



## The Importance of Understanding Jokes and Humour



### Developing humour in secondary school:

When we're thinking about the development of communication at secondary school, humour is something which tends to be forgotten about. However, we cannot underestimate the role that humour plays in connecting us with others, allowing us to build friendships and provide entertainment.

Did we mention that, laughing is good for you? It not only boosts the happiness chemicals (endorphins) in our brains, but also stimulates the area associated with feelings of 'reward'. In later years, children with a well-developed sense of humour tend to be more positive-thinking individuals with higher confidence and self-esteem. They are often socially well-adjusted, too. Humour helps children handle stress better and helps to put them at ease with the world around them.

As your child becomes older they will be exposed to humour involving language: Kids' jokes, limericks, tongue-twisters, riddles, puns, silly poems, made-up words, and funny stories. However, we know that this is an area which can prove difficult for some of our deaf young people, as it can be harder for them to understand the vocabulary and multiple meanings involved in jokes and riddles. It is therefore essential that they are exposed to jokes and become familiar with how and when we use them.

### Mary Hare Joke Competition:

This term, the Mary Hare Speech and Language Therapy department has been running a Joke competition in support of the "Voice Box" national joke competition which is held every year in mainstream and specialist schools. The competition is a joint initiative from the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT) and The Communication Trust (TCT). It is designed to raise awareness of the fun and importance of communication in a light-hearted and inclusive way.

Pupil response to the competition has been fantastic and over 70 jokes were entered this year by students from years 7 through to 13. Some of our favourites included:

- "What do you call a fake noodle? - *An im-pasta!*"
- "Why did the snowman melt? - *Because he was reading Heat magazine!*"
- "Why do Giraffes have long necks? - *Because their feet smell!*"

The overall winner of our school competition was chosen by principal Peter Gale. The winner was Chloe Burton in year 7 who created her own joke in her speech therapy session:

"What do tennis players drink at Wimbledon?.....*Deuce!*"

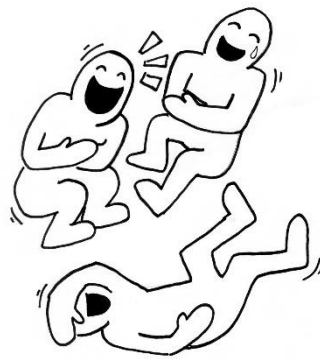
Her joke has been entered into the National competition – fingers crossed for a win! We would like to thank all of our students who entered the competition and made it a big success.

### **Help to develop your child's Humour at home:**

If you would like to continue our work at home, below we have listed some useful tips to encourage your children to laugh and develop their own sense of humour:

- Spend some time looking at joke books or websites and explaining the meaning of jokes to your son/daughter
- Think of and share your favourite jokes
- Have a go at writing your own jokes – perhaps when making your own Christmas crackers, or plan to share jokes with the family over Christmas dinner
- Talk about what makes a joke funny (creates a funny picture in your head, uses a double meaning 'pun' etc.)
- If a joke appears on TV, or someone shares a joke at a family party, check if your son/daughter is able to understand what it means and why it is funny

So when you're pulling a cracker this Christmas, make the most of the opportunity to share in laughter and develop your son/daughter's sense of humour. We might not always find the same things funny, but a strong sense of humour helps break the ice and teaches our young people to look at things from a different perspective.



*Securing the future of deaf children and young people*