



ROSEWOOD FREE SCHOOL

Title: Learner Communication Policy

Lead Reviewer: Deputy Headteacher

Who this is aimed at: All Staff

Version	Reason for Change
V1	New 2019
V2	Regular review March 2021
V3	Regular review March 2023

Date Initially Implemented	March 2019
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Policy Statement

The ability to express thoughts, feelings, and ideas and to have your communications understood by another person is fundamental to an individual's social and emotional well-being and to the development of their individuality and personality. Being able to exchange communications with another person enhances the quality of all our lives, enriching interactions and affirming meaning and significance.

We believe each learner has the right to have their communication strategies recognised, respected, responded to and developed so that they are able to exert an influence over others and experience some control in their lives. Building on a learner's existing skills in order to support them to develop intentionality and control in their interactions is the foundation of Rosewood's work with learners throughout the day. Communication therefore has the status of a Key Skill at Rosewood School.

We are committed to using appropriate modes of communication with each learner. Our assessments show that many of our learners are not yet developmentally ready to use alternative or augmentative communication aids. For those learners who do progress to this stage we will introduce and develop these in close liaison with our speech and language therapist to ensure the most suitable aid is selected for the learner and to ensure that it provides them with a functional means of communication.

Application

This Policy applies to all staff.

Aims

We aim to provide a consistently responsive environment within which every learner's ability to communicate is respected, responded to, and developed, with the intention of supporting their progress from pre-intentional to formal communicators.

Objectives

- To promote the development of learner's individual communication skills as a priority throughout the school day.

- To ensure a focussed communication environment which offers: -
 - Reasons and opportunities for communication.
 - Highly engaged, observant and focussed communication partners.
 - Time for communication exchanges to take place.
 - Opportunities for learners to be in control, including the ability to initiate, extend and conclude interactions.
 - Agreed systems of communication appropriate to each learner
 - Consistency of approach for learners.
 - Consistency of approach throughout the school.

- To support learners' progression through stages of pre-intentionality, emerging and confident intentionality and into formal modes of communication with a wide range of communication partners. We are committed to using appropriate modes of communication with each learner and to ensuring the functionality of communication modes and systems.

- To use the principles enshrined in intensive interaction throughout the day for all learners, and additionally to ensure all learners have at least one timetabled intensive interaction session each week which is recorded in detail.

- To use consistent body cues with all learners throughout the school.

- To use consistent transition cues with all learners throughout the school, differentiating the time at which these are presented to learners to match their levels of understanding. For learners who can understand objects as signifiers, individualised systems of 'Objects of Reference' may be introduced.

- To use Affective Communication Assessments (ACA) with all learners until they have consolidated their ability to intentionally use their responses to influence adult behaviour (Stage 4 of Rosewood's ACA strategy).

- To ensure all learners have an up-to-date communication passport accessible to all those working in the School. The passport should be renewed at least annually but needs to be

changed as a learner's needs and abilities change so that it is always relevant.

- To identify three individual communication targets for each learner in consultation with the school's speech and language therapist, if necessary, based on the information in their communication assessment and the communication curriculum.
- To produce and keep up to date detailed visual and hearing profiles for every learner so that communication environments can be optimised, and sensory skills can be developed to minimise their impact on communication development.
- All communication strands are covered via class routines and essential schemes of work. Any specific individual communication targets from learner's Individual Education Plan (IEP) that are not met in this way are planned into timetabled sessions through the week. All learners also work on Environmental Control (EC) targets which may support their access to Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) at a later date. This includes working with eye gaze technology for some learners.
- To consider access to alternative communication strategies such as the use of objects, photographs, or symbols as these become developmentally appropriate, ensuring that sets of symbols or objects are agreed and used consistently and meaningfully with learners.
- To assess those learners who are ready to be introduced to alternative communication aids in order to establish appropriate and accessible aids and identify opportunities to use these in a functional way. It is likely that these learners will need to have an identified communication partner as they gain confidence in using their aid.
- To keep detailed records of learners' current abilities and progress which inform communication assessments, profiles and individual target setting.
- To ensure that all staff, volunteers, and students on long term placements receive comprehensive communication induction,

including intensive interaction, body and transition cues, ACA, and visual and hearing impairments.

Supporting Learners' Communication Development

Learners' **receptive** language development is supported by the use of:

- Body cues
- Transition cues

For some learners an agreed consistent key vocabulary may be used (supported by signing using Signalong for those with appropriate vision). Additionally, learners at the formal stage of communication may use a variety of approaches appropriate to their communicative strengths, such as Objects of Reference, photographs or symbols.

Guidance on the use of all these approaches is available in the Communication folder in each class.

Learners' **expressive** language development is supported by the use of:

- Intensive interaction
- Affective Communication Assessments

Additionally, learners at the formal stage of communication may use a variety of approaches appropriate to their communicative strengths, such as objects, photographs, symbols, signs, vocalisations etc.

Profile, Assessment, Curriculum and Target Setting

All learners are assessed on School entry. In the Early Years Department, an Initial Assessment (My Observation Notes) is completed which incorporates descriptions of communicative behaviours observed. This information is then used to complete the ImPACTS Communication Assessment for each learner. Wherever possible this is completed in association with parents or carers.

Information from the communication assessment is used to complete a communication profile sheet. This helps to highlight a

learner's communicative strengths and to identify priority areas for intervention. At this stage 3 communication targets are identified for each learner and a communication passport is created. The ImPACTS assessment is completed at least annually for each pupil.

The detailed communication curriculum which links to each box on the communication profile can provide support with both individual target-setting and with establishing learning opportunities and content for class lesson planning.

Related Documents

This document should be read in conjunction with other School Policies, including those relating to the Pupil Charter and Touch Policy.

Complaints

Any employee is entitled to make a complaint in respect of any breach of this Policy through the Grievance Policy and Procedure.