



## PENDLE COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL & COLLEGE Total Communication Policy

### **Introduction**

We believe communication is the foundation of good quality teaching and learning.

A 'Total Communication' environment helps us to identify personal communication strengths and challenges which, in turn, allows us flexibility to use the most appropriate communication method with each pupil. It also helps us make informed educational decisions regarding the communication methods that will support a pupil's lifelong learning and future pathway.

Pendle Community High School & College (PCHS&C) therefore, provides targeted and relevant communication support for all students who attend this setting. We adopt a 'Total Communication' approach and embrace that communication is not just about talking. We also emphasise the importance of body language, signs, symbols, objects and more creative mediums such as music and art. This facilitates individuals with communication differences to interact with others in the way most accessible to them.

### **Audience**

This document is intended for all staff and other stakeholders with classroom responsibilities, school governors, parents, the Local Authority and Ofsted. A copy of this policy is made available for all staff on the school network. A copy of this policy is also available to parents via the school website.

### **Overview and Aims**

At Pendle Community High School and College, we aim to:

- help pupils find a way of expressing themselves using good functional communication.
- improve quality of life, develop social communication skills and facilitate more communication opportunities for students, staff, family and friends, to help individuals form connections and facilitate successful interactions.
- enable pupils to develop their receptive and expressive communication skills.
- offer a sensory supportive environment including consideration of lighting, background noise, position, posture and objects that may distract.
- ensure that each pupil's individual communication system is used consistently.
- give careful consideration to the learning environment in order to make the communication systems on offer as effective as possible.
- implement targets through clear liaison between Speech and Language Therapists, parents or carers and staff.
- provide access to relevant training.

### **Developing a Successful Communication Environment**

A Total Communication environment supports everyone to increase their functional communication (communication used in everyday life). The approach involves pupils and staff using every form of communication available to them, with particular emphasis on what is relevant to an individual, to ensure equality of opportunity.

This can include: spoken language (verbal communication), non-verbal communication (e.g. body language, facial expression) and Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC).

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) refers to any means by which an individual can supplement or replace spoken communication.

What we know:

- AAC systems do not interfere with speech development and may encourage it.
- AAC systems involve specific procedures, methods, styles and strategies.
- AAC systems can provide:
  - a means of communication for people at an early stage of development.
  - a means of communication and language for those whose speech isn't clear.
  - a bridge to spoken language.
- The implementation of AAC requires interdisciplinary assessment, coordination and monitoring.
- School staff, families and therapists can make a difference.

Total communication means that we encourage the use of all appropriate means of communication, both unaided and aided, between pupils and between adults and pupils; this may include but is not restricted to:

Unaided:

- Verbal skills including speaking and listening
- Signing (BSL/ Makaton/ Deaf-blind)
- Verbal/gestural strategies (e.g. cued articulation, cued speech)
- Body language, eye pointing, facial expression, natural gesture, use of vocalisation/intonation, sensory stimulation

Aided:

- Voice Output Communication Aids
- Symbols
- Core communication boards
- Core communication books
- Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)
- Pragmatic Organised Dynamic Display (PODD)
- Objects of reference
- Visual supports e.g. TEACCH
- Intensive interaction
- On body cues
- Photographs
- Eye gaze
- Social stories
- Written text

In addition, to ensure good communication between adults, parents and carers there are:

- Communication Passports
- Pen Portrait Profiles
- Feeding Plans
- Health Care Plans
- Behaviour Support Plans
- Sensory Diet/Lifestyle Plans
- Positive Handling Plans
- Home school communication books/ Class Dojo / Email
- School website
- FLO Facebook page
- School/parent text/ Letters
- Reviews, Parent Evenings and Reports
- Parent events – coffee mornings and workshops

- Cygnet Training

**Roles and responsibilities**

We work closely with outside agencies, as well as commissioning our own independent providers, to ensure the best communication outcomes for each individual.

***We have a dedicated communication support team:***

- Joanne Chatburn (SLT lead for EdTech and Communication)
- Laura Gibbons (Lead Teacher for Communication)
- Hayley Horrocks (TA3 for Communication)
- Louise Wilkinson (TA2 for Communication)
- Nosheen Bhatti (Communication Partner - Training)
- Emma Cowling (Communication Partner - Training)
- Cameron Disley (ICT Manager)
- Stephanie Curtis (SENDCo)
- Sandra Gregory (Independent Speech and Language Therapist (SLT))
- Nicola Fielden (Independent SLT)
- Jo Heyward (NHS SLT AAC focused)
- Jo Brown (NHS SLT)
- Sarah Cross (NHS Senior Speech and Language Assistant)
- The Ace Centre

**Further resources**

Please see our website for links


**Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed annually by SLT. After every review, it will be approved by the governors.

**Links to other policies**

This policy is linked to our:

- Equality Policy
- Positive Relationships and Behaviour Policy
- Promoting Positive Well-being and Mental Health Policy
- Online Safety Policy/ AUP
- Professional Development Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Curriculum Policy

<b>Policy adopted by governors:</b>	March 2024
<b>Review Date:</b>	Feb 2025
<b>Signed:</b> T Ashton, Chair of Governors	
<b>Signed:</b> D Grogan, Head Teacher	