

Oak Field School and Sports College

Policy for Communication

Reviewed 22nd September 2016
To be reviewed September 2018

Philosophy

- Every student is entitled to a broad and enriching Language and Communication curriculum.
- The Communication policy should ensure that it encompasses the National Curriculum and meets all Student needs.
- Any attempt by a student to communicate should be responded to in some way. Whatever the extent of learning difficulty, every student has a definable set of communication skills. It should always be assumed that the student is attempting to communicate and if communication is not possible, or difficult using conventional methods, other methods of communication are sought, e.g. non-verbal communication, sign, symbol, objects of reference, electronic devices, pointing etc.
- The school should ensure that due regard is given to the equal opportunities policy in the delivery of the Communication policy. The teaching of communication will ensure the recognition of the diversity of the curriculum needs of pupils of different ethnic groups, gender, disability and age range. Consequently, the resources and activities used will ensure the appropriate balance in terms of equal opportunities for all pupils. Throughout the school the planning, assessment and evaluation of progress in communication will take into account pupils from different ethnic groups, gender, disability and age range.

Aims

- Oak Field School is committed to providing an environment which stimulates development and effective communication amongst all its students regardless of their communication ability. This environment is not limited to the classroom or to formal teaching sessions but extends to all experiences the student gains within school.
- The school encourages language development in all pupils and aims to develop the individual's skills of communication. To meet these needs a whole variety of systems should be addressed – e.g. body language, all the senses, signing, speaking, listening, intensive interaction, use of symbols, objects of reference, support to point or type and a variety of electronic communication equipment.
- Oak Field School is committed to providing an environment for **total communication** – that is –
 - Natural Communication Clues
 - Sound Clues
 - Body Communication Clues
 - Person Communication Clues
 - Multi-Sensory Activity Clues
 - Multi-Sensory Room Clues

- Oak Field School aims to develop equal interaction between **Means of communication, Reasons and Opportunities for communicating.**
- Oak Field School is committed to the use of Makaton first and foremost and other signing systems if necessary by staff and students to support Communication.
- Oak Field School aims to work towards the use of the formal skills of speaking, comprehension of the spoken word, reading and writing.
- The communication curriculum will endeavour to support, encourage and motivate **all** pupils to reach their full potential. All pupils will, therefore, have opportunities to develop effective knowledge, communication and positive self-images in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and respect.

Strategies for putting policy in to practice

- Communication is fundamental to every aspect of school and home life and staff should be acutely aware of its importance within the curriculum.
- Staff working with pupils with Profound and Multiple Learning disability use the natural communication clues and responses of the students themselves as a basis for their non-verbal shared communication. In addition, multi-sensory clues and objects of reference are used to support understanding, teaching and learning. In addition to differentiated and personalised communication (see **assessment**), all students should have the opportunity to encounter a range of spoken language modelled by adults using lively informal conversation, formal, rich, technical and poetic language expressed using correct grammatical forms.
- ‘Speech’ (means of communication) may take the form of non-verbal signs and symbols, gestures, body language, facial expression, pointing, objects and pictures or writing; but from a student’s first day in school he or she should be placed in situations where the **reasons** for and **opportunities** to communicate are facilitated. This includes allowing time for students to initiate and respond without interrupting or pre-empting needs.
- Functional communication is focused upon via three main areas and requires interaction between them :-

Means	-	How we communicate
Reasons	-	Why we communicate
Opportunity	-	When, where and with whom, we communicate.

Functional skills groups may be used to develop skills in a particular means of communication. Mode of communication could sometimes, but not always, inform groupings of students within lessons.

- Targeted language, communication, speaking and listening sessions may focus upon one or more communication skills. These could take place during News-Time, P.E., Maths, Art, or any other curriculum area, but the teacher may be particularly focusing upon For example, facial-expression, eye-contact, turn-taking or questioning and will use a variety of approaches according to student needs and abilities.

- The communication curriculum aims to be age appropriate and this should be reflected in the planning and delivery of sessions throughout the school.

Roles and responsibilities

- The subject leader will have responsibility for Communication across the school as part of the curriculum and in its broader sense ensuring that all staff are aware of the policy and are trained as appropriate. The subject leader will liaise with other colleagues (Speech and Language Therapy, Teacher of the Deaf, University research project leaders) and outside agencies such as the Makaton charity to ensure agreed common approaches and staff expertise.
- Key Stages will be responsible for the planning and delivery of programmes and the total communication environment with support and guidance from Speech and Language Therapy as required. Key Stage leaders will monitor progress and quality of provision.
- Oak Field class teachers and their teams will work together with Speech and Language Therapists, Teacher of the Deaf, Educational Psychologist and other colleagues (e.g. University of Nottingham Motor Planning research project) to ensure that individual needs are met and appropriately ambitious targets are set and worked towards.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

- All students at Oak Field School are to be assessed in respect of their communication using the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile, P level indicators and accredited unit assessments documents or other appropriate assessments used in school. Assessments will also be carried out by the Speech and Language Therapists as appropriate. Levels achieved are to be reported as part of the annual English data for the school.
- Students should also be assessed using the **Derbyshire Language Scheme** Rapid Screening Test on entry to school and later if appropriate. This gives an indication of their level of comprehension of spoken language which should inform teaching.
- Achievements may also be recorded in a range of formats appropriate to the mode of communication e.g. written, symbolled, CD/ DVD, e-portfolio and Classroom Monitor Assessment Data and Evidence.

Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

- Attainment, progress and quality of teaching will be monitored by the subject leader and key stage leaders. Data will form part of the school's Self Evaluation Process and produce priorities for development.
- The effectiveness of new approaches will be reviewed by the subject leader and relevant colleagues using baseline and review data.
- The policy will be reviewed annually by the subject leader with changes submitted to the governing body for approval.