



Pupils Communication Statement

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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 Academy curriculum of Discovery Academy.

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 communication promise). 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.

Pupils have access to a speech and language therapist whilst in Discovery Academy access to which is done through a referral system in co-operation with the family and the professionals educating the child.

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 Discovery Academy 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 Discovery Academy is to ensure that all pupils are given equal opportunities to communicate, in all areas of their Academy day, that all pupils have access to the Academy 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. Staff are trained to be confident using a wide range of communication strategies that are often unique and personalised to the child.

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 Academy staff is limited; this collaboration may take the form of a referral for a particular service or an outside agency visiting Academy to provide support and training. Organisation of
 - 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.
 - Ensure pupils have a voice for safeguarding policies and procedures.