

Policy approved & adopted by	Head Teacher
Date	Sept 2025
Review cycle	3 years
Next Review	Sept 2028



## Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Policy

### Definition of AAC

The supplementation or replacement of speech and/or writing to enable opportunity for choice making and access to equipment to control a person's environment.

### Aims and Objectives

In using AAC at Applebee Wood School we aim:

- To facilitate the use and provision of AAC as appropriate for all learners cross-curricular.
- To enable learners to access the curriculum.
- That every child has the opportunity to communicate through appropriate means.
- For learners to develop confidence, independence and competence in communication and learning.

- For learners to listen, understand and respond appropriately to others in a range of situations.
- For learners to communicate their needs and ideas in a widening range of circumstances, using speech and / or augmentative communication including ICT.
- For learners to develop their initiative and ability to work both independently and in co-operation with others.
- To provide opportunities to ensure learners interpret signs, pictures, text and sounds to meet their individual needs.
- To ensure continuous professional development for staff in the area of AAC.

### **Classroom Organisation / Teaching and Learning Style**

AAC enables independence and control, reduces frustration and in turn minimizes challenging conduct. It provides a voice in order to facilitate choice making, commenting and protesting, encourages social inclusion and community participation.

Users of AAC have limited or no verbal communication including;

- Articulation difficulties (verbal dyspraxia, CP)
- Delayed/disordered language
- Progressive neurological conditions
- Autism

AAC systems include both Low and High Technological options. Low Tech options can include; objects of reference, photos, symbol boards, PECS, Big Mack, sequencers, randomisers, latching boxes, Derbyshire Language, Blanks Level questioning & Makaton. High Tech options include; Eye-gaze, my choice pad, iPads and tablets.

Consideration needs to be given to access when organizing classrooms and when selecting AAC for particular learners. Placement of particular AAC, for example in a distraction free environment or with room for a wheelchair user. In addition, the users' needs, physical limitations, visual impairments etc.

Examples of how AAC can be used include:

- To make choices/request e.g. a particular activity or to stop an activity
- To draw attention/initiate e.g. say hello, comment on, use a name
- To respond to questions e.g. yes/no
- For cause and effect e.g. joining in an activity, turning on a piece of equipment

The approach taken with each pupil using AAC is individual to them, please refer a learner's KSCP for their individual specifications.

For support and advice please refer to the AAC lead.

### **Lesson Outline**

Lessons should be planned with reference to the learner's Individual Key skills and Care Plan where AAC is documented. Teachers and Teaching Assistants have a role in ensuring that AAC is used within lessons to maximize potential for learners. As such they (Teachers and T.A.'s) should:

- Extend their fluency in Total Communication, using signs and symbols to support speech, as a level that is understood.
- Model language and extend vocabulary using set phrases
- Give students time for response
- Allow learners time to initiate activities and express opinions and choices

AAC is delivered across the curriculum and is woven into the fabric of all activities within school. In order to deliver specific teaching points and the EDY model is adopted.

### **Assessment**

Initial individual assessments of the students' abilities and needs will be undertaken by class staff, SALT and the AAC lead. A pupil's need to AAC will be documented using the Key Skills Care Plan (KSCP) and be the responsibility of the class teacher.

Formative assessment should take place on a daily basis by class staff

Summative assessment - Each learner's needs should be reviewed termly. PECS SS2S assessment should be carried out in Summer 1

### **Monitoring**

Termly evaluations should be completed by Form teachers along with examples where AAC is used. The AAC subject lead / SaLT will monitor these and advise as to next steps, alterations to AAC provision as needed. An annual audit of AAC individual needs and provision within school will be made during Spring Term 1.

### **Cross-Curricular Links**

AAC links directly with all curriculum areas and aspects of school life.

### **Staff Training (Understanding of PECS)**

All teaching staff have received Continued Professional Development (CPD) training of AAC through teachers' meetings and further training will be given to teaching assistants through the use of CPD at Twilights and part of the AAC carousel training nights (currently Tuesday). It is the responsibility of the AAC subject lead that the training given is of a high standard to enable teaching staff to effectively use AAC across the school to a range of students.