



DELAMERE SCHOOL

Table of changes

Date	Section of Policy	Amendment
April 2023	Overview	Added: The term 'Total Communication' encompasses all aspects of alternative and augmentative communication
April 2023	Intent	Added: To make effective use of specialist staff including the SALT team
April 2023	New section	Added: collaboration with the speech and language therapy team
April 2023	Innovative practice	Added: Each classroom has been allocated a dedicated communication iPad

Communication Policy

Date of Policy: April 2023

To be reviewed: Annually

This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies:

- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Assessment and Recording Policy
- Attachment Aware Behaviour Regulation policy
- Reading Policy
- Any other relevant policies

Our vision, our values and our rights underpin all of our policies and the education we deliver. Article 3 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that: "The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions that affect children". This policy has been created to keep the children at Delamere School safe and happy.

Overview

A large proportion of pupils entering Delamere are pre-verbal.

At Delamere School communication is an integral part of the curriculum, fundamental for developing skills for life and the basis for all learning. Communication is used to enable pupils to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding across all areas of the curriculum.

The term 'Total Communication' encompasses all aspects of alternative and augmentative communication.

Intent

- For pupils to develop receptive communication skills enabling pupils to extract meaning from their environment and experiences.

- For pupils to develop functional expressive communication skills [pupil voice] in order that pupils may convey their needs, comment on their environment, make requests and express their feelings and emotions appropriate to their level of development to support their readiness for learning.
- For pupils to be encouraged and given opportunities to interact with others and develop personal relationships including responding to, initiating and engaging with others in group situations and within a range of environments.
- For pupils to develop self-esteem and confidence in order that they may communicate their ideas, interests' choices and feelings more readily to others, in order to develop and apply life skills.
- For pupils to show / have emerging awareness of activities and experiences.
- For pupils to develop greater levels of attention and improved levels of engagement.
- For pupils to co-operate with shared exploration.
- For pupils to develop an understanding and use vocabulary in keeping with their level of development and preferred method of communication such as speech, signing or alternative communication system.
- To make effective use of specialist staff including the SALT team.

Implementation

Delamere School promotes a 'Total Communication environment' where every available means is used to enable a pupil to communicate effectively. This includes the use of vocalisations, speech, Signalong, Intensive Interaction, Canaan Barrie on body signing, objects, photographs, switches, pictures, symbols, gesture, eye pointing, facial and whole-body movements and low / high tech communication aids including PODD mats and use of the SnapCore app. No means of communication is valued above any other - all communication strategies have equal value.

At Delamere we recognise that behaviour is a means of expressing communication and is a signal for support. Consistent strategies are put in place as part of a child's learning support plan [LSP] to support their communication by staff, parents and the wider disciplinary team.

Pupils are given the opportunity to extend their communication skills / use their communication aids outside school and in the wider community. Practice is shared between parents for use at home and different nursery/school placements.

All strategies are personalised to pupil need and facilitated by highly skilled staff.

- At Delamere we provide a total communication approach.
- The teaching of communication is not confined to timetabled sessions alone but fully integrated into school life and a part of every curricular area. This

includes high quality continuous provision and outdoor learning which promote a love of learning and encourages communication.

- All pupils have an appropriate initial baseline assessment to identify their individual starting point and in order to identify next steps.
- Different strategies are trialled based on each child's individual starting point, learning style and individual need.
- Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development.
- Adults build positive relationships with each child so that they feel confident to communicate their basic wants and needs. Adults build positive relationships with each child's parent/carers to find out how they communicate at home and to support them when communicating with their child at home.
- The Engagement Model is an integral and underpinning approach to supporting communication and learning for children working below 60% of P4. Engagement identifies and celebrates all pupils' progress, including linear and lateral progress, the consolidation and maintenance of knowledge, skills and concepts.
- The Engagement Model includes 5 areas: exploration, realisation, anticipation, persistence and initiation.
- Structured 1:1 and small group communication activities are identified daily on the timetable with children having quality interactions with adults and peers.
- Timetabled structured communication sessions likely to be included are: attention games, choose time, intensive interaction, positive looking activities, lego therapy,
- There is repetition of activities to develop and consolidate communication skills.
- The Zones of Regulation are taught and practiced throughout the school to encourage children to effectively express their emotions and self-regulate effectively.
- A significant area of difficulty for our pupils with autism is rigidity of thought. It is important that children in the school have regular opportunities to practice their skills in the wider community. Educational visits to support this may take place in settings including parks, play grounds, cafes and shops.
- Pupils are encouraged to self-assess their work and peer assess too.

Reading

- Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Children are exposed to a wide range of different texts in order to extend their vocabulary and to support their comprehension. Children have the opportunity to read stories / poems, join in interactive rhymes and song with an adult on a daily basis.

Innovative Practice:

- As a Rights Respecting School we firmly believe that every child's voice should be heard. Supporting pupil voice through school council, Rights Squad etc allows pupils to fully participate in the role of the school.

- School supports inclusive practice in the local community allowing pupil voice to be acknowledged and valued.
- Teachers work collaboratively with the speech and language therapy team in all departments, using shared specialised developmental schemes, including ELKLAN and other specialist tools.
- Teachers work collaboratively with other agencies, including play therapist, music therapist, art specialist and ensure that planned interventions include communication targets for each child.
- Training workshops for parents and other professionals are offered to ensure consistency of approach between home and school. We have a pathway of support offer for parents which includes a voices and choices offer where visual communication is taken into the community and we support parents to use visual communication at home.
- We have appointed a Communication Champion at Delamere. Our Communication Champion promotes the importance of communication development for all our children and keeps up the profile of alternative and supported methods of communication such as speaking, signing, symbols or use of electronic communication aids. We also try to gain recognition for different methods of communication in the wider community- we do this through social media, the Signing Choir performances, inclusion projects, competitions and much more!
- Each classroom has been allocated a dedicated communication iPad.

Collaboration with the Speech and Language Therapy Team

The speech and language therapist's role is to assess each child's communication. This is done through communicating and playing directly with each child. We also observe the child interacting with other key people such as the teacher and TAs. At school we see the children in a group, with perhaps one other child sharing a game or we play with them on our own. We discuss our observations with the class teacher and plan an individual learning goal together for each child. We share our specialist knowledge of communication and language development with the teachers who use the national curriculum e.g. P levels. Our additional knowledge helps to break down learning into smaller, more achievable steps. Together with the teacher, SALT try out methods and share what works. The teaching team see the children each school day and work on the strategies and goals. SALT monitor the progress and alter the methods to suit each child. Parents are involved via the IEP process and annual reviews. We would welcome your input to discuss what your child is learning to communicate at home. Together we can help your child make even more progress.

Assessment

- At Delamere we use assessments that relate to the individual pupils learning needs, Formal and teacher assessments are used to inform planning, these include:
 - Hanen Communication Levels
 - Discoverer and Communicator Assessment Framework
 - Intensive Interaction Framework
 - Blank Levels language scheme (ELKLAN)
 - BSquared
 - EYFS framework
 - TASP

- Switch road map
- Engagement Model
- Signalong

Following termly data analysis targeted communication interventions may be put in place

Impact

- All pupils will have a functional communication system [pupil voice]
- All children will be supported to develop their personalised method of communication making at least good or Outstanding progress from their individual starting point.
- Children will have access to accredited communication schemes where appropriate

Evidence for Learning is collated through;

- Evisense
- Class Floor books
- Prior learning journey
- Intervention reports
- End of Year reports
- Annual review of EHCP
- PLT Observations
- Learning journey displays
- Social media
- School website

References

- Bsqared Expressive and Receptive language / Early steps communication assessment software
- Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage effective from 1st September 2021