

## **GREAT OAKS COMMUNICATIONS POLICY**

### **RATIONALE**

At Great Oaks we believe that every child has the right to understand and to be understood in all aspects of life. Communication underpins all areas of the curriculum and of everyday life for all pupils in our school, and it is essential that we present our pupils with a total communication environment. Opportunities for communication – verbal and non-verbal – can be found in all areas of both the formal and the informal curriculum. Some of our pupils may require a more structured approach to communication and a range of approaches and aids are used. Pupils' individual communication needs are shared regularly amongst staff, and communicated through our pen pictures and through the whole school communication register. This is all stored in the Communications folder on Sharepoint.

### **WHOLE SCHOOL AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

Our aims for an effective whole school policy and implementation of this policy are:

- To pursue the right of every pupil to have an effective and functional means of communication.
- To actively foster an inclusive communication environment giving equal status to all methods of communications and ensuring that pupils have access to their own method of communication throughout the day.
- To ensure that teaching plans and the delivery of lessons are appropriate for the communication needs of the pupils.
- To empower pupils to make choices and exert control over their environment.
- To work in partnership with parents and carers.
- To ensure carefully managed transition throughout the school.
- To ensure uniformity of communications strategies throughout all classes and departments within the school.
- Where possible, to allow pupils to be responsible for determining their preferred method of communications.
- To ensure that all staff have regular access to Communications CPD opportunities.

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

Pupils' communication needs will be assessed on entry to our school, and an individualised communication system will be developed to meet their needs.

This communications system will then be implemented throughout the day. At Great Oaks we recognise that all pupils have an important part to play in establishing a total communication environment. This is implemented through ensuring that all communications systems are visible and in use throughout the school and are regularly used and referred to across the school day.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation:**

This information is monitored, evaluated and updated through regular termly IEP reviews, meetings with other professionals, Annual Reviews, Annual pupil reports to parents and tracking progress each term and annually through CASPA

Policy approved \_\_\_\_\_

Policy to be reviewed:

## **Appendix 1**

The communications systems we currently use at Great Oaks School are:

- Objects of Reference
- TEACCH
- PECS
- Signalong
- Communication Software.

Many pupils at Great Oaks will continuously need sensory clues to ensure that the curriculum is meaningful. Much importance is placed upon the sensory approach in classes where children are functioning at the lower P levels, or have a need for sensory activities in order to enable them to access the curriculum. It is used in all areas for class based groups and in whole school planning for every national Curriculum subject. It cannot be compartmentalised into areas of learning but is more a method of approach which every member of staff must be aware of and party to. In effect, the sensory approach has to be “owned” by all who are involved in the education of the child. It begins with the routine of getting ready for school, the journey and the arrival. It continues throughout the whole of the school day – the route to the lesson being of equal importance to the lesson itself. Knowing and anticipating what will happen is essential to the understanding, and some children will need strong sensory clues in addition to spoken language.

Once the child has some awareness that he has control over part of his environment, or that their behaviours produce reactions that are responded to, they become more actively involved in their communication environment. Pupils who are communicating at this level must be provided with opportunities for purposeful or intentional communication. Pupils will be given opportunities to communicate at this level through the most appropriate system suited to their needs. When pupils are communicating spontaneously then they are able to use their communication systems more independently to access the curriculum.

Establishing a level of communication

These are procedures and monitoring which will occur during initial weeks at Great Oaks School. Pupils communication needs are assessed using a combination of information from school observations, previous school assessments and knowledge of the pupil, other professionals who have worked with the pupil and liaising with parents/carers.

Communications information is then stored in pupils individual folders in every classroom, in their communications passports, and with the Communications Co-Ordinator. Speaking and Listening P and NC levels are assessed and formally recorded each term. These are also used to inform planning through individual needs and through the planned curriculum.

The following will be recognised.

1. Awareness of the dangers of sensory “bombardment” in presenting stimuli
2. Techniques such as timing, silences, burst/pause sequences.
3. The importance of objective-free observation.
4. That a limited number of people can be involved in this information gathering.
5. That information about the seven senses is vital and that where a disability exists in more than one of these, then the learning problems are compounded.

### **Speaking and Listening**

Pupils with verbal communication skills are taught to express themselves correctly and appropriately in line with statutory requirements. Opportunities are planned in the formal curriculum i.e. literacy lessons and weekly Talkabout sessions.

Social language is taught informally: pupils are encouraged to follow the standards set by adults in the school environment to speak correctly, politely and listen to others responding appropriately.

### **Speech Therapy**

Some pupils may have SLCN as a need on their EHCP. 1:1 speech therapy is delivered wherever possible. Currently programmes are planned by a speech therapist who will assess pupils on entry and a member of the support staff who deliver programmes to individuals and groups. The speech and language therapist from Alice Kelly LTD works alongside school staff to plan, deliver, assess and review programmes for pupils who are in need of specific SALT support. These pupils are identified through level of need, concerns raised through school staff or during Annual Review meetings.

### **EAL**

Pupils for whom English is an additional language will work with their peers depending on learning ability. They will be able to access both the signed environment and spoken English. Language support assistants from the LA work with targeted pupils depending on availability and learning need.

Nov 19

Reviewed Nov 21

Next review January 23