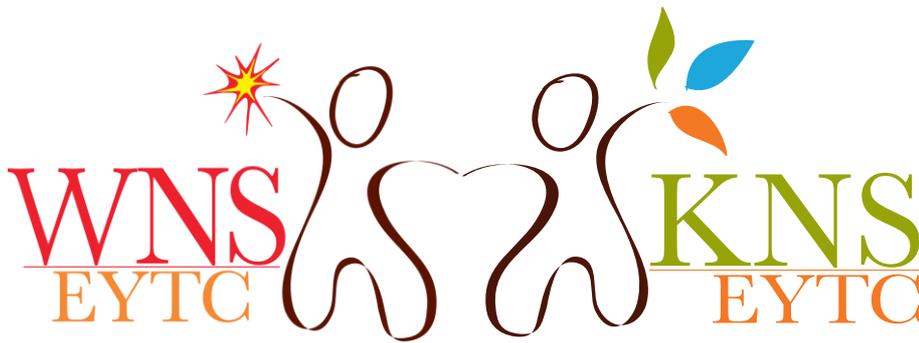


# Kenilworth Nursery School & Whitnash Nursery School & Early Years Hubs



*“Recognising and valuing the uniqueness of every child”*

## Communication Policy

Date initial Policies Written January 2006 Compiled to one policy Date: November 2019

Chair of Governors Reviewed Due: July 2021

Date: Head teacher Chair of Governors

Head teacher

# ABOUT US

## Kenilworth Nursery School & Whitnash Nursery School

### Values and Beliefs:

The nature of learning is:

- \* social co-construction of understandings
- \* Education as growth through investigation and exploration rather than transmission
- \*Based in relationships and the importance of exchange for shaping ideas and knowledge
- \*The making of connections

### Principles of early childhood education:

The task of education is to support and encourage children's exploration and understanding of the world around them, themselves and others. Skills are acquired and grow to support children in their encounters and enquiries and are tools that allow children to make links, test and consider and give meaning to their experiences building their knowledge and understanding.

As a School we identified we wanted our children to :

Encounter the environment, each other, experiences, materials and adults and in doing so gain. Educators observe and notice this and research how this may then be extended and what further learning it may support.

Experience Education as a creative process of Exchange. Children are born sociable learners and it is our role to develop this to support them to become flexible to ideas around them and understand where knowledge maybe and how to find it, to adapt their hypothesis and thinking in response to what they discover and what is shared with them.

Enquire, to make sense and give meaning to the world and materials around them, be interested and develop confidence to ask questions, share knowledge, test hypothesis and listen respectfully to the ideas of others, reshaping their thoughts and explorations in response.

Whitnash Nursery School and Kenilworth Nursery School are happy, warm, secure, caring schools that aim to provide the highest quality education and care in line with our beliefs and principles for early childhood education.

We understand that our interactions with children are significant and that they give meaning and often 'guide' children in their learning. The wrong interaction or communication can close down possibilities for learning making communication a critical tool.

Our ethos recognises and values the uniqueness of every child and we aim to support children to become 'communicators' who convey their ideas, thoughts and feelings and are able to interact, exchange ideas and find answers to their questions, building relationships for learning. We ensure children are 'noticed', listened to and valued as we observe their interests to follow lines of enquiry that motivate and enthuse and to offer them possible learning experiences based on the things they wish to find out about, identifying sources of knowledge around them and allowing them time to explore and express themselves.

This policy sets out some simple guidelines that allow us to consider our communication with children, at times suggesting phrases and asking us to build a repertoire of effective communication and questions that can underpin the philosophy of the ways in which we wish to co-construct learning so that we do not build walls and confine ideas.

The Hundred languages of children poem begins this work by ensuring all staff understand that children are using many forms of communication, not simply words and that we must value their actions and different forms of expression and exchange with the World and around them and with others.

### The Hundred Languages of Children

No way.

The hundred is there.

The child is made of one hundred. The child has a hundred languages

a hundred hands

a hundred thoughts

a hundred ways of thinking

of playing, of speaking.

a hundred, always a hundred

ways of listening

of marvelling, of loving

a hundred joys

for singing and understanding

a hundred worlds to discover

a hundred worlds to invent

a hundred worlds to dream.

The child has a hundred languages (and a hundred hundred, hundred more) but they steal ninety-nine.

The school and the culture separate the head from the body. They tell the child to think without hands to do without head

to listen and not to speak  
to understand without joy  
to love and to marvel  
only at Easter and Christmas.  
They tell the child  
to discover the world already there and of the hundred they steal ninety-nine.  
They tell the child  
that work and play  
reality and fantasy  
science and imagination  
sky and earth  
reason and dream  
are things  
that do not belong together.  
And thus they tell the child  
that the hundred is not there.  
The child says  
"No way – The hundred is there."

Loris Malaguzzi (translated by Lella Gandini)

## Communication

We recognise communication can occur both non-verbally with actions and physical movements that express intentions and ideas and verbally with spoken language. In the early years much communication will be non-verbal but we will see verbal language skills developing and the role of adult beside the child at this point in development is key so this policy seeks to express our ideas and approach to the ways in which we may support and encourage communication in our Nursery Schools.

The first aspect of providing an environment that enables children to express themselves and exchange ideas is to build relationships for learning in which adults facilitate communication and value listening and noticing.

This means that staff will carefully plan their interactions with each child and family from the first meeting and throughout settling in. They will collect knowledge about the child's interest and capabilities and will plan an environment in which the child feels 'there is something of themselves' there. The first interactions will be based around gathering information not sharing it. Photographs of the child with their family will be collected and placed in School, their families will be thought about and a relationship built and this begins by us listening to their knowledge and thoughts about their child. This may need some prompts or questions for families who are not used to being recognised as the child's first teacher or advocate...

First questions may include:

How do you think \*\*\*\*\* will manage in school? What do they know about?

Like to find out about?

What skills do they already have?

Use of first names is an important part of communication, learning parents first names and explaining why we use them is also important, Parents tell us

'I feel recognised and valued and that supports me to trust the school quickly' 'If you know my name and family you will also already know quite a lot about my child'

Mutual trusting relationships can begin because you have listened, valued and responded sensitively. A dialogue can then begin.

"Dialogue is a conversation in which those involved are attentive to one another and jointly advance to a more comprehensive understanding of self, others and the circumstances they share" Professor Alumni, Reggio Emilia 2011

Communication and language is of key importance and so the words we use, how we listen and what we say needs to be considered and planned. The core of language acquisition occurs between 1 to 4 years, with children acquiring much of the necessary basic phonology, syntax and vocabulary during this time.

Research tells us that many of the educational outcome variances are based upon a child's competency in language (Norbury et al 2016). This is evidenced clearly in the variance between summer born and autumn born children as academic and social demands of the classroom have impact on children not yet fully competent in language often creating 'gaps' in attainment that are still present throughout school. It is useful to reflect that 'summer born effect' is reduced or completely disappears in countries where formal teaching of literacy and numeracy are delayed to 7 years (eg. Finland or Denmark)

Our Approach:

Adults listen and respond to children using a volume of voice that is just below usual speaking. By keeping the levels of volume lower children are drawn in to listen, they also often respond with quieter voices and this allows them to hear each other in what could be a noisy environment. Adults do not raise their voices and respond in even tones, when something is unsafe adults will say "Stop" and Makaton sign Stop. They can then explain why once the dangerous issues has stopped.

Adults explain what they wish to see happening or what is safe/unsafe They speak positively, 'walk' rather than "do not run", what you focus upon you get more of and there is less chance a child will pick up the wrong key word as they develop their understanding skills.

Adults do not 'call across' classroom spaces, they call/gesture children to them to speak or exchange ideas or they move to the child. Adults work at children's height and speak to them without the need for loud voices.

Adults may withdraw or reduce language to encourage children to exchange with each other. Adults may also draw attention to the ideas of children and sometimes verbalise or narrate alongside children who do not yet have the verbal skills to communicate with language.

Quiet time for adults can be planned and timed and at those points adults may gesture smile and interact but without language. Children should still understand the adult presence in the room but not seek communication with them but be able to communicate 'around them'. With others, supporting ideas and sometimes taking that facilitator role with other children.

It is useful to lower your voice as situations become louder and to be able to speak to children about volumes of noise around them. The louder we talk, the louder children around us must talk. Adults never shout if a child is unsafe the adult moves to them as quickly as is safe. WE can indicate urgency to each other without loud shouting by our intonation and responses. In a quieter environment these responses are noticed more easily.

Adults will understand that young children can need longer processing time and they may wait for periods longer than is socially acceptable or sometimes feels comfortable. By waiting they give the child time to process and organise their thoughts and also show they are willing to wait for a response.

Language is considered and planned, valuable phrases and questions are shared, "I wonder if we are all thinking the same?" "what were you trying to find out about?" "who could help us with that?"

A shared vocabulary is important and supports the culture of the school:

Adults will introduce language that is specific to the school and 'new' to the young children who attend being clear that some complex words are effective and useful:

Acceptable/unacceptable behaviour That is not acceptable because.....

Reflection time: a shared group time when children stop and think together, recalling reflecting and 're-cognising'.

Gathering group: a space to come together and greet each other and think about the day, what is new or different in school, what the order of the morning or afternoon maybe and then to consider what the children may want to do first

Challenge: this is defined with children as something that is tricky and will allow us to develop new skills or knowledge but that we may not be able to do at first, we may have to practice

Co-construction: working together and beside each other to each contribute towards developing a skill, finding out something new problem solving.

Collaboration: many people's work and that by working together the work gets better/bigger etc, that we achieve something greater than the sum of its parts.

Resilience: what we do when things go wrong, sharing experiences with children of mistakes we might make. Model seeing problems as opportunities, smiling and saying 'oh well what can we do about that?'

Emotional literacy: saying and speaking feelings aloud, that makes me feel...Name and explain our emotions and link them to expressions and the value of looking at faces and listening to tones.

Risks: defined as safe and unsafe situations and the likelihood we may get hurt, worried etc

"Could something go wrong?". Children are asked to risk assess outdoor areas and classroom spaces for safety and add signs when equipment is slippery or wet.

Atelier: is an artists space, full of materials that maybe aesthetic or creative that can be used and explored intrinsically.

Encounters: the interactions children have when they meet...environment, resources, each other, adults, ideas and provocations. We also name our observation documents Encounters with Learning.

Language that relates to resources or interests are captured and shared across the team so everyone knows exactly how we might describe what we are finding out about. New vocabulary is explicitly referenced in planning so once again everyone can focus upon its use and introduction. For example when we explore crescendo in music the wider team will also use and consider the word.

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I have read and understood the communication policy and agree to follow this approach when working with children at Kenilworth/Whitnash Nursery School.

I know much of young children's communication is non-verbal and will observe to understand and then actively support the articulation of ideas and interests in my role beside the child.

I know the words I say and the way in which I listen can have a profound impact upon a young child and I agree to communicate in a considered and thoughtful way:

I will speak clearly and quietly to children, at their level and use appropriate and planned vocabulary, questions and phrases.

I will balance my use of voice with that of the children so that spaces and ideas are not dominated by the adult.

I will notice, value and actively listen to the children and will ensure there is time to do this and that 'conversation' can occur that is back and forth to extend understanding and deepen ideas.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Role: \_\_\_\_\_