

**Name of Policy: Curriculum Policy for Communication and Language**



**Author: Gillian Barton**

**Contributors: NHS SALT team**

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**Links with other policies: All curriculum policies**

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**Woodlands Meed Equalities Statement is available on the website: [www.woodlandsmeed.co.uk](http://www.woodlandsmeed.co.uk) under policies.**

### **Woodlands Meed's Overall Aims:**

#### **Building Unique Futures Together**

This includes:

- Providing a safe, secure environment
- Recognising the individual needs and strengths of each child
- Planning and facilitating unique, enjoyable opportunities to maximise learning and potential
- Working with parents/carers and outside agencies to achieve the best for each child
- Ensuring opportunities from the wider community are utilised

#### **Introduction**

Communication is the most important skill you can teach a child.

Communication is meaningful interaction between two or more individuals to request, resist, choose or comment – furthermore communication underpins all areas of the school curriculum and allows pupils to access learning, increase independence and develop social relationships. Effective speech, language and social interaction will be encouraged and supported throughout the school and equipping pupils with skills for adult life.

#### **Methods of Communication**

For communication to be successful, pupils must be able to understand the meaning of the interaction and be able to, or be supported to, participate themselves.

Many of our children and young people need support if they are to participate in effective communication with those around them. This may be due to:

- speech difficulty
- learning difficulty
- physical difficulty, for example due to cerebral palsy
- brain injury due to accident or illness
- autistic spectrum disorder

Pupils will be supported through all five Key Stages with methods of communication that take many forms and can include one, or a combination of the following:

- Body language / Facial expressions
- Eye contact
- Gestures and pointing
- Signing (Makaton / BSL / SSE)
- Vocalisation / Speech
- Use of objects of reference and body cues
- Use of photographs
- Use of symbols / line drawings / Aided Language Boards
- Use of Assistive & Augmentative technology
- Writing / drawing

### **Vision**

Many of our pupils experience significant difficulties with communication. Therefore our ultimate vision is that every pupil will establish an effective system of communication in whatever form is appropriate to them.

*Our strategy includes the vision that Woodlands Meed will be recognised as a beacon of outstanding practice in the 'Total Communication' approach; highly trained members of staff will share expertise with the staff team, parents, stakeholders and the wider community.*

### **Aims of the Communication Policy**

- To maximise pupils communication skills within the scope of their ability
- To allow and facilitate pupils of every ability to participate in lessons and offer their feedback on their work, school life and in the wider community.
- To facilitate the participation of pupils in meetings that concern them – in particular the setting and evaluation of Next Steps, Annual Reviews and Child Looked After meetings.
- To draw up specific, measurable, attainable, realistic communication targets which are regularly reviewed.
- To meet the communication potential of every pupil with respect to their cultural, religious or family views.
- To ensure, where possible, that pupils are provided with an appropriate and consistent communication environment.

- Commitment to become a 'Communication Friendly Setting' by training staff in the Elklan Communication Approach for SLD and ASC
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- To ensure, where possible, that pupils are provided with the equipment and / or technology to facilitate effective communication within the school, home and wider community.
- To facilitate the development of successful social communication.
- To ensure that pupils leave Woodlands Meed with an effective method of communication and this information is passed onto future education and care providers in the form of a 'Communication Passport'

SALT aims within the school are:

- To work closely with staff to promote the optimum environment for developing speech, language and communication.
- To introduce, develop and maintain augmentative and alternative communication systems for individuals as appropriate.
- To provide advice, information and training as appropriate for all staff.
- To plan, deliver or delegate to S & L TAs - appropriate therapies
- To work with class teachers to provide each child on their caseload with an appropriate and attainable communication target.
- To support and enable class teams to carry out work linked to pupil's Speech & Language targets – providing resources where appropriate.
- To liaise with parents during contracted hours  
To liaise with and make referrals to other professionals.
- To provide input to Annual Reviews/Transition Plans where required.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

It is **everybody's** responsibility to have an understanding of the different methods of communication, to respect the individual's communication style and to encourage pupils to interact with those around them.

To be effective communicators all staff must also be effective listeners and observers.

### **Speech & Language Team**

At Woodlands Meed we have access to a small team of Speech & Language Therapists – this service is commissioned from the NHS and is reviewed each year according to changing need.

In addition we have intervention assistants who work closely with the NHS team and augment the Speech and Language provision we offer. These Speech & Language teaching assistants are able to offer contracted services to local community schools under direct NHS supervision but also as part of the Meeds SEND Alliance offer.

To ensure the successful communication development of all pupils – the SALT team and school staff work collaboratively with scheduled meetings and informal discussion.

### **School Staff**

- To have a clear understanding of each pupil's individual communication needs

- To become proficient in the use of Assistive and Augmentative Technology where their role demands this
- To use apps / software as an aid to communication between pupils, school and staff
- To create an environment conducive to the communication styles of individual pupils
- To carry over good practice and programmes or activities observed and developed in group SALT sessions to all areas of the curriculum
- To take every opportunity to participate in CPD linked to the communication needs of their pupils.
- To act as a role model for good communication skills for pupils and other staff
- To have a 'communication profile' at the entrance to each classroom for staff and stakeholder information
- To create 'Communication Passports' for learners who will need them in future educational or care provision
- To facilitate specialist roles designed to promote the ethos and delivery of communication throughout the school
  - Communication Champion
  - Attention Autism Champions
  - Speech & Language Intervention Assistants
  - Makaton Tutors

## **Working with Parents**

We will continue to work with parents to develop a shared understanding of the quality and range of communication taking place both at home and school, by:

- Maintaining good links with parents by phone, e-mail, home-school books (where appropriate) and Seesaw
- Sharing information at annual reviews
- Liaising with parents at termly Parents' Evening
- Providing details of SALT programmes via NHS professionals plus advice on communication development and ideas for activities at home
- Regular opportunities to learn communication skills e.g. provision of Parent Makaton sessions / visits to classes to observe communication methods e.g. PECs
- Provision of communication resources to be used at home including, PECs Books, Aided Language Boards, AACs and software, social stories
- Informal and formal tuition for parents on their child's communication method
- Addition of resources for parents on the website
- Discussing 'Next Steps' targets with parents and ensuring a copy is sent home each term

## **Delivery**

To ensure that the communication policy is put into practice the following will be implemented:

- Woodlands Meed will maintain a comprehensive programme of training for staff in order to equip them to meet the differing communication needs of all children they teach.
- Appointment of a member of LG with specific responsibility for Communication

- Appointment of a Designated 'Communication Champion'
- Regular meetings between SALT team and school
- Liaison with parents at termly Parents' Evenings / contact from NHS SALT
- WSCC occasionally fund private Speech & Language service in order to fully meet the needs of a child's Statement or EHCP where the commissioned NHS provision does not have the capacity

### **Approaches**

A range of different communication methods will be utilised to interact with the pupils, including low and high tech. The needs of the pupils will vary between classes and age groups.

Whatever approaches are assessed as being appropriate for individual pupils, will be followed **consistently** by **all staff** working with them, to ensure that maximum communicative function is achieved. This means that if a student is more able to communicate and understand objects of reference / photographs / PECS / symbols they should **always** have access to them and **all** staff involved with that child should know how to use them.

An aid to support communication or indeed a single symbol must **never** be taken away from a pupil.

As pupils progress they will be moved on to the next stage of communication after structured discussion and planning between the SALT team and school staff who have been trained in a particular approach.

### **Transition**

Transition is an important part of a pupil's life; it can be a challenging time for pupils and their families.

- Pupils will be prepared for transitions through a variety of means – visits, social stories, discussion and photos.
- Information on preferred and successful methods of communication skills will be transferred during the Summer Term through the sharing of Pupil Profiles, Class Communication Profiles, Next Step targets and Speech & Language reports.
- [There is a formal schedule of handover meetings involving class teams and professionals.](#)
- Communication specific folders in the staff SEND drive will store all SALT information, reports and targets for each individual pupil so that these key documents are all available in one place throughout a pupil's journey through the school and college.
- When pupils leave Woodlands Mead where possible we will equip future educational or social care providers with essential information about a pupil's communication needs and where appropriate will provide a 'Communication Passport' produced in consultation with parents / carers.

### **Outcomes**

- **All members of staff** will have a comprehensive awareness of communication needs
- The school environment will be consistently '**communication friendly**'.
- Staff with an additional responsibility will keep practices, resources and provision up to date.
- Staff will continue to have on-going training to help aid children's communication.

## **Review**

- Termly Communication team meetings
- Termly subject development meetings
- Yearly annual review reports
- Communication Subject leaders will review and update this policy regularly in meetings and make the leadership team aware when revisions are made.
- Commitment to keep up to date of developments on communication