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TWEENDYKES

SCHOOL

COMMUNICATION AND INTERACTION POLICY

Date of Original Policy: May 2014

Review Date: November 2017

ETHOS AND VALUES

Tweendykes School's Communication and Interaction Policy should be read in conjunction with the vision of the school and take into account our policies for behaviour, Curriculum, assessment and recording guidelines.

All students at Tweendykes School have severe or complex learning difficulties/disabilities (SLD/CLDD) which may affect their ability to communicate. These can include medical needs, specific language impairment, physical and sensory impairment, global developmental delay & autism. The triad of impairments, as illustrated by those with ASD, affects language and communication, social awareness and imagination and flexibility of thought.

At Tweendykes School we believe that communication is the most important skill to learn and understand that all children communicate in different ways, which may include behaviour. As such all staff working with our students must adhere to the following key principles at all times:

- "Hands off unless danger"
- "Be the desirable object"
- "Show me don't tell me"

We respect and strive to develop their skills at their own level through the use of appropriate teaching strategies across the curriculum (see 'support we provide').

WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?

Communication happens when one person sends a message to another person either verbally or non-verbally. Interaction happens when two people, for example, an adult and a child, respond to one another - a two-way communication. This is acknowledged as a significant difference for those pupils with ASD.

It is important to remember that communication and interaction do not have to involve the use of language and speech and can be pre intentional and intentional. It is important to note that those with speech may have differing levels of expressive and receptive communication, including echolalia, and it is therefore vital to check understanding throughout interactions.

THE SUPPORT WE PROVIDE

The school places a high emphasis of the use of non-verbal forms of communication recognising the fact that people can be difficult to understand and process and are often inconsistent in the language that they use. A minimal language approach and the consistent use of visual support is expected of staff working with our students, especially those with ASD.

Student's communication and interaction needs are assessed through the use of the SCERTS Model, Communication Profile and B2. Additionally the school works closely with the Speech and Language Therapy Team (SALT).

The use of appropriate teaching strategies and interventions are informed by the above assessments and may include the use of:

Intensive Interaction:

Working on the basic principles of pre-intentional communication throughout the curriculum (e.g.1-1 sessions, sensory play, sensory movement, rebound, soft play, music and drama).

Picture Exchange Communication System PECS:

A system of using photos or symbols allowing students to develop expressive communication in a non-verbal way.

Visual Support – "Show me don't tell me"

A non verbal approach to giving information to pupils at an appropriate developmental level. This may include the use of objects of reference (a physical object used to consistently represent an activity or place), photographs, symbols, gesture and physical modelling. These may be presented in various ways such as now and next, choose boards, daily timetables, in session strips, working towards board, visual consequences, symbol fans.

The TEACCH approach:

To provide a structure through which the pupil can gain information reliably, and a secure framework in which to operate confidently. The aim is to reduce anxiety and increase engagement by communicating the following in a non-verbal way:

- Where? - Structured environment (labelling, arrangement of furniture, clutter free)
- When? – Timetables (symbols, photos, objects of reference)
- What? - Work System
- How? - Visual Support (symbols, photos, objects of reference)

WHERE TO GO FOR HELP?

To ensure students reach their full potential a multi- disciplinary approach is used throughout the school. Information and help can be obtained through:

- The class team
- Communication and Interaction Team (CAIT)
- SALT
- Individual Education Plans
- Communication Profiles
- B2
- Parents
- Other professionals involved.