



Doubletrees School COMMUNICATION OFFER

<p>To be given real choices</p>	<p>To say no, refuse and reject choices</p>	<p>To ask for what I want</p>	<p>To share my feelings</p>	<p>To be heard and responded to (even if the answer is no)</p>
<p>To ask for and get attention and interaction</p>	<p>I have the right to communicate</p>			<p>To have and use my speech system at all times</p>
<p>To ask and know about my schedule and my world</p>				<p>To be taught how to communicate</p>
<p>To have my speech system in working order and to have a back up</p>	<p>To be a full and equal member of my community</p>	<p>To be treated with dignity and respect</p>	<p>To be spoken with, and not about</p>	<p>To be communicated with in a sensitive manner</p>



Contents

Rationale	3
Intent.....	3
Implementation	4
Pathway 1 – our universal offer	4
Pathway 2.....	8
Pathway 3.....	10
Pupil Voice.....	10
Impact.....	13
Appendix A.....	14
Appendix B.....	14
What is a Communication Passport?	14
Who might have a Communication Passport?	15
What does a Communication Passport look like?.....	15



‘Every child deserves a voice’

‘The average 18-month-old has been exposed to 4,380 hours of oral language at a rate of 8 hours a day from birth. A child who has a communication system (AAC) and receives speech/language therapy 2 times a week for 20-30 minutes will reach the same amount of language exposure (in their AAC language) in 84 years.’

Jane Korsten

Rationale

At Doubletrees school, most of our students will have significant struggles with speech and language difficulties or more complex special needs and may need support to initiate and take part in communication and interaction.

We recognise that the development of communication skills is crucial to the development of our young people and the belief that ‘Every child deserve a voice’ is at the heart of everything we do. The communication offer aims to provide the young people at Doubletrees School with the skills, resources and opportunities to communicate to the fullest of their potential.

Doubletrees School will offer inclusive environments that meets the communication needs of our learners within our specialist teaching provision. We will also work closely with external professionals and services to meet any additional complex communication needs that require a specialist input.

Intent

At Doubletrees our intent is to ensure all learners are given the opportunity to develop the communication skills to reach their full potential.

- > We will provide our learners with an environment in which communication skills can thrive.
- > We will provide teaching and learning strategies and resources that fulfil individual communication needs.
- > We will ensure that staff are skilled and inclusive, able to communicate effectively with all learners and build on individual communication strengths.
- > We will ensure a multi-disciplinary approach to meeting communication needs. This includes a tiered approach to provision based on individual needs, linking to the Specialist Intervention Therapy Team and external specialist providers.
- > We will work will families to ensure that communication strategies can be embedded across home, school and community settings.

- > We will ensure that communication needs are identified and reviewed regularly and planned for throughout a young person's journey through Doubletrees School. We treat Communication as one of our core subject areas for all pathways.
- > We will ensure that our young people have the communication skills to transition effectively into adulthood, whether work, education or community based.
- > We will seek any opportunity to hear our learners' voices, from an individual level through to a school level, for example through the school council. We wish to ensure that pupil voice is embedded in what we do.

Implementation

Pathway 1 – our universal offer

An immersive approach

At Doubletrees school, we employ the principles of a total communication approach, allowing us to immerse the child in the world of communication and determine the best pathway for an individual. Total communication involves using any means of communicating that is available to the child or young person.

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) is a range of strategies and tools to help people who struggle with speech. These may be simple letter or picture boards or sophisticated computer-based systems. AAC helps someone to communicate as effectively as possible, in as many situations as possible. Low tech and high tech AAC are at the heart of our total communication offer.

These systems may include:

- > Speech and spoken language
- > Makaton signing
- > Photos
- > Picture symbols
- > Choice boards
- > Communication books/PODD books
- > Concrete objects
- > Objects of reference
- > Voice output communication aids and computer based systems, such as Proloquo2go
- > On body signing (TaSSeLs)
- > Intensive Interaction
- > Eye Gaze technology





Role of the Environment

We recognise that the environment plays a crucial role in communication as such we expect that:

- > Staff sign using Makaton
- > Staff use symbols both to support learners to understand what is happening and to facilitate pupil voice.
- > Symbols are visible in all areas of school.
- > Symbols are incorporated into all aspects of the curriculum
- > Communication and AAC has a high status in terms of staff training and sharing of expertise.

Within our setting we ensure that our staff both sign and used symbols to support the understanding of our learners.

Symbols are used widely within the environment and support transitions. They are routinely used to support learning activities. All classes display timetables and schedules for the day, to support learners to know what is happening and support them to understand their world. These may be whole class or bespoke to individuals.

Core boards/choice boards/feeling boards are available in classrooms, shared spaces and corridors to support learners to initiate communication and encourage independence and being heard. We differentiate between what communication is adult to learner and communication systems that are learners wants, needs, choices and interests, ensuring we support learners to develop their own 'voice'.

The curriculum

The Communication Curriculum is decided by pathway, however, this remains bespoke and personalised to individuals, therefore learners can access the offer from a pathway other than the one they are on, if this best meets their needs.

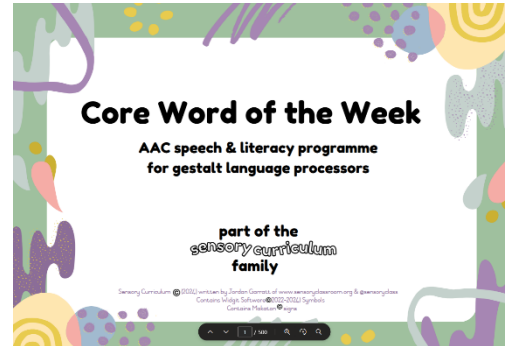
Using the Core Word Curriculum from The Sensory Classroom to support specific pathways alongside our communication curriculum it ensures that all learners can access and develop communication through a consistent Total Communication model, where speech, AAC, symbols, on-body signing and Makaton are used together in meaningful contexts. Research shows that a small number of core words make up the majority of everyday communication, and by modelling these consistently across real-life activities, learners are better able to understand, generalise, and use language independently.

This approach benefits learners by providing repeated, functional opportunities to communicate across the day, rather than in isolated sessions, supporting deeper understanding, increased independence, and more effective self-expression. It also

ensures communication is inclusive, flexible, and personalised, enabling every learner to develop a voice and participate actively in their learning and wider life.

Engagement Pathway

Here our learners are developing a sense of self, understanding their environment and their agency within it and developing awareness and relationships with others. As such, Communication for the learners on this pathway is immersive and integral to all areas of their curriculum therefore embedded in all aspects of the learner's day. We try to focus explicitly on both expressive and receptive modes of communication in isolation alongside our engagement profiles as we believe the way our learners receive communication is just as important to identify as identifying how they express communication. The outcomes for learners are mainly those identified on their EHCP and those identified by professionals and through discussions with parents. Learners are supported to communicate using a range of specialist approaches and opportunities. These include:



- > The hanging out Programme (HOP) – underpinning practice and ensuring that communication is central in the practice for this group
- > Intensive Interaction
- > On the body signing (TaSSeLs)
- > Object, photo and symbol use
- > A specialist multi-sensory approach (eg. auditory/light cues, idiosyncratic signifiers, countdowns and powerful pauses)
- > The engagement model embedded
- > Use of Low-tech and high tech AAC including Eye Gaze

Exploration Pathway

Here the learners follow the Core Word curriculum to support them to develop a bank of 40 core, highly used words to support early speech and literacy progress.

The rationale for this is, while spoken language has at least 250,000 words, a list of only 200 words accounts for about 80% of the words used every day! These words are called “core words”. Therefore, the core words and their related signs and symbols are taught through discrete and explicit sessions as part of the communication sessions and then embedded throughout the whole curriculum to provide opportunities for consolidation and application to ensure that learners quickly develop the skills and knowledge to communicate their needs and wants using this structured approach.

Discovery Pathway



The learners here follow the Equals curriculum. The rationale behind this curriculum is that to communicate learners need a reason or motivation to communicate, a means to communicate and a partner with whom to communicate with.

The curriculum develops ten core areas of communicative learning:

- > Imperative communication
- > Following instructions
- > Declarative communications
- > Dynamic communication
- > Narratives
- > Personalised reading and writing
- > Non-verbal and behavioural communication
- > Peer to peer communication
- > Use of AAC

Again, these are taught through discrete curriculum sessions and opportunities embedded throughout the day for learners to consolidate and apply what they have learnt.

Early Years & Foundation Stage

Communication is a core priority for our youngest learners and they are immersed in this. In addition to the prime area of Communication and Language, they follow the Core Word curriculum alongside our Access pathway to ensure that they are given the tools to communicate. They also use the Cherry Garden assessment Framework strands of both Communication, Language and Literacy, and the Communication framework so support tracking the progression of learning towards communication outcomes.

Post 14

Within post 14 learners they will continue to follow and embed previous curriculums and begin to work towards the ASDAN personal progress award. This focuses on developing communication skills to support them with life beyond school and within the four areas of preparing for adulthood. There is a focus on applying previously learnt skills to a broader range of contexts, particularly within the local community to ensure they are involved as much as possible and equipped for their life as adults.

Pupil Voice and the school council.

We have an active school council who meet monthly. They take questions and proposals back to their classes to gather viewpoints and feed this back to the next meeting. This facilitates a 'you said, we did' approach to their views of their school. Members of the school council also represent pupil voice during our regular online safety group and take an active role in the recruitment of adults who work within the school.



Training and staff development

We prioritise communication training within our CPD schedule. This starts with a module on Communication and Autism for all new staff as part of our induction programme. There is additional training available every Thursday for all staff to ensure that they are all confident with the key skills required to deliver our universal offer. We plan whole or pathway training, by external specialists, the SIT team or our own internal specialists. This is to ensure that we are keeping up to date with best practice, all staff have the knowledge and skills needed to deliver our core offer and also, where needed, informed by quality assurance processes within school.

Partnership working

Our young people will have a communication passport (see Appendix A for more information). At Doubletrees school, all our learners have a pupil 'One Page Profile'. This details key information about a learner, their preferred communication method, their likes, dislikes, medical needs, families and is reviewed and updated regularly with families and, where they are able, learner's contributions and views.

We work closely with families to share approaches and supporting resources so that our learners experience consistency across their settings. School regularly offers drop-in sessions with both internal staff and external specialist to support parents' understanding of communication strategies and approaches.

The ACE team

This is the Communication and Engagement team (The Achieve, Communicate and Enjoy from our school vision) who support learners to feel safe, stay regulated and communicate their needs and wants. The school has a team of specialist HLTAs.

Within the ACE team there are HLTAs with the following specialisms:

- > Communication and Autism lead
- > Sensory regulation
- > Emotional regulation and Trauma Informed Schools lead practitioner

All three can offer support for class teams to ensure the universal pathway 1 offer is in place and effective or do short term interventions to support individuals within their areas of specialism.

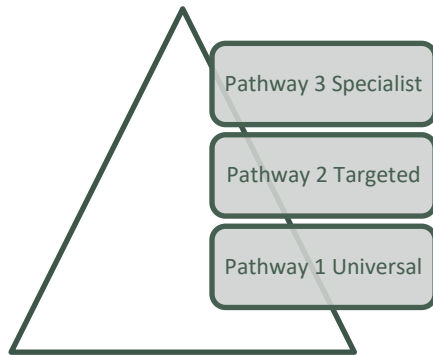
Following the pathway 1 offer, with support from the ACE team, if a learner is still struggling to access and engage with their learning or the staff identify a greater need, then a referral for pathway 2 will be made.

Pathway 2

The Trust in School Special Intervention offer (SIT)

The Specialist Intervention Team (SIT) is available to all children and young people across the Special Partnership Trust. The team work on a referral basis. These referrals must be made by the class/leadership teams within the schools.

All of the SPT settings are specialist and therefore our universal offer encompasses a range of skills, strategies and knowledge to support Engagement in Learning for SEND.



The SIT supports with access to therapeutic input across three pathways, with all learners accessing Pathway 1 as part of the school offer. The three pathways reflect the level of therapeutic input needed in order for that child/young person to access their education. Some learners will move between pathways as their needs change. Others will remain on one pathway for their school career due to their needs.

A variety of audits, including Pathway 1 and EHCP Provision audits, support individual settings to continue to grow and develop their universal offer in order to meet the needs of their changing cohorts.

The SIT triage process can identify trends in need and gaps in provision. If significant and recurrent needs are identified the specialist Intervention Service supports by offering/identifying continuing professional development opportunities for school staff, ensuring changing needs can be met within universal provision and/or works alongside external agencies and service providers to identify specialist support/training/intervention.

Each Area of Need that has external therapeutic services options has it's own SIT offer with differentiated pathways. Communication and Interaction, Sensory and/or Physical, Social, Emotional, Mental Health (SEMH) and Health (*in development*).

Within each offer SIT cover six areas to ensure all aspects of support, input and stakeholders are accounted for:

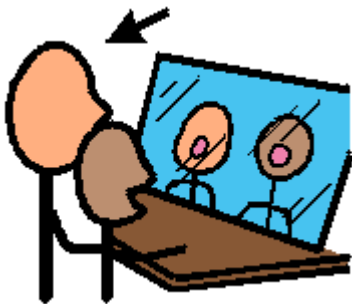
Environmental and Resourcing	Workforce	Teaching and Learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •This area outlines the whole school environmental approach and equipment available throughout the school to enhance the specialist offer within a school that supports the needs of complex learners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •This area highlights the development of skills within a specialist staff, including whole school CPD and individual staff skills pathways. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •This area reflects the strategies and skills used within the teaching and learning to ensure that individual therapeutic areas of need are met within the whole school approach.

Identification and Review of Needs	Families and Young People	Community and Inclusion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This area highlights the ongoing planning and reviewing of individual needs of all learners within school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This area shares strategies for supporting families and young people to meet aspects of individual needs at home. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This area includes guidance on strategies for supporting needs when accessing the local community and developing an inclusion offer within local settings.

Pathway 3

External specialist support

Learners will have access to external professional support as indicated in their EHCP. Some students may remain on Pathway 3, due the nature of their ongoing needs, while others will access the Pathway as needs change and developments are made. The Specialist Intervention and Therapeutic Support Team will enhance the provisions and support designed by the external agencies. Learners accessing Pathway 3 will receive the following support to meet their individual needs.



Examples of therapists that might support the communication offer may include Speech and Language Therapists (SaLT), Occupational Therapy (OT), Physio Therapy (PT), School Nurse, Paediatrician, Paediatric Dietician, Music Therapists, Educational Psychologists, (EPs), and Child and Adolescent Mental Health – Learning Disabilities (CAMHS-LD) team including Psychiatrist and Clinical Psychology.

Most commonly this will mean working with the Speech and Language Therapist, but within the area of communication there are often multiple barriers to learning that require additional specialist involvement. Where possible an approach where all the therapists involved will work to provide the best practice model, considering all barriers to learning and setting joint goals.

Pupil Voice

At Doubletrees School, pupil voice is a fundamental entitlement for every learner and is embedded within our Total Communication approach. We recognise that many pupils experience communication barriers; therefore, pupil voice is not a one-off activity but an ongoing, individualised, and responsive process. Every pupil is



supported to express preferences, make choices, communicate needs, and influence their daily experiences using their preferred communication methods.

Intent

We aim for all learners to:

- Have their voice heard, valued, and acted upon, regardless of how they communicate
- Develop skills to express needs, preferences, emotions, and aspirations
- Experience autonomy through meaningful choice and control
- Contribute to their learning and wider school life
- Build confidence, independence, and a sense of belonging

Implementation

Pupil voice is embedded across all pathways and daily practice:

- **Total Communication** strategies (speech, AAC, Makaton, symbols, objects of reference, gesture, behaviour) are consistently used
- Communication-rich environments provide accessible tools (e.g. core boards, choice boards, visual supports, sensory cues)
- Staff act as skilled communication partners, interpreting and responding to all forms of communication
- Opportunities for choice, refusal, and decision-making are built into routines, lessons, and interactions
- Pupils contribute through a range of approaches including structured activities, creative expression, and personalised communication systems

Pathway approaches:

- **EYFS:** pupil voice is supported through a Total Communication approach, providing all learners with accessible ways to express their needs, preferences, and emotions using tools such as choice boards, core boards, symbols, and Makaton. Consistent modelling, communication-rich environments, and strong home–school partnerships ensure communication is personalised, supporting early expression, regulation, and engagement.
- **Engagement:** pupil voice is supported through highly individualised and responsive communication approaches, with a strong focus on choice-making, processing time, and attuned adult interaction. Through the



Engagement Model, consistent routines, and personalised sensory experiences, learners are supported to communicate preferences, give or withdraw consent, and engage meaningfully in 'here and now' interactions.

- **Exploration:** pupil voice is supported through consistent, accessible communication systems, including core boards, symbols, Makaton, and choice-making opportunities embedded across all environments and learning activities. These approaches build pupils' confidence, autonomy, and self-advocacy, enabling them to express preferences, regulate emotions, and engage meaningfully through activities tailored to their interests and sensory needs.
- **Discovery:** pupil voice is embedded across the curriculum and daily routines, with learners using a range of communication methods to express themselves, make choices, and participate in decision-making. Structured support to support social interactions and allow aspiration to be shared, creative opportunities, and real-life experiences promote independence, confidence, and self-expression, enabling pupils to influence their learning and develop skills aligned with their aspirations.
- **Post-16:** pupils use their established communication systems to express their views and take an active role in decisions about their curriculum, routines, independence, and community experiences, supported through real-life, meaningful opportunities. Pupil voice is embedded through the annual review process and Preparing for Adulthood outcomes, with a continued Total Communication approach enabling learners to develop independence, self-advocacy, and influence over their school and future lives.

Pupil Voice Impact

The impact of pupil voice is seen through:

- Increased ability to communicate choices, needs, and preferences
- Greater independence, confidence, and engagement in learning
- Learning, environments, and provision shaped by pupil preferences
- Meaningful involvement in school decisions and wider community experiences
- Strong collaboration with families, ensuring pupil voice is reflected across settings

Impact

The impact of the Communication Offer should be felt across all aspect of school life. Learners' communication needs will be met, ensuring that they will feel more comfortable and ready to learn. Progress will be seen in both communication skills and across the wider curriculum.

The learner's voice will be heard, as their confidence to communicate needs and share ideas is carefully planned for.

Environments will show a consistent approach ensuring that communication strategies can be applied as students' progress and transition throughout school. Staff and students alike will feel confident in the use of communication systems.

Resources will be in place and used to enhance the learner's communication skills.

Families and external professionals will engage in and play an active role in the development of communication skills.

Communication skills will be applied beyond school and into the community and future settings.



Progress can be linear and progressive, working on the acquisition of new skills and generalisation of their use. It can also be the assessment of established skills displayed via different means, for example the learner may be proficient in making food choices using a low tech system such as symbol exchange and may be learning how to perform the same requests using a high tech method such as a software system on an iPad. For these reasons

assessment using traditional linear progress methods will not always reflect the progress that a learner makes. Personalised Learning Goals, linked to EHCP outcomes, specifically but not exclusively the Communication and Interaction targets.

These methods are all personalised to the individual learner.

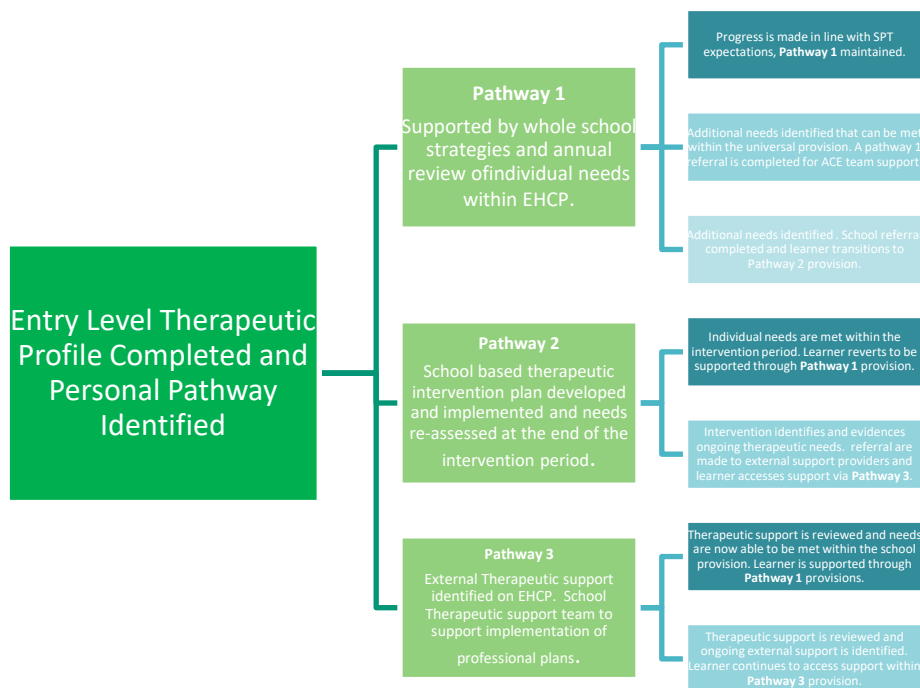
Target review will involve information from all settings where possible and relevant, to ensure that the generalisation of skills remains at the heart of the process. An 'Assess, Plan, Do, Review' cycle ensures that assessment fully informs next step target setting. This impact will be evidenced across the following areas:

- > Learners making clear and measurable progress towards their individual communication outcomes/PLGs.
- > Education and Health Care Plan review, including a review of our students One Page Profiles, to ensure that these include information from families, wider professionals and reflect up to date preferences, communication strategies and other relevant information.



- > Progress against the Communication curriculum that each learner is working towards and linked outcomes.
- > Evidence of learning and progress captured on Evidence for Learning.
- > Speech and Language Therapy target review.
- > Links between SPT schools and external professional agencies will be effective and optimise opportunities to meet the needs of learners and develop practice.
- > Schools will have in place a professional development programme linked to specialist intervention needs.
- > Regular monitoring of school environments will demonstrate the effective use of therapeutic systems and total communication strategies.

Appendix A



Appendix B

What is a Communication Passport?

A Passport gives a child a voice to share key information about themselves, to help people to get to know them. A Passport is shared by the child/young person, parents, families and professionals. It is especially important when going to new places and meeting new people.



Who might have a Communication Passport?

A Passport is for anyone who needs support to communicate important information about themselves. It makes sure information is shared - not lost or locked away - and saves misunderstandings. It gives people ideas about the best ways to do things. A Passport also saves parents or carers from saying the same things over and over again!

What does a Communication Passport look like?

A Passport is written from the child's point of view and is easy to understand. It should have photos and pictures so the child can enjoy reading it, will want to show it, and be involved in adding new things to it.