



At Willow Bank School we provide an ambitious curriculum in a nurturing and safe environment for pupils to develop:

- Independence
- Emotional intelligence and resilience
- Appropriate communication skills
- The ability to contribute to society through good citizenship skills and preparedness for work

## **Intent**

*Please read this overview in conjunction with the Oracy Policy.*

At Willow Bank School, we understand that social and communication skills lie at the heart of social interaction, participation, building relationships, making friends, and making sense of the human world around you. They are key to enabling our young people to interact with and learn from others in all aspects of their lives.

Communication is not just the words we use but how we use our body language, facial expression and tone of voice to communicate with someone else. In fact, well over half of language is nonverbal – body language and vocal cues such as the tone and volume of our voices.

It is important that we are all enabled to understand the messages we give to each other without speaking, such as the meaning we put into our voice, the expressions on our faces, and gestures such as waving, pointing or shrugging and those messages that others might be trying to give us, too. For those who have social and communication difficulties such as Autism, difficulties with interpreting or understanding these forms of communication can often make it hard to make or keep friends and join in with group or social activities.

Many of our young people find social communication difficult due to their individual differences and our rich tapestry of neurodiversity and it is our aim to support them as much as possible to learn these skills for life to make their world a more connected and comfortable place.

## **Implementation**

At Willow Bank School we have timetabled discrete Communication and Social Skills teaching sessions where the focus and objectives are related to the development of social communication skills and understanding.

- At Key Stage 2, a Nurture style provision which adheres to the six principles of Nurture ensures that communication and social skills are embedded throughout the entire curriculum in a highly personalised way for each child.



- At Key Stage 3 and 4, we use 'Talkabout for Teenagers' which focusses on self-awareness, self-esteem, body language, conversational skills, friendship skills and assertiveness.

## **Assessment**

As part of the 'Talkabout' programme, pupils will self-assess their social skills. Teachers will also conduct a relaxed Student Interview and a Social Skills Assessment and Summary which details each pupil's strengths and needs. This process allows us to create a personalised plan of action for each pupil which is reviewed twice throughout the year, at the end of half term three, before the February break and at the end of the academic year.

## **Impact**

By the time our young people start Key Stage 4, they will have a greater awareness of the importance that communication and social skills have in all aspects of their lives and have a range of skills and strategies which will allow them to better communicate their ideas and understand those of others.