



Communication Policy

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School Business Manager:		Date:	08/04/2025
Headteacher:		Date:	25/04/2025

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1. Adult to Pupil Communication

Our school is a very rich communication environment and we should strive to ensure pupils have opportunity to explore, access and use it. Adults should foster a positive verbal and non-verbal communicative environment that promotes respect for all parties.

We have high expectations for our pupils and so model polite and appropriate communicative manner. We support and motivate pupils to respond to and engage in communication with adults.

All adults involved in the pupil's life should be aware of their communicative ability and targets thereby enabling a holistic approach to supporting communication. Communication Profiles and Snapshots for individual pupils help adults to communicate appropriately with them.

When we interact with pupils, we ensure that our mode of communication takes into account: the child's functional communication ability (with regards to expressive and comprehension), their age and the context.

- Adult body language, facial expression and positioning help to ensure that pupils are in the best position to access adult communication.
- The context in which an adult is communicating with a pupil will be important so we think about the environment e.g. it is easier to see the adults face if the light source is not behind the adult.
- Clearly a calm accessible environment is most conducive to accurate communication.
- Pupils will need varying amounts of time to respond - it is important to allow this time before repeating or rephrasing
- Adult communication needs to be direct and precise so that pupils understand e.g. use the pupil's name to gain their attention initially
- The majority of our pupils benefit from signing to support spoken language. This may take the form of Makaton or tactile sign. Makaton is used throughout the school as part of our total communication ethos.
- The use of visual prompts also supports pupils' understanding e.g. object cues; visual 'writing with symbols' symbols; actual objects.
- Where appropriate proper, full, polite sentences are modelled providing a precise and effective model of speech for our pupils.

In general, pupils' needs are best met when education staff parents and **Speech and Language Therapists** (SaLT) work closely together in the following ways:

- Initial assessment once in the context of school by the SaLT.
- SaLT observation in classes to share good practice and negotiate further communication goals within classroom settings



- Joint writing of communication outcomes
- Joint planning and delivery of lessons
- Education staff attend individual and group therapy sessions as appropriate to support generalisation of new skills being taught
- Baseline level of training for all staff and specific training according to individual needs
- Regular and close liaison with home/carers often including home visits which are jointly carried out by SALT and appropriate class teacher.

Educational Psychologists provide advice with regards to each pupil's developmental level of language comprehension and functional use. They may use a variety of assessment tools. This advice should form the basis of an individual pupil's language targets which are shared with all relevant adults.

We all use **Makaton signing** as part of a total communication ethos and environment. It is always used alongside speech except where it is used in conjunction with gesture e.g. pointing to an object. All staff will receive training to ensure that we all use the same signs. We need to be using the same signs throughout the school to enable pupils to identify, copy and learn each sign in a variety of contexts. Makaton and British Sign Language are separate signing systems and therefore it is recommended that they are not interchanged. Supplementary signs would need to be agreed as a school.

Tactile signing may be appropriate, especially for pupils with sensory impairments. An agreed vocabulary of tactile signs can be used e.g. 'hello'; 'finished' and 'next'.

Activity Cues are available for each subject and can be used with pupils to support understanding when transitioning between spaces or subjects. Where possible these should be used routinely and peers supported in understanding their use (inclusion).

A variety of **photos and pictures of real objects**, people and places are used to support communication and ensure that concepts are developed (and differences in appearance accepted).

TOBIs : (True Object Based Icon) A T.O.B.I. can be a line drawing, scanned photograph, etc., which is cut out in the actual shape or outline of the item it represents. Symbol shape, which the child can both see and feel, appears to assist the child in more readily understanding a 2-dimensional representation.

'Communication In Print' Inprint Widgit PCS symbols are used as the default for symbol work. Symbols are used to inform pupils of what is happening; what has happened and what will happen e.g. visual timetables and 'now/next' cards. Symbols are also used communicatively to request, respond, recap, question and to comment, so adults need to understand how this works for individual pupils. Adults wear functional symbol supported lanyards to increase communication opportunities across the day and in all environments.

Augmentative Communication Aids VOCAS (Voice output communication aids) are used by a number of pupils in the school. Adults need to understand how these work and be able to supply suitable vocabulary for pupil access.

It is important that pupils have the opportunity to see adults writing as they move through the school.



Teachers need to embed communication across the **curriculum** when planning. This will enable potential difficulties to be identified and new signs and symbols to be researched e.g. subject specific vocabulary in science and music.

Effective, functional communication is clearly vital to successful teaching and learning and as such should be highlighted in lesson **planning** and **observations**.

Communication outcomes have been developed using the '**Hertfordshire Community Health Trusts Communication Framework**' (a developmentally evidence based model) which is used by teachers to ensure consistency of acknowledgment and understanding of pupil's baseline communication level. All pupils are baselined using the framework and this informs setting on communication outcomes.

2. Pupil to Pupil Communication

Communication between pupils is very important. It promotes social interaction and encourages good relationships and friendships. It provides opportunities for speaking and listening and comprehension skills. Pupil to pupil interaction is encouraged and viewed as positive behaviour.

Effective communication reduces anxiety, frustration and negative exchanges. It has a positive impact on pupil wellbeing and learning. Opportunities for positive communicative interaction will be identified throughout the day.

3. Verbal

The aim for all pupils is to achieve meaningful and effective expressive communication and where possible verbal communication/speech. Appropriate verbal communication is modelled by staff, pupils and parents.

4. Support

It is recognised that every pupil has communication needs. Advice and support is provided to each class to encourage pupil interaction by the Speech and Language Therapy Department (SaLT). For pupil's on case load, focused outcomes are set by the Speech and Language Therapist to promote pupil exchanges jointly with relevant class teachers. Alongside this, Communication Profiles and snapshots for each pupil are agreed by SaLT, parents and class teacher and are reviewed at least annually.

5. Non-Verbal

We recognise that not all pupils are able to communicate their needs and requests verbally.

Non-verbal pupils are provided, as appropriate, with object activity cues; pictures, TOBIs (true object based icons) photos; symbols, speech output switches, VOCAS offering AAC software and the written word to communicate their needs, and when interacting with other pupils.



6. School to Parents Communication

The school is committed to providing open and regular communication with parents and carers. It is recognized that there are different forms of communication and these may include:

- School App (Newsletters, and general correspondence)
- Weekly Bulletin
- Tapestry
- School Website
- Email
- Telephone
- Twice yearly parent consultations
- EHC Plan Review documents: reports from teachers, SaLT; Specialists; Health Professionals (including the Nursing team; Speech and Language Therapists; Physiotherapist and Occupational Therapist), Attendance records
- Educational Psychologist
- Clinical Psychologist
- Services for Young People (SfYP) Information

6.1. Class Email / Tapestry

Each class now has a dedicated email address which is used to communicate with parents electronically.

Tapestry is an online tool which will be used to share pupil achievements and progress through photos and videos.

Types of information included may include: the day at school; behaviour; timetable; health; events; lunch details; requests; replies to queries and pupil progress (Tapestry).

Discussions via telephone or face-to-face meetings will be logged by school staff and held on the pupil's file.

6.2. Language

All communication must be written in full English language.

Translations will be available, if requested. Translations will take no less than 4 weeks and therefore will need to be requested well in advance.

Communications may need to be sealed in an envelope for the purpose of maintaining confidentiality.

'Communication In Print' may be used so that pupils can access information alongside their parents or carers.



6.3. Photos

Photographs are taken and used to celebrate success and to evidence achievement. They are a positive part of our culture and ethos to record outcomes of pupil learning. Photographic evidence may be used in school for the purpose of evidencing enjoyment and achievement.

In line with the General Data Protection Regulations consent is obtained from parents/guardian for photography and videoing of pupils in school, this is part of the school admissions procedure. Consent is obtained for photographs to be used on display boards in the school, in the media, in publications, website and social media. A list of those pupils who do not have permission for their photograph to be taken is held centrally.

6.4. Confidentiality

The majority of correspondence will be sent via the School App which provides a confidential secure means to communicate.

All information written to parents is confidential to them. Any others who need to be included will also be informed at this point.

Amwell View School and Specialist Sports College is promoting a paperless working environment and as such there will not be any hardcopy correspondence sent home to parents/carers, however, if there was a need this will be addressed to the expected reader in a sealed envelope and sent home via the pupil. Correspondence may not be shared with any other party without the permission of the author.

All communication received from parents/carers to the school will have the same degree of confidentiality and shared with relevant staff members.

7. Staff Communication

There are systems in place which allow effective communication between all staff at Amwell View School. All staff members have a responsibility to check and use the communication systems and share knowledge with others where appropriate. The following act as a vehicle for communication between adults at Amwell View School;

- Induction
- Full staff meetings
- Friday briefings
- Teacher staff meetings
- SLT meetings
- Team meetings
- School policies and procedures
- Staff handbook
- School website
- Email
- School App
- Pigeon hole system for all members of staff



- Staffroom notice boards
- Absence notice board
- Front Office is a central point of communication

7.1. Class Team

Communication between all members of the class team is essential to the effective management of a classroom, and the delivery of teaching and learning.

The following systems allow communication between class team members to take place:

- Communication meetings
- Effective use of 15 minute slots at beginning and end of the day.
- Class file
- Day plans
- Classroom notice boards
- Sharing of long term, medium term and short term plans.
- Outcomes set, shared, discussed and displayed.
- Staff meeting minutes on the shared drive
- Access to pupil files.

7.2. Specialist Team Communication

- Joint outcome setting
- Planned meetings for sharing information.
- SaLT meetings with Headteacher
- Monthly Multi-Disciplinary Team Safeguarding Meeting
- Noticeboards

7.3. Mentoring / Support communication

- Induction process/ meetings
- Induction books/ files
- TES mentor meetings
- Early Career Teacher meetings
- Apprentice review meetings and support
- Support and application process in place for colleagues seeking further qualification.
- Observation process and feedback
- Team leader support for specific issues.
- Peer observation and support
- Coaching
- Support for progress to role of a H5 TA.

7.4. Continuing Professional Development communication

- Performance management reviews
- Twilight training
- Whole school training evenings
- CPD days
- Application process for courses.



- Feedback from individual courses.
- Observation process and feedback.
- Funded opportunity and mentorship provided for Masters studies
- Bite size training sessions for TAs.

7.5. Communication with volunteers, students and external agencies

- Tours around school for visitors/ students
- Introductory talk when placement begins.
- Links with placement professionals
- Visitor sign in system
- School website
- Use of E mail

7.6. Communication with individuals with specific responsibilities

- Data Protection breach log – Data Protection Officer (DPO)
- Child protection; CPOMS (Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL))
- Reports of violent incident, RPI, accident and near misses CPOMS – SLT and Team Lead.
- Offsite visit requests and approval – Offsite Lead and Headteacher.
- Request for absence – HR Manager / Headteacher.
- Staff registers – HR Manager
- Music therapy referrals- Music Therapist
- NHS referrals
- Social Care referrals

7.7. Manner in which we communicate

We respect confidentiality.

We use clear, concise communication without ambiguity.

We hold mutual respect for all.

We have a positive, collaborative approach.

Time is planned for and allocated for discussions and meetings.

All members of the team are valued and empowered to communicate.

We foster an ethos of behaving appropriately, honestly and professionally.