

The Mendip School Communication Policy

Rationale

As a school we believe everyone has the right to be heard and know that they have been listened to. All of the pupils at The Mendip School are able to communicate, but for some of them the rest of the school community needs to take time to enter into a dialogue. Each individual should know that every day they have been listened to by others and they in turn have listened to someone else. These pupils are often given the label PMLD, MSI, Deaf/blind.

We understand specialised communication as involving voice output communication aids, behaviour, signing, symbols including PECS, movement, objects of reference and any other form that the individual uses to communicate with others. Communication is not limited to one form or another, so we recognise that The Mendip School should be a Total Communication environment responding to the individual's needs and starting with how they are communicating now.

Aims

- That pupils who have specialised forms of communication are understood by staff and fellow pupils and know that they are understood.
- That the school community works together to develop communication systems that are particular for the individual and seeks to work with other settings to produce an integrated approach to communication.
- That assessment directly supports an individual's communication experience at school.
- That the school has a high level of expertise to call on from among the school staff and has ready access to other professionals who are well trained and experienced and have skills relevant to specialised forms of communication
- That communication is recognised as cross-curricular and is vital in order to ensure access to the curriculum/learning opportunities.
- That the assessment and communication plans have due regard to the individual's ethnicity, culture, religion and heritage.

Objectives

- That these pupils who have specialised forms of communication are formally assessed upon entry to the school and at the end of each key stage and when any other significant change occurs in the life of the individual that might make further assessment beneficial. This is in addition to the continuous monitoring and assessment that is necessary to ensure the progress of the individual's communication skills.
- That assessment is collaborative and includes the family of the pupil and anyone who may add to the understanding of the individual.

- That the assessment is coordinated by one person who is given an agreed amount of time and a specific target date for completion, production and implementation of a Communication Plan by their line manager
- That results are shared and clearly identified in the educational programme of the individuals assessor.
- That the communication plan drawn up is reviewed along with the IEP and at statement reviews
- That all members of the school community* need to be prepared to be involved in the assessment and implementation of the policy where appropriate.
- That staff receive regular INSET from appropriately trained members of the school community
- That identified key personnel are trained to a level, which gives them the knowledge and understanding to support pupils with specialised forms of communication.

*School community – This involves not only the families of The Mendip School pupils and staff employed at the school, but governors, volunteers, professionals attached to the school and anyone whose involvement is calculated to be beneficial to individual pupils and the school in general.