



Connection ● Communication ● Independence ● Aspiration

## **Total Communication and AAC Policy 2026/2027**

### **Statement of Intent**

Staff at Redwood Secondary School are committed to making communication a priority for all. We value and respect all young people's communication, regardless of ability or preferred method.

We recognise that communication is fundamental to learning, well-being, and participation in school and wider society. Redwood Secondary School will provide an inclusive environment where young people's communication is recognised, encouraged, and developed so that each individual can fulfil a meaningful role in society, make informed choices, and gain independence.

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### **Communication**

Communication is any act by which one person gives to or receives information from another about needs, desires, perceptions, knowledge, or emotional state. Communication may be linguistic or non-linguistic and may occur through speech, signs, symbols, behaviour, or other modes.

For definitions of AAC and Total Communication please see AAC handbook

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### **Aims of the Policy**

At Redwood Secondary School we aim to:

- Accept, respect, and respond to all forms of communication used by young people
  - Uphold the right of every pupil to have access to an effective means of communication, regardless of disability
  - Develop communication skills to each individual's maximum potential, using verbal and/or non-verbal methods, including AAC
  - Provide an environment that stimulates, motivates, and supports communication
  - Create opportunities for pupils to use communication skills in interactive situations across the school day
  - Ensure access to a range of communication strategies and appropriate aids, including Voice Output Communication Aids
  - Enable pupils to use communication strategies effectively across a range of situations and with a range of communication partners
  - Consult pupils wherever possible regarding their communication systems, including vocabulary choice, programming, and practical use
  - Work in partnership with primary feeder schools, Post-16 and Post-19 providers to ensure continuity of communication systems
  - Work in partnership with parents/carers and professionals, including Speech and Language Therapists (SLTs), to assess needs and review progress
  - Ensure staff receive ongoing training in Total Communication and AAC
  - Ensure pupils and their communication partners are appropriately trained in the use of individual communication systems
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## Speech and Language Therapy Provision

### The Balanced System

Redwood Secondary School works within the Balanced System for Speech and Language Therapy. Under this model:

- Referrals are made directly to the school's assigned Speech and Language Therapist
- Redwood Secondary School's assigned Speech and Language Therapist is Muslimah Mahmood

### Referral Process

- Parents can no longer refer directly to Speech and Language Therapy
- Any concerns or requests for referral must be discussed with parents/carers by school staff
- All referrals must go through the school's intervention referral procedure
- Staff are responsible for clearly documenting:
  - Parental views
  - The reason for referral
  - Evidence of need and strategies already in place

This ensures referrals are appropriate, timely, and fully evidenced.

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### Levels of Speech and Language Therapy Support

The Speech and Language Therapy Service offers support at three levels:

1. **Whole-school / classroom level**  
Supporting staff to plan and deliver good communication practice within everyday environments
  2. **Group or curriculum level**  
Developing pupils' communication skills within specific activities, such as small groups
  3. **Individual pupil level**  
Assessment and targeted intervention through a structured programme devised and monitored by the SLT and delivered by trained school staff
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### Objectives

- Communication skills will be embedded across the curriculum and encouraged in non-curricular activities
  - A range of strategies will be available, including signing, symbols, photographs, and objects of reference
  - Individual communication targets may be assessed and devised jointly by the SLT and class teacher
  - Identified communication strategies and systems will be used consistently by all staff
  - Staff will liaise with the SLT to monitor, evaluate, and record progress toward communication targets
  - Parents will be supported to develop Total Communication approaches at home
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## Communication Passports and Documentation

- All pupils who use AAC, including device users and paper-based system users, must have a Communication Passport in place
  - Communication Passports must be:
    - Written and maintained by the form tutor
    - Reviewed regularly and updated as needed
  - All high-tech device users must also have a Blue Communication Folder
    - This folder must be read by all staff working with the pupil
    - It contains essential operational, communication, and access information
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## Devices and Communication Aids

- Communication aids that remain in school will be maintained and monitored
  - Tutor staff are responsible for:
    - Daily care of communication devices
    - Ensuring devices are stored safely
    - Minimising risk of damage or breakage
  - The AAC Coordinator will manage operational difficulties and liaise with the SLT as required
  - All staff will have a basic working knowledge of pupils' communication aids and their implications for curriculum access
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## Training and Professional Development

- Training in Total Communication, AAC use, and supporting AAC users will be ongoing
  - Training priorities will reflect:
    - Pupil needs
    - New developments in AAC
    - Available resources and funding
  - All training will take place in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team and Headteacher
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## Measuring Outcomes

Outcomes will be measured through:

- Improvements in functional communication
- Increased participation and curriculum access
- Progress toward EHCP communication targets

These outcomes will be reviewed during pupil reviews in consultation with staff, parents, and involved professionals.

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## **Resources**

The school maintains a range of communication resources, including:

- Communication books and charts (e.g. PECS, visual timetables, Communication Passports)
- Licensed symbol sets and software (Boardmaker, Clicker 5)
- Signing resources
- Switches and computer access devices
- Electronic communication aids
- Helpkidzlearn subscribed software

Resources will be updated regularly, subject to funding, and individual-specific resources will be available at all times.

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## **Links with Parents**

- Parents are consulted on EHCP communication targets
  - Communication targets are reviewed at Annual Reviews/EHCP meetings
  - Parents may attend consultation evenings
  - Termly reports provide evidence of communication progress
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## **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually or as required.

It will be promoted and implemented consistently across the school.

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### **Written by:**

P. Stott – AAC Coordinator

### **Presented to Governors for approval**

**Review cycle:** Annually or as appropriate