



NORTH STAR NURSERY AND HOLIDAY CLUB
COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

This policy is written for Nursery and Holiday Club staff, students, volunteers, parents and carers. It provides information, guidelines and rules for effective communication with a range of recipients according to their age and stage of development and abilities, and advises of adjustments where necessary to support communication.

Speech, language and communication skills are vital for all children. Without these skills they will not reach their full potential. Early Years practitioners are crucial to supporting children, and identifying when they might be having difficulty. 1 in 10 children have speech, language and communication needs, so all staff need to understand how to better support these children.

Definition of Communication

Communication is the way in which information is relayed between people. The methods can be verbal, non-verbal, written, electronic or picture symbols and include listening.

The participants may be adults, children or young people.

Communication can take part between two individuals or a whole group.

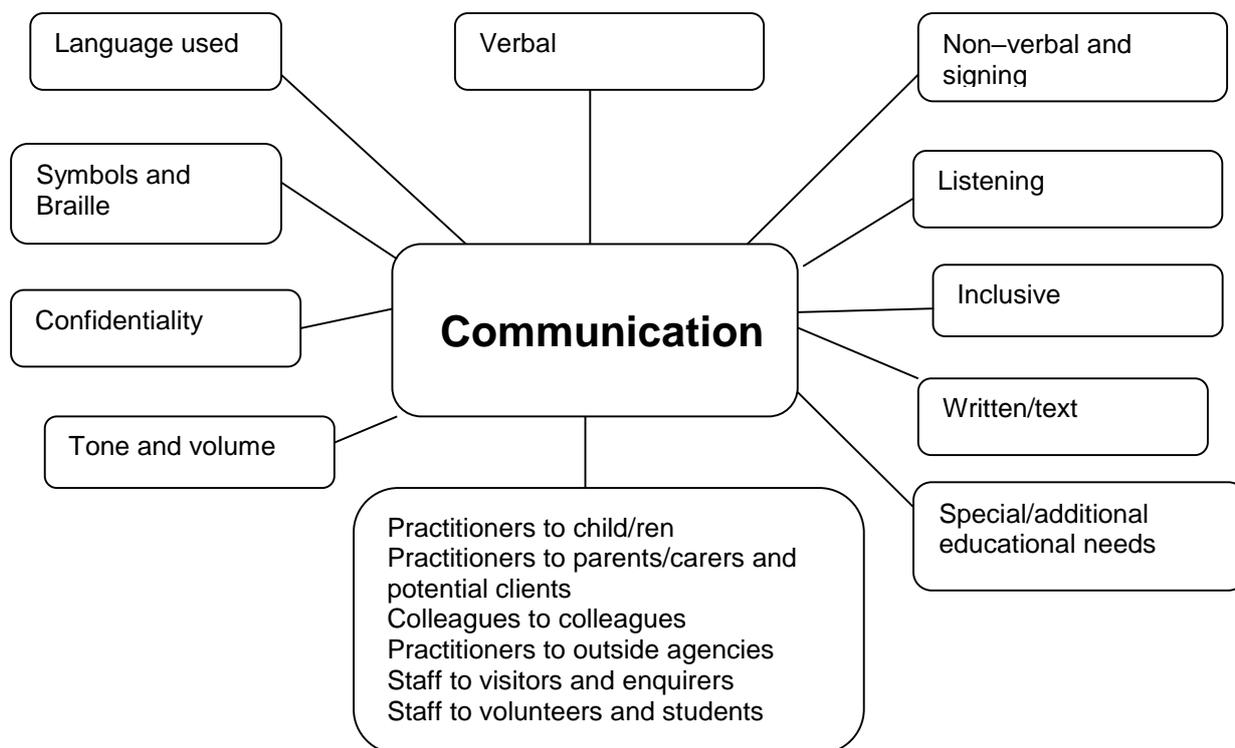
The Nursery's and Holiday Club's work with children and families will involve communication on a daily basis in many forms.

Communication must be adequate and effective.

The Chinese characters, which make up the verb "to listen", tell us how important this part of communication is.



What forms of communication may take place within the Nursery and Holiday Club?



Requirements for normal language development

1. A functioning aroused brain
2. Functioning hearing and speech ability
3. Ability to focus attention and concentration
4. Stimulation a) interesting experiences; build concept/ideas and encourage memory
b) attractive, meaningful adult conversation to accompany child's activity/experience.
5. Motivation A child will want to communicate if he/she has found it rewarding and pleasurable.
6. Symbolic understanding

(Adapted from the National Hospitals of Speech and Science 1985)

Communication with children

Names are an important part of people's identity. Children should be addressed by the names they have or want to be known as (nicknames). Use the correct spelling when writing the child's name and if possible in their original alphabet if English is not their first language. Use their name on displays and belongings. A child's photograph can also be utilised to identify belongings. Use capital letters at the beginning of a child's names in written communication.

Books and Storytelling present valuable resources of language. Books with bilingual text can help all children understand that there is more than one written language. It is essential that all children can see their home language acknowledged in the setting.

Spoken language must be heard. The overall noise level should allow all children to hear adequately, especially those who are distressed or with hearing problems or learning one or more languages in addition to English. Practitioners should acquire phrases of the child's home language for and from family members and such words as toilet, hungry etc. This will strengthen the links between the setting and home.

We will follow the EYDCP Language Code, of which a copy will be in the induction pack for staff and personal copies will be available on request.

Conversations with children must allow them space to reflect, consider the information they have not encountered before and to come to their own conclusions via discussion. Each Practitioner should be able to involve themselves in conversation in a natural way with children. Practitioners should be aware of the child's age and development and build on these skills. Practitioners need to show genuine interest in what the child says through use of non-verbal and verbal involvement.

At North Star Nursery, we follow the key messages from Every Child A Talker (ECAT) to support the development of communication.

Where possible group participation should be encouraged allowing time to listen, remember conversation is a two way process.

Sensitivity should be shown towards children, who are having difficulty with certain sounds, words and this information should be passed on to the parents. Next Steps can be planned to encourage the use of particular sounds through play opportunities.

Tone and volume can enhance the communication by emphasising information, creating atmosphere and bringing enjoyment to the listener (particularly during storytelling.) It is good practice for staff, particularly new practitioners and students to learn from each other the effective use of tone and volume when addressing a child audience.

Labelling needs to be clearly written in the child's home language. Labelling can be used to identify personal belongings, such as coat peg, tray and art work. It can also introduce new words and letters to the children and with older children show word association to objects. Parent's support will be sought for individual script writing for including on displays.

Pictures and symbols are used throughout the Nursery and Holiday Club to help children identify which activities and toys belong where. This is a pre-reading skill that we encourage by placing pictures next to their names in the Pioneers room and gradually removing the picture thus encouraging letter identification. In Discoverers, the children use pictures or their name to identify their milk. The picture used is of an object or animal that starts with the same sound as their name, e.g. Sophie = snail, Ebony = egg, bringing alliteration into daily use.

Communicating with a hearing impaired child

North Star Nursery considers the information provided by the Pre-school Learning Alliance information sheet 9 (Helping the Child with a Hearing Impairment) and Speech and Language guidance notes when supporting a child with hearing impairment.

“One child in a thousand is born with a hearing impairment, and many of these children will attend a pre-school” (PSLA info 9)

Different types of Hearing Impairment

- Some children have a hearing loss only at certain times, such as when they have a cold.
- Others have permanent hearing loss, due to damage to the nerves affecting hearing. This may result in certain sounds only being heard.
- For some it is severe, and likely to be diagnosed before the age of 3 years.
- But sometimes children pass all the tests and yet may be suspected of having a hearing difficulty.
- This means some children will be aware that they have a hearing difficulty because they wear a hearing aid, with others, parents, carers and staff may suspect they don't hear well, but there has been no professional diagnosis of hearing loss.

Some signs of possible hearing loss in a young child

- Does not respond when called by name
- The child responds inconsistently to sound, sometimes hearing it; other times not, or seems to attend only when people raise their voices
- Appears dull
- Appears uninterested, dreamy or distracted
- Appears withdrawn into a personal and private world
- Displays behaviour problems and poor social adjustment
- Persistent colds
- Complaining of earache or history of ear infections
- Discharging ears
- May turn their head so that one ear is directed towards the sound source
- The child seems more responsive to visual clues in the environment, including watching the speaker's face
- Delayed language or unclear speech
- Finds it difficult to hear when there is background noise
- Child may be consistently the last to follow instructions.

N.B. A deaf child very quickly learns to respond to non-verbal clues, e.g. vibrations on the floor. Don't be fooled into believing that their response to your spoken word is proof that they can hear.

What can we do to help the child communicate?

The hearing impaired child with some speech needs to develop and expand it, while the child without speech needs to be helped to communicate and not be excluded from social relationships because of the lack of speech. It can be frustrating for the child, the group, the parents and carers and staff and, therefore, it is essential to find support as quickly as possible. There will need to be differentiation in planning to meet the child's needs and Next Steps.

Here are some points to remember:-

1. Be relaxed; expect normal social behaviour but be prepared for signs of frustration occasionally.
2. Show by example what you want. Use gestures to enable the child to understand e.g. Baby Sign or Sign-Along.
3. Speak normally, but make sure the child can see your face clearly and that you are facing the light so that your lips are visible. Speak clearly but do not exaggerate your lip movements or shout.
4. In a noisy room a child may not hear you call. Touch them gently on the shoulder and position yourself in front of them to communicate.
5. Practitioners need to learn signs already used at home to assist communication, or parents and practitioners could attend training together and support the child this way.
6. Include the child in an activity without causing them embarrassment or undue awareness of their problem, perhaps as a helper of a regular task, so that they know what is expected of them.
7. At story and song time they should sit at the front of the group or centre of the circle, repetition songs will allow the child to learn when to move fingers, thumbs or hands for actions.
8. Reduce the background noises and use carpets and curtains to reduce the vibrations and echoing.
9. An extra helper may be needed to build up a close relationship with the child, to support when communication breaks down.
10. Use visual support for communication including facial expression and photos.
11. If the child uses a hearing aid ensure it is correctly managed by all who care for the child.
12. A pre-school child may need support to identify which is their good ear and sit accordingly to hear individuals or the group.

It is our intention that at any time within North Star Nursery a practitioner will have some experience of sign language and visual pictures to support such communication with children.

Parents and carers know more than anyone else about their child. They can share problems and solutions with Nursery and Holiday Club practitioners, and explain how the child attempts to communicate. Professional reports, advice and feedback will inform practise.

Communication with parents and carers

Parents' rights

- To acquire information about the care environment
- To express their views on the care environment
- To alter the care environment of their child
- To contribute to their child's care environment.

Extract from the Department of Health's Guidance and Regulations on the Children Act – Volume 2

The setting's aims must be to create a group in which:

- everyone feels they have a part to play, their views and opinions are considered and accepted or rejected courteously and thoughtfully.
- their values, language and culture and diversity are respected and welcomed.

Communication of information

Parents and practitioners must be encouraged to share as much information as possible with each other. This can be through:

- Verbal conversations at the beginning or end of the day
- By writing messages on the child's daily page
- By telephone
- Through newsletters and letters to parents
- Display work and photographs
- Developmental records
- Parents consultations or meeting with key person
- Information on the notice boards and front doors
- Information on website and updated policies
- E-mail correspondence
- Manager's open door policy.

The style of care, all policies, rules and regulations that affect parents and children are displayed on our website and in the Policies and Procedures file in the corridor. Parents are welcome to request copies.

Policies are updated regularly with parent/carer, staff and committee input. Parents and carers are given the opportunity to seek clarification on the contents of policies, procedures and documentation.

How to develop communication relationships between practitioners and parents and carers

- Positively welcome their presence in the setting
- Used preferred names and modes of address (e.g. first name, Mr, Mrs or Dr.)
- Create effective opportunities to talk with parents
- Use positive body language, smile at the parents, make eye contact.
- Interaction with parents acknowledges they are the most knowledgeable people about their own child.
- Information given is accurate, relevant, clear and given at the earliest possible moment.
- Information beyond the responsibility of the practitioner is referred to the senior team or outside agencies following the correct guidelines.
- Remain consistent to the Confidentiality and Data Protection Policies
- Communication shows respect for cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
- Comments made by parents and views expressed are shared with colleagues only in ways that benefit the family.
- Information provided by the parent is accurately recorded and passed to relevant practitioners only.
- Information provided by parents is used to develop understanding of the child and their family.
- Practitioners draw parent's attention to child's efforts and achievements by displaying their work on the wall.
- Positive aspects of the child's day are clearly explained to parents, which enables them to feel proud of their child.
- Positive reassurance is given to anxious parents.
- Share methods and strategies for positive behaviour management to encourage consistency in positive behaviour.
- Parents and carers need to be responsible for passing on their child's experiences outside of the setting, to enable an all round picture of the child to be formed and any areas of concern explored. Parent input is encouraged and informs planning to build on the child's knowledge.
- Practitioners to complete all child's records accurately and promptly.

- It is the parent's responsibility to return questionnaires, reply slips and learning journeys promptly to enable planning and decision making to be effective.

Communication with other staff

How to develop communication relationships with each other

- Use preferred modes of address, e.g. first name, nickname, shortened name.
- Acknowledge each other's presence.
- Pass on verbally messages from parents and carers to those in immediate care of the child by way of diary, register or communication book.
- Remain consistent to the Confidentiality and Data Protection Policies.
- Participate in planning meetings and staff meetings.
- Cascade training evaluations back to manager and colleagues.
- Inform the nursery of absences as soon as possible following the procedures.
- Acknowledge other people's skills; seek support from them in areas you are unsure about. Encourage one another in our roles.
- Accept that some information will only be passed on, on a need to know only basis. Do not pressure other staff into releasing such information.
- Summarise what has been said to ensure you understand what is being asked of you.
- Inform manager or most senior practitioners about changes to child's emergency contact or collection immediately.
- Spend time chatting freely during lunch breaks about personal interests to develop working relationships further.
- If conflicts arise, seek assistance in dealing with them, if you do not feel able to speak to the individual directly.
- The manager has an open door policy.

What methods are available to us?

- Verbal, in person or by telephone system.
- Written messages or memos, and white board in staff room.
- Planning meetings
- Staff meetings and minutes
- Nursery diary
- Room communication books
- Newsletter
- Email
- Text messages via the Teachers2Parents website
- Website

Safeguarding Children

Should a practitioner have any concerns with regard to the welfare of a child in our care, they should follow the correct procedures with regard to communicating and reporting their concerns. These procedures are set out in the Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy and are also displayed in each room.

Whistleblowing

Should a practitioner, parent or carer have any concerns with regard to the safe working practice of a colleague, they should follow the correct procedures with regard to whistleblowing. These procedures are set out in the Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy.

Special Educational Needs

Should a practitioner have any concerns with regard to a child's development, they should consult the SENCO and correct procedures should be followed with regard to drawing up an Individual Play Plan, Early Help Records and an Education, Health and Care Plan.

REFERENCES

Department of Health's Guidance and Regulations on the Children Act – Volume 2

<http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk/early-years-practitioners>

This policy links to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Special Educational Needs Policy Equality and Diversity Policy Positive Behaviour Management Policy Technology Policy Acceptable Use Policy Code of Conduct Food Policy Confidentiality Policy Data Protection Statement – Clients & Staff Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy Complaints Procedure Staff Induction and Training
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Policy Review History	
September 2013	v.1
October 2015	v.1.1
November 2015	v.2

This policy will be reviewed in November 2017 unless a review of events, legislation or guidance from health professionals or Ofsted indicates that a review should take place sooner.