Communication

Support and Development Guidelines

Being A Communication Friendly Academy

Key Stages 3/4 and Post 16

Communication Support and Development Guidelines

Philosophy

These guidelines reflect the values and philosophy of Abbey Hill Academy and Sixth Form in relation to communication skills, and were written in consultation with teaching staff. The guidelines set out a framework within which all staff can operate, and give guidance on practice within school. Their purpose is to impact positively on practice in and out of the classroom, and to ensure that staff have the highest expectations of students with respect to communication skills which are reflected in high quality modelling of communication and creation of frequent opportunities for student to use and develop these skills.

Values and Aims

The Trust's message is 'To do more and do it better'. This principle is reflected in the communication environment in Abbey Hill Academy and Sixth Form where we endeavour to enable students to communicate their wants, needs, emotions and ideas effectively and appropriately in a total communication environment, valuing the use of gestures, signs, symbols and communication aids as well as speech, to enhance expressive and receptive language and communication. The communication of staff will be relevant and appropriate to the individual needs of students and we will have a high expectation that each student develops effective communication skills to their own potential. This in turn will contribute to the development of young people who

- are safe, happy and able to develop good personal relationships
- can join in and contribute
- enter the adult world as respectful, tolerant, valued, confident and independent young people with resilience and ambition
- can use creativity and problem solving to play an active part in the world

In order a achieve this, consistent approaches to supporting the speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) of all students will be fostered.
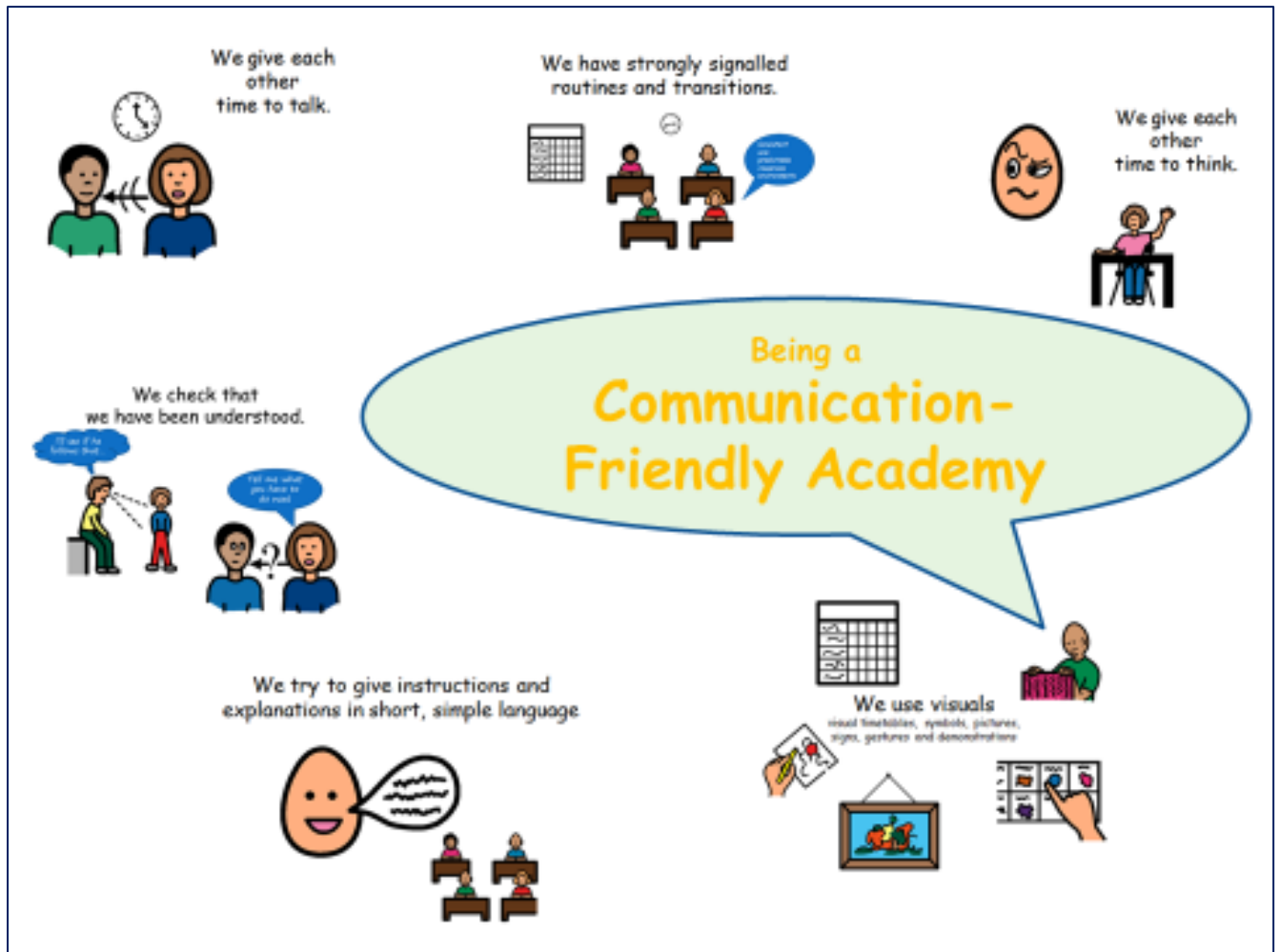
A Communication Friendly Environment

The academies will support all students to enhance their expressive and receptive language and develop effective communication skills to their individual potentials through the use of communication principles and strategies.

Universal Strategies See Appendix 1

Whole Academy Strategies for Ensuring a Communication Friendly Environment

- Use of clearly signalled routines alongside pictures, symbols, signs and written words to support understanding and expressive communication
- Gaining students' attention before telling or asking them something
- 'Chunking' instructions and explanations into small sections or short sentences, using the order in which events occur
- Allowing time for processing
- Checking that students have understood by asking them to repeat what has been said or watching their response
- Modelling spoken expressive language; repeat, emphasize and expand what the student has said
- When teaching new vocabulary, modelling words in a variety of contexts, demonstrating the meaning and providing plenty of opportunities to use them
- Use of concrete examples and hands-on activities when teaching abstract ideas and conceptual thinking
- Use of organizational aids and visual supports, for example, photographs, film, symbols, Powerpoint, word mats, visual timetables and objects to enhance all aspects of learning for our students
- Creating opportunities for extending and developing communication and interaction skills across and curriculum and life of the school, for example, supporting students to prepare for public speaking, debates and individual presentations
- Planning for lessons across the curriculum, especially in English, Drama, Understanding My World and Communication to support and develop the communication needs and skills of our studentsWhole School Activities; for example 'Word of the Week', 'Sign of the Week' and Celebrate Communication (No Pens) Days

Whole academy strategies for ensuring a communication friendly environment can be expressed as

Targeted Strategies

Strategies for Ensuring a Communication Friendly Environment for Students with More Specific Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)

Additional communication assessment, support and strategies, and a range of teaching adaptations, including the following, will be required by some students who have different patterns and degrees of difficulty in communication. These students include those with SLD, complex needs, ASD and specific communication difficulties.

- Use of a Total Communication approach with visuals including demonstrations, pictures, symbols, written words, signs and gestures. These may be used via a variety of platforms and methodologies including symbol timetables, 'first-then' transition cards, Picture Exchange (PECS), communication charts, symbol books, eye-gaze computers and communication aids
- Engineering the Environment; creating motivating situations, opportunities, prompts and cues for students to communicate for a variety of reasons.
- Modelling the use of objects, pictures, symbols (e.g. on communication charts or aids) gestures, signs and speech for communication. (Aided Language Stimulation)
- Voicing students' communication intentions; interpreting their actions by speaking aloud, using communication aids, signing and/or pointing to symbols, therefore providing a model for communication
- SCERTS (Social Communication, Emotional Regulation and Transactional Support)
- Attention Autism
- TEACCH
- Tac Pac
- Sensory Stories
- Interactive Stories
- Strategies and approaches including Video Interactive Guidance, Circle Solutions and Spirals of Enquiry may be used to consider the communication and interaction skills, needs and plans for individuals and groups

Specialist Strategies

Students in Need of Additional Communication Assessment, Support and Intervention

Some students with complex or specific communication difficulties are identified on a case by case basis and assessed by the Trust Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT) in order to identify their speech, language and communication skills and needs and to provide support for identifying targets and advice around bespoke communication strategies. Many of these students will need support and interventions that can be provided by teachers and special needs assistants (SNAs) following the advice of the speech and language therapist. Some of these students will require support or intervention from the speech and language therapist including

- development of skills in communicating using communication aids
- development of vocabulary-learning skills
- development of narrative skills

Some students join the academies while on the active caseload of an NHS SaLT. Horizons Trust SALT seeks to liaise with relevant NHS SaLTs in order to facilitate support for these students' communication needs in school and establish joint working or shared management as appropriate.

Those students requiring specialist SaLT assessment and advice, for example with regard to eating or drinking difficulties, including dysphagia, or fluency, will be referred to the NHS Speech and Language Therapy Service in order to access this.

The Trust SaLT will accept referrals from parents, teachers, the educational psychologist, parent support advisors, tutor teams and visiting professionals.

Responsibilities

Horizons Specialist Academy Trust Speech and Language Therapist will

- Promote strategies to develop the awareness and understanding of the whole academy community around SLCN and effective communication and interaction
- Support and advise teachers and SNAs in order to create a Communication Friendly Environment throughout Abbey Hill
- Support school staff in understanding specific communication approaches through joint working and offering relevant training; for example, signing workshops. This support may be focused on whole school needs, specific cohorts of students or individuals
- Liaise with staff in order to identify students' communication strengths, needs and any specific interventions needed
- Provide support for identifying targets and advice regarding bespoke communication strategies
- Assess the speech, language and communication skills and needs of individual students as agreed with parents and staff
- Provide documents and reports as and when required, to be shared with tutors, the Senior Leadership Team, other professionals and parents, to describe communication skills and needs and recommendations for individual students
- Provide specialist support and interventions for students who have been identified as having this need
- Monitor the implementation and effectiveness of advice and recommendations for tutor groups, cohorts of students and individuals through discussion, observation and reassessment as appropriate
- Help parents and carers in understanding specific communication approaches through bespoke support and offering relevant training
- Actively seek to maintain and develop professional knowledge and skills (Professional Learning/Continuing Professional Development)

It is the responsibility of all staff to

- Have an awareness of good communication support strategies
- Contribute to the provision of classroom environments that facilitate the communication skills of all students
- Develop resources to support the communication needs of their students
- Request assessment of individual students when needed
- Request specific training as required
- Plan and provide opportunities for whole class communication development and for individual students in line with agreed SaLT recommendations.
- Follow agreed recommendations to support the SLCN of individual students

It is the responsibility of the Senior Leadership Team to

- In conjunction with the SaLT, identify the communication needs of the whole academy, cohorts of students and individuals
- Ensure staff and material resources are available to support and develop the communication needs of students.
- Identify staff training needs
- Ensure training opportunities are provided
- Ensure staff take part in training opportunities

The implementation of these guidelines will be monitored by the Speech and Language Therapist and Academy Vice Principals through audit, staff, student and parent feedback, classroom observations and learning walks.

These guidelines can also be read in conjunction with one or all of the following:

- Teaching and Learning Policy
- SEN policy
- CAN guidelines
- HSAT assessment guidelines (currently under review)
- Tutor overview booklet
- SNA guidelines
- Quality Assurance Framework
- Pre-/Semi-formal curriculum offer
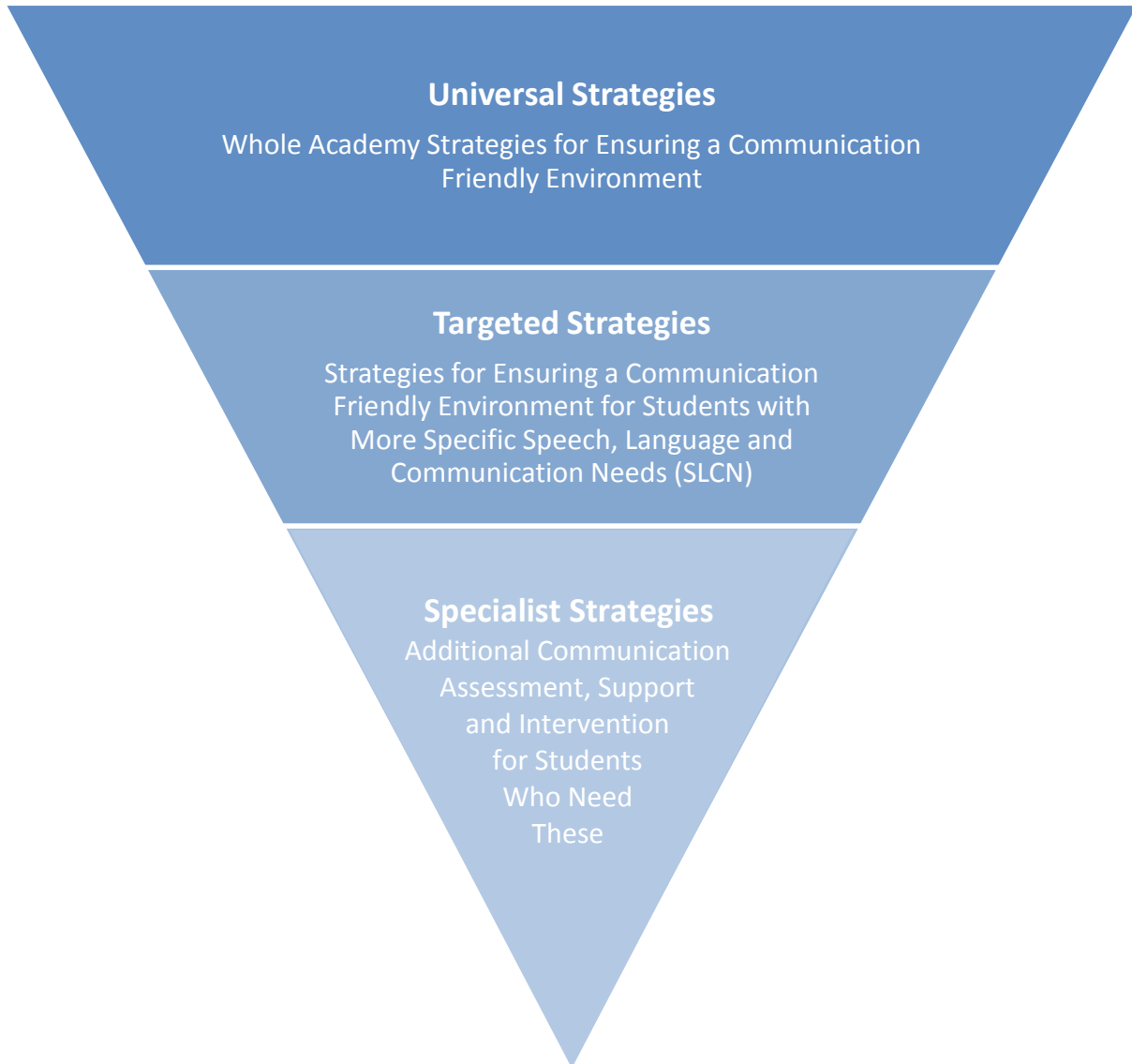- Post 16 Curriculum Pathway Documents

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Tiered Model for SLCN Provision

Reference: Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists: Communicating Quality 3

Universal Strategies

Whole Academy Strategies for Ensuring a Communication Friendly Environment

Targeted Strategies

Strategies for Ensuring a Communication Friendly Environment for Students with More Specific Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)

Specialist Strategies

Additional Communication Assessment, Support and Intervention for Students Who Need These

Appendix 2

Glossary

AAC	Alternative and Augmentative Communication: Methods of communication which can be used by adults and children who find difficulty in communicating because they have little or no clear speech. It adds to or replaces spoken communication and may include low tech as well as high tech methods. Low tech includes signing, pointing to pictures in a Communication Book, Picture Exchange Communication System etc. High tech devices normally work electronically.
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder: A lifelong, developmental disability that affects how a person communicates with and relates to other people, and how they experience the world around them
Attention Autism	The Attention Autism programme targets the teaching of attention, communication and social interaction skills.
Blank Levels	Levels of understanding and use of language described in The Blank Language Scheme (or The Language of Learning model)
Boardmaker PCS	Picture Communication Symbols
Communication Book	A personalised book containing photos or pictures that enables an individual to communicate thoughts and ideas by pointing to the pictures in the book. This is a low tech AAC device.
Comprehension of Language Receptive Language	Understanding the words, sentences and meaning of what others say or what is read.
Expressive Language	Using words, sentences, symbols and signs to communicate. Expressive language informs an individual's writing.
Dysphagia	Difficulties with swallowing.
Dysfluency	Difficulty in producing smooth, fluent speech; the terms 'stammering' and 'stuttering' are frequently used to describe this.

Speech	The ways speech sounds are put together to make words This includes Articulation: The process of controlling speech organs (e.g. tongue, lips, palate etc) to produce speech sounds. Phonology: The speech sound system of a language; the ways sounds are organised in words in order to convey different meanings.
Pragmatics Interaction Skills Social Use of Language Social Communication Skills	The use of language in social situations; it involves understanding the meaning of words and the conventional rules and hidden meaning in language: knowledge of the rules of conversation and the ability to follow them, when to listen, take turns, etc.; knowledge of social rules, how to gain attention and show empathy; as well as the ability to interpret both verbal and non-verbal rules of communication.
Symbols	Visual, auditory or kinaesthetic representation of a concept. e.g. picture of an apple that represents an apple.
Talking Mats	Low tech communication framework involving sorting pictures.
Visuals Visual aids	Pictures, photos and objects used to support communication and learning.
Visual timetable	A visual timetable enables children to understand what they are doing over a period of time. It gives structure to the day and can reduce anxiety levels. Symbols pictures or objects are used to represent the tasks, activities or lessons.
Word Map	A visual resource to support the learning of vocabulary that explores semantic knowledge (meaning) and phonological knowledge about a single word (similar to a mind map).
PECS	Picture Exchange Communication System PECS is an approach that develops functional expressive communication skills using picture or symbol exchange.
Eye Gaze	A computer operated through a bespoke camera reading an individual's eye movements
VOCA	Voice Output Communication Aid
SCERTS	Social Communication, Emotional Regulation and Transactional Support

Appendix 3

Useful Sources of Information

Attention Autism http://ginadavies.co.uk/

British Stammering Association https://www.stammering.org/

ICAN https://www.ican.org.uk/

National Autistic Society https://www.autism.org.uk/

Talking Mats https://www.talkingmats.com/

Appendix 4

Processes and Procedures

Classroom or group support and advice will be given by the speech and language therapist

- Following requests and discussion with teachers, Tutor Teams, the Educational Psychologist and/or the Senior Leadership Team
- After the SaLT identifies a class or situation in which students and staff may benefit from support and advice, following discussion with teachers and/or SNAs
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Students in Need of Additional Communication Assessment, Support and Intervention

In order to refer a student for SaLT assessment, academy staff should

- Contact the SaLT to explore the need for a referral
- Complete a referral form (except in exceptional situations as agreed)

Verbal referrals may be taken directly from parents and carers.

Appendix 5

Referral to the Speech and Language Therapist

Forename:	Surname:
Date of Birth:	Pupil Premium: **Yes/No**
Language(s) other than English spoken at home	Interpreter needed: **Yes/No**
School: Tutor Group	Name of Tutor Name of SNA

What communication difficulties is the student having? What concerns are there regarding this student?	
What **impact** is this having at school?	
What **impact** is this having at home?	
What are you hoping for from this referral?	

What communication support strategies help already?

What extra support has the student received recently? Please include referrals to and involvement by other services of which you are aware e.g. Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Medical Consultants, Educational Psychology, CAMHS.

Name and Profession

Or: Information available on Student Profile (please tick) ☐

Medical information:

Does the student/young person have any specific diagnoses?

Or: Information available on Student Profile (please tick) ☐

	None							Significant
Level of referrer's concern	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Level of parent/carer concern (if known)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Level of student's concern *(if appropriate)*	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Has the student been referred to Speech and Language Therapy before?

Yes   **No**   **Don't Know**

Is the Student on a Current Caseload of an NHS Speech and Language Therapist?

Yes   **No**   **Don't Know**

Name of NHS Speech and Language Therapist (If known)

Please provide any other information you think may be helpful.

Referred by (please print):

Full name:_____ Relationship/Job Title :_____

Signature of referrer: _____

Date:_____

Please return the completed form to Sue Rowney, Speech and Language Therapist
*at Abbey Hill or to **sue.rowney@horizonstrust.org.uk***