



pathfield
SCHOOL

Inspiring interaction

Communication Policy

Adopted by Governors Date	Full Governing Body 29.11.22
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Policy / Procedure checked by Date	Stuart Allman / Cat Jones September 2022

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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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. Many of our pupils have a communication and interaction difficulty. Communication underpins all learning and therefore we are committed to providing a consistent, enriching, Total Communication environment.

Aims

Our school aims are to:

1. Adopt a consistent 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 pupil's 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 the 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 the pupil's progress. The class teacher is to continually monitor and evaluate the 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 the following 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. It is good practice for staff to model the use of Makaton when communicating with both fellow staff members and our pupils.

- 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. Objects of reference are consistent throughout the school, and examples can be found on the school server for staff to replicate where necessary.

- Symbols / Photographs

It is the responsibility of class staff to provide symbol/photo vocabulary as appropriate. At Pathfield we use the 'InPrint' programme to create our symbols. This allows us to be consistent in our use of symbols across the school. Examples of key/ everyday symbols are located on the school server for all staff members to check and ensure continuity. The use of symbols/photographs provides valuable support and is encouraged through our writing, daily routines and reading throughout the school day.

- Communication Aids

A range of voice output communication aids are used throughout the school. These include iPads, Tablets, GoTalk devices, recording panels and buttons.

- Playground Communication Boards

There are Communication Boards situated in our outdoor environments to ensure our playgrounds are inclusive to all pupils. It augments a pupil's ability to be a part of whatever activity is taking place on the playground alongside their peers. The boards allow staff to encourage socialising and also give the pupils the opportunity to communicate their needs, make requests and to communicate and play with their friends. Staff exploring the outdoor areas should model the use of the boards by pointing to the symbols when asking questions or suggesting activities.

- 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 as they require updating regularly.

- Communication Grids

All pupils have a Communication Grid detailing their communication needs for expressive and receptive language, and Total Communication requirements for the differentiation of learning resources. These are used to inform behaviour plans as well as to support pupil learning and are updated by our Communication HLTA, in conjunction with SALT. They are to be displayed in the classroom so that all adults working with our pupils are aware of their personalised communication needs.

Pupil One Page Profile

The class teacher is responsible for writing and updating these plans annually, seeking advice from our Annual Review Facilitators, SALT and the Communication HLTA as appropriate. The One Page Profile is a celebration of our pupils and a detailed description of what they like and dislike. They give all adults working with the pupil vital information about their individual needs, personal information as well as how they communicate. Along with the pupil's Communication Grid, they are to be displayed in all classrooms throughout the school.

Parent Workshops and Makaton Training

Consistency and routine are hugely important to our pupils' communication needs. For them to have enriching and supportive experiences that help them to develop their daily communication both in school and at home we will offer opportunities for parents to come into school for support in using symbols and communication aids such as GoTalks and Ipad/tablet effectively. There will also be Makaton training opportunities for parents, as well as Makaton videos posted on the school website.

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 staff training needs and the SALT/Communication HLTA will support the implementation of these modules.
- 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 reviewed by the Communication Lead Teacher and reviewed and approved the Pathfield Governing Body every two years.