



## **St Margaret's Academy Audiology and Communication Policy for Children in the Hearing Support Centre**

### **Rationale**

Throughout this document the term 'deaf' and 'deafness' are used to denote all types and degrees of hearing loss.

St. Margaret's Academy is committed to enabling deaf children access to language, whether this is access to spoken language through optimally functioning listening equipment or access to signed communication through BSL. Cued Speech is used as a visual support system to access language as appropriate to the pupils in the Hearing Support Centre.

### **Audiology**

Many deaf children have the potential to develop and use their residual hearing through the use of amplification eg. hearing aids, cochlear implants and assistive listening devices (ALD). At St. Margaret's we recognise the importance of supporting the use of residual hearing and through audiological management of equipment we ensure that optimal listening experiences are achieved for our deaf children. We believe that children receive maximum benefit from amplification if it is used consistently and if pupils are given opportunities and support to develop their auditory experience.

We work closely with cochlear implant centres, Torbay hospital and an audiological technician from the Ewing Foundation to monitor equipment and to remain up to date with new technologies. We aim to encourage children to take responsibility for their listening equipment and to develop a positive deaf identity.

### **Objectives**

- All amplification systems are in good working order.
- Assistive listening devices (ALD) are correctly maintained and used appropriately.
- Daily checks are conducted on hearing aids/cochlear implants and ALDs
- The use of amplification is encouraged and seen positively throughout the school.
- Audiological training for all staff is updated.
- HSC staff keep abreast of audiological developments and research and implement them in the school when they will be of benefit to the pupils or staff.

- The HSC has appropriate equipment to carry out testing. If repairs cannot be carried out within the HSC, parents are informed so that they can follow up with hospital/implant centre.
- Termly checks and balancing of ALD and hearing aid/cochlear implant are carried out.
- There are soundfield systems in the hall and classrooms. ALDs are set up to work alongside the soundfield systems
- Pupils are encouraged to recognise the benefits of amplification for receptive and expressive speech and language skills and to be able to describe issues with their equipment.
- Pupil independence is encouraged in terms of equipment management.

## **Communication**

We aim to be flexible to deaf children's communication needs. Within our specialist staff we can offer a wide range of communication and learning tools to suit individual learners, such as BSL and Cued Speech.

## **BSL Objectives**

- School staff communicate with pupils through their own mode of communication. A Deaf Inclusion Worker interprets information where necessary.
- Deaf Inclusion Workers communicate in lessons, assemblies and other gatherings where BSL interpretation is required.
- Communication is consistent to support development and confidence.
- Children have access to BSL through Meal Time Assistants at lunchtimes.
- School staff are offered training in BSL and Cued Speech as appropriate to support communication with the pupils.
- Teacher of the Deaf and Deaf Inclusion Workers support staff to demonstrate inclusive principles and an understanding of <sup>1</sup>Deaf culture.
- Pupils are encouraged to develop a sense of Deaf identity and an understanding of their own communication needs.
- The development of BSL skills is encouraged within the school through BSL club, and the direct teaching of BSL to hearing pupils who have a deaf child in their class, and BSL teaching to staff.

St. Margaret's Academy aims to be responsive to all aspects of diversity and to increase the learning and participation of all pupils within the school and its locality. We will endeavour to meet the audiological needs and communication needs of children within the HSC.

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<sup>1</sup>Deaf with a capital D refers to the Deaf community

**Review**

This policy will be reviewed as it is deemed appropriate, but no less frequently than every 2 years. The policy review will be undertaken by the Headteacher, or nominated representative.

**Contacts**

Contacts If you have any enquires in relation to this policy please contact the Headteacher, or Jo Saunders, Teacher of the Deaf.