**Speech and Language Therapy Service: SEND Therapy Team**

**Communication Friendly Environment: Whole School Audit and Action Plan**

***‘A communication friendly environment should make communication as easy, effective and enjoyable as possible. It should provide opportunities for everyone to talk, listen, understand and take* part’ – The Communication Trust**

A communication friendly environment will support the development of all pupils’ communication skills, including those with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN). It is good practice to analyse and reflect on what you have in place and what might be appropriate to focus on developing within your setting.

The communication friendly environment audit can be carried out by any member of school staff, but involvement from a member of senior leadership is advised. Some parts of the audit can be completed from information already known. Other parts require observation across your school setting. Once the audit is complete, it can be used to formulate a whole school action plan. The audit can then be completed again to review progress at a later date. The plan can be used in settings which include Early Years - Key Stage 4.

To create a communication friendly environment, the following 4 areas should be considered:

1. **Whole School Approach**

Does the whole school ethos promote and support communication and the inclusion of pupils with SLCN?

1. **Physical Environment**

Does the physical learning environment support communication?

1. **Communication Opportunities**

Are opportunities to support communication included in teachers’ planning and evident within classrooms?

1. **Adult Strategies**

Are adults aware of strategies to support communication and are they used?

**Speech and Language Therapy Service: SEND Therapy Team**

**Communication Friendly Environment Audit**

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| **Name(s) of person(s) completing audit:** | | | | **Date:** | | |
| **Date for review:** | | |
|  | | | |  | | |
| **Whole School Approach**  Does the whole school ethos promote and support communication and the inclusion of pupils with SLCN? | | | | | | | |
|  | | **No** | **Sometimes** | | **Yes** | **Examples/Comments** | |
| 1 | Are approaches to support communication promoted via discussion at staff meetings and incorporated into School Development Plan? |  |  | |  |  | |
| 2 | Are visuals (e.g. symbols) used consistently across the school in all areas? |  |  | |  |  | |
| 3 | Do all staff who work with pupils with SLCN have access to reports, assessment information and intervention programmes from professionals involved? |  |  | |  |  | |
| 4 | Are resources to support SLCN available for staff to use to support pupils’ learning? |  |  | |  |  | |
| 5 | Are systems in place to support social interaction and communication at play and lunch time (e.g. buddy systems, friendship stops, circle time)? |  |  | |  |  | |
| 6 | Are there opportunities for staff to share information and knowledge around SLCN gained from experience and CPD? |  |  | |  |  | |

Score 1 point for ‘yes’

Total: /6

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| **Physical Environment**  Does the physical learning environment support communication? | | | | | |
|  | | **Yes** | **Sometimes** | **No** | **Examples/Comments** |
| 1 | Are learning environments organised?  (E.g. equipment organised and labelled, furniture laid out appropriately, clear wall displays etc.) |  |  |  |  |
| 2 | Are background noise levels managed so that it is easy for pupils and adults to hear and be heard? |  |  |  |  |
| 3 | Is lighting is managed so that it is easy to see people’s faces when they speak? |  |  |  |  |
| 4 | Can learning spaces be used flexibly and easily rearranged to allow for communication opportunities? (E.g. group work, talking partners, role play etc.) |  |  |  |  |
| 5 | Are there quiet, cosy areas are available in school for talking and quiet time? |  |  |  |  |
| 6 | Are visuals are used to support understanding?  (e.g. colour coded map of school, visual timetables, photos of key staff displayed) |  |  |  |  |
| 7 | Do outside environments include spaces in which pupils can interact with each other? |  |  |  |  |
| 8 | Is key vocabulary clearly displayed and visually supported? |  |  |  |  |
| 9 | Is pupils work displayed and labelled, including verbal comments (not just written)? |  |  |  |  |
| 10 | Are transition times managed effectively?  (E.g. pupils know where to go next, noise levels are not excessive) |  |  |  |  |
| 11 | Are rules for communication displayed and referenced to in the classroom?  (E.g. listen to others, take turns to talk) |  |  |  |  |
| The following questions relate to Early Years only. If your setting does not have an Early Years, do not complete and score accordingly. | | | | | |
| 12 | Are book specific areas available, containing a range of books?  (E.g. fiction, non-fiction, different languages) |  |  |  |  |
| 13 | Are resourced that are available for free play easily reached by the pupils within their line of vision? |  |  |  |  |
| 14 | Do indoor and outdoor spaces include opportunities for imaginative role play? |  |  |  |  |
| 15 | Are there a range of toys available?  (E.g. small world, real/natural resources) |  |  |  |  |

Score 1 point for ‘yes’

Total (settings with Early Years): /15

Total (settings without Early Years): /11

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| **Communication Opportunities**  Are opportunities to support communication included in teachers’ planning and evident within classrooms? | | | | | | | |
|  | | **Tick Box to Record Each Example Observed** | | | | | **Examples/Comments** |
| 1 | Are small group opportunities to talk facilitated by adults? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 | Do adults pre-tutor vocabulary and concepts? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 | Is new vocabulary explicitly identified and taught? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4 | Are there planned opportunities for using and practicing new vocabulary? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5 | Is asking questions and seeking clarification is actively encouraged? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6 | Is teaching multi-sensory?  (E.g. symbols, pictures, props, practical activities etc.) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7 | Do pupils have a chance to talk about what they are learning?  (E.g. class discussion, talking partners) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| The following questions relate to Early Years only. If your setting does not have an Early Years, do not complete and score accordingly. | | | | | | | |
| 8 | Do pupils have opportunities to engage in interactive book reading with an adult? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 9 | Do pupils have opportunities to engage in structured conversations with adults? |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Score 1 point for each area with 5 ticks

Total (settings with Early Years): /9

Total (settings without Early Years): /7

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| **Adult Strategies**  Are adults aware of strategies to support communication and are they used? | | | | | | | |
|  | | **Tick Box to Record Each Example Observed** | | | | | **Examples/Comments** |
| 1 | Do adults position themselves to enable communication?  (E.g. face to face with pupils) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 | Do adults use pupils’ names to gain their attention? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 | Do adults adapt their language to match pupils’ levels of understanding?  (E.g. being aware of use of idioms) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4 | Do adults use visuals to support spoken language?  (E.g. gesture, symbols, mind maps etc.) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5 | Do adults break information into chunks, using a slower pace and pausing to allow thinking/processing time? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6 | Do adults use pausing to encourage pupil initiation, participation and turn taking in discussions? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7 | Do lesson plans include activities to develop speaking and listening? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8 | Do adults use open questions to support pupils’ thinking, reflection and explanation? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 9 | Do adults help pupils to expand and develop what they want to say? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 10 | Do adults show they are listening and interested in what pupils do and say by responding appropriately? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 11 | Do adults build pupils’ confidence and willingness to participate by offering praise and encouragement? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 12 | Do adults encourage children to be active listeners and praise them when they ask for clarification? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 13 | Are there systems in place to encourage all pupils to contribute?  (E.g. not always ‘hands up’) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| The following questions relate to Early Years only. If your setting does not have an Early Years, do not complete and score accordingly. | | | | | | | |
| 14 | Do adults get down to the pupils’ level when interacting with them? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 15 | Do adults repeat back what children have said to show they have listened and understood? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 16 | Do adults comment on what is happening or what pupils are doing at that time? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 17 | Do adults repeat what the pupil says, adding a few words as a good model?  (E.g. ‘scissors’ – ‘I’ve got big scissors’) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 18 | Do adults label objects, actions and feelings? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 19 | Do adults repeat the same language in familiar routines?  (E.g. ‘it’s snack time, first we sit in a circle’) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 20 | Do adults provide pupils with choices?  (E.g. ‘would you like to read a story or play on the computer?’) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 21 | Do adults facilitate turn taking? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 22 | Do adults reinforce what ‘good listening’ means and praise pupils for doing this? |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Score 1 point for each area with 5 ticks

Total (settings with Early Years): /22

Total (settings without Early Years): /13

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| --- | --- |
| **Total Score (including Early Years): /52** | **Total Score (excluding Early Years): /37** |

**Speech and Language Therapy Service: SEND Therapy Team**

**Communication Friendly Environment Action Plan**

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| **Name(s) of person(s) completing plan:** | **Date:** |
| **Date for review:** |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Area to Develop** | **Plan** | **Who is Taking Lead Responsibility?** | **Who Else is Involved?** | **Date for Review** |
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***References***

* + - * *Primary and Secondary Inclusion Development Programme: Teaching and Supporting Pupils with Speech, Language and Communication Needs*
      * *Making your Place Great For Communication – The Communication Trust*
      * *Communication Friendly Environments Checklist – The Communication Trust*
      * *ICAN Factsheet 2 Support for Professionals: SLCN Classroom Strategies for Primary School*
      * *Developing a Communication Supporting Classroom Observation Tool, Dockrell et.al. Better Communication Research Programme 2012*
      * *National Autism Standard for Schools and Educational Settings - Autism Education Trust*