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1. Introduction

Communication is at the core of all our work at Horton Lodge School and is embedded within the Curriculum and the wider school day. It is fundamental to the lives and learning of children at Horton Lodge. The freedom to communicate is a basic equal opportunity human right. We recognise that the inability to communicate impacts adversely on social, emotional, cognitive, language development, and wellbeing. Developing communication skills is the responsibility of all staff and they should have the knowledge, skills, support and training to ensure that all children reach their communicative potential.

Effective communication incorporates body language, facial expression, gestures and tone of voice. It may also include more formal modes of alternative and augmentative communication (AAC). The Ace Centre Advisory Trust refer to AAC as any means by which an individual can supplement or replace spoken communication.

2. Aims

At Horton Lodge School we aim to:

- Be a 'total communication' environment, this means that we recognise and respond to all communicative attempts in whatever form (see Appendix 1)
- Be inclusive to every child's need and to show school cohesion through the wearing of the green 'more to say' wristband on the right wrist by both children (where appropriate) and adults and for adults to wear a single page PODD book upon their person.
- Ensure that every child is given every opportunity to work towards being an autonomous communicator. This involves being able to say whatever they want to say, to whoever they want to say it to and whenever they want to say it. This aim highlights early progression skill, once the child is secure in becoming an autonomous communicator, they will be taught the etiquette of communication. This including; developing their listening skills, responding and/or commenting appropriately, developing patience in communicating and not 'talking' over someone else.
- Ensure that adults around the child have the understanding and skills to support the child effectively.
- Immerse the pupils in an environment where their communication systems are used by adults across the day.
- Work closely with families and outside agencies

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Leadership Team:

- To ensure staff adhere to the Communication Policy
- To ensure that all staff have basic communication training in a range of communication strategies as part of their induction
- To monitor and support progression of children's communication skills

- Teachers to complete a communication profile on each child in their class that uses non-verbal skills to communicate and to review these periodically. These will be visibly displayed within the classroom and shared with Kiplings residential facility where appropriate.
- To support staff to develop their knowledge and skills of communication strategies
- To have an oversight and understanding of the range of communication strategies used within school
- To identify funds for purchasing resources and equipment and for accessing relevant training

3.2 Subject / Area Leader

- Stacy Dawson and Emily Osborne lead in communication
- All Subject Leaders have responsibilities in the areas of: Knowing, supporting, monitoring and changing
- Provide up to date CPD opportunities to all staff working across the school as well as providing opportunities for parents to develop their understanding and skills using their child's AAC.
- Ensure the 'total communication' approach is maintained and consistent across the school.

3.3 School Support Staff:

- Develop children's communication skills across the day
- Ensure all child have access to individual communication systems at all times
- Have high expectations and standards and always assume competence in terms of the communication of each child
- Be a model as a communicator
- Record development and progress
- Provide meaningful contexts for each child to develop as a communicator
- Identify their own professional development needs
- Maintain close communication with home
- Keep communication aids in good working order and to report any losses or breakages promptly to SLT

4. Developing Communication across the school

The approaches used to support communication are individualised to each child's communication needs. Below are some of the approaches that may be used within the School. These are just some of the approaches that may be used and should not be viewed as an exhaustive list:

- Time Tables: Some classes and child within school will have a visual timetable and now and next boards. The use of visual planning supports difficulties with respective language and increases independence.
- Communication Aids: there are a number of different communication aids used by the children within school. These include low tech options such as communication books up to high tech aids such as eye gaze systems.

- PODD – Pragmatic Organised Dynamic Display - A way of organising vocabulary for communication at any time. PODD uses Boardmaker PCS colour symbols, The intervention used with PODD is aided language stimulation. This is a strategy by which adults or communication partners use the system to speak to the individual, (pointing and saying the symbol label) to teach them what they could say, when to say it and who to say it to. In PODD communication books and page sets for high tech systems (windows and iOs) vocabulary is organised according to communication function and conversational discourse requirements.
- Additional Language Display (ALD) communication boards are used to support specific activities.
- Objects of reference. This is a communication support system whereby particular objects associated with particular activities are used to communicate an activity that is about to take place. Items are selected that are meaningful to the child.
- Sensory cues (e.g. daily aroma, physical touch, personal identifiers).
- Makaton: Makaton is a form on sign supported English. It is used alongside speech and can support understanding of spoken language as well as being used by child as a form expressive language.
- Switches: These are additional to the various AAC approaches and are used by child to enhance other AAC forms. They can be personalised based on children’s needs e.g. - to indicate they have ‘more to say’. A range of switches are accessible based on children’s needs e.g.- Big Mack, Duel switches and talking tiles.
- Continuous modelling of the green ‘more to say’ wristband by adults and wearing a single page PODD book upon their person.

5. Assessment

Communication and interaction is a domain on the SEND Code of Practice. Progress in communication is monitored through tagging evidence on Evidence for Learning. Where a child has Outcomes for Communication and Interaction on their EHCP this outcome along with short term IEP targets are assessed using the MAPP Continuing Skills Progression.

6. Monitoring arrangements

- The Communication policy is presented to the Governing Body.
- A subject leader report for communication is presented to governors annually
- It will also be reviewed within the two year cycle or earlier if required.

7. Links with other policies

This Communication Policy is linked to our:

- The EYFS policy
- English Policy

- The Equals curriculum policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Assessment Policy

Appendix 1

Communication Bill of Rights

to be given real choices

to say no, refuse and reject choices

to ask for what I want

to share my feelings

to be heard and responded to even if the answer is no

to ask for and get attention and interaction

to have and use my speech system all the time

ask and know about my schedule and world

SCHEDULE	
1.	bus
2.	reading
3.	math
4.	lunch
5.	recess

to be taught how to communicate

I have the right:

to have my speech system in working order and to have a back up

to be a full and equal member of my community

to be treated with respect and dignity

to be spoken with, not about

to be communicated with in a sensitive manner