



Holly Park School

Talk and Communication Policy

Speaking and Listening is an area that permeates within all parts of the curriculum, and is the fundamental foundation upon which English teaching and learning is based. Speaking is not only an object of study but the means through which a subject is learned

Staff in school model speaking clearly. This includes clear diction, reasoned argument, using imaginative and challenging language and use of Standard English.

All staff are to model the correct pronunciation of words and where required - discreetly model corrections for pupils where necessary. Staff are also sensitive in encouraging the participation of retiring or reticent children.

Talk is part of Teaching and learning/Curriculum and also Personal Development (the quality of debate and discussions that pupils have)

Links to The Rights Of The Child:

- ☐ Article 12: You have the right to give your opinion and for adults to listen and take it seriously.
- ☐ Article 13: You have the right to find out things and share what you think with others by talking, drawing, writing or in any other way unless it harms or offends other people

According to the National Curriculum (2014) children should be able to:

- Listen and respond appropriately to adults and peers
- Give well-structured descriptions and explanations
- Ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and build vocabulary and knowledge
- Articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions
- Gain, maintain and monitor the interest of the listener(s)
- Maintain attention, participate actively in collaborative conversations, staying on topic and initiating and responding to comments
- Use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas
- Speak audibly and fluently with an increasing command of Standard English
- Participate in discussions, presentations, performances and debates.
- Select and use appropriate registers for effective communication.
- Consider and evaluate different viewpoints, attending to and building on the contributions of others.

Intent:

Talk and Communication (Speaking and Listening) is central to our Curriculum and is developed from EYFS throughout our school, across the curriculum. We believe that the ability to speak and listen is fundamental to pupils' language and social development. It is an essential tool for all areas of the curriculum because talk underpins learning and thinking. It is vital that its significance is recognised by pupils, parents and staff. Pupils need to be provided with many and varied contexts for talk but they also need direct teaching in the skills of speaking and listening.

We nurture children's speaking and listening skills through a variety of approaches such as: exploratory play, story time, hot-seating, debate, learning partners and also through collaborative learning across the curriculum. We develop these skills so that our children are capable of expressing their own ideas clearly and confidently, in a safe and supportive environment, in all aspects and areas of their school life and into their future. We allow our children to learn in an environment where their views are valued.

We believe that discussion and debate benefits children by:

- ▣ Improving critical thinking
- ▣ Enhancing self-confidence and public speaking skills
- ▣ Improving listening skills
- ▣ Helping to organise thoughts

Aims:

Our aims are for all children to be able to:

- Communicate effectively, speaking with increasing confidence, clarity and fluency
- Participate in discussions and debate in a variety of contexts
- Listen to the views, opinions and ideas of others with increased interest
- Articulate ideas and thoughts clearly with appropriate tone and vocabulary recognising audience
- Respond to questions and opinions appropriately
- Retell stories and poems which are known by heart
- Ask questions with increasing relevance and insight
- Have an interest in words and their meanings with a growing vocabulary.
- Listen carefully in discussion making contributions and asking questions;

Implementation:

We recognise that the teaching of these skills are not exclusive to English lessons.

Our whole school approach to the children's development are recognised and provided as follows:

Regular opportunities for children to voice their opinions with talk-partners, in small groups and in whole-class situations.

Developing the ability to take turns and to listen to others.

Opportunities for pupils to discuss and debate and articulate their opinions and justify ideas, arguments and opinions, give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes.

Listening and responding to a variety of different texts including stories, poetry and non-fiction texts (also taught through foundation subjects). Listening to stories read aloud. Use dramatic techniques, including work in role to explore ideas within texts

Teaching children to articulate thoughts and feelings of characters in books they read, and the situations they may have experienced. Talk opportunities before writing. Retelling stories and poems

Planning opportunities for children to take part in role-play, drama activities, discussion and hot-seating across the curriculum.

Speaking in school performances and assemblies. Performance poetry.

A variety of school councils and other pupil voice opportunities where children can share their thoughts about school life and the wider world.

Encouraging children to speak audibly and fluently with an increasing command of Standard English.

Speaking in a variety of curriculum lessons e.g. demonstrating how to do a scientific investigation or explaining how to solve a two-step word problem in Mathematics. Presenting ideas to audiences

Talking about their own experiences, recounting events. Talking to visitors in school and on trips

Listening to ideas and opinions of adults and peers

Vocabulary

Teaching vocabulary in school and addressing the word gap is vital

Subject specific vocabulary is embedded across the curriculum, through our subject learning Organisers and teacher modelling, in context. Contextual learning helps children to understand new words and supports them in including them in their work. All classrooms have vocabulary trees on display. Vocabulary may also be shown on working walls.

Role play, curriculum days, trips and visitors are also used across all subjects to explore and engage children in their learning. This gives children the chance to increase their vocabulary and embed vocabulary in shared activities. The use of topic specific language used repetitively and transferred into writing helps children to embed it.

This model is reflected in shared reading sessions, where children are given the chance to explore unfamiliar vocabulary and expand their knowledge of words.

We are keen to model the correct grammar in speech, for example using 'we were' instead of 'we was' and encourage children to reflect this in their use of spoken and written language. Children are given the chance to orally rehearse ideas for writing regularly.

The teaching of Vocabulary includes: Key words in each subject, Key words for EYFS, As part of VIPERS/guided reading, Incidental 'magpie-ing' and Grammar lessons e.g etymology

Debate

Discussion and Debate promotes an open forum for honest dialogue, where our children are encouraged to exchange ideas and opinions. This is often started with a question for discussion, which can be applied to the wider world. Children are encouraged to 'build' on each others ideas, sift through different points of view and

communicate their ideas to create discussion and debate. Above all, they try to understand each other and alternative points of view.

Teachers use talk frames to support children with discussion and debate.

Debates can be varied and cover discussion across the curriculum:

- ▣ Should children wear school uniform?
- ▣ Which houses are better, Celtic roundhouses or Roman villas?
- ▣ Should deforestation be illegal?
- ▣ Should Goldilocks have entered the house of the 3 bears?
- ▣ Should Jack have climbed the beanstalk?
- ▣ Should the father have welcomed back the prodigal son with a party?
- ▣ Should boys wear dresses?
- ▣ Should women be paid the same as men in professional football?
- ▣ Your sister has bought a hideous new top. She loves it. Do you keep quiet or tell her your true feelings?
- ▣ Can we replace teachers with computers?
- ▣ Which rights of the child are the most important?

Floor Books

We use 'floor books' across the curriculum. This also helps to develop speaking and listening skills. Children enjoy looking through them and it is an opportunity for them to talk about and discuss their learning.

Talk Time

In KS1 and KS2 the children have a weekly Talk Time session for 20 -30 minutes. Talk time might relate to current affairs, school wide issues, local, UK or world news items or particular class problems. Talk Time teachers can read picture books about feelings to promote good mental health and encourage discussion. The children can write their worries and post them in a Worry Box. During Talk Time, the children's worries and coping strategies are discussed. Children can also post positive notes in a special bucket and these are shared in the Talk Time session. Sometimes short films or pictures are used to explore sensitive issues. Children can also participate in a range of activities to promote good relationships and self-esteem.

Writing:

At Holly Park, the use of dialogic talk in English lessons is integral; pupils being encouraged to reason, discuss, argue and explain their views deepens understanding and promotes critical thinking. It allows them the vital opportunity to play with different language structures before applying them to their writing construction. The provision of carefully planned, scaffolded activities and opportunities for talk and articulation provides clarity of content and builds confidence in our young writers.

We aim for our pupils:

- To talk through their ideas and plans before starting their writing.
- To discuss the features and effectiveness of different genres.
- To be able to explain their opinions on model texts, identifying and articulating what they believe to be effective or ineffective and why.
- To take part in discussions and debates on topics that will inform their writing.
- To carefully articulate and justify the rationale for settings, character and plot within narratives, content and structural choices in non-fiction writing and chosen arguments in persuasive writing.

- To use the experience of having taking part in drama activities to inform their ideas for writing.
- To be able to read aloud and/or perform their own written work.
- To engage in discussions to inform the editing process.
- To regularly engage in discussion and analysis of their own written work with peers and/or an adult, in order to receive positive feedback and constructive criticism.

Reading:

We recognise that talk and communication are a vital component in the reading offer at Holly Park. Verbalising our ideas and listening to those of others provides the opportunity to reflect and expand critical thinking. Our pupils are encouraged and supported to share their love of books (and the worlds and information they find within them) through discussion with adults and their classroom peers.

We aim for our pupils:

- To have the opportunity to discuss books that they are reading; presenting and sharing their recommendations with peers.
- To have planned opportunities for interesting, engaging and lively discussion and debate over books and narratives; where the value in listening to others and responding respectfully is understood.
- To be able to articulate their understanding of plot and provide verbal summaries.
- To be able to verbalise their predictions, making justifications.
- To want to re-tell and/or recite their favourite stories and poems.
- To have regular opportunities to share their opinions on a character's choices within a story. To be able to articulate and justify these opinions.
- To regularly discuss the wider themes and moral dilemmas within a story, articulating and expressing their views clearly.
- To develop and formalise their observations and opinions in to more structured debate.
- To be provided with a wide variety of platforms for discussion; whole-class, within small groups, learning partners, during assemblies or in one-to-one sessions with adults.
- To be given additional support, have carefully adapted lessons and resources and receive targeted intervention, when needed.

Zones of Regulation

The Zones of Regulation is a curriculum developed to help children understand and manage their emotions. Children identify how they are feeling and talk about coping strategies. They are encouraged to talk about how they are feeling and think about the size of the problem. Children learn to express how they feel in a way that is helpful.

EYFS

Children learn by observing and copying adult behaviour so in the Early Years all staff model good speech and language skills. They model effective language during all interactions, whether that be planned storytime activities or during free flow spontaneous interactions. All adults in Nursery and Reception will use the following strategies to help children develop their communication skills

- Get the child's attention by moving down to their eye level.
- Speak clearly and calmly using age-appropriate language.
- Recast what the child has said to model and reinforce appropriate language skills.
- Repeat sentences back to children and extend what they have said; extending the child's understanding of sentence structure and building new vocabulary.
- During child initiated activities provide a narrative of what the child is doing to develop their receptive language skills.
- Introduce key vocabulary through planned story sessions and during child initiated activities During informal chats and planned discussions, listen carefully to children and be patient, giving them plenty of time to respond and find their words.
- Use gesture, tone of voice, facial expressions, and visual prompts such as PECS to convey communications clearly and with impact.

- Use sensitive and effective questioning, being careful not to over question children or use closed questions.
- Carefully monitor children's language development and modify how they support children's language through recasting, key vocabulary and careful use of questioning.
- Quickly identify children who need additional support such as Talk Boost
- Understand that bilingualism is an asset and the first language has a continuity and significant role in identity, learning and the acquisition of additional languages
- Understand that English words and phrases need to be repeated and reinforced so that the models are easy for non-English speakers to recognise

Safeguarding

Children developing the skills needed to communicate their thoughts and feelings is crucial if we are to keep them safe. We aim to give our children the vocabulary they need in order for them to articulate what they want to say clearly. In all subjects of the curriculum, key vocabulary is taught and developed. In PSHE lessons, children learn the correct names for body parts. Teaching children the anatomically correct names for private parts increases a child's self-confidence and positive body image. When adults are clear, unashamed and upfront about all parts of the body, this teaches the child that all parts of their body are important and no shame and stigma are attached to any part. Once children understand this and know the correct vocabulary, they are able to express how they feel and if they are unhappy or scared about something.

Behaviour

At Holly Park we use the Restorative Approach when there have been problems between children. It creates a positive learning environment where children have the necessary skills to self-regulate their own behaviour. The Restorative Approach both relies on children having good communication skills whilst also developing their communication skills further. In learning to resolve conflicts, they learn to explain:

- What happened
- What they were thinking and feeling when the incident happened
- What they think about the situation now about what happened
- Who has been affected by what happened
- What they think should happen now to makes things right

SEND

Talk interventions

Talk and communication is essential to access the curriculum. We assess and monitor children termly. If we see that children are not making progress in their speech and communication skills they will have access to interventions to support them.

Language Enrichment Programme:

The language enrichment project is run by Barnet and it is to support children with their communication skills and vocabulary. Barnet train school TAs who become language enrichment champions and provide communication-friendly advice for school setting. It is an exciting and engaging intervention run by the TAs which includes talking, turn taking and playing games. The children work on their vocabulary, narration and confidence.

Talk boost

Talk boost is a targeted and evidence based intervention which supports language delayed children in EYFS to make significant progress with their language and communication skills. It is run by our Nursery nurses in EYFS with children that have been identified as having language delay.

Colourful Semantics

Colourful semantics is an intervention to support spoken and written language learning across the curriculum. This is done in small group sessions, one to one and as whole class teaching. It helps children understand and build sentences. Sentences are cup up into different roles and colour coded. Who – Orange, What (verb) –

Yellow, What (object) – Green, Where – Blue. Pictures can also be used to help construct sentences using the colour codes stated.



This helps children construct sentences and to understand what is needed in a sentence for it to make sense.

Speech and language therapist

If our school based interventions are not helping the children to make progress in their speech and language skills we will do a referral to the NHS speech and language service for additional specialist advice. The child will then have an assessment. If this is done in school time then a TA will attend the session and then continue with the strategies until the child is seen by the speech and language therapist again.

EAL

For our EAL children Talk and Communication skills are very important for them to access the learning in the classroom. For lots of our EAL children being in the language rich environment in the classroom will help develop their language skills. For children who need extra support we run EAL interventions where children have the space to learn conversationally and social English in a small group with a TA. This is to help build their confidence and improve their vocabulary and social English.

Impact:

Speaking and listening give us the basic skills we need to communicate with the world around us. Children are given a range of opportunities to develop these skills, in a safe and stimulating environment. The wide range of speaking and listening activities – which are weaved throughout our curriculum – help to develop ideas, vocabulary and confidence, as the more we talk, the more we pick up on different words that other people use.

We regard the development of good speaking, listening and collaborative skills as fundamental to the achievement of children who attend our School. It is our belief that by teaching these key skills, we are equipping our children for life and work within secondary school and beyond. Moreover, at the same time we are promoting the development of positive relationships and social skills, that will enable these same children to lead fulfilled lives.

The Role of Governors

- It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to monitor the effective deployment of this policy.

Monitoring and Review

This responsibility of review has been delegated to the Governors Teaching and Learning Committee.

This policy will be reviewed biannually.

Document Control

Revision History

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1.1	Spring 2023	T&L Committee	Amended, adopted and ratified
1.2	Autumn 2023	T&L Committee	ratified
1.3	Autumn 2025	T&L Committee	ratified

Signed by

	Name	Signature	Date
Headteacher	Ann Pelham		Autumn 2025
Chair of Governors	Clare Hegarty		Autumn 2025

Distribution

Shared with
• Staff via school server • Parents via Website • Governors via committee meetings

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Autumn 2027

Oracy Skills Framework

