



## **Total Communication Policy**

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Communication is fundamental to teaching and learning at Meadowfield School. It is a two-way process through which information, ideas, thoughts and feelings are passed between individuals and/or groups of people.

Communication is central to life, human rights, inclusion and all areas of human development.

The development of communication skills for all pupils at Meadowfield School is an integral part of the curriculum and should not be seen in isolation.

A Total Communication approach is used to develop the most appropriate functional communication for each pupil at Meadowfield School

Total communication means that we encourage the use of all appropriate means of communication between pupils and between adults and pupils; this may include but is not restricted to:

- Verbal skills including speaking and listening
- Signing including gesture and body language (Primarily Makaton with BSL if on EHCP)
- On Body cues (TASSELS)
- Symbol Exchange
- SCERTs
- Symbols
- Photographs
- Objects of reference
- Technology communication aids
- Eye gaze
- Social stories
- Written text

In addition, to ensure there is good communication between adults, parents and carers there are:

- Pupil profiles
- Health care plans
- Pupil Wellbeing Support Plans (WSP)
- Home school communication books
- The school website
- The school Facebook page
- School/parent WeDuc

## **Our aims**

- To help pupils find a way of expressing themselves using good functional communication.
- To enable pupils to develop their receptive and expressive communication skills
- For each pupil's individual communication system to be used consistently across the school site and off site.
- To implement My Plan targets through clear liaison between Class teachers, the Speech and Language Therapist and parents or carers.
- To support parents or carers through access to information and training.
- To ensure all staff are able to understand and work with all aspects of total communication and are offered training as appropriate to the needs of the pupils in their class which may include induction sessions, signing sessions, off- site day courses or mandatory qualifications.

## Partnership Working

Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) is currently provided by NHS Therapy team following the Balanced System model. Some pupils will have SALT as a provision on their EHCP. Where pupils are not currently receiving SALT or have never received SALT but teachers and or parents/carers feel they require SALT the class or form will be supported under the Balanced System.

Under the Balanced System Approach the NHS (EKHUFT) speech and language therapy team work with the school to develop our provision for speech, language and communication across universal, targeted and specialist levels.

**Universal** outcomes (and the provisions that help deliver them) support **all** pupils within the school to develop their speech, language and communication skills. At Meadowfield this might include:

- Ensuring pupils have access to a 'total communication' approach which may include: signing, visual support, verbal communication, communication and vocabulary books and objects of reference.
- Ensuring that classrooms and common areas are arranged so they encourage communication and interaction.
- Ensuring staff can confidently assess when further support and advice is needed requiring a child's speech and language development.

**Targeted** outcomes (and the provisions that help deliver them) support pupils with an identified speech, language or communication need who require more focused support. Targeted provisions may be delivered by school staff who have received specific training as well as by speech and language therapists where appropriate. At Meadowfield this might include:

- Therapy programmes and approaches delivered by trained staff such as: Symbol exchange, Intensive Interaction, Adult Child Interaction, Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC), Language Intervention Groups, Social Communication Groups and Speech Intervention.
- Classroom observations of children by speech and language therapist to identify appropriate support and interventions.
- Teacher meetings to review and plan pupils' interventions and targeted support.

**Specialist** outcomes and resources are either to support more complicated speech, language and communication needs or to provide more specialist information and help. Some pupils and their families will need specialist level support as well as targeted and universal levels for them to make the progress they wish to make with speech, language and communication. Specialist level may not be needed all of the time and may be helpful at certain points on a child or young person's journey. At Meadowfield this might include:

- Assessment of pupils by speech and language therapist to identify support required.
- Individualised time-limited intervention to address specific area of need. For example, work to implement a functional communication system, or programme to address speech sound difficulties etc. Children receiving this level of support will have involvement of a speech and language therapist, but parents and school staff will have an essential role in implementing plans.

Pupils receiving SALT will receive a My Plan programme from the therapist. It is the class or form teacher's responsibility to ensure that targets are integrated into the school day. All members of the class or form team should be aware of pupil targets. If there are any difficulties in delivering targets due to lack of resources or knowledge, then it is the responsibility to the class or form teacher to raise this with the SALT either in person or via email as soon as possible.

Some pupils with complex communication needs may require input for the specialist Kent & Medway Communication and Assistive Technology service (KMCAT). A referral to this team can be made by school staff or by the therapist. A referral to the KMCAT is not a first response to communication needs,

prior to a referral there needs to be evidence of a range of strategies and interventions having been in place.

There are joint meetings three times per academic year between the therapists and one of the Deputy Principals to address any specific or school wide issues.

### **Supporting communication across the school**

- To support pupil understanding of the flow of the day a symbol timetable should be set up in every classroom. Some pupils will require individual symbol timetables.
- As appropriate for the pupils in each class, symbols should be used to support learning.
- In IMPACTS classes on body cues should be used consistently to cue pupils in to key changes especially changes in position.
- Where appropriate objects of reference should be used, these should be consistent across departments.

### **Communication between adults and adults/pupils within school**

- Class teachers should set up pupil profiles, working in liaison with previous class teacher, as part of transition before the end of the academic year. The profile should include specific information regarding the pupil's preferred mode of communication.
- Pupil profile information should be easily accessible to any adult who is working in the classroom or joins the class to provide cover for colleagues.
- All adults should be aware of the 'signs of the week' and use every opportunity to practise these.

### **Communication between school and home**

- Home school communication books should be read at the start of the day by any member of the team ensuring any information is shared, discretely, with the whole team.
- Home /school communication books should be written in regularly, by the class or form teacher. Messages should be broadly positive, where an incident has occurred parents should be informed, this should be factual and accurate, if serious parents/carers should be informed by telephone or in person at the end of the day. Information should be given about how the situation was resolved and how the pupil has been for the rest of the day.
- All phone conversations with parents/carers should be recorded on the appropriate Contact Sheet, these should be filed in the pupil main file.

### **Transition**

- Information on class groups for the next academic year will be shared with parents, staff and pupils by the first week after Term 6 if possible, with the proviso that some further changes may still occur and if this is the case this information will be shared as soon as possible.
- All Primary pupils will receive a pathway leaflet; some pupils requiring greater information will receive a more detailed booklet.
- Pupils joining the school in September and Year 6 pupils transitioning from Primary to Secondary will receive a pathway booklet. Secondary pupils transitioning to Sixth Form who require greater support than the transition visits will receive a transition booklet.
- A series of transition visits will take place in Term 6 across all phases of the school to prepare pupils for their new class rooms and/or new peers to classes.

Meadowfield School operates an open-door policy. Parents and carers can request a meeting with a teacher, Head of Department, Deputy Principal or the Principal at any time. It may not always be possible to grant instant meeting requests but a mutually convenient date and time will be arranging as quickly as possible. Teachers will not be able to come out of the classroom for short notice unscheduled meetings.

Contact the school office to request a meeting via [office@meadowfield.kent.sch.uk](mailto:office@meadowfield.kent.sch.uk) please be clear about your reasons for wishing to meet and your expected outcomes.

## EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Meadowfield School is committed to equality of opportunity for all pupils and staff in which people treat each other with mutual respect, regardless of: age, disability, family responsibility, marital status, race, colour, ethnicity, nationality, religion or belief, gender, gender identity, transgender, sexual orientation, trade union activity or unrelated criminal convictions. We strive to educate, promote and celebrate the wider diversity of society within our school community.

## COMPLAINTS

Any complaints concerning teaching and learning should be made through the school's complaints procedures. The Complaints Policy is available on the school's website or can be obtained from the school office.

## OTHER RELATED DOCUMENTATION

Curriculum Policy  
Assessment Recording and reporting policy  
Teaching and Learning Policy  
Special Education Needs & Disability Policy  
Staff Code of Conduct  
Online Safety Policy  
Continuing Professional Development Policy

 School Policy Approved by Leadership Team	
Policy Adopted	Date: September 2023
Policy Approved	Date: <a href="#">Awaiting Approval</a>
Next Review	Date: Academic year 2024/25