

COMMUNICATION

POLICY

Rationale:

- We all have the right to communicate meaningfully with others to meet our basic needs (food, drink, comfort), to develop and maintain interpersonal relationships, to develop independence and assert our rights. Frankston Special Developmental School follows the “Communication Bill of Rights” (Brady. et al, 2016).

Program Description:

- Communication and language skills are developed across the curriculum as an integrated part of the daily routines and activities. Explicit teaching of communication skills will be provided. Speech Therapists are available to support the explicit teaching of communication skills through a range of modalities including verbal, non-verbal and Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) such as the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) and Speech Generating electronic devices.

Aims:

- To provide a learning program that develops communication and language skills that encourage all students to interact with their environment and community in a functional and meaningful way.
- For students to have access to communication systems which optimise their ability to have their needs met, interact socially, express their emotions, reject items/actions and share experiences.

Implementation:

- Every student at Frankston SDS will have an individualised learning goal in the area of communication.
- Student communication goals will be developed with teachers, families and speech therapists.
- Student communication development will be an integral part of classroom practice, embedded across all subject areas.
- The Victorian Curriculum, English, Speaking and Listening Goalbank will be used to develop communication goals to ensure communication development follows a continuum of learning and skill acquisition.
- Students will be provided with age appropriate activities designed to develop, enhance and use their communication to access the curriculum and interact as a member of the school and wider community.
- Teachers will regularly view Individual Learning Plans and review communication goals in alliance with assessment dates and at other times in consultation with speech therapists.
- Students will have access to a whole-class visual schedule and/or individual timetable.
- Skill development will prioritise key development in:
 - Requesting help/assistance
 - Requesting a ‘Break’
 - Requesting items, activities and actions

- Rejecting items/actions
- Responding to wait
- Responding to directions
 - Visual directions
 - Spoken directions
- Transitioning between activities
- Following a visual schedule
- Staff will be aware of students' methods of communication and consult with speech therapists to ensure students have access to a working communication system and an alternative system. Eg. Augmentative or Alternative Communication (AAC) such as a Speech Generating Device (SGD) or Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) with a low tech or no tech back up system such as a core language board.
- Staff will make reasonable adjustments to all curriculum materials presented to students to allow for non-verbal and minimally verbal students to understand and respond to classroom content.
- The speech therapy department will oversee and coordinate all aspects of the program, provide support and advice to others when needed and organise professional development when required.
- We will respect students and treat them with dignity, by the school community engaging in the practice of talking about a student out of their hearing range and treat the conversation with confidentiality.

Evaluation:

- This policy will be as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

Brady, N. C., Bruce, S., Goldman, A., Erickson, K., Mineo, B., Ogletree, B. T., Paul, D., Ronski, M., Sevcik, R., Siegel, E., Schoonover, J., Snell, M., Sylvester, L., & Wilkinson, K. (2016). Communication services and supports for individuals with severe disabilities: Guidance for assessment and intervention. *American Journal on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, 121(2), 121-138.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in....	2017
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