



pupil voice



respect



independence



dignity



entitlement



COMMUNICATION POLICY

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An academy within:



“Learning together; to be the best we can be”



Communication, including AAC, forms a central part of the school curriculum of Kelford School.

Augmentative and Alternative communication (AAC) refers to any way in which spoken communication is replaced. AAC describes methods of communication which can be used by children, or adults who find communication difficult, it adds to (augments) or replaces (is an alternative for) spoken communication. AAC can also help the user's understanding, as well as provide a means of communication.

There are two types of AAC – **aided** and **unaided**, most AAC users combine both methods.

Unaided communication does not require additional equipment;

People use many unaided methods to communicate, for example body language, pointing, eye pointing, facial expressions, vocalisations, gestures, and signing (Makaton).

Aided communication requires additional equipment

This equipment may range from simple photographs, symbols, switches, computers, and or high tech electronic equipment.

Aided methods may be low technology or high technology.

Low technology devices include anything which is not powered, for example everyday objects, charts, communication books with pictures, symbols or photographs, (PEC's), objects of reference and simple switches.

High technology devices refer to more complex systems such as specialised programmable electronic devices and computes which speak and or print.

Helping people to communicate improves their quality of life.

Communication is the successful transmission of a message from one person to another and is not limited to the use of formal systems, such as speech, sign or written word. All children have the right to communicate (see the *bill of rights*).

The overall aim of the provision of AAC is to provide each pupil with an effective mode of interaction (communication). For some this will be through traditional sentence and work structure, for others it may require other methods, such as big macks or other switches, and or other low tech devices, including Makaton signing, board maker symbols, aided language boards, PEC's or high tech communication devices, such as iPod, or other electoral devices , or eye gaze.

All pupils will undertake a full communication needs assessment, either by the Inclusion and Intervention Manager or a Speech and Language Therapist (SALT), in conjunction, with class teams and with consultations with families, within the first few weeks of attendance, or as and when required throughout their school life.



This communication policy is in line with the schools philosophy that all children have the right to be the best that they can be and is deeply rooted in the schools values for pupil voice.

Our Vision is underpinned by our P.R.I.D.E. Values

Pupil Voice - enabling all learners to communicate their needs, choice and control

Respect - respect for one another and our environment

Independence - encouraging all learners to be as independent as possible

Dignity - implementing the highest levels of care and concern at all times

Entitlement - the right to receive a broad and balanced, high quality, personalised learning programme school values.

Pupil Voice

The term pupil voice refers to a way of listening to the views of children and young people and/or involving them in decision making; at Kelford School we promote the use of modified and adapted devices to ensure ALL pupils are provided with the opportunity to express opinions and to communicate, in all aspects of their own lives.

The aim of Kelford School is to ensure that all pupils are given equal opportunities to communicate, in all areas of their school day, that all pupils have access to the school curriculum at the level appropriate to their development, and taking into account their individual communication needs and preferences, where appropriate they will have access to AAC resources and teaching approaches. We aim to provide a “total communication” environment where all modes of communication are equally valued and pupils are given opportunities to make choices, initiate conversations, and express their own ideas and opinions.

AAC class resources and low tech individual resources are provided by the school for all pupils who require them; high tech equipment will be sought through the correct channels via SALT support.

Implementation

Full communication is used throughout the school day. The daily routines and interactions will develop many of the fundamental skills of communication. Time spent on structured communication/AAC teaching will vary according to the needs of the individual child, and may be supported by the **Inclusion and Intervention Team**.

AAC teaching may take place:-

- informally throughout the day. Interaction in natural contexts is essential if pupils are to generalise AAC skills and use them functionally.
- at snack time and lunch time.
- throughout the whole curriculum but especially in Literacy and English sessions.
- in whole group sessions.



- in individual sessions, following targets from either SALT or Inclusion and Intervention Manager, this will be especially important for those pupils using high tech communication devices, as they will need time to learn how to use the devices.
- in communication through play sessions.
- outside of the school environment (where applicable and with permission from SALT, high tech devices may be used in the home setting).
- by working in partnership with families and other agencies involved with the child to and extend opportunities for communication, and to ensure that pupils' communication is extended beyond the school.

Roles and responsibilities

It is a whole school responsibility to use adapted forms of communication to support children's ability to express their, needs, feelings, choices, etc. (*see bill of rights*)

In order to promote the use of AAC the following communication strategies may be employed:

- Giving the AAC user **TIME** to initiate and respond.
- Encouraging the use of **AAC everywhere and at all times.**
- Looking at the **total communication** that the pupil is using, e.g. body language and facial expression as well as the use of their communication aid.
- Finding time to just "chat" informally without the adult controlling the subject matter.
- Leaving class AAC resources lying around, so that they may be used casually by any pupil.
- Encouraging school staff and others to use the class/individual AAC resources themselves to find out how it feels to use it and to encourage pupils and others to regard it as a normal means of communication.
- To sign all the time and everywhere not just when speaking to a signing pupil.

Under the guidance of the AAC co-ordinator who is the Manager of the Inclusion and Intervention Team, the school aims to achieve continuity and progression by working together with all those concerned with the child or young person i.e. Speech and Language Therapists, Teachers, staff, families, physiotherapists etc. The Inclusion and Intervention Manager will meet regularly with the Speech and Language Therapists to discuss caseloads, progression and next steps targets. The AAC co-ordinator is responsible for the low tech AAC equipment in school, this includes maintenance and cleaning of loaned equipment, and along with the Inclusion and Intervention Team, will ensure that children and young people have up-to date, readable and working AAC resources. Class Teams are responsible for the day to day care of AAC equipment.

Assessments are carried out by the Inclusion and Intervention Manager, in consultation with Teachers, class staff, families and Speech and Language Therapists. The SALT team, in collaboration with the class teacher, will implement communication strategies for children and young people on their case load and liaise with the Inclusion and Intervention Team Manager.



The role of the teaching assistants is to make relevant symbols, charts and books (or whatever is appropriate for individual pupils needs) which support the pupils communication within the class room. This will be supported by the teacher, AAC co-ordinator and or SALT. Class staff will continually monitor and evaluate pupils' progress in the area of communication.

Collaboration with other agencies

- Collaboration with the families is viewed as essential and a successful introduction of AAC systems. Families who are involved in the decision making process are more able to extend use of the strategies into the child's home and social networks.
- Collaboration with other agencies (including SALT) may be required where the scope and experience of the school staff is limited; this collaboration may take the form of a referral for a particular service or an outside agency visiting school to provide support and training.

Organisation of resources

- The AAC co-ordinator (Inclusion and Intervention Manager) will be responsible for the cataloguing, logging and distribution of AAC support materials and equipment with in the school. As well as monitoring the maintenance of all AAC equipment (including equipment loaned from SALT or other outside agencies).
- The AAC co-ordinator will be responsible for the collation of resource materials (catalogues, advice sheets and books) for use by staff throughout the school.
- The AAC co-ordinator will keep a record of loaned equipment which is updated and available for audit.
- The AAC co-ordinator will monitor the teaching and learning of AAC throughout the school.

Training and Support

- The AAC co-ordinator (Inclusion and Intervention Manager) will support training across the school, including induction for new starters, in conjunction with SALT, and other relevant agencies.
- The training of families, where a pupil has an individual AAC device and or a particular technique of communication, should be implemented by the AAC co-ordinator, outside agencies may be involved, where appropriate.
- Training should be considered as ongoing, and needs led. Teachers and staff should make the AAC co-ordinator aware if staff need updated training, or, are unsure how the pupil uses their communication device/system.
- All training programmes should be regularly reviewed, reappraised and updated.

Equal Opportunity and Involvement

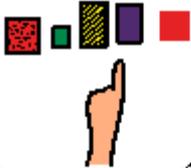
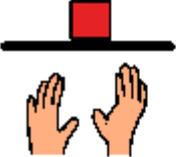
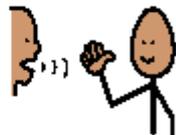
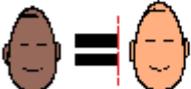
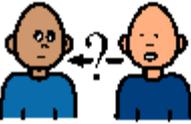
- Encourage communicative awareness within the classroom by providing opportunities for all pupils to express basic needs, thoughts and feelings.
- Provide a communication environment where signs and symbols are used routinely to enhance learning opportunities.



- Provide a collaborative approach to assessing and supporting pupils who require more formalised augmented or alternative communication systems.
- Ensure continuity of augmentative and/or alternative communication used within the classroom to support learning.
- Provide on-going support as assessment to the AAC user and adults that work with them.
- Ensure pupils have a voice for safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Ensure that staff familiarise themselves with the Communication Bill of Rights. (Appendix 1)
- Staff to have a basic knowledge of do's and don'ts of AAC (Appendix 2)

Communication Bill of rights

I have the right to:

- to be given real choices
 
- to say no, refuse and reject choices
 
- to ask for what I want
 
- to share my feelings
 
- to know my schedule
 
- to be spoken to not about
 
- to have my communication device in full working order
 
- to be heard and responded to even if the answer is no
 
- to be a full and equal member of the community
 
- to be taught how to communicate
 
- to have my speech system with me all the time
 
- to be treated with dignity and respect
 
- to ask for and get attention and interaction
 

DO'S and DON'Ts of AAC



Do use the AAC system to talk yourself.



Don't expect the AAC user to communicate without you modelling.



Do aim high



Don't demand prerequisite skills



Do use a well-designed Comprehensive vocabulary e.g. core vocabulary



Don't provide an AAC system with very little vocabulary or too few choices.



Do ask open questions



Don't do all the talking.



Do provide enough wait time.



Don't say "And now say it on your talker."



Do respect Multi-modal Communication.



Don't limit access to the AAC system.



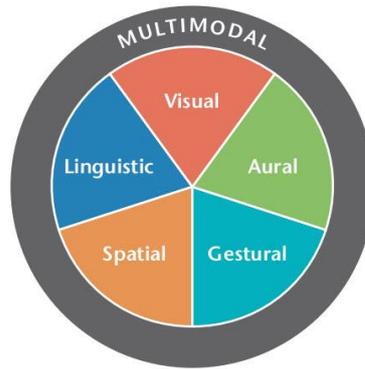
Do make sure the AAC is all day every day.



Don't limit access to the AAC system.

Figure 1.6 The Five Modes of Communication

This chart of the modes is based on a diagram created by the New London Group.



For example