Castle Hill School

Innovating, Communicating, Empowering

Intensive Interaction Policy

Policy Created	**2016**
Committee	**LGB**
Last review	**Nov 2026**
Frequency	**2 years**
Date to be reviewed	**Nov 2028**

General Policy Statement

At Castle Hill School we intend to provide a safe, secure, caring environment where everyone is valued and respected equally. We aim to provide an inclusive education where children develop independent learning skills and are taught according to need whatever their age, gender, background, beliefs, or abilities.

National legislation, the Equality Act 2010 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014 re disabilities, race relations and special education needs underpin this policy, which has also taken into consideration national, local and school policies on Special Educational Needs, Equal Opportunities and Health and Safety.

Philosophy

Intensive Interaction is an approach to communication that is appropriate for all students whether pre-verbal, or with speech. It is led by the learner, and is embedded throughout the school as a fundamental part of the Total Communication Policy

Intensive Interaction is respectful of the individual, including their personal boundaries (See Use of Touch policy). It aims to build trust between partners, and develop the Fundamentals of Communication.

The Fundamentals of Communication-

- Learning that people are fun to be with
- Learning to give brief attention to another person
- To share attention with another person
- Learning to extend those attentions, learning to concentrate on another person
- Developing shared attention into 'activities'
- Taking turns in exchanges of behaviour
- To have fun, to play
- Using and understanding eye contacts
- Using and understanding of facial expressions
- Using and understanding of non-verbal communication such as gesture and body language
- Learning use and understanding of physical contacts
- Learning use and understanding of vocalisations, having your vocalisations become more varied and extensive, then gradually more precise, and meaningful
- Learning to control and regulate arousal levels

(A Practical Guide to Intensive Interaction - Nind and Hewitt 2001)

Practice

Opportunities for Intensive Interaction are woven throughout the school day. Staff should seize every opportunity to make communication irresistible and to be an available communication partner. This can include during personal care routines and transitions around school. Staff should tune in to the subtle responses of the students, including their body language, breathing rhythms movements and sounds, gestures, and facial expressions. Intensive Interaction can be used to facilitate engagement in preparation for learning, and to encourage peer interaction.

Teaching environment

The teaching environment depends on several factors, and most importantly the individual. Props or resources can sometimes be useful to promote joint attention and turn taking. Intensive Interaction can be planned, or incidental, and is embedded within the curriculum for this to happen regularly. Intensive Interaction is student led, and the communication partner should be flexible and be skilled in adapting any lesson plans or preconceived agenda. Intensive Interaction should be used to develop and extend The Fundamentals of Communication, with adults building and reflecting on prior learning whilst allowing the learner to take the lead. The approach can be used as a coping strategy for some students and supports the school's Regulation Policy. It can provide reassurance and a predictable response in times of distress or overstimulation.

Recording and evaluating

- Video evidence
- Staff discussion
- Observations, jottings
- Evaluations
- Evidence based practice

Guidelines

- Intensive interaction is an appropriate communication tool for students of all ages and abilities however, staff must be aware to the danger of intimate communication being misunderstood and triggering responses of a sensitive nature. Such behaviours can be redirected in a positive way.
- Staff must be aware of potential hazards involved with intimate communication and work within the guidelines of the Use of Touch Policy
- Staff should work with a student, where possible, in open environments
- Staff should be confident in articulating and reflecting on their practice
- Staff should respect student signals to end or amend the interaction
- Observation of practice and training is available for all staff

Training

Training is available to all new staff during the term in which they start working in school. There are frequent opportunities throughout the school year to join the Working parties and Regional meetings. The Intensive Interaction lead teacher is available for advice, support and personalised training when requested. Staff are regularly updated and good practice shared through the weekly Briefing Meetings, Teacher meetings and the school Facebook page.

Further Information

- See school website and leaflets
- Intensive interaction Institute website and Facebook page
- Castle Hill School 'Use of Touch' policy
- Castle Hill School 'Regulation (Behaviour) Support' policy