

*St Edmund's Catholic Primary School*



*St Joseph's Catholic Primary School*

## COMMUNICATION POLICY

**Policy Adopted: Summer 2015**

**Reviewed: Autumn 21**

**Review Date: Autumn 2024**



## **Communication and our school**

Our Mission Statement 'Learning Together in God's Love' was chosen by the children to reflect the journey each individual makes as they grow spiritually and academically during their career at St Edmund's. A huge part of this is ensuring each child can understand, has the confidence to speak out and that their voice is heard. In order to do this our school and those who work in it must be communication friendly.

The aim of this policy is:

- to raise the profile of communication across the school curriculum and in the wider school community
- to provide a communication friendly school where the environment and the teaching are differentiated accordingly
- to help with early identification of those with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)
- to ensure children leave St Edmunds as effective communicators

### **What is communication?**

Communication is an important and wide ranging skill which underpins the basis for all future learning, it involves:

- Receptive language skills include attention, listening, and understanding language.
- Expressive language skills can be described as 'talking' – putting sounds, words and sentences together to share information, ideas and wishes.
- Alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) strategies; AAC refers to the different ways (other than speech) that people use to communicate with each other. This could include signs, symbols or technology such as an electronic communication device, for example.
- Social skills are used to communicate with others both verbally and non-verbally using for example; gestures and body language.

As a school we recognise that children may have speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) - these are children who have difficulty with some aspects of communicating. This difficulty may be minor and temporary, or more complex and long term. The term 'needs' refers both to the child's needs and to what school can do to support them, by looking at the child and the environments in which they play, learn, and communicate.

Definitions adapted from <http://www.communicationhelppoint.org.uk/da/Glossary.aspx>

### **Professional Development**

Each academic year every member of staff will undertake training (school INSET) to further their knowledge and skills in the area of speech, language and communication.

Each new member of staff will receive an information pack and/or training about supporting speech, language and communication in the classroom and a sheet with information on creating a communication friendly classroom.

Members of staff may also access outside training (local authority or other providers) in more specific areas of speech, language and communication need.

### **As a communication friendly school all staff**

- Are aware of developmentally appropriate norms for speech, language and communication
- Are aware of the range of communication difficulties which children can experience
- Are aware of the strategies which are helpful for promoting communication: Talk trios. Giving thinking time (traffic light) and limiting questions instead use comments, repetitions, expansions and explanations. Blank level questions (reading bookmarks, reading comprehension, differentiating questions). Extending vocabulary (mindmaps, STAR vocabulary teaching.) Visual strategies (timetables, timelines, task plans, visual school rules). Speak out (voicing views and speaking out).

### **Referral pathway for children with speech, language and communication needs**

*'All schools should have a clear approach to identifying and responding to SEND. The benefits of early identification are widely recognised – identifying need at the earliest point and then making effective provision improve long-term outcomes for the child or young person.'* (section 6.14 of the Code)

It is the responsibility of class teachers to identify children they are concerned about and to follow this 3 step process in order to identify if the child has speech language and communication needs:

**Be alert** – if there are concerns about a child, always consider if there is an underlying SLCN. There are strong links between language and attainment, literacy, and behavioural, social and emotional development.

**Check it out** – using the Communication Checklist (found in the SEND file) if the child comes out as amber or red go on to early action.

**Early action** – speak to the SENCo/parents/child/school speech and language therapist (SaLT) to:

- *Assess* – identify strengths and needs
- *Plan* - in conjunction with parents/SENCo/SaLT plan what support will be put in place and what outcomes should be expected
- *Do* – implement planned support and observe how the child responds
- *Review* – discuss with parents/school staff based on observations and planned outcomes – what has been achieved

In addition:

1. In early years parents/carers will have filled in a communication questionnaire. This information will be considered by the class teacher and if there are concerns they will go to **Early Action**.
2. If parents/carers are concerned they should approach the class teacher/ SENCo/school speech and language therapist and the process will begin at **Check it out**.
3. If an outside referral is needed e.g for specialist advice or provision this referral will be made by the SENCo or school speech and language therapist in discussion with the parents/carers, child and class teacher.

For more detail on the 3 step process see:

[http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/345750/early\\_identification\\_framework.pdf](http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/345750/early_identification_framework.pdf)

## **Where a child has been identified as having SLCN – roles and responsibilities**

### **Headteacher**

The headteacher will carry out the role of responsible person. They have the responsibility of the day to day management of all aspects of the schools work, including provision for children with SLCN. The headteacher should keep the governing body informed and work closely with the school SaLT and SENCo.

### **SENCo and SaLT**

- Has responsibility for the day to day running of the communication policy
- Ensures all areas of the communication friendly framework are in place
- Works with the teaching and support staff in co-ordinating provision for SLCN pupils
- Monitors and evaluates SLCN provision and reports to the governing body
- Liaises with parents as appropriate
- Liaises with external agencies and other support agencies
- Assess children with SLCN and plan interventions
- Provide training for all staff on speech, language and communication

### **Class teacher**

The class teacher is responsible for meeting the day to day management of SLCN within their class including:

- Planning differentiated work to meet the children's needs
- Writing and reviewing personalised targets
- Liaise with and direct teaching assistants, including planning appropriate work for pupils
- Keeping and updating provision maps showing speech and language interventions
- Referring children causing concern to SaLT or SEN coordinator by using the agreed checklist
- Reporting to parents at consultation meetings and in Annual Reports
- Making their classroom communication friendly

- Delivering communication friendly lessons

### **Where is this policy stored and how often will it be monitored?**

This policy is available to all parents, prospective parents, staff and governors, it is in the school policy file and on the school website.

It will be monitored on a three yearly basis to ensure it is up to date and meets the current needs of the school and its pupils. The school speech and language therapist will review it in conjunction with senior staff and the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo).

Its effectiveness will be judged through monitoring plans and books (for vocabulary strategies such as mindmaps, word wise whizz), auditing classrooms (for visual strategies e.g. task plans/visual timetables), observing staff (for communication strategies e.g. traffic light, Blank Level Questions), pupil perception interviews with a focus on communication and asking staff about their confidence in raising concerns about children and differentiating their communication. In addition children with SLCN will be monitored in reaching their targets using plans, observations, reviews and discussions with pupils themselves and parents/carers.

### **Contacts:**

- The governor for speech, language and communication needs is Jane Southin
- The school speech and language therapist is Luisa Martinez
- The SENCo is Cate Bullen
- Speech and Language Therapy, Child Health, Hospital Road, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 3ND (01284 775081) (contact for the local NHS SaLT service)

Written by Luisa Martinez (school speech and language therapist)

Date of policy Autumn 2018