

# Trinity Specialist College

## Communication Policy



<b>Policy reviewed</b>	Nov 2019
<b>Date for next review</b>	Nov 2020
<b>Signed by Chair of Trustees:</b>	

At Trinity Specialist College, we acknowledge that our learners have a variety of different means of communicating their needs. Communication is key, as it is how we express ourselves and it is important that our learners can share their needs, wants and thoughts with those around them within the college environment and beyond.

As a result, Trinity Specialist College adopt a Total Communication approach. Total Communication demands a holistic methodology, using a broad combination of communication methods which cater for all levels of need and skill. These might include:

- Spoken language (verbal)
- Sign - including gesture and body language
- Objects of reference
- Symbol support which includes Picture Exchange Communication System (P.E.C.S.)
- Written text
- Low and Hi-tech communication aids
- Photographs

The college is committed to providing a communication-friendly environment that considers:

- the physical environment,
- the quality and quantity of staff to learner interactions and
- communication opportunities provided throughout the day.

In doing so, staff enable learners to develop functional communication skills and meet their full learning and communication potential which will lead them to experience greater independence in the wider community.

### **At Trinity Specialist College, we aspire to**

- Give our learners a means of communication that can be used in all aspects of their daily lives which will support them to express themselves, and be understood by those they communicate with.

- Value and respect every method of communication our pupils use and encourage learners to become involved in decisions about their care and the services they access.
- Implement the termly communication targets set by the Speech Therapist in conjunction with teaching staff, and create opportunities for the learners to work on agreed targets.
- Ensure all individual communication strategies are supported by developing a shared knowledge, skills and attitude base essential for a total communication environment.
- Ensure Individual Communication Profiles are accurate and used consistently by staff.
- Identify good practice for classroom organisation and support staff to achieve best communication practice.
- Provide communication aids and experiences that are individualised, based on the learners' communication needs.
- Provide opportunities for our learners to make choices and encourage their independence.
- Create opportunities for learners to develop their social skills with both staff and peers, allowing them to feel included, build friendships and be part of a community.
- Deliver classes or activities at a level that is differentiated to the communication needs of learners to ensure they are accessing the curriculum and activities that prepare them for the work place, higher education or greater independence.
- Provide regular communication opportunities throughout the day and curriculum to include peer to peer opportunities.

### **Implementation of the Communication Policy**

When a learner first joins Trinity Specialist College, an assessment of their communication skills will be completed by the Speech and Language Therapist in collaboration with the college staff. This assessment will capture a baseline of the learner's communication skills. Following on from this assessment, a report and

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individual communication profile will be generated, which will detail the individual learner's communication strengths, needs and strategies that can be used by staff to facilitate improved communication skills. This report and profile will be shared with parents/carers and college staff and should be regularly referred to in order to ensure communication needs are met and appropriate opportunities are provided.

Learners will have regular communication opportunities throughout the day and within the curriculum. This will include peer to peer opportunities. Learners are to be offered a range of communication interventions and staff will receive training to support implementation.

Throughout the college, there will be communication systems in place to support learners' communication. This will include symbol support on notice boards, photographs, P.E.C.S. books, AAC aids and objects of reference.

As an integral part of implementation of the communication policy, a monthly meeting involving senior college management and the Speech and Language Therapist will take place to ensure regular feedback regarding learner progress and staff development. Similarly, regular meetings with the communication champions (outlined below) will help ensure that communication remains at the forefront of everyone's agenda at the college.

### **Staff development and support**

The Speech and Language Therapy team are available to give help and support to all staff regarding communication. Each classroom will have an appointed communication champion within the staff team. Under the direction of the SLT, the identified communication champion will receive training up to an enhanced level of The Speech and Language Communication Framework (SLCF). With the support of the Senior Leadership team, these individuals will be responsible for the development and ongoing implementation of specific communication needs in each of the classes, including augmentative and alternative communication (AAC).

Staff training will be kept up to date in order to facilitate a Total Communication approach within the college. The majority of training will be provided in-house by the Speech and Language Therapy team to develop staff knowledge and understanding of communication and how to best communicate with our learners. A number of staff members will be provided with accredited training, such as P.E.C.S., Intensive Interaction and Makaton, dependent on the staff development budget. Staff who receive training will share their knowledge and skills with colleagues and will be responsible for ensuring it is implemented into the daily college environment.

### **Monitoring and Reviewing Procedures**

The Speech Therapist will work alongside classroom communication champions and senior leadership to ensure the communication needs of learners remain a consistent priority across the college.

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The SLT team will review intervention plans termly with college staff and learners. Using the information gathered from the review process, the WMSLT management will provide college with termly impact reports detailing work completed and learner progress. College staff will familiarise themselves with learners' individual communication profiles to ensure they know their communication strengths and needs and can support learners accordingly.

With the support of the senior leadership team, an annual communication environment audit will be completed by the Speech and Language Therapist to ensure consistent adherence to best practice guidelines. The outcome of this annual audit will inform future planning and signposting with respect to staff development.

The Communication Policy will be reviewed annually by the senior leadership team and the Board of Trustees, with the support of the Speech and Language Therapist.