



# Communication Policy

Approved by Governors: *Curriculum and Progress Committee*

Minute Number: 20.4/16 (C/P) - 5<sup>th</sup> May 2016

## INTRODUCTION

### Purpose

Ashgate Croft School is an all aged special school that caters for pupils with moderate, severe and profound/multiple learning difficulties as well as complex medical needs.

Good communication enables inclusive relationships and supports individuals to have choice, control and greater independence. It underpins all learning and therefore we are committed to providing a total communication environment, where all forms of communication are equally valued and where language and communication is seen as an integral part of the curriculum.

All new staff are given a copy of the Communication policy to highlight the communication ethos at Ashgate Croft school.

### Aims

Communication at Ashgate Croft focuses on promoting language development through:

- To implement the Ashgate Croft Communication Charter (see Appendix). Every class is to display the Charter on their wall and adhere to this charter.
- Access to an environment in which a child has the need, desire and motivation to communicate.
- Frequent and consistent opportunities for pupils to communicate.
- Access to a means of communicating (whether verbal or other) with identified progression.
- An environment where all means/modes of communication are of equal value.

- A consistent response to every communicative attempt.
- Appropriate augmentative and alternative systems of communication.

## PROCEDURES AND PRACTICE

### Teaching

#### **Symbols:**

- Should only be used for key words in sentences and phrases
- should be used on every corridor display and relevant class displays
- Photos, pictures, symbols - should be used to help pupils give meaning to words (both verbal and written). 'Communication in Print' is used to produce the symbols
- Symbols should be used across the school for pupil timetables and schedules
- Symbols used for timetable sessions can be found on Class Shared (location)
- Pupils may use symbols as part of their communication systems (e.g. through PECS, eye pointing, communication aids etc). Pupils should have the correct symbols accessible to them and that they are updated accordingly.

#### **Makaton:**

- Every member of staff to have at least one hour, job specific, Makaton training annually.
- Every member of staff should sign as much as possible throughout the day whilst working with pupils
- Some pupils may also require on body signing, which can be found on class shared K:\RESOURCES\RESOURCES\COMMUNICATION\Timetable objects of reference sybols and K:\RESOURCES\On body signing

#### **Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS):**

- A large number of pupils at Ashgate Croft school use PECS as a form of communication, therefore, care should be taken to ensure that the books are up to date, staff should regularly have refresher training (annually).
- Information on setting books up, sizes of symbols and PECS advice is on class shared:

#### **Intensive Interaction:**

- Some classes use Intensive Interaction as a form of communication with their pupils.

#### **Eye Gaze:**

- There is Eye Gaze technology in various classes. Training will be provided if staff are based in classes where eye gaze technology is used.

#### **AAC devices:**

- Specific pupils use I pads which have communication apps on them. In school these are: Sonoflex, Widgetgo, Words for Life (LAMP). The I pads should only have the communication app on them, no other games. Staff should ensure that they seek training needed to assist pupils with these AAC devices.
- Some pupils use Big Mack switches, staff should take time to ensure they know how to work these. These pupils may take home a Big Mack in order to share what has happened

during the day with their families who will return the Big Mack daily with their comments on.

### **Objects of reference:**

- Some classes use visual timetables and timetables with Objects of reference attached to them. These are to be shown at the appropriate times in order for pupils to begin to understand what is about to happen to them.

### **Additional cues:**

- can be used to aid understanding and communication (e.g. sound, people, song, place etc). Pupils can also be cued in to the day of the week by a colour and smell and piece of music. The colours are: Mon - red, Tue - Orange, Wed - yellow, Thurs - green, Fri - Blue.
- Some pupils may also access communication through Moon or Braille with support from the Visual Impairment service.

### **Pupil Profiles:**

- Class teachers are responsible for compiling information needed to create and update (at least annually) pupil profiles.
- Views for the pupil profiles should also be sought from the pupils, parents and professionals involved.
- Pupil profiles must be available in the pupil's classroom.

*Staff should use a variety of games, strategies, teaching styles and resources to encourage all forms of communication.*

It is the responsibility of the class staff to make sure any communication aids/devices/methods (e.g. PECS book/eye gaze/Makaton/symbols/big macks/intensive interaction) are available to the pupils and are used consistently by all staff. This includes: ensuring they are working (with charged batteries) and report any damages or problems immediately. Ensuring that they are able to programme the aids and technology and that they are up to date with symbols.

The speech and language therapist, communication co-ordinator and class teacher work together to assess appropriate communication aids for individuals and this is reviewed at least annually. If class teachers feel that a particular aid is not appropriate for an individual pupil then this should be reported to the communication co-ordinator.

### **Assessment**

- Pupil profiles must have a communication section on them, this should be completed every year regarding the forms of communication used by the pupils. This is done to ascertain, alongside the Speech and language therapist and communication co-ordinator, that the most appropriate form of communication (including appropriate communication aid) is being used and encouraged.
- There is a folder in Class Shared (under Communication) which holds a number of assessment sheets, blank proformas and information regarding communication for staff

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- Every pupil should have at least one communication target (functional literacy) as part of their Personal Skills targets, however, some pupils with PMLD may have two.
- Pupils' speaking and listening progress is monitored through B squared. This progress is monitored three times per year and support is provided where needed.
- The Speech and Language therapist may set targets which will need to be followed by the class staff
- The class teacher will need to keep their own, daily, assessments in regards to communication.

### Role of the Subject Leader (in liaison with Speech and Language Therapist)

- Give support and feedback to teachers to promote communication in their class
- Provide staff training
- Provide parent/carerer training
- Provide other professionals training
- Provide a 'Total Communication Environment
- Provide annual report to Deputy head
- Work with Assistant Heads to ensure their teams are familiar with the Communication Policy.
- Discussions on the pupils' progress will take place with teacher at regular intervals.
- Keep knowledge updated on documentation from the government on the National Curriculum and Early Years policies.
- Keep own CPD updated.
- Feedback to governors on progress.
- Manage budget for communication
- Speaking and listening gaps and progress in speaking and listening monitored three times per year and meetings with teachers are held to discuss support.
- Meet with parents, who's children have communication difficulties, annually to discuss their child's communication, what school can offer and how the pupil communicates at home.
- Oversee working party and staff with specific communication roles.
- Drop in sessions are held every half term
- Learning walks

### Parental Involvement

Parents are informed of the AAC modalities that their children will access whilst in school in a variety of ways; Speech and Language Therapist visits, Annual review reports, letters home and parent/carers' evening. In addition to this, we offer a specific communication meeting with the communication co-ordinator for parents/carers to access, at this point parents can give information on their child's communication, gain advice on how to use the different equipment through school and when training is being held throughout the school year. Makaton packs can be borrowed from school, enabling learning at home to take place.

Some pupils may take Big Macks home to practice communicating, explanation letters will accompany this and a slip will need sending back to school to acknowledge liability.

### Equal Opportunities

The school's Equality policy should be consulted. All teachers should ensure that their practice reflects the Equality policy.

### Monitoring of the policy

Communication lead monitors the policy. Reviewed bi annually by School Governors.

### Appendix

#### 1. Communication Charter

#### Explanation of terms:

AAC - Augmentative and alternative communication.

Total Communication Environment - This is a holistic view of communication, often using a range of modalities or even thinking "outside the box" to create a system of communication that works for an individual. Other definitions of Total Communication include:

- Using any means and every means to communicate and/or receive a message.
- Creating a best fit system of communication to facilitate an individual to communicate, optimizing his skills and reducing his impairments.
- A "catch-all" that ensures that an individual has access to some means of communication.
- Facilitating and assisting each person by providing supports and opportunities to become involved and to actualize their potential.

RRSA Articles: 12 - The right to give an opinion, 13 - The right to share what you think, 23 - The right to a special Education, 28 - The right to have a high quality Education.