

DRUMBEAT OUTREACH COMMUNICATION POLICY

Introduction

Communication is an essential life skill that enables children and young people to lead an independent and fulfilling life.

Communication is central to the individual's psychological, emotional, social and cognitive development. It is through communication that children and young people learn and develop.

All areas of communication and interaction present challenges to students on the Autism Spectrum.

Communication can be verbal and non-verbal. It involves receptive and expressive language skills. ASD is a communication disorder. Students with ASD may be at different stages in developing their communication and interaction skills. They may include;

- Students at the **pre-verbal** stage of communication may have extremely limited expressive and receptive language skills, difficulties with sharing attention and poor understanding of the purpose of communication.
- Students at the **emerging** stage of communication may have limited receptive and expressive language skills and limited ability to share attention.
- Students at the **verbal** stage of communication may have well developed expressive language skills but they will still be experiencing various degrees of underlying social understanding difficulties which will impact on their ability to communicate their own thoughts, feelings or needs effectively and interpret the needs of others.

Aims and objectives

The aim of this policy is to set out a wide range of principles and support strategies to meet effectively the communication needs of students with ASD at all stages and levels of development.

As a service we are committed to ensuring every child is given the appropriate tools and strategies to enable them to communicate. It needs to be tailored to their individual needs to enable them to be effective communicators.

Strategies

The Picture Exchange Communication System (PECs)

Alternative Augmentative Communication (ACC)

Makaton

Visual supports (vocabulary mats, communication cards, emotion thermometers, Five Point Scale)

Big Mac switches

Strategies for students at the verbal stage of communication

PODD - Pragmatic Organisation Dynamic Display Communication System

Intensive interaction

Drama

Please refer to the Drumbeat Communication handbook for information on further strategies.