



Total Communication Policy

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. There is a statutory requirement for all agencies supporting children, young people, and adults with learning disabilities to develop communication policies. (SEND Code of Practice). The duty extends to a requirement that all written information is available in a range of accessible formats (HM Government, 2008). The aim is to develop cohesive, consistent communication systems across the academy for those who require them. Creating consistent communication approaches across different settings is vital in order to minimise communication breakdown and distress to the child or adult.
- 1.2. Underpinning the strategy are basic principles relating to the entitlement of all groups: those with learning disabilities as well as those with complex communication, physical and/or sensory impairment, who may not necessarily have learning disabilities, to be able to communicate in the way most appropriate to them. This is supported in various legislation: the Mental Capacity Act 2005, the Equality Act 2010, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989. People who use alternative methods of communication are entitled to communicate and be communicated with using their preferred medium.
- 1.3. This policy is to be read and used in conjunction with our Practice Guidelines: Total Communication.

2. The purpose of the policy is to

- 2.1. Promote opportunities to enable all children, young people, and adults to access and share information equally and so ensure that the views and opinions of everyone are considered when decisions are made.
- 2.2. Develop an infrastructure which values and supports all forms of communication.
- 2.3. Ensure all staff will promote and encourage Total Communication across all activities, throughout the lives of individuals with learning disabilities.
- 2.4. Develop communication skills to the individual's greatest potential (These skills may be verbal and/or non-verbal). Communication refers to understanding of language and the use of language in a range of social situations to fulfil a range of functions.
- 2.5. Support families, carers and staff with training and developing their skills in total communication and in making effective use of resources available.

- 2.6. Work in partnership to promote Total Communication.
- 2.7. Speech and Language Therapists compile an accurate and up to date profile of a student's communication skills, and those of their communication partners, before introducing Total Communication. This will ensure the appropriateness of the form of communication chosen and its effective implementation.
- 2.8. Encourage the recording of Total Communication Strategies to support transition e.g. Wellbeing passport, care plan, Positive Support Plan or Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP).

3. Definition

- 3.1. The following definition was developed by Alison Matthews in the early 1990's in Oldham, with people with learning disabilities, it remains relevant.
 - 3.1.1. 'Total Communication is about communicating in any way you can. It's not just about talking. It's about signing, pointing to pictures, symbols, objects, or photographs. It's also about using gestures or body movements. Facial expressions tell people how you feel. Writing, drawing, miming, drama, and other art forms are also ways of communicating. Through communication we build relationships with people. We let others know how we feel and what we think. Being able to communicate and knowing that you are being listened to is important.'
- 3.2. The ability to understand others, express views and contribute to personal decision making is a basic human right and fundamental to the acquisition of skills and knowledge.
- 3.3. The Total Communication Analysis: Appendix 1

4. Alternative and Augmented Communication (AAC) is a fundamental part of Total Communication

- 4.1. AAC refers to methods of communicating which supplement or replace spoken language. Methods of AAC can be divided into: Light Tech (symbols books/charts anything that does not need a battery) and High Tech (Voice Output Communication Aids: VOCA).
- 4.2. Assessment for AAC is highly specialist and involves a team approach. This is usually led by a speech and language therapist and can include physiotherapist, occupational therapists, parents/carers, specialist

teachers and teaching assistants/key workers as well as the person themselves.

- 4.3. Picture Communication Symbols (PCS) such as Boardmaker are the most commonly recognised and accepted symbol systems in use for AAC. It is important to consider the abstract nature of some of the symbols selected.
- 4.4. Using AAC systems has significant time and resource implications. This is particularly relevant as resources need updating/amending on a regular basis.
- 4.5. There needs to be a system to monitor, evaluate and record the development of AAC systems for the individual. This will include considering changes in their ability to participate in activities and the functional use of their AAC system. The Speech and Language Therapist has a lead role in supporting this system.
- 4.6. When helping an individual to communicate using an AAC, it is important to create real communication opportunities in every-day contexts to enable the individual to take an active role in all of their interactions. All modes of communication should be valued. This is central to the Total Communication philosophy described earlier.

References and Resources

Communication Matters. (2008). *Focus On ... What Can I Say? Vocabularies for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Systems*. Leeds:

Communication Matters/ISAAC (UK). Available at:

<http://www.complexneeds.org.uk/modules/Module-3.1>

[Communication---augmentative-and-assistive-strategies/All/downloads/m09p045a/What_can_I_Say_A4.pdf](http://www.communicationmatters.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Accessing-communication.pdf)

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Communication Matters. (N.D.). *What is AAC?* Available at:

<https://www.communicationmatters.org.uk/what-is-aac/>

Communication Matters. (N.D.). *What is AAC? Guidance: People with Communication Aids*. Available at:

<https://www.communicationmatters.org.uk/what-is-aac/guidance/>

5. Comic Strip Conversations

- 5.1. Comic strip conversations were developed by Carole Gray. They are a visual strategy to help explore different situations and unpick what was said, what may have been thought and possibly what was felt. They use

a line drawing approach in the format of a comic strip, in order to describe a situation and to understand the context and the exchange from different perspectives.

- 5.2. Comic strip conversations can be helpful for a number of reasons. They can
 - 5.2.1. Help the individual understand the difference between what is thought and what is said, and that people don't always say what they are thinking.
 - 5.2.2. Help to solve problems or conflicts.
 - 5.2.3. Help a young person communicate their feelings.
 - 5.2.4. Explore feelings arising in particular situations.
 - 5.2.5. Help a young person understand a situation from another person's perspective.
 - 5.2.6. Reflect on a situation in a non-threatening way, without being asked lots of questions.
- 5.3. Reduce the pace of the conversation in order to support the person's processing
- 5.4. Help to visually support a complex conversation which can be referred back to. This reduces the demand on memory.
- 5.5. Work out what went wrong and think about what the student could do differently next time.
- 5.6. Give opportunities for the student to develop strategies to manage their feelings and behaviour.

References and Resources

Gray, C. (1994). *Comic Strip Conversations: Illustrated Interactions That Teach Conversation Skills to Students with Autism and Related Disorders*. Arlington, Texas: Future Horizons.

National Autistic Society. (2023). *Social Stories and Comic Strip Conversations*.

Available at: <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/communication/communication-tools/social-stories-and-comic-strip-conversations>

6. Communication Books

- 6.1. Those who have difficulty using speech to communicate could benefit from the use of a communication books. Communication books can be used as an alternative or an augmentative communication method.

They are highly individual in terms of content and layout and are important as a backup to high tech communication aids.

- 6.2. Before creating a communication book, an assessment of the most appropriate layout and access method must be carried out by a trained person, who will consider:
 - 6.2.1. The level of symbolic development
 - 6.2.2. Size of symbols.
 - 6.2.3. Page orientation and size.
 - 6.2.4. Number of symbols per page.
 - 6.2.5. Visual accessibility e.g. colour coding, contrast.

7. The following points need to be taken into consideration when thinking about introducing a communication book:

- 7.1. For successful implementation and use of a communication book, training should be sought from the specialist speech and language therapist.
- 7.2. Agreement must be made with the student and families on the content of the book.
- 7.3. The size of the communication book needs to match the user's lifestyle. For example, a mobile user will need a small portable book or package of symbols. A wheelchair user can use a larger, more accessible book.
- 7.4. The book should contain an introduction to the reader and how the book is accessed. It should be written in the first-person context at the beginning of the book. E.g. *'Welcome to my communication book. This book helps me share my thoughts, needs and ideas with you. Using this book, we can communicate more easily and understand each other better. I access my communication book by [describe the method, e.g. pointing to symbols, using a stylus] etc.'*
- 7.5. Symbols, pictures, or photographs need to be arranged in categories with an index system for easy access and use.
- 7.6. The everyday vocabulary used in conversation by the student should be included in their communication book.
- 7.7. The communication book is not to be used as curriculum tool. Topic based charts should be used for this purpose to prevent communication books becoming impractical and unmanageable for everyday communication.
- 7.8. The communication books belong to the person.

- 7.9. The student should have access to their book whenever they need it. It should never be withdrawn because it gets in the way or as a punishment. It is the user's voice!
- 7.10. Avoid duplicated books or different vocabulary in different books (i.e., home/school) as all vocabulary should be available to develop language and communication in every context.

8. Intensive Interaction

- 8.1. Intensive Interaction is used as a therapeutic approach for people who have limited social and communication skills.
- 8.2. Intensive Interaction is an approach that should to be used on a daily basis in the individual's own environment e.g. school, home, sensory room, etc.

9. How to do Intensive Interaction

- 9.1. Intensive Interaction is drawing on skills that are intuitive, natural, and comfortable to most people. In fact, many people all over the world use Intensive Interaction without any training and without any knowledge of the approach. It is an easy approach to use. Many people fail to use it because they are apprehensive that anything so effective could be as simple as Intensive Interaction appears to be. Intensive interaction involves 'being with' the person instead of 'doing to' and having a type of conversation, often without words.
- 9.2. Intensive Interaction techniques include:
 - 9.2.1. Sharing personal space- In Intensive Interaction we look to share proximity in a mutually acceptable way e.g., somehow lying, sitting, standing, or even moving together, touching or apart.
 - 9.2.2. Vocal Echoing -Echoing some aspect of a student's sounds (even any non-symbolic sounds) can be socially acknowledging and even develop into conversation-like exchanges e.g., echoing a person's sounds or vocalisations, perhaps even echoing their breathing patterns. Behavioural mirroring.
 - 9.2.3. Mirroring some aspect of a student's posture, movements or behaviour can be socially acknowledging and can develop into dynamic behavioural exchanges e.g., mirroring some aspect of a person's movements or physical activity, adopting someone's posture.
 - 9.2.4. Physical contact- Sensitive, sociable physical contact can sometimes promote mutual trust and sociability e.g., holding, squeezing, or clapping hands together; hand-under-hand games; rhythmically

stroking arms or shoulders; walking arm-in-arm; touching foreheads or rubbing noses.

- 9.2.5. Making or exchanging eye contact - Sensitive eye contact can be important for exchanging inclusive social signals e.g., looking at, and looking away games, making dramatic glances, looking in the mirror together.
- 9.2.6. Exchanging facial expressions - Using clear and sustained facial expressions with a student creates opportunities for these to be better understood and reciprocated e.g., clear smiling, winking; even pulling faces.
- 9.2.7. Joint focus activity - This is when both people focus their attention on the same object or activity, structuring their social engagement around this object or activity e.g., jointly exploring objects, books, and pictures; doing a structured activity together; reading to or listening to music together.
- 9.2.8. Turn taking - Turn taking involves two people intentionally sequencing their actions in some way e.g., via sequenced vocal or physical exchanges e.g., clapping or passing things in turns, etc.
- 9.2.9. Burst-pause sequences - This is when an action is preceded by an extended pause, building an expectancy that something is about to happen e.g., hide-and-appear games; playing 'catch' with a '1-2-3' countdown; using noise escalation games that gradually build then abruptly go quiet.
- 9.2.10. Using 'running commentaries'- The timely use of a positive 'running commentary' on someone's actions, or on the visible actions of others in a shared environment, can provide a socialising element to an engagement e.g., using limited language to describe a student's activity e.g., "wow, great, yeah...", "I can see you looking...", "from me to you..." etc (Taken from: An introductory guide to Intensive Interaction for those who work with or support people with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties and/or autism. Graham Firth Intensive Interaction Highly Specialist Practitioner Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (2019).)

10. The Team Role

- 10.1. It is important and rewarding to implement intensive interaction in the spirit of team-working. No one individual on the staff team will have all the insight into a particular user. No one member of a staff team will hold the 'key' to building a relationship with a particular student. The reasons for this are:
 - 10.1.1. The work continues if someone is ill, on leave or moves.
 - 10.1.2. The work is continued between different provisions e.g. home, school and respite services.

- 10.1.3. Different personalities bring different perspectives to interactions from which others can learn.
- 10.1.4. The individual learns that other people are good to be with – not just one person.
- 10.1.5. Team working provides a forum for discussion, support and exploration of strategies that work / don't work.

11. Multisensory Storytelling

11.1. What is Multisensory stories?

11.1.1. Multisensory Storytelling (MSST) is an interactive approach combining sensory experience and storytelling. The approach is typically used with children or adults who have additional support needs and is most often facilitated in a small group. The approach uses different objects (stimuli) which stimulate the five senses, touch, smell, hearing, taste, and vision. Each stimulus is linked to one sentence of a short story. The stories are designed to be interactive, playful, and fun. Repetition is an important part of multisensory storytelling and sessions are often run over a number of weeks.

11.2. Why is Multisensory Storytelling beneficial?

11.2.1. MSST is beneficial for people for many reasons. Firstly, opportunities for sensory exploration and experience are offered. Sensory experience and stimulation are important for brain development, and during MSST participants might experience new or interesting textures, sounds, smells, or visuals. Repetition of experience builds new neural pathways, important as brain development is use-dependant (Hong and Mason, 2016). Participants are able to explore the stimuli at their own pace and often gain the confidence to try something new. Furthermore, opportunities for developing early communication skills also occur through MSST. Research has found that MSST supports engagement and responsiveness in people with complex support needs, and they can help people to develop skills in social communication, such as turn taking, eye contact, and choice making (Halfens, 2012). A key feature of MSST is the repetition of the story and the anticipation which occurs when in a group setting. Storytellers have noticed that some people really enjoy being last in the group. This is because going last builds excitement, participants are able to watch other group members take their turn and thus, anticipate their own. This also allows participants who are nervous about being in a new environment, the chance to see what happens before it is their turn.

11.2.2. Further opportunities to support positive experiences in relationships occur in the relationship between the storyteller and participant. As a storyteller, it is important to build rapport with participants and notice subtle changes in their presentation and communication when delivering MSST sessions. This might look like a short smile when engaging with a certain stimulus or it could be that someone is looking worried before having their turn. It is also important for the storyteller to respect boundaries, know when a participant has finished or had enough, or is overwhelmed by a stimulus. As the trust in the relationship builds week upon week, the storyteller becomes more able to assess the participants needs and can make judgements about when to gently encourage exploration and when to take a step back. The storytelling session becomes a dynamic process, adapting to the needs of each participant. This might look like giving a participant longer to explore something if they seem to be enjoying it. It could also look like skipping a certain stimulus or modelling how it used on yourself first if someone seems unsure. Noticing how another person feels and acting accordingly is called attunement. Attunement is an important part of building relationships and helps another person feel heard, valued and understood.

References and Resources

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- Willems, N. W. J. (2014). "Sense the story" The effectiveness of an adapted version of Multi-Sensory Storytelling on the responsiveness of children, adolescents, and young adults with Multiple Disabilities at a Children's Home in South Africa. Utrecht University.1-56

12. Using Objects to Communicate

- 12.1. Objects can be used in a variety of ways to encourage communication and consultation. Objects are one of the less abstract ways of communicating and may be useful when communicating with someone who does not benefit from using photographs, symbols, signs, or the spoken word. They can, however, be used in conjunction with these methods, if needed. Unlike most other forms of communication, objects potentially register with all the senses. As well as having a certain texture, shape, size, weight, and temperature, they also have visual characteristics. Some objects have a distinctive smell and others may have a recognisable sound. All these multi-sensory properties can be used to enhance receptive communication.
- 12.2. Objects can be used to give information to others, to express wants and needs and to make sense of information. Although we all use objects to communicate to a degree, some people may benefit from them being used in a more structured and thorough way.
- 12.3. Students who may benefit from the use of objects may be:
 - 12.3.1. Students for which two-dimensional picture representations are not useful.
 - 12.3.2. Students who have sensory impairments e.g., vision/deafness.
 - 12.3.3. Students who do not understand more complex spoken language.
- 12.4. When introducing objects of reference, it is important to consider the individual's ability to discriminate between objects by touch, in order to associate an object with activities, places or people and to remember the assigned meaning. The individual may not be able to discriminate, associate or remember objects. This may need to be prompted through a structured programme over a time. The class team will need to agree the function and use of the objects.
- 12.5. When an area of communication breakdown has been identified for example the transition between activities and places, and the effectiveness of using the objects has been established, a thorough plan of how they will be introduced needs to be outlined. Attention to detail will enable the person to learn more effectively and will prevent further communication breakdown from occurring. Monitoring progress and developing ideas will be an essential part of this process.
- 12.6. Deciding which objects to use as Objects of Reference will be a case of trial and error. The objects should be chosen through careful observation, noting how the individual interacts with their environment and taking account of objects which seem to have particular

importance or meaning for that person. When introducing Objects of Reference, context is crucial to encourage the association between object and person/place/activity. They should be introduced in everyday situations whenever the need to communicate arises. It is advisable to start with simple, concrete objects that have a direct physical connection with the person/place/activity. As the user reaches the necessary level of understanding, objects that are more abstract can gradually be introduced. However we work cooperatively to gain this knowledge from the primary schools.

- 12.7. Objects can be used in their complete form and in some circumstances, can be gradually reduced so that the student can recognise a small part of the object. This is useful as it makes the item more manageable and saves space and it also promotes learning.
- 12.8. As with all Total Communication methods, it is essential that the objects are used consistently, even if the environment is inconsistent. Progress will depend on everyone's co-operation, with clear aims in place. The use of any objects should be documented Wellbeing Passport. This will encourage consistent working practices and the prevention of future communication breakdown and distress.
- 12.9. Objects of Reference can be used in many of the ways that speech, signing, reading, and writing can. As well as helping people to communicate with others, objects can also boost confidence in social interaction, promote sensory and motor skills, enhance receptive skills, and help people remember things. They may also serve to reduce challenging behaviour as they help the person to understand their world better and improve their ability to communicate with others.

References and Resources

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13. Using Photographs to Communicate

- 13.1. Many people are able to use photographs to communicate. However, photos are symbolic in that they are two dimensional, flat and represent an item, person, or place. Not everyone recognises that a photograph means the same as the real thing. A Speech and Language Therapist can assess the appropriateness of photographs for an individual with the person, their carers, and those who work closely with them.
- 13.2. When first introducing photographs as a means of expressive communication, it is important to choose pictures which are highly motivating. 'Toilet' and 'Drink' may seem like useful things to start with,

but they may not fire the imagination. Think about the student's interests. The student may need help to realise that they can control their environment by communicating. This means that each time the photos are used, their attempt should be 'rewarded' (in other words, something positive should happen). This way, the individual will gradually learn the usefulness of photographs.

- 13.3. If charts or books are made with photographs it may be necessary to produce additional resources for specific occasions or topics. For example, 'swimming' and Curriculum subject areas e.g., food technology, may all need separate books or charts.
- 13.4. The student's name and how they access the photos should be clearly displayed to provide information for the communicative partner.
- 13.5. Careful consideration needs to be given when supporting the person to move from using photographs to symbols, as symbols are more abstract and at a higher level of symbolic development.

References and Resources

Matthews, A. & Baynham, T. (2006). Photo Opportunities. *Speech and Language Therapy in Practice, Spring*. pp.7-9.

Matthews, A. & Samuels, R. (2006) 'Conference Calls: Show and Tell'. *Speech and Language Therapy in Practice, Summer*. pp.20-22.

14. Linking Photographs to Symbols

- 14.1. Photographs may limit some people in that it is hard to depict abstract language in a photograph. For instance, the words 'when' 'yesterday' and 'if' would be almost impossible to represent easily by photographs. It may be helpful, therefore, to move on to symbols which are more abstract. These links may need to be taught.
- 14.2. The Speech and Language Therapist will be able to offer advice about the appropriateness of photographs and symbols match i.e., select the most motivating photographs to link to a symbol in order to learn that the symbol represents the same concept as the photograph. The therapist will also be able to advise about the transition stage involved in moving from photographs to symbols e.g., presentation of photographs and symbols. For some students visually decoding the photograph can be a real challenge; making sense of the whole image, understanding the foreground and background, and seeing the whole context can place a heavy load on the student's processing skills. Sometimes symbols can be easier to decode.

- 14.3. When moving from photographs to symbols it is helpful to pick the symbols, which are the least abstract. For example, a brush would be easier to recognise than a symbol for a restaurant.

15. Taking Photographs

- 15.1. When taking photographs, the following should be considered:
- 15.1.1. Try to use personalised photographs when appropriate.
 - 15.1.2. Ensure the photograph is clear and in focus.
 - 15.1.3. Frame the shot well – make sure the subject is in the centre.
 - 15.1.4. Make sure you don't include any hidden messages in your photo. It is easy to include something in your photo which is not relevant to what you are trying to depict. Avoid visual distractions on a photograph.
 - 15.1.5. Think about vocabulary – are you sure the student is familiar with the item being photographed. Do you need to teach it?

16. Symbolic development

- 16.1. As we develop we go through stages of understanding how things can be represented. Students we support will be at different stages on this path of development:
- 16.1.1. Stage 1: understanding the real object (knowing what it's for).
 - 16.1.2. Stage 2: understanding photo representations of the object.
 - 16.1.3. Stage 3: understanding picture representations of the object (drawing).
 - 16.1.4. Stage 4: understanding symbol representations of the object.
 - 16.1.5. Stage 5: understanding written words relating to the object.

17. Perspective

- 17.1. As with symbolic development, understanding perspective is a skill some of the individuals we support may not have. When taking photographs, try to get as near to the thing you are taking the picture of to make it fill the whole photo, i.e., we know that people in the distance look smaller than people close up, but this may be confusing for some individuals.

18. Focusing on part, rather than the whole meaning

- 18.1. The photo may have something in it that the student focuses on rather than what was the intended meaning. For example, being interested in

the packet of crisps on the table in the photograph which was meant to represent 'kitchen'.

19. Vision difficulties

- 19.1. Find out whether the student you are supporting has any vision difficulties. This may distort what the photo looks like to them. Consider whether using matt laminating pouches would help avoid glare.
- 19.2. Some individuals do not have an actual problem with their eyes. The messages going from their eyes to the brain can get distorted or the brain may have difficulties processing information effectively.
- 19.3. Some individuals find it hard to focus on photos because the muscles controlling their eyes are not working properly. You may see their eyes moving rapidly from side to side. This is called nystagmus.

20. Expressive, receptive or both?

- 20.1. Photos can be used to help someone understand (receptive language). They can be used to help someone communicate what they want to say (expressive language). They can also be used to help someone understand. For example, we may tell someone that we are going to the park by showing them a photo of the park (receptive language). In the future they could point to the picture of the park to communicate that they want to go there (expressive language).

21. Accessibility is a key issue: Where will any aid be stored and how will it be used?

- 21.1. Do the photos need to be accessible on the wall, in a book or in a wallet? Could they be on colour-coded card? Do those individuals who will be using the system need training? Discuss which photos are a priority and start with them. Think about the things the student would be motivated to communicate about.

References and Resources:

Matthews, A. & Baynham, T. (2006). Photo Opportunities. *Speech and Language Therapy in Practice, Spring*. pp.7-9.

Matthews, A. & Samuels, R. (2006) 'Conference Calls: Show and Tell'. *Speech and Language Therapy in Practice, Summer*. pp.20-22.

22. Using Symbols to Communicate

- 22.1. Symbols are used to give and receive information to students who have difficulty either in understanding or expressing themselves. They are

often used to allow students who do not use spoken language to express themselves. For example, by pointing to the symbols to get information across. They can be used alongside the text to make written information more accessible to those who do not read. In this way they can also act as a memory aid.

- 22.2. A Speech and Language Therapist can assess the appropriate symbols for an individual in conjunction with their carers and those who work closely with them.
- 22.3. The symbols that a person is familiar with (their vocabulary) should be recorded and kept in a safe place so that this information is not lost. This should be updated and added to whenever a person learns a new symbol.
- 22.4. Symbols can be produced in different formats and suit the individual's physical and/or sensory needs and personal preference. Symbols should be appropriate to the needs of the individual with whom they are being used. For example, if the individual finds colour distracting, black and white symbols should be used. This may involve 'direct access', which means that the person points to a symbol.
- 22.5. When symbols are used to support text, key symbols should be used to represent the meaning of a phrase, sentence, or paragraph rather than symbols being used to represent each individual word. Please see 'Accessible Information Guidelines' (e.g., Mencap).
- 22.6. When a new symbol is introduced, care should be taken to ensure that the meaning of the symbol is explicitly explained to the person. If the individual has difficulty relating the meaning to the symbol that has been introduced, the team should consider whether the person might find a different symbol easier to understand for that meaning.
- 22.7. Symbols should be consistent with those used throughout the academy wherever possible. We use Widgeit Online.

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www.widgeitonline.com

23. Using Makaton

- 23.1. Makaton provide adequate accessibility in terms of vocabulary, training, and resources. Makaton is a language programme that uses signs, symbols and speech to help people communicate:
 - 23.1.1. Express their thoughts, feelings and wants
 - 23.1.2. Be understood
 - 23.1.3. Pay attention
 - 23.1.4. Listen and understand speech
 - 23.1.5. Remember and sequence
- 23.2. Makaton is used by people with a variety of communication and learning needs. Makaton is used in the UK and more than 40 other countries around the world. It's based on the grammatical structure of spoken English. Makaton includes a core vocabulary of 450 essential words, signs and symbols. It has a larger, open-ended vocabulary that covers broader life experiences.
- 23.3. Makaton was first developed by a speech therapist named Margaret Walker in the 1970s. It was named using a few letters from the names of the first three Makaton teachers: Margaret Walker (MA), Katherine Johnston (KA) and Tony Cornforth (TON).
- 23.4. With Makaton, signs are used with speech in spoken word order. Using signs can help people who have no speech or whose speech is unclear.
- 23.5. Children who have difficulty understanding and speaking often become frustrated or withdrawn. Young children may communicate this through behaviours such as screaming and kicking; older children and adults may shout or hurt themselves. By using Makaton, we are helping them to communicate in a more acceptable way.

References and Resources

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/grownups/makaton>

<https://www.sense.org.uk/information-and-advice/ways-of-communicating/makaton/>

https://makaton.org/TMC/TMC/About_Makaton/How_Makaton_Works.aspx

24. Social Stories

- 24.1. Social Stories are short stories, which have certain characteristics that describe a situation, concept or social skill using a meaningful format. They describe what people do, why they do it and what the common

responses are. The goal is to teach social understanding, not rote compliance. They are often used to support individuals who have autism and/or social use of language difficulties. They may be particularly useful in times of transition or when introducing changes, new situations or to address fears and anxieties. They can provide a prompt for socially appropriate behaviour and help to prevent extreme reactions that stem from a lack of social understanding in a supportive (rather than bossy) way.

- 24.2. Any person associated with an individual may write Social Stories. This may include parents, relatives, teachers, speech and language therapists, teacher assistants/key workers, and psychologists.

References and Resources

Gray, C. (2015). *The New Social Story Book: Over 150 Social Stories That Teach Everyday Social Skills to Children and Adults with Autism and Their Peers*. Arlington, Texas: Future Horizons.

National Autistic Society. (2023). *Social Stories and Comic Strip Conversations*.

Available at: <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/communication/communication-tools/social-stories-and-comic-strip-conversations>

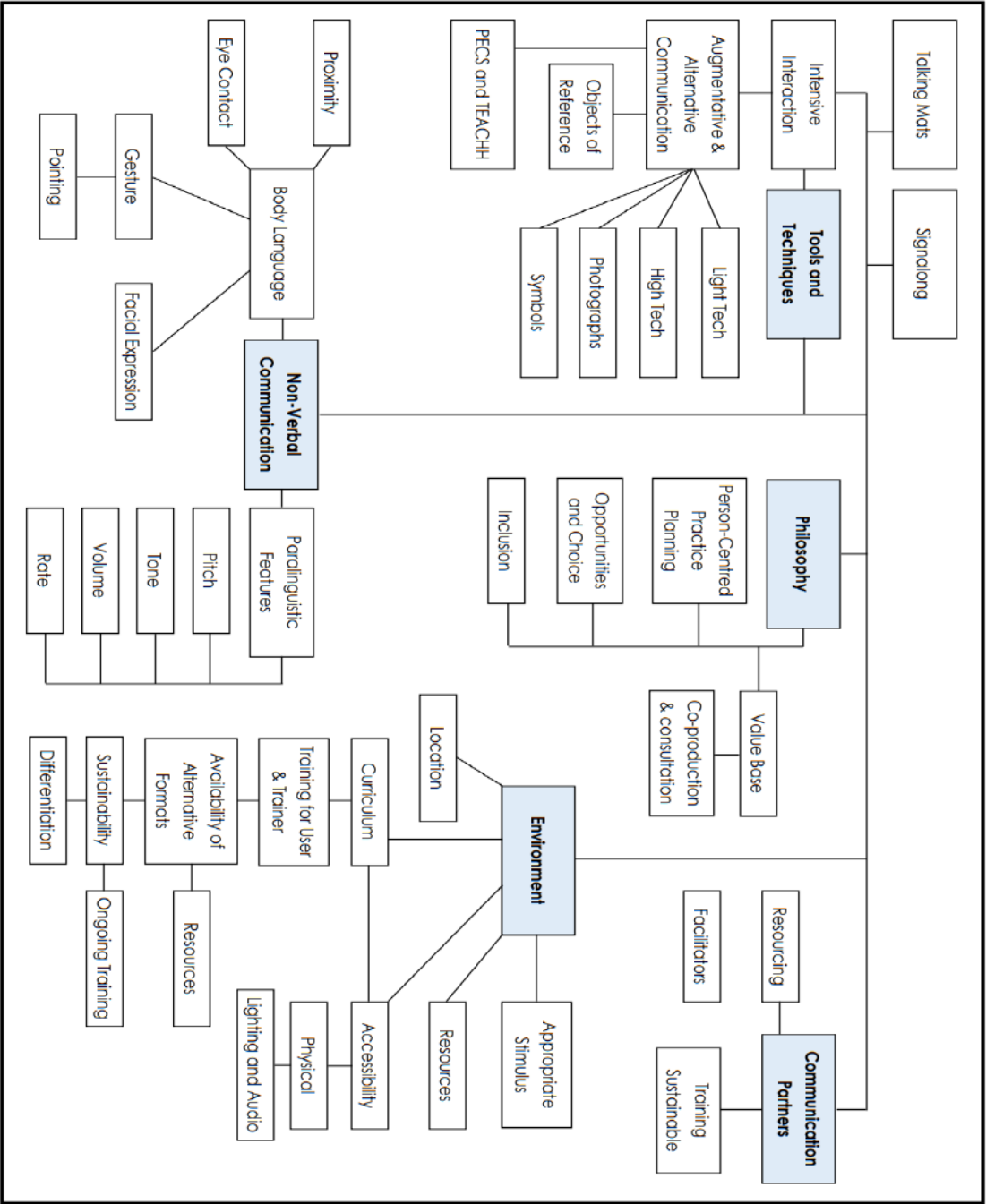
<https://carolgraysocialstories.com/>

Thanks to: Northern Care Alliance, Oldham Children's Speech, and Language Therapy at Werneth Primary Care Centre, Total Communication Services CIC Speech & Language Therapists and Play Therapist and Oldham Council: Sensory and Physical Support Service

25. Changes

Description	Date	Page	Section
New policy - original	05.12.2024		

Appendix 1: Total Communication Analysis



Matthews, A. & Newman, H. (Unpublished).