Stone Bay School.
Policy Document.

Group E Policy.

E 10. Communication Policy.

Group E policies are not statutory and no paper copies will be kept. The original word copy will be stored in our policy library, a PDF version will be accessible on our website.

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Mission Statement.

We accept all students **as they are** and believe that every one of them is **entitled** to the very **best education**, delivered in an **environment** that is **supportive**, **caring** and **safe**.

 Our goal is to develop our students to become:

> · **Successful** Learners.

> · As **independent** as possible.

> · **Confident** individuals and self-advocates.

> · **Effective** communicators and **contributors**.

> · **Responsible** citizens.

We will do this by working to **ensure we get every aspect of their provision just right**, helping them to achieve academically, personally, socially and morally.

<div align="right">Stone Bay School: "getting it right for every student".</div>

Communication Aims and Rationale.

At Stone Bay, we believe that communication is fundamental to the ultimate success of our students and vital to the development of educational opportunities and life skills. We advocate a Total Communication approach; this means that students and staff are encouraged to use every available form of communication, with a particular emphasis on what is relevant to any given individual student. This means that, in practice, all students' communication systems and methods are respected and promoted and that we work to give every student a functional voice.

We recognise that communication permeates the whole curriculum and therefore every opportunity should be used to develop students' communication skills.

Definitions.

- *Augmentative communication*: refers to an approach which is in addition to natural speech.

- *Alternative communication*: refers to an approach which is clearly a substitute for natural speech or hand writing.

- *Augmentative and Alternative Communication* (*AAC*): includes both of the above definitions.

Curriculum content.

Communication is taught formally through the speaking and listening elements of the literacy curriculum (see Literacy Policy). This speaking and listening element should be taught in discrete lessons and across the curriculum to encourage two way communication and to foster a literary

environment focussed around student response and participation. A key aspect of speaking and listening is the ability to interact functionally with adults and peers in the environment.

In addition, classes receive weekly groups focussing on different aspects of communication such as extending key word use, developing vocabulary and extending sentence length and complexity. These groups are devised and session content delivered by members of the communication team.

There is a significant emphasis on developing AAC within the classroom in a functional manner and regular whole class and small group sessions take place both in the classroom and in the residential flats to ensure that activities are differentiated appropriately for students using a total communication approach.

Students may understand and use all or some of the following methods of communication:
- Spoken/written language
- Non-verbal communication such as gesture, body language, facial expression and proximity
- Makaton signing
- Objects of reference
- Context specific visual supports
- PECS (Picture exchange communication system)
- Communication books (including Pragmatic Organisation Dynamic Display communication books (PODD))
- Context specific communication boards
- Simple high tech electronic aids (big mack etc.)
- Complex High-tech electronic aids (Proloquo to go, Grid 2 etc.)

Where appropriate students will be encouraged to write independently using techniques such as their phonic and grammatical knowledge. The use of Context Specific Communication Boards (CSCBs) are one of the strategies used to help students develop their use of a wider range of vocabulary and/or more complex sentence structures.

Students may access the communication service at one of three levels:

Specialist Support.

Targeted Support.
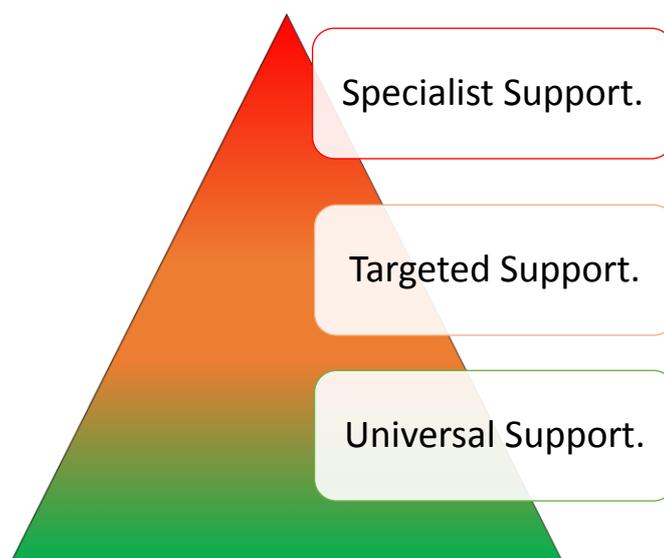
Universal Support.

Universal:

The Universal Tier has a focus on prevention and is available to all. It empowers parents and staff to facilitate support for all students as follows:

- Provision of advice, signposting and training to parents/settings to increase awareness and understanding of SLCN particularly as it relates to ASC.
- The delivery of local and nationally accredited training for the wider workforce e.g. Makaton
- Provision of indirect support for all students to access the curriculum through information, advice, joint planning and training.
- Promotion of communication friendly and linguistically modified environments e.g. use of symbols and signing within schools.

Targeted:

Interventions include those which have been established with the help of the Speech and Language Therapist or Associate Practitioner (SaLT/SaLTAP) but become self-sustaining within settings.

- The provision of specific training and support to school staff to enable them to deliver structured interventions to children with SLCN e.g. maintaining use of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) systems, early language groups, AAC user groups, social communication skills groups, etc
- Support for the school to monitor the speech, language and communication development of children, offering advice to staff as appropriate.
- Support to identify and overcome barriers to learning thereby enabling staff to differentiate the curriculum and maximise the young person's understanding and participation in day to day activities

Interventions include those that require the direct involvement of a SaLT for assessment and monitoring but which can be delivered by the SaLTAP team.

Examples include:
- The provision of further assessment following receipt of a referral.
- Programmes devised by SLT, modelled to teaching staff who then deliver the programme throughout the week.
- Access to groups established, modelled and monitored by a SALT APP if required.
- Work with individual students and groups of students school staff, who can embed the approach into the child's everyday environment.

Specialist.

Addresses the needs of those students who have a defined clinical need and where the SaLT's expertise together with the agent of change, for example a parent or key worker will make a significant contribution as follows:
- SaLT/APs may work directly with children on a 1:1 or small group basis to provide highly specific and effective interventions in the most appropriate environment.

- The provision of specialist assessment, advice and intervention to support and monitor a student's progress.
- Specialist training to support schools/settings and families, for example to establish new forms of AAC techniques.
- Referral on to other specialist SALT services such as CAT or feeding team

Intervention will usually take place in the child's educational environment unless there are clinically agreed exceptions.

Environment.

Symbols

The school has a site licence for Communicate in print and this should be used in all cases to produce Widget symbols for PECS, Mini-schedules, labels, CSCBs and other visual supports. Occasionally a student will need an AAC system that makes use of photographs and often the choice wallet will contain photographs of available options once a student has made a request, e.g. of the student asks "I want drink" they would then be offered a choice wallet with available drink options. Photos may also be used in *change of routine* stories which are used to help students understand when there is a planned change to their routine or when something unusual is happening.

Signing

All staff are expected to use Makaton signing throughout the day when communicating with the students and other staff. No other signing system is to be used. We need a signing environment to encourage students to use signs to support their expression.

Spoken language will be supported by all members of staff though out the school day, during structured teaching, informal social interactions and whole school gatherings such as assembly.

All staff will have the opportunity to attend Makaton training sessions and are expected to become familiar with the signs of the week which are introduced and modelled at a weekly assembly and displayed on the a staff noticeboard.

AAC

Some students will need augmentative support to help them access information around the school. For example, there is a voice output menu board at the serving hatch to the kitchen which provides information to students about the menu for the day. This is changed as necessary by members of the kitchen team.

Planning.

Support with planning for specific pupils or groups is provided by members of the communication team at the universal level.

Delivery.

The delivery of communication intervention will vary greatly according to the students' needs. Some students will require visual supports to enable them to process the verbal information that they receive, whereas others may require a full, multi-sensory approach to gain meaning from the activity.

Students' abilities to respond to their experiences and contribute to discussions/engage in a group, should be paramount, with methods being taught in a structured way during 1:1 or small group sessions.

Some students will make us of greater levels of AAC and may sign, use a formal communication system such as PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) or an informal system such as objects of reference.

Some students will be encouraged to develop their ability to speak to an audience, to moderate their language use for a specific listener, to use language to predict, infer or negotiate and to extend their language to include non-literal language formations.

Students using AAC systems should have these readily available throughout the day. Staff must model, encourage and provide support for students to use individual communication systems.

Communication as part of the waking day curriculum across the school.

Effective communication is a vital component of learning and life and as such is an important aspect of everything we do at Stone Bay. All teaching staff are required to include a communication target in the students' IEP. This enables staff to plan appropriate subject activities at the correct receptive and expressive language levels for their students. The development of students' communication skills should be central to lessons and a fundamental aspect of the whole day.

Assessment and objective setting.

The majority of students at Stone Bay are working towards P Levels or early National Curriculum levels (this will be reviewed as new advice regarding assessment in received). Many students learn through a multi-modal, total communication approach.

Individual pupil assessment is completed regularly by teachers, and students' communication targets are reviewed three times a year by members of the communication team. The specialist speech and language therapist will conduct their own clinical assessments as required to support members of the staff team.

Resources.

A wide range of resources are available on the shared area in the communication folder as well as from the communication team.

It is the responsibility of the class and residential team to keep symbols including mini-schedules and PECS symbols in good condition and to replace them as necessary. The Communication team will provide the initial book and be responsible for updating the book as required.

Non-formal systems of communication will be provided by the communication team but again, it is the responsibility of the class and residential staff to maintain them in good order.

Monitoring and evaluation.

Monitoring of the communication IEP targets will be undertaken by the communication team in collaboration with teaching and residential staff three times a year: at the end of term two, term four and term six. In addition, the communication team will contribute to the student's annual review document.

Safeguarding, Equality and Equal Opportunities Statement

Stone Bay School, and all policies and procedures, will promote equality of opportunity for all students and staff from all social, cultural and economic backgrounds. The school will ensure that no student or staff member is disadvantaged, discriminated against or treated less favourably because of their gender (including gender reassignment), race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or due to pregnancy or maternity.

Stone Bay School aims to;

- Foster good relationships and create effective partnerships with all sections of the community
- Ensure that the school's service delivery, commissioning and employment practices will not discriminate unlawfully, either directly or indirectly
- Provide an environment free from fear and discrimination, where diversity, respect and dignity are valued and celebrated

All aspects of Safeguarding will be embedded into school life and will remain the responsibility of all members of our school community.