



GREENSIDE SCHOOL

Communication Policy

Introduction

This policy reflects the values, ethos and philosophy of Greenside School in relation to the teaching of communication. It provides guidance on, content, planning, teaching and assessment. This policy should be read in conjunction with the English and Literacy policies.

The Communication Policy is a working document and as such it reflects both the practices that are carried out and those to which the school is striving.

The policy is agreed upon by the whole teaching staff and presented to the Governing Body. The document is available for interested parties.

Rationale

At Greenside school the teaching of functional communication is fundamental to all pupils, to enable them to access the curriculum and develop life skills. It is understood that all pupils in the school benefit from the teaching of communication skills. Communication is a cross-curricular skill and therefore every lesson provides opportunities for the development of these skills.

The acceptance that pupils need to be within an environment, which stimulates them to want to communicate is essential to the teaching of communication skills, as is the need for pupils to have someone to communicate with. Alongside teaching methods of communication, pupils need to be taught that communication is enjoyable and brings positive results.

The teaching of communication skills across the curriculum is primarily to assist pupils'

- understanding and interpretation of the environment,
- listening skills,
- ability to build relationships,
- ability to communicate as effectively as possible, and
- ability to make choices.

Pupils at Greenside School may face a number of challenges to the development of their communication skills. It is important, therefore, that we have a broad and flexible approach to defining communication.

“Communication may range from any movement or behaviour which is observed and interpreted by another person as meaningful, to the use of a code agreed upon between people where items have specific meanings.

This definition identifies the range of methods of communication. Through the use of signs, gesture, symbols and objects of reference within Greenside School the children are introduced to and taught a range of augmentative and alternative communication, to supplement or replace spoken language. The definition also emphasises both pre-intentional and intentional aspects of communication.

Greenside School recognises that the development of communication is especially linked with English, Literacy, ICT and forms a significant part in our analysis of behaviour.

Through developing communication it is planned that the school will become a total communication environment, through the use of photographs, objects of reference, symbols and text to label.

Aims

The school will:

- provide pupils with knowledge, skills and understanding to enable confident, positive communication in school and within the wider environment
- provide opportunities for pupils to communicate thoughts, feelings and ideas in a range of contexts
- provide each pupil with the means, whatever they may be, by which he or she will be able to exercise a degree of control over their environment
- provide pupils with the opportunity to make meaningful choices
- promote enthusiasm for communication that is appropriate to each pupil's level of development, age and experience
- provide an environment where meaningful communication is encouraged and rewarded
- work in partnership with the Speech and Language Therapist, and other professionals as necessary, to promote the teaching of communication skills
- effectively assess pupil's communication skills, and target development through the use of individual objectives set in the annual review of their statement.

Implementation

The acquisition of communication is a developmental process that involves moving through a continuum of skills. At Greenside School Individual Pupil targets for Communication are set in their Annual Review. These skills are taught and practiced throughout the day, across the whole curriculum.

Equal Opportunities

Teachers will provide any adaptations, specific teaching techniques and specialist resources required to overcome individual pupils' barriers to learning. The entitlement of all pupils to a full curriculum is acknowledged.

Teaching and Organisation

Individual class teachers are responsible for their own class organisation and teaching style in relation to communication, while at the same time ensuring that these complement and reflect the overall aims and philosophy of the school. Communication skills are taught across the curriculum, in all subjects and activities, recognising that the development of communication is a continual process.

It is intended that teaching should provide pupils with communicative intent and functional communication. It is accepted that many pupils will be unable to learn the language system fully and need to learn those aspects of language that will enable effective communication.

Sign a Long signs are used across the school, as an alternative and augmentative means of communication. Sign a Long signs are always used in conjunction with speech. The use of Writing with Symbols programme enables symbols to be used extensively to

help to equip some pupils with a means of communicating, particularly through the use of PECS

aid the stimulation of vocal expression

enable access to reading

provide information, e.g. visual timetable and labelling within the environment

Objects of reference are also used to aid communication. These help to develop

comprehension

concentration

turn taking

appropriate responses

interactions between pupils and adults,

increased pupil initiated communication

understanding of familiar routines

Children are given the opportunity to work as a class, as part of a group or as individuals. The learning task or activity, the nature of the topic being studied and the resources being used will determine the choice of class organisation.

Assessment

Teachers must continually assess pupils' current understanding and knowledge in order to ensure that appropriate learning targets are set.

Record Keeping

Records will be kept in line with school policy.

Reporting

Communication will be reported on in individual pupils' annual review.

Resources

A range of communication resources is available in school. The majority of resources are located within individual classrooms. Each class has a set of objects of reference relating to timetable subjects and two sets of symbols representing timetable subjects, days of the week, months of the year and the weather.

There are additional communication aids in each class e.g Big Macks. Some are stored centrally, e.g. Sign a Long sign and PECs symbol handbooks. The subject learning team leader is responsible for the communication resources. The purchase of resources is planned each year in consultation with all teachers.

The use of ICT provides opportunities for all pupils to develop communication skills. Through cause and effect programmes, making choices, encouraging attention and listening skills and working collaboratively, ICT provides pupils a range of experiences to enhance their learning.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation will be carried out in order to enhance the teaching and learning of communication within our school. It is the responsibility of all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, to monitor and evaluate the curriculum provision made for communication within the school, so that pupils make the greatest possible progress and enjoy the learning experience.

Evaluation will be conducted according to the priority given to communication within the School Development Plan. The subject leader is available for advice and is responsible for aspects of monitoring and evaluation.

Review of the policy

The policy will be reviewed in line with whole school procedures.