



## Woolgrove Communication Policy.

### Aims.

To provide all pupils with the basic skill of communicating and an effective means of communicating so that they can;

- Succeed in the community.
- Communicate effectively with their peers, who may use a different method of communication to the one that they use.
- Choose their own means of communication and respect different methods of communication.
- Adjust their communication according to the needs of the situation.

The method of communication used may be:

- spoken language
- spoken language supported by signing
- signing- sign a long is the method used at Woolgrove and is based on BSL and Makaton
- symbol books
- PECS

### Pupils' communication modes.

Pupils will often have a dominant means of communicating. This could be signing, speaking, using a talker or using the PECS. We will therefore provide for all of these communication modes.

Spoken dominant communication.

Signing dominant communication.

Non verbal pupils who have not acquired signing skills will be provided with PECS, communication book or talker dominant communication.

Pupils will therefore communicate in different ways;

Spoken dominant pupils will communicate in English and will learn signing taking into account their academic abilities.

Signing dominant pupils will communicate in sign and learn English taking into account their academic abilities.

PECS, communication book or talker dominant pupils will communicate using these methods and be taught signing, to intonate words and possibly English taking into account their academic abilities.

Pupils' abilities in speaking and listening using their individual communication method will be assessed on entry to school and annually as part of the annual review process or more regularly, should there be a need. Pupils' communication preference will be recorded on their individual pupil passports.



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### **Communication in practice.**

Teachers should identify the modes of communication that pupils within their class and will modify their mode of communication to cater for individual pupils needs.

All classes have been provided with a copy of the Woolgrove Sign-along book and additional copies are available to be purchased. At Woolgrove we will use the signs in the book apart from the signs for home, finished and number where alternative signs will be used. Any signs not in the Woolgrove Sign-along book can be found in the sign-along books which are available in the Outreach library or from the sign-along database C.D. Rom which is available to borrow from the Infant area.

All staff will (according to their ability), when necessary, sign the keywords in a spoken sentence to support the development of speech and to aid understanding. This enables pupils to receive two clues about what the teacher is saying, a verbal clue and a visual clue.

All staff (according to their ability) are expected to use sign-along signs when communicating with pupils in communal areas including the playground, dining room and hall.

Some staff will sign the songs that are being sung in assembly and during the hymn practice. Some pupils may be identified to model the signing during these sessions.

The BSL alphabet will be used to sign the initial sound of names of places and people. Some teachers may wish to add an attribute associated with the pupil to the letter, for example for a pupil who is always dancing, a teacher may sign the initial sound of their name followed by the sign for dancing. Alternatively a teacher may just wish to add a boy or girl sign after the sign for the initial sound of the pupils' name.

Cued articulation will be used to support pupils' articulation and some teachers may use this method when teaching phonic sessions.

All teachers will, if necessary, produce and provide appropriate pictures, symbols, communication books or talker overlays to enable a non verbal, non signing pupil to communicate or to enhance the communication of verbal or signing pupils.

Widget symbols or pictures will be used to support pupils understanding. Symbols should be used on displays and as a teaching aid. The lunchtime menu will be produced using symbols and displayed for pupils to read. Hymns will be produced using symbols and will be displayed during the Monday morning assembly and hymn practice.

### **Speech and Language Therapy.**

All children are seen as a matter of course by the Speech and Language Therapy Service (S.A.L.T) if they have S.L.T. in their Education Health Care Plan (EHCP). Many of the children will already be known to this service and their case notes will be transferred if they were seen in Hertfordshire.

If they have not been seen in Hertfordshire but they are identified as having difficulties with communication, they can be referred for assessment and following that, if appropriate, ongoing therapy and strategies will be offered.



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The S.A.L.T. Dept has 2 S.L.T.s and an SLT Assistant. They are employed by the Hertfordshire NHS Trust and work at other locations as part of their professional contract.

A member of the team is at Woolgrove from Monday to Thursday and available for either personal or telephone contact.

The children at Woolgrove may have difficulties in various areas of their communication.

These can be divided into:

### **Comprehension/Receptive Language –**

This refers to how much a child can understand. Difficulties may affect:

Vocabulary knowledge

Ability to follow instructions

Ability to follow longer pieces of information such as stories and lessons

Understanding of grammar such as tenses and plurals

Verbal reasoning such as being able to predict or infer information

### **Expression-**

This refers to how well a child can express themselves. There may be difficulties such as:

- Ability to recall words
- Ability to construct sentences
- Difficulties in sequencing logically

Some children will have great difficulty in expressing themselves verbally and the use of a signing system such as Sign a Long will be encouraged or the use of an alternative/augmentative system such as Picture Exchange Communication Scheme (PECS) or an alternative method such as an electronic aid.

### **Speech**

This is the ability to produce speech sounds clearly.

### **Dysfluency**

Some children have difficulty producing fluent speech and may repeat the sounds or syllables in words.

### **Pragmatics**

Children with pragmatic difficulties may have difficulties with the social use of language which may affect their play and friendships.

Children may be assessed using formal standardised assessments. The Communication Framework is also used which is an informal assessment of a child's functional communication skills. This is done in conjunction with the class teacher.

Following this targets are set jointly with the teacher to ensure that the child's communication targets run through the curriculum and encourage the generalisation of new skills.

Targets need to have

- Small steps
- Be measurable
- Progressive



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### Staff and Parent training.

The Senior Leadership Team will be responsible for ensuring that the following training takes place.

Annual signing training sessions will take place for teaching and non teaching staff, including, Teaching Assistants, Mid-day supervisors, Kitchen staff, Office staff and any other adult who may need to communicate with pupils in the school.

Annual signing training sessions for parents will take place. Any parent attending at least 3 of the sessions will be provided with a Woolgrove Sign-along book free of charge.

Outreach signing sessions will take place, these may take place in house with schools attending on site or Woolgrove staff may offer training at a school that has requested information about signing. Woolgrove staff who wish to increase their skills may also attend.

Cued articulation training will take place and be updated regularly.

Elklan training will take place annually.

PECS training will take place for teaching and non-teaching staff and will be updated regularly.

Training on making and using communication books will take place for teaching and non-teaching staff and will be updated regularly.

Training on talkers will take place and be updated regularly.

Training on using the Widget and Board Maker software will be updated regularly.

Staff will be given opportunities to share good practice.

The S.A.L.T Dept will attend at least one coffee morning per year to give information to parents about the S.A.L.T service.

Training will also be offered to staff from the S.A.L.T dept as necessary.

All staff will be provided with opportunities to receive the necessary training and resources to be able to;

- Read the Woolgrove Sign-along book to effectively sign some of the signs from the book.
- Read the pictures for cued articulation to use this to teach phonics or support the articulation of sounds.
- To teach or support pupils who use the Picture Exchange Communication System.
- To teach or support pupils who use communication books.
- To teach or support pupils who use switches or talkers.
- To make PEC's resources using Widget software or Board Maker software.
- To make communication books or pages to insert into the book using Widget or Board Maker software.



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- To make super talker overlays using the Board Maker software.
- To programme a switch or talker.

Staff can request additional training to the sessions that have been provided. Additional training may be provided by the S.A.L.T dept or The Senior Leadership Team.

### Terminology.

At Woolgrove School we use the sign-along version of signing. Sign-along is based on British Sign Language (BSL) and the Makaton version of signing. It is a signing system that has been developed for use with people with special educational needs. It is a visual language with its own structure and grammar.

Sign supported English is a signing system that signs or fingerspells all of the words that would be spoken.

Augmentative communication is a method that non verbal pupils can use to communicate using pictures or a talker.

Talkers are electronic devices that can be programmed to enable a person to press a picture or symbol on the talker to produce the spoken word. At Woolgrove School we currently have a selection of switches and talkers that can be used by non verbal pupils.

The Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) is a method of communicating, by selecting photographs, pictures or symbols on a sentence strip and handing it to a person, to communicate. At Woolgrove digital photographs, widget symbols or colour pictures are used.

Communication books are books that contain symbols and are designed for individual pupils to enable them to point to the symbols to communicate with others.

Cued articulation is a method of visually signing a sound to support articulation.

Widget Symbols or Board Maker pictures are produced using the widget computer programme or Board maker programme on a computer.

English includes;

Speaking and Listening, including attentive listening skills, comprehension and deduction skills.

Spoken English, in all its forms, questioning, answering, giving and following instructions, listening and responding to others, communicating own ideas and experiences, explaining ideas, understanding and expressing different view points and using a variety of expressions.

Reading.

Writing.

Signs to support spoken English.