Reviewed on:	9/12/22
Next review:	9/12/25
Staff Responsibility:	Abigail Facchin
Linked policies:	Safeguarding and child protection, Intimate care policy, Medicine Policy, Inclusion Policy
Singed by chair:	Lisa Vitler
Date:	9/12/22

Total Communication Policy
Boarshaw Community Primary School

What is communication?

- Communication is fundamental to teaching and learning at Boarshaw Primary School.
- It is a two-way process through which information, ideas, thoughts and feelings are passed between individuals and/or groups of people.
- Communication is central to life, human rights, inclusion and all areas of human development.
- The development of communication skills for all learners at Boarshaw Primary School is an integral part of the core provision we offer, it is a 'golden thread' and should not be seen in isolation.

What is total communication?

The term 'Total Communication' encompasses an approach, combining a range of modes of communication covering all aspects of verbal, non-verbal and written communication. Such as; signs, oral, auditory, written and visual skills to enable children to communicate in a way that is appropriate and accessible to them. At Boarshaw Primary we utilise a range of; objects of reference, photographs, symbols, signs, written words and AAC devices to allow pupils to be exposed to as many modes of communication as possible. At Boarshaw Primary School, pupils can have a range of communication difficulties and It is important to identify these as soon as possible, as it is through communication that pupils' progress and learn. Pupils learning difficulties, including Autism, may mean they are non-verbal, have limited language or have functional language use.
It is crucial to understand that the spoken language is different to social communication. Social communication includes body language, eye contact, hand gesture, tone, intonation and volume and many people with ASD lack those skills, which is why it is important to put communication systems in place to support them. At Boarshaw Primary we recognise that being non-verbal is not an indication of understanding and should not inhibit learning and achievement.
At Boarshaw Primary School we operate a Total Communication Environment, which provides a range of approaches to enable the pupils to communicate effectively. This Communication Policy promotes the use of effective communication which staff and visitors are expected to follow consistently.

Boarshaw Primary School aims to:

- Understand the world from the pupil's perspective and the frustrations/difficulties that they can face.
- Ensure that our pupils are equipped to communicate effectively in adult life.
- Provide opportunities for learners to develop a meaningful and functional system of Total Communication using verbal and/or non-verbal communication.
- Ensure that all learners feel included with their preferred method of communication which facilitates the opportunity to be understood, responded to and to make decisions and choices.
- Integrate fully our approach to communication within all aspects of school, with particular regard to literacy and its elements of speaking and listening.
- Enable access to provision through a total communication approach.
- Provide staff with the skills and knowledge to support pupils.

This may include:

- Aided Language Displays (ALD's)
- Communication books
- Gestures, body language, vocalisation/speech, eye pointing and facial expression, sign language, symbols, pictures
- Adult interaction - adult modeling, repeating and expanding
- Intensive Interaction
- Signalong signing
- Objects of Reference (OOR)
- Signing (Signalong)
- Picture Exchange Communication System (Mayer Johnson)
- Photographs/pictures/symbols/schedules
- Assisted Technology (Clicker)
- Social Stories
- Talking Mats
- Voice Output Communication Aids/equipment (VOCA)
- Communication Friendly Environments
- Specific universal strategies implemented to develop vocabulary

You can find further information regarding any of the communication support systems in our school booklets, 'supporting pupils with a communication and interaction need' and 'the communication friendly classroom toolkit'. Both can be found on the school website.

Equal Opportunities

All learners are entitled to appropriate support and intervention relating to the development of their communication, regardless of their race, culture, gender, disability and socioeconomic background.
We all communicate in different ways and each way should be equally respected and encouraged.
Communication is vital to every aspect of our lives. It impacts on our relationships, choice, control, emotions, self-esteem and self-expression. Therefore, it is fundamental to our wellbeing and quality of life.
Using total communication approaches helps people with learning disabilities develop their understanding and expression in order to communicate more effectively.

- **Communication is a basic human right**
- **Total communication is an approach, which includes all the ways we communicate**
- **Total communication is about building relationships and self–esteem**
- **Total communication is for everyone**

Multi agency working

Boarshaw Primary School works in partnership with all agencies who support some of our pupils.
This includes;

- SALT (speech and language therapy)
- RANS (Rochdale additional needs)
- EP service (Educational Psychology)

Individual learners are referred to appropriate services at the request of the school/ class staff/ parents, and an agreed approach to communication is devised. This forms an integral part of the learner's learning adventure and holistic approach to their communication.
In some cases, the S & LT team may have direct focused intervention with learners; this may specifically relate to establishing a system of communication e.g. assessing the learner for a communication aid. Once an individualised care plan is established, all staff should work closely as part of a team, ensuring consistency of approach and use.

Working with Parents and Carers

We have a team of teachers and TAs, who support the children who access our Nurture provision. This team includes a specialist Speech and Language TA.
Boarshaw Primary School is committed to supporting parents and carers in the development of their child's communication. This may involve joint meetings with the S&LT team, our Communication TA and regular home-school liaison. Parents and Carers are aware of our 'open door' policy and are welcome to visit school to observe and discuss any aspect of their child's approach to communication. Where it is considered appropriate, and in consultation with the Parents & Carers, we will provide resources to support the pupil in the home environment (e.g. symbols, books).

Assessment and reporting

The S&LT team or SALT TA will make an initial assessment of a learner on request. This may involve individual work with the learner, consultation with class staff, learner observation and parental liaison.
Ongoing assessment is then facilitated by class staff as part of the learners agreed pathway to learning. Monitoring, includes the use of information taken from the Learning Adventure, EHCP's (Educational Health Care Plans) and S & LT Targets. All these documents are available on the learner's individual files. Targets should be referred to during teaching and learning throughout the school day.
Some pupils are assessed using a bespoke communication system called Connecting Steps. This should be used for recording progress and achievement towards communication targets. This may take many forms such as written statements, photographs or post it notes.
An annual written report is produced by the school at the end of the academic year. Parents and Carers also have the opportunity to discuss their child's progress at termly parent's evenings. Both the school and the S&LT Team are happy to provide reports at times other than these for specific purposes e.g. re assessment.
It may at times be necessary for Speech & Language Therapy Team and our SALT TA to observe learners within their class/group in order to assess and provide constructive support and advice.

Training for Staff

Our school specialist SALT TA will provide regular training sessions for school staff that will be bespoke to the needs of the children in school. This training will include creating a communication friendly environment that is universal and runs throughout the whole of the school to ensure consistency of effective strategies to support communication for example; Blank Levels, quality adult/child interactions, general shared resources and strategies to develop vocabulary. This training will include upskilling school staff to be able to identify different waves of intervention/support needed as well as what support is needed for each of the three waves.