



Communication policy

“Communication is crucial.... It is an essential life skill....and it underpins a child’s social, emotional and educational development.” (Bercow Review 2008)

Statement

The following policy aims to outline the importance of Total Communication, how staff at Hazelbeck school will be provided with an understanding of what Total Communication is and how this can be used to support all students. It should also provide staff with an understanding of the expectation of assessment and recording procedures around communication for individuals.

Principles and values

We recognise that positive relationships and communication are inextricably entwined and essential to all learning experiences at Hazelbeck School. Without a relationship there is no desire to communicate and without communication further learning will not take place. One cannot happen without the other and “feelings of worth can flourish only in an atmosphere where individual differences are appreciated, mistakes are tolerated, communication is open, and rules are flexible - the kind of atmosphere that is found in a nurturing family” (Virginia Satir).

As all our students at early stages of communication development, it is essential that the building of relationship and communication are the priorities for each pupil. This is not something that happens in isolation but underpins all learning experiences and therefore, opportunities to develop communication skills should be maximised throughout the school day, supported by a responsive environment. All our students have a right to develop communication strategies which are meaningful to them and we will endeavour to provide a learning environment which offers opportunities for this. We will do this through modelling a range of communication approaches which may be accessed and taught consistently to be used by individual students to express themselves more effectively. We understand that students may need different strategies depending on their need, age and stage of education and that a personalised approach is key to development, supported by robust systems of assessment and recording to reflect this.

Objectives

“Communication leads to community, that is, to understanding, intimacy and mutual valuing”.
Rollo May.

This policy aims to:

- Ensure that the quality of Total Communication offered to our students is consistent
- Ensure that our students’ individual communication preferences are understood and documented
- Provide all staff with a basic understanding of how to deliver and support a student to use a range of communication methods

- Offer each student a range of communication methods through our classroom practice so that they may have opportunity to choose the one which suits their needs (see document 'Possible Communication Approaches')
- Support the development of staff expertise so that all staff feel skilled at assessing and providing appropriate support to enable each student's communication skills to develop
- To ensure that students are achieving or exceeding their targets set in Speaking and Listening and if not, have a clear plan to address this.
- Acknowledge that for some students SaLT input may still be required on an individual basis.

Strategies

- Training/ CPD to support staff understanding
- Personalised communication assessment and approaches
- Systems in place to document individuals' methods of communication and progress within these
- The provision of a responsive environment
- Ongoing assessment
- Practical strategies and understanding of the different communication
- Liaising with SaLT on a regular basis
- Regular review of staff training/ CPD need and staff confidence

Actions

These will be outlined in an annual Communication plan and the Communication 3 year plan.

Outcomes

The action taken as outlined in the Communication plans will be evaluated on an ongoing basis and reviewed at regular intervals, at least termly. Progress towards objectives identified in the Communication Action Plans will also be reviewed annually and new targets set at the beginning of each academic year.

Performance Indicators

We will measure success of the policy by:

- Reviewing annually with all staff that they are developing their understanding of the value of Total Communication
- Checking that each student has specific, documented information relating to communication
- Annually reviewing that action identified in plans has taken place and targets have been achieved/ worked towards
- Analysing data to check that students identified as previously making less than expected progress to have made expected progress
- Seeking feedback from staff after CPD sessions to evaluate the success of these
- Providing annual questionnaires for staff to review how confident they are planning and delivering a range of communication approaches
- Ensuring through observations that all leaders of learning have an toolbox of strategies for assessing and supporting individual students' communication needs

Management plans

The SLT will ensure that the policy is being implemented and observed through:

- Observations/ learning walks and drop ins which note the quality of total communication support and any changes in practice
- Analysing and moderating data regularly to monitor progress and highlight areas for development
- Attendance at EHCPs
- Quality assurance exercises to review documents for individuals
- Monitor SaLT input

Review programme

This policy is to be reviewed in June 2019 to check that it is still current and relevant.

NB. Please read 'Communication action plan 2017-2018' 'Communication 3 year action plan', 'Possible Communication Approaches' alongside this policy.