



**pathfield**  
SCHOOL

Inspiring interaction

## Communication Policy

Adopted by Governors	<b>Avril Burrows</b>
Date	<b>15.10.15</b>
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Policy/Procedure checked by/date	<b>Claire May Stuart Allman Laura Sommerville Sharon Facey September 2015</b>

Pathfield School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

This policy will support, promote and be applied with due regard to the requirements of the

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*inspire • empower • enable*

## Communication Policy

### Introduction

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for communication at Pathfield School. All new staff are given a copy of the policy to highlight the communication ethos at Pathfield School.

Pathfield School is an all aged special school that caters for pupils with severe and profound/multiple learning difficulties as well as complex medical needs. All pupils have a communication and interaction difficulty. Communication underpins all learning and therefore we are committed to providing a total communication environment.

### Aims

Our school aims are to:

1. Adopt a total communication approach throughout school, where pupils have access to their own means of communication throughout the day.
2. Develop means of communication appropriate to each child's individual needs.
3. Create opportunities for communication throughout the curriculum to enable each child to communicate to the best of their ability.

### Pupils Starting School

On entry to school the majority of children are already known to the Speech and Language Therapist (SALT). If a pupil is not known, the school can refer to the service.

A pupils' communication needs are assessed within the school setting using a combination of individual assessments; classroom observations and liaison between staff and family.

Pupil's needs are best met when education and SALT work closely together in the following ways:

- SALT/Communication HLTA observation in classes to share good practice and negotiate further communication targets within classroom setting.
- Joint planning and delivery of lessons between the communication HLTA and classroom staff.
- Training opportunities are provided by SALT to all staff to raise awareness of best practice and to make the referral process clear
- Education staff to be supported in generalisation of new skills being taught.
- SALT to deliver specific training according to individual pupil needs.
- Communication targets are embedded across all areas of the curriculum.
- Keeping other professionals updated on the means of communication for pupils they work with (e.g. Physios, occupational therapists, etc).

## Monitoring and Evaluation

The importance of monitoring and evaluating a pupil's progress is central to their development. As with all communication methods, regular opportunities to use these are vital for the pupil to achieve success. Signs, symbols, photographs, objects of reference and communication aids must **always**, with appropriate support from staff, be available to the pupils:

- Within the class
- Around school
- In the community

The HLTA and SALT will monitor pupil's progress. The class teacher is to continually monitor and evaluate pupil's progress in the area of communication. Support will be given as needed and/or requested.

## Communication Methods in School

At Pathfield School we adopt a Total Communication approach using a range of alternative methods to support and encourage two way communication and speech and language development. These are not used in isolation and a pupil may use several of these methods.

## Makaton Signing

This is a signing system used alongside speech to develop a pupil's understanding of language and their ability to express themselves. The use of signing throughout the school day by staff greatly enhances a child's ability to be an effective communicator.

## Objects of Reference

Some pupils will need to use objects of reference to aid their communication and understanding of language. An object of reference will be a real object that represents an activity or a place.

## Symbols / Photographs

The use of symbols/photographs provides valuable support and is encouraged even if pupils are not using PECS. It is the responsibility of class staff to provide symbol/photo vocabulary as appropriate. Some pupils use:

- Picture Exchange Communication System – PECS (Frost and Bondy)
- PECS is where pupils learn to exchange symbols/photographs to communicate.

### Communication Aids

A range of voice output communication aids are used throughout the school. These include iPads.

### Communication Books

These are indexed books of symbols that can be used to aid a pupil's communication. Initially these are produced by the SALT/Communication HLTA and are then the responsibility of the class staff and they require updating regularly.

### Communication Grids

All pupils have a Communication grid detailing their communication needs for expressive and receptive language, and also Total Communication requirements for the differentiation of learning resources. These are used to inform behaviour plans as well as to support pupil learning. These are updated by Communication HLTA, in conjunction with SALT where necessary, and Laura Somerville.

### Pupil one page profile

The class teacher is responsible for writing and updating these plans, seeking advice from SALT and Communication HLTA as appropriate. These should be reviewed and updated once a year or earlier if information changes significantly. These give people vital information about a pupil's individual needs including personal information, as well as how they communicate.

### Home/School Communication

In our school we aim to have clear and effective communications with all parents/carers and with the wider community. Effective communications enable us to share our aims and values, through keeping parents well informed about school life. This reinforces the important role that parents play in supporting the school.

Good communication between the school and the home is essential, and children achieve more when schools and parents/carers work together.

We send a newsletter to parents at the end of each school week. It contains general details of school events and activities and a copy is forwarded by email as arranged and is available on the school website. We send other letters of a general nature when necessary.

At the beginning of each term all teachers send parents of the children in their classes details of the work to be covered during the forthcoming term.

Children in all classes have a home-school diary. This enables parents to record a wide range of information that they wish to share regularly with the teacher. Teachers use the home-school diary to record achievements, and as a regular channel for communication with parents.

The school encourages parents to share any issues about their child at the earliest opportunity. Staff meet with parents as soon as it is possible.

All pupils have a person centred annual review to evaluate and develop an action plan regarding all aspects of the child's life. Representation from all professional services working with the family attend.

We arrange two parents evening meetings for parents in the year. These are evening meetings to explain areas of our curriculum and discuss progress. A club is offered to assist with child care issues to enable parents to attend. Parents are invited into school prior to residential visits regarding the planning and content of the visit.

If a child is absent from school, and we have had no indication of the reason, the school secretary will contact a parent (by telephone, if possible) to find out the reason for the absence.

### Professional Development

Identifying training needs of staff is vital to ensure continued progress for our pupils. These needs will be identified and met as follows:

- An induction package for new staff where they begin to access an understanding of Total Communication. It is the school's responsibility to identify the staff's training needs and the SALT/Communication HLTA will support the implementation of these modules.
- Total Communication from Communication HLTA to new groups of Petroc students working within school as extended placements of half-term or more.
- Staff are responsible for identifying their own training needs and can apply to Senior Management to discuss relevant courses. This may be through the performance management structure or at any other appropriate time.

### Monitoring and Review

This policy will be regularly monitored, and will be reviewed by the communication lead teacher and curriculum committee governors.

