



## **Inclusive Communication Policy – Beatlie School**

Linked to UNCRC – Article 12 (respect for the views of the child), Article 23 (children with a disability) and Article 29 (goals of education)

### **Purpose of this policy**

This policy details the aims, principles and strategies for using an inclusive communication approach at Beatlie School.

### **Who is this policy for?**

This policy is for all staff working at Beatlie School and our partners, parents, carers, families and other professionals.

### **Mission Statement**

To ensure that all staff, pupils, families and other professionals hold the same positive values towards using all forms of communication and that communication opportunities are embedded within the school day from classrooms to corridors, from lunch hall to the local community.

### **Details of school**

Beatlie School is for children and young people from nursery to secondary with complex additional support needs including communication needs.

### **What is Inclusive Communication?**

Due to the diverse range of communication needs within Beatlie School we use a wide range of means of communication all of which are of equal importance in helping our pupils achieve their potential to communicate.

An inclusive communication approach is about finding and using the right combination of communication strategies for each child and young person to help them learn, communicate, understand and be understood.

These strategies may include the following:-



## **Partnership Working**

We work together as partners with parents/carers, education staff, health staff and other agencies with a shared vision of inclusive communication and processes that ensure:

- Co-creating an environment of inclusive communication supports and opportunities.
- Joint assessment of the communication needs of CYP together with their families.
- Ensuring where possible for all CYP to have a 'voice' so that they can be involved and contribute to school life.
- Joint goals and plans for implementation of inclusive communication supports for CYP together with their families.
- Joint involvement in School Improvement Plans as they refer to the development of communication approaches within the educational experiences of CYP.
- Joint commitment to supporting training for staff and families in inclusive communication approaches.

## **Training**

- Ongoing training for all staff as required in how to use a range of inclusive communication strategies with the children and young people that they are supporting in their school environment.
- All new staff will be provided with the appropriate level of communication training so that they can communicate with all the pupils in their class.
- Training for staff and parents will be offered in response to requests for assistance.
- Staff training should be ongoing in line with the schools vision and values as well as priorities identified in the schools quality improvement plan.
- Opportunities for training in specific approaches such as Signalong, aided language, PECS, using visual supports, intensive interaction will be offered regularly.
- Training can take on different forms - formal, individual consultation, modelling of strategies.
- Training and support from SLT can be offered through class team meetings.
- We will aim to work in collaboration to ensure that individual's communication systems are meeting their needs.
- Close collaboration between the team around the child is required to ensure that each individual is able to achieve their communication potential.



## Standards/Best Practice

School will provide/ be working towards an inclusive communication environment.

- There will be a standardised object of reference system used throughout the school.
- There will a standardised list of song signifiers.
- Signalong is the key signing system used within the school.
- All staff will know the 12 key signalong signs. (see below for details)
- Each class will have a copy or access to appropriate Signalong resources.
- Staff will have access to a Phase 1/foundation signalong course.
- Tassles multisensory signing system will be used with identified pupils.
- All pupils will have an 'All About Me' profile that outlines key communication strategies. This is accessible to all staff.
- Staff will identify their own training needs.
- Education staff and SLT will carry out a range of assessments including Triple C, at identified times.
- All pupils will be provided with an appropriate means of communication.
- Pupils who use a form of communication system e.g. big mack, communication book, high tech device will have access to this throughout the day.
- Pupils will have a communication system that is up to date and fully functioning.
- Staff know who to contact when a communication system is not working.
- Assessment for wheelchairs and specialised seating will always take account of the potential needs for mounting and accessing communication systems.
- There will be regular communication group meetings that will support communication developments in the school.

## Descriptions of strategies

### **Multisensory signing (TaSSleS)**

Multisensory signing (sometimes known as 'tactile signing') is a signing system for use with pupils with limited functional vision, or are at a sensory learning level.

At Beatlie School we have a key vocabulary of TaSSleS signs. These include alert, hoist, finished, gastrostomy feed, personal care. All staff will be trained in how to use these signs with the pupils. This training includes how to prepare a pupil for tactile signing using an alert sign.



### **Objects of Reference (or OORs)**

Objects of Reference (OOR) are sometimes known as ‘object signifiers’. OORs are used with pupils to aid their understanding of what is about to happen if they are not yet able to understand photographs or symbols.

- Beatlie mainly uses a shared OOR scheme (with scope to provide individualised OORs as necessary for a particular child).
- Each pupil will have their own set of OORs in their own yellow bag.
- Use of OORs should be consistent and adhere strictly to the ‘Give and Go’ principle.
- Pupils should take OOR to destination and match on arrival, returning initial OOR to yellow bag.
- It may be appropriate for some pupils to use OORs on a visual timetable in which case they would be encouraged to ‘Take and Go’.
- An up to date list of relevant OORs should be kept in the pupil’s yellow bag.
- A List of existing, standardised OORs can be accessed on the server under ‘Staff Shared, Teacher Resources, Pupil Support, IC’.
- Any new OOR can only be added after consultation with SLT and SMT.
- Staff should use simple and consistent language when using OORs with pupils.

### **Symbols / Photos**

Symbols and photos can also be used to support a pupil’s understanding and promote independence. They can be used so that the pupil is not reliant on an adult to provide as much support with an activity. These include symbols/photo shopping lists and recipes; visual supports for getting dressed, washing hands, toileting.

Symbols and photos can also be used to support expressive communication – for pupils to make choices, express feelings, comment on learning activities, share their news and tell stories. These range from simple choices of two photos or symbols, through PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) books and aided language boards, to ‘chat books’ with pages of symbols to point to or eye point to.

### **Photographs**

For some pupils it may be necessary to use photographs rather than symbols as they are not at the level of understanding symbolic representation.



- Photographs being used as IC should be either printed on photographic paper or laminated using high quality matt laminating pouches.
- They should be backed on green card to create a border.
- The size of the photograph will depend on the individual and the purpose.
- The content of the photograph must be a clear representation of the activity and may include the child, to be agreed in consultation with SLT.

### **Symbols**

Where possible all symbols should be **Boardmaker** symbols.

There is a bank of symbols on the shared server (Pupil Support). These should be used to ensure consistency across the school.

If a new symbol needs to be introduced, it should be added to the server bank of symbols and shared with other classes through the school's IC representative.

A physical bank of symbols is being created and updated on an on-going basis.

The templates on the shared server indicate the format that all symbols should follow (i.e black border, size, font etc).

Where possible, when using symbols to present a choice, a board or E-tran frame should be used.

### **Song Signifiers**

Song signifiers are specific songs, with simple words and signs that are used to mark the start and end of activities. These are used to support pupils to understand and make transitions between activities. At Beatlie School we have a set of standardised song signifiers. These can be found on the Beatlie website to share with parents/carers. A list can also be accessed on the shared server.

### **High-tech Communication Devices (VOCAs)**

High-tech communication devices are sometimes known as VOCAs (Voice Output Communication Aids) or AAC (Augmentative and/or Alternative Communication).

VOCAs can be used at pre-intentional or intentional level.

Once intentionality has been established, VOCAs can be used to support expressive communication. The appropriate device will be identified by SLTs.



At Beatlie School we have some simple communication devices (such as Big Macks or Step-by-Steps) available for use in each class across the school day. These devices can be used to record a spoken message or word; the pupil then presses the device to play the message.

At various points it may be appropriate for pupils to progress to a more complex device. This will be done in consultation with SLT. Keycomm may also be involved in the assessment process if required.

All VOCAs should be labelled with an appropriate photograph or symbol.

Positioning of VOCA should be carefully considered to ensure pupils can use as independently as possible. (Consult OT and SLT)

Overlays for VOCAs should be developed in consultation with SLT.

If appropriate, VOCAs should be used in the child/young person's wider community.

### **Signalong**

Beatlie School uses **Signalong** to support comprehension and expressive language. Signalong is a key word sign supported communication system developed for children and adults with learning disabilities. Signalong uses a combination of speech, sign, body language, facial expression and voice tone to reference the link between sign and word. It is based on British Sign Language and is used in spoken word order. By signing keywords only it helps learners to process language and keep messages simple and short.

At Beatlie School we have a key vocabulary of 12 Signalong signs. These include: \_Listen, Toilet, More, Again, Yes, No, Look, Help, Wait, Sit, Finished, Ready...Steady ...Go

All staff are trained in how to use these Signalong signs with the pupils. Staff will also have the opportunity to attend further Signalong training such as a phase 1/ foundation course in order to further develop their skills.

Signalong teaches a vocabulary which is relevant to the individual learner; therefore staff may seek advice from Speech and Language Therapy about which signs might be beneficial for individual pupils, and when to extend the signing vocabulary.

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