassels has an alert sign to prepare the pupil for signing, this should always be used to prepare them for the sign to come.
- The adult must have already established a relationship with the child and need the child's permission to touch them (behavioural responses).
- Some learners will require their own signs to be developed due to sensory or physical differences.
- Consistency and frequency are key to the success of any system.
- Display signs so that all adults can learn them, even if they are not in frequent contact. This will also allow consistency between settings.
- Always use clear and consistent speech as you sign,
- Sign only the key words in a phrase ("It's time for a **drink** now"),

This sign is two taps on the mouth

- With your left hand, bring the learner's right hand up to their mouth and gently tap
- Say eat or drink



Useful resources –



This book contains the on body signs that are used in Curnow School. This book can be found at Lower School, electronic versions of the signs and target setting materials can be found in folders called **TASSELS – On Body Signing** in the **Upper and Lower school drives**.

- Any of our **Learning 2 learn class teachers, speech therapists** or the **Communication Lead** will be able to support with practical issues.
- <https://ianpbell.files.wordpress.com/2011/08/article-20.pdf> is a useful online information sheet.