



"Inspiring minds to ignite lifelong learning"



Onchan Primary School
School Road, Onchan, Isle of Man IM3 4PD
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Onchan Specialist Provision Centre Communication Policy

Member(s) of Staff Responsible: SPC Manager

Policy Statement

Onchan Specialist Provision Centre (SPC) is committed to promoting the development of functional communication for all children. We adopt a Total Communication approach, recognising that every child requires an individualised system of communication in order to access learning, develop independence, and engage meaningfully with others.

The SPC ensures that all staff, parents, and professionals involved with the child are supported in understanding and implementing communication strategies to promote consistency across settings.

Total Communication

The Total Communication approach encourages the use of all appropriate methods, including but not limited to:

- Verbal communication (speaking and listening)
- Signing, gestures, and body language
- Written text
- Picture symbols with accompanying words
- Photographs
- Objects of reference
- High-technology communication aids (e.g. Go Talk, Gridplayer)
- Low-technology aids (e.g. pictorial/symbolic resources)

Aims

- To enable every child to find a means of expressing themselves through functional communication.
- To support the development of both receptive and expressive communication skills.
- To ensure consistent use of individual communication systems across the SPC and in partnership with parents/carers.
- To maintain and develop children's communication systems with the support of Speech and Language Therapists (SALT).



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- To ensure all staff are trained to understand and use the principles of Total Communication.

Communication Targets

Following assessment, a full set of communication targets will be created for each child.

- Targets will be agreed collaboratively with the SALT team, SPC staff, and parents/carers.
- Copies of targets will be displayed in the classroom, provided to staff, and stored in the child's file.

Resources

All necessary resources to develop and maintain communication will be provided by the SPC.

- Support staff are responsible for maintaining equipment.
- Regular visits by SALT staff will ensure assessment, progress monitoring, and setting of new targets.
- Copies of all individualised resources (e.g. visual timetables, symbols, communication books) will be stored securely to allow for replacement if required.

Review of Communication Skills

Each child's communication skills will be reviewed through their Individual Education Plan (IEP), with input from the SPC Manager and SALT team.

- Reassessment will take place when necessary, using formal and informal methods.
- Communication targets will be updated at least twice annually in line with IEP reviews.
- A communication profile will be maintained for all children open to SALT intervention.
- Parents may request SALT intervention at any time. Children remain open to SALT services even if a focus period has been closed.

Transition

The SPC is committed to ensuring smooth transitions to new placements.

- Staff will liaise with receiving settings, sharing communication profiles, equipment, and strategies.
- Training and modelling will be offered where possible to support staff in new placements.
- Children's communication resources will be transferred to their next setting to maintain continuity.



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Video Recording

Video recording will be used, with consent, to capture good practice, support staff development, and model strategies for parents and carers.

Liaison

The SPC promotes strong working relationships with both on-site and off-site professionals.

On-site liaison includes:

- Collaboration with educational staff and professionals.
- Regular discussions about communication strategies, targets, and mealtime procedures.
- Open-door policy to address queries promptly.
- Formal and informal SPC team meetings.

Off-site liaison includes:

- Engagement with parents, SALT staff, transition staff, social care, and medical professionals.
- Sharing resources and training to support consistency in communication.
- Ensuring school leavers take all communication resources and profiles to their next placement.

Approaches to Communication

Functional Communication:

- All children, whether verbal or pre-verbal, are supported to develop active listening, turn-taking, appropriateness, and organisational skills.
- Visuals are widely used to support the gestalt language process.

Intensive Interaction:

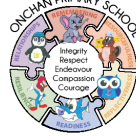
- Used with children who are harder to reach.
- Encourages engagement, social interaction, turn-taking, and vocalisation.
- Delivered one-to-one, often in a quiet environment, by trained staff or therapists.

Signing:

- A Sign-a-long based system is used consistently across the Isle of Man SPCs.
- All staff and children are encouraged to sign where appropriate.
- IEPs may include signing targets.
- Signing is embedded within music, dance, drama, and storytelling.



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- All staff undertake Sign-a-long training as part of their CPD.

Symbols:

Three formats are used: objects of reference, photographs, and Widgit symbols.

- Symbols are personalised for each child and used for both expression (e.g. pointing boards) and understanding (e.g. timetables, social stories, now/next cards).
- All staff carry basic photo communication cards at all times.

Mealtime Procedures:

Eating and drinking are supported through individualised assessments and resources.

- Children experiencing difficulties are referred to SaLT.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the SPC Manager in consultation with the Speech and Language Therapy team.

Date of Policy: September 2025

Review Date: September 2026