



FUNCTIONAL LITERACY POLICY

Policy approved & adopted by	Head of College
Date	November 2019
Review cycle	2 yearly
Next Review	November 2026

Intent

Literacy promotes and develops our skills as communicators, and correspondingly encompasses communication which can be interpersonal (signing, speaking and listening) or symbolic (reading and writing). Valley College is committed to maintaining high practical and academic standards and has high expectations of the learners. In the context of a generic special college, Valley College caters for a wide range of ability levels, it is essential that learners have access to Adult Literacy as part of the delivery of a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. Our curriculum must be able to teach explicitly the knowledge and skills required to facilitate meaningful participation in society with as much independence as possible.

At Valley College we identify Functional Literacy as the most important skills for all of our learners. We deliver these skills through our individual target teaching and a variety of teaching styles and approaches are used in sessions appropriate to the functional topics being taught and the particular needs of the learners.

Aim

- interact and communicate effectively with others in a range of social situations, helping them to form healthy and happy relationships with their peers, as well as in the wider community;
- make choices, obtain information, question, and be actively involved in decision making to help them keep safe;
- develop creativity and imagination so that they can enjoy and achieve;
- have access to a wide range of literature to enrich and broaden their experience;
- develop literacy life skills that they will need to be independent.
- develop effective functional literacy skills in all learners, developing their individual potential to the full.

Implementation

At Valley College a Golden Thread runs through the Functional Literacy curriculum from a learner's EHCP, reviews, Life Skill Plans and across the curriculum model.

At Valley College the Curriculum Model consists of the Formal Curriculum, Developmental Curriculum and Additional Curriculum. Curriculum design is individualised and therefore the weighting of this will depend on the learner and their needs.

Individual targets are identified in accordance with our Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy. These are taught specifically through Functional Literacy Sessions with targets taken from the Functional Literacy Core Curriculum. Two sessions per week are dedicated to Functional Literacy sessions but functional skills are embedded within all subjects taught.

Implementation of Communication

Objectives

- To teach active listening and understanding of language.
- To teach expression and choice making skills.
- To teach social communication skills.

Throughout the college, staff are aware that communication is an essential skill which is an integral element of all subjects and activities. It is the responsibility of all members of staff to provide opportunities to develop and generalise individual learner's communication skills. In addition, staff should model appropriate language and grammar whilst modifying their speech to suit the needs of the learner. It is our priority to teach functional communication skills to all learners.

Learners are made aware of language to reflect purpose and audience. They are encouraged to; perform, present, chat, imitate, discuss, debate and share information.

Valley College encourages multi-modal approaches to communication and offers a total communication environment.

Resources

At Valley College staff are trained in a range of specialist speaking and listening strategies.

The following resources are used throughout the college:

Makaton

Derbyshire Language Scheme

Intensive Interaction and Jabadao

Narrative Therapy

Tac Pac

Sherborne

Sensory Stories

Picture Exchange Communication (PECS)

Alternative and Augmentive Communication (AAC) including iPads and VOCAs

Communicate in Print

Objects of Reference and Objects of Focus

Emotional Support Packages

Small Steps to Independence

Implementation of Reading

Objectives

- To read, share and access books and functional literature.
- To teach a variety of reading strategies including synthetic visual and kinaesthetic methods.
- To teach functional reading skills including e-literature.

Throughout Valley College all staff are aware that reading is an essential skill which is an integral element of all subjects and activities. It is the responsibility of all members of staff to provide opportunities to develop and generalise individual learner's reading skills. The college is committed to provide a literacy rich environment to allow learners every opportunity to generalise their reading skills for example learners read signs in the environment.

For learners that are unable to read a variety of strategies are used for e.g the use of colourful semantics enables learners to link symbols and explain what is happening in functional pictures.

Valley College learners may have access to a local public library.

Implementation of Writing

Objectives

- To develop systematic fine motor skills.
- To develop grammar, vocabulary and punctuation.
- To develop functional writing skills including email and text messaging.

Throughout college all staff are aware that writing is an essential skill which is an integral element of all subjects and activities. It is the responsibility of all members of staff to provide opportunities to develop and generalise individual learner's writing skills.

Learners will be encouraged to compose texts using word processing packages, mobile phones, emails, social networking sites etc.

Session Outline

Sessions follow a three-part structure: the introduction sets the expected learning outcome of the session. This is age appropriate, motivating, engaging and related to familiar experiences and interests of the learners.

The main activity offers the opportunity to develop their skills through activities which are:

- Differentiated to match the conceptual and practical demands to learner ability.
- Consider the physical needs of the learner and are adapted appropriately.
- Ensure it is possible to reach a satisfactory endpoint in the time available.

The plenary enables the learners to collectively address misconceptions, share their work and progress towards the session objectives.

Assessment

Learners are assessed formatively and summatively and at the end of each half term. Staff attend progress meetings with SLT to discuss progress towards expected targets for functional literacy. Information from the progress meeting is used to inform the planning process.

Monitoring

Monitoring takes place through a range of different processes, formal and informal observations, file scrutiny and target setting and monitoring.

Impact

- The impact of these sessions should develop the learner's literacy skills in a functional situation. This will support their development in the future and prepare them for adulthood.
- The content of our curriculum is delivered and repeated to ensure skills and knowledge are retained. Throughout college, these skills are re-addressed at later stages and prior knowledge is built upon.
- Staff informally assess through continuous assessment, questioning, peer and self-feedback and dialogue within the environment. Staff may also have dialogue with the Head of College or directors.
- Staff formally assess the progression of skills within EHCP targets.
- At Valley College the impact of the intent and the implementation is monitored and key responsibility is given to staff as they all play a part in ensuring that accurate assessment takes place.