

# LOCKHART CAMPUS



Lockhart Campus  
UNLOCKING POTENTIAL 

## Total Communication- Policy, Procedure and Practice



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## Total Communication- Policy, Procedure and Practice Rationale

Communication is a human right through which we make friends, build relationships and express ourselves. Article 12 of the UNCRC (UNICEF, 1989) says that every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. These expectations are also embedded within the *Getting It Right for Every Child* policy (Scottish Government, 2006).

This right enables us to be social human beings and fully participating members of our families, school community and wider world. It is the way we become independent, make choices, express feelings, thoughts, indicate needs, learn and make sense of the world around us. Communication is a fundamental element to accessing education.

There is a recognised link between children with Speech Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) and low attainment, behavioural and emotional difficulties, mental health issues and poor employment opportunities. Without the right support, there is the potential for significant, long-term personal, educational and economic costs in failing to meet these communication needs. At Lockhart Campus, we work in partnership with pupils, parents and where relevant, our Speech and Language Therapy service (SALT), to meet the communication needs of all pupils. Full access to the Curriculum for Excellence is facilitated through communication focussed learning and teaching environments and individualised communication approaches, which are consistent with local and national best practice. Highly trained staff are key to providing effective interactions for all our pupils, with a tailored programme of continuous professional development in place to support staff to meet communication needs.



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### Approaches

*Without the means of communication, you cannot express yourself.*

*Without reasons for communication, there is no point or need to communicate.*

*Without the opportunities, there cannot be any communication.*

(Money and Thurman 1994)



### Functional communication requires:

Effective communication using any means available.

Meaningful reasons to communicate.

Opportunities for communication to occur.

**It supports pupils to both express and understand ideas and information, make choices, access the curriculum and develop increased personal independence.**

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A **Total Communication** approach involves using a variety of methods of communication which reinforce each other and support communication at all levels. This may include:

- ✓ Intensive Interaction
- ✓ Voice Output Communication Aids (VOCA)
- ✓ Makaton Signing
- ✓ Talking Mats
- ✓ Communication Passports
- ✓ Visual Supports including: real objects, photographs, symbols, line drawings etc.
- ✓ Speech and Spoken Language
- ✓ Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)
- ✓ Natural gesture
- ✓ Body Language
- ✓ Eye Contact
- ✓ Facial Expression
- ✓ Pragmatic Organisation Dynamic Display (PODD)

A communication friendly school encourages all forms of communication, developing children's language skills, ensuring social, emotional and academic progress. It provides opportunities for building speech, language and communication skills from the Curriculum for Excellence by providing a supportive environment and ensuring adults are aware of children's language levels. We work closely with parents and carers so that they can support language development and communication at home. Lockhart Campus will continue to promote opportunities for speaking, listening and communicating across a broad and creative curriculum, enabling children to be confident communicators. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 (UNCRC) details the specific communication rights for our young people and have been used to develop our Communication Charter.

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### Lockhart Communication Charter

<p>To ask for and get appropriate attention and interaction</p> 	<p>To ask for what I want and share my feelings</p> 	<p>To have help to develop my communication skills</p> 	<p>To be given real choices</p> 	<p>To have my communication approach known, understood and used at an appropriate level</p> 
<p>To say no, refuse and reject choices</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>I have the right to communicate</b></p> <p>The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 (UNCRC): Article 12- Respect for the views of the child Article 13- Freedom of Expression</p>			<p>To be a full and equal member of my community</p> 
<p>To be communicated with sensitively and with dignity and respect</p> 				<p>To have the right to be listened to and given time to respond</p> 
<p>To be spoken with and not about</p> 	<p>To know my timetable and World</p> 	<p>To be heard and responded to (even if the answer is no)</p> 	<p>To be taught how to communicate</p> 	<p>To have my communication aid available at all times</p> 

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## **Total Communication- Policy, Procedure and Practice**

### **Communication Hub**

Our Communication Hub works closely with parents/carers to help identify communication barriers and provides strategies, training and support to help overcome them. The Communication Hub shares information and resources to help achieve the best outcomes for our young people. Staff provide training in a range of communication strategies to both parents/carers and a range of external partners to facilitate continuity in communication approaches in all aspects of our pupils' lives. We hope that by building relationships with parents/carers, we become better at understanding the needs and challenges of our young people.



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### **Outcomes**

- Pupils' preferred means of communication are identified in collaboration with the team around the child - parents/carers, early year's establishments, education professionals, health and social care professionals and where relevant, Speech and Language Therapy service etc.
- Pupils' identified means of communication is shared with all staff via the Communication Profile within the Learner's Individual Planning documentation, to facilitate effective communication, interactions and delivery of the curriculum.
- Staff will ensure that effective communication is considered in their planning, preparation, delivery and assessment of learning and teaching experiences to ensure that pupils are able to meet planned outcomes.
- Pupils are supported to effectively use their identified means of communication to enhance their interactions and engagement with staff, pupils, learning environments, curriculum and the wider world.
- Pupils are encouraged and supported to develop their communication methods to reach their own potential, taking into account individual strengths and areas of challenge.
- Pupil assessment data is used to ensure their development is facilitated through a clear literacy and communication progression pathway.
- Pupils' high quality learning and teaching experiences are provided by highly trained staff who enhance their skills through continuous professional development, ensuring that best local and national practice is delivered.
- Pupils' communication developments are shared with staff through continuous professional dialogue with both our school team and external partners, ensuring adjustments in communication approaches are appropriate, effective and consistent.
- Pupils' communication developments are shared with the team around the child through regular updates at appropriate times to ensure pupils experience continuous and consistent communication opportunities within all environments and are able to experience success using their identified means of communication.
- Our environment promotes enhanced opportunities for communication.

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### Aims

- Our staff team will assess the communication needs of our pupils and liaise with Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) colleagues as required. This assessment may take many forms which can include classroom observation, teacher discussion and individual assessments.
- Staff are proficient in a multitude of communication strategies ensuring that pupils can communicate effectively using a wide range of methods suited to their needs and areas of strength and pressure.
- All staff use non-verbal communications such as Makaton signing, symbols, gesture and facial expression to aid pupils understanding and will input spoken language at an appropriate level for each pupil. Teaching and learning takes place in a wide variety of settings including snack and lunch time, within educational visits to the wider community, outdoor learning and recreational activities.
- Staff engage in Continual Professional Development and attend annual refresher inputs on key communication methods to ensure progression pathways are accurately followed and that pupils are progressing steadily. This training is cascaded to all staff including teaching staff, Additional Support Needs Practitioners and support staff including colleagues in catering, administration and facilities management.
- The teaching of key communication skills is not taught in isolation and is an integral part of routines and daily lessons within all curricular areas to enhance and reinforce the more discrete teaching of communication methods. Pupils are encouraged to develop communication skills through interactions with staff throughout the school day, during collaborative working with peers and within whole class discussions.





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- Symbols and Objects of Reference are also used as part of displays in corridors and classrooms and within resource management, including the labelling of resources and accessible areas.
- Some pupils have a communication passport which are readily available, allowing them to share their own strengths, communication needs, likes and dislikes with new carers, support staff etc. The accessible nature of these passports ensures that pupils can develop independence in the sharing of this information whilst also ensuring that key information is readily available to new staff and visiting specialists from external agencies.
- Pupils are given many avenues to communicate their learning to parents/carers, each individually suited to their needs and abilities. Home-school diaries and Voice Output Communication Aids (VOCA) are used to ensure that parents are kept informed of each pupil's daily activities, providing a springboard for discussion between parent and child. Our verbal pupils are encouraged to develop independence with this, taking responsibility where possible for the recording and sharing of this information.
- The application of online platforms for sharing information with parents allows teaching staff and pupils to share comments, photographs and videos easily with parents on a two-way platform. This is particularly effective in supporting those pupils who use a visual mode of communication such as Makaton or PECS.
- Training and support is provided to parents/carers and external partners such as respite provision to ensure that communication is consistent between home and school.
- As a staff team, we will complete the 'North Ayrshire Communication Friendly Environment Specialist Provision Level Self-Evaluation Framework and Accreditation Assessment Tool' to ensure consistently high communication standards are maintained.

