

**“You have the right to find out things and share what you think with others, by talking, drawing, writing or in any other way, unless it harms or offends other people.” Article 13 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in child friendly language**

The aim of Woodcroft School’s *Communication policy* is to allow pupils to gain independence in their own lives through the use of functional communication. We make every effort to help our pupils be included in all parts of their school and home lives.

Our pupils have many different diagnoses, including Autistic Spectrum Disorders, and benefit from support as suggested by the National Autistic Society (NAS). Our school is accredited by the NAS.

This policy has been written by the speech and language team with the help of Woodcroft School pupils.

## Working together

SALT stands for a speech and language therapist. At present Woodcroft School has two SALTS. Pupils’ skills in speech, language and communication are developed by having SALTS deliver speech and language therapy as part of the school’s curriculum.

The way SALTS work:

- We plan what is taught together.
- The plans reflect how our pupils communicate.
- We use a variety of strategies to help communication skills.
- We think about pupils progress and targets together.
- We learn and share our training.
- We share and make resources together.
- We include speech and language therapy work in class as much as possible.

Working like this helps to bring all our different skills together, and helps:

- targets be more accurate;
- share information about planning, assessment and training; and
- everyone at school understand the importance of communication difficulties in education and how to improve this.

How it works:

- SALTS spend time with the pupils during their school day.
- SALTS meet weekly to talk about communication needs.
- Teacher’s and teacher’s assistants lead/carry over sessions/strategies as required.
- SALTS work with parents and carers on strategies.

## The way we communicate

Woodcroft School is a ‘total communication’ environment. This means our pupils use their preferred method of communication to understand and express themselves. Pupils can tell people what they need and want, and how they feel in lots of ways.

- *PECS* (Picture Exchange Communication System) helps pupils to communicate by exchanging a picture of something wanted, needed or something they want to talk about.
- *Static communication boards* help pupils to communicate by pointing to a sequence of pictures.
- *Colourful semantics* help pupils make sentences by using pictures at sentence level within a colour coded system.
- *Visual support* is used to support pupils understanding of vocabulary, concepts and instructions within the classroom. These link with ELKLAN strategies.
- *Cue cards* are used to help pupils understand instructions by seeing a picture instead of somebody talking.

- *Makaton sign language* uses signs and symbols to teach communication, language and literacy skills.
- *Reduced language* helps pupils with sensory and language processing needs by using clear, basic instructions.
- *Intensive interaction* helps pupils at the early stages of communication develop skills like sharing and turn-taking.
- *Play* is very important for learning. We use play in lots of different ways. A structured approach that is used is LEGO therapy, which aims to enhance all areas of communication.
- *Speech generating devices* are used to play a pre-recorded message that is accessed by the pupil, e.g. to ask for favourite things.

## Communication – people and places

Everybody in the pupils' lives help them to communicate. Staff and parent training is very important and Woodcroft School uses lots of ways to help pupils communicate in their school and home lives.

SCERTS forms the ethos of service delivery. This means we consider:

- **S**ocial **C**ommunication which looks at the desire to communicate.
- **E**motional **R**egulation which is how emotions are managed and sensory needs met.
- **T**ransactional **S**upports which is the adults role in facilitating learning.

SCERTS is the foundation for pupils on the ASD spectrum to access the curriculum with meaning. Lessons must be motivating, predictable (visual supports), purposeful and meet sensory needs.

SPELL is used to understand and respond to pupils. This means we have:

- **S**tructure to help with everyday things, like using a timetable.
- **P**ositive attitudes to help pupils to do their very best.
- **E**mpathy to understand, respect and relate to the pupils' experiences.
- **L**ow arousal areas to help pupils manage their lives, e.g. having quiet areas.
- **L**inks between all parts of their lives, e.g. writing in the home/school book.

Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA) is a method which helps pupils increase independence by helping them learn, maintain and generalise new skills and behaviours.

TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication-handicapped Children) is used to help pupils learn by themselves in a structured way. Pupils have their own schedules to help them understand their day and achieve steps to learning.

The Pyramid Approach is used to make learning and communication as fun as possible.

## Reaching our targets

To match the SEND Code of Practice school staff, pupils, parents and LAS work together to assess how we are learning by:

- having regular formal and informal SALT assessments;
- having an annual assessment using the PIVATS system;
- carrying out half termly assessments of each pupil's Great Goal Setting targets;
- carrying out termly assessments of each pupil's Behaviour Profile and Risk Assessment (PBP/RA);
- having termly summary review updates;
- updating evaluation sheets throughout each school day;
- having regular informal and formal SALT team meetings; and
- having regular meetings with other members of the therapy team.