

Belmont School's Total Communication



“Total Communication” is an approach which encourages the use of many different communication techniques to support someone’s understanding and use of language.

Examples of Total Communication are:

- Signing
- Gestures, body language and facial expression
- Symbols, photographs or objects of reference
- Music to aid transitions



The classes in Belmont are split into four **C&I Pathways**, where strategies are tailored to ensure that all pupils are provided with the right environment, tools, and support to reach their full communication potential.

At Belmont School we have a **Total Communication environment**, meaning all forms of communication are encouraged, supported and accepted. This is beneficial for anyone with speech, language and communication needs.

If you have any questions or would like further support, please contact Speech & Language Therapist.

MAKATON SIGNING



Makaton signing is embedded into all aspects of learning, play and development in many of our classes at Belmont, particularly in Pathways 0 and 1.

As part of the induction process, staff are introduced to our own Core Vocabulary signs. Select classes are trained in Level 1 Makaton.

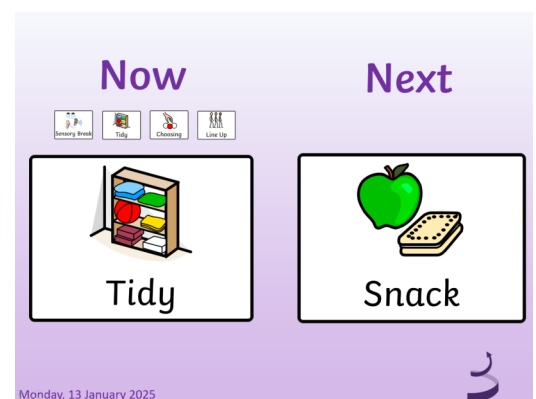
To further learning, six “Signs of the Week” are taught to all staff and pupils every week, via video and line drawings.

TRANSITIONS

Visuals are used to support transitions.

Daily timetables are consistently used throughout the day. All classes in Pathways 0, 1 and 2 also use a PowerPoint (right) to show what they are currently learning and what is happening next. Transition music is played as an additional prompt when it is time to change activity.

All staff wear a symbol lanyard to support verbal instructions.



Augmentative and Alternative Communication

AAC is a range of tools to help people who have difficulties with speech. It can come in many forms, such as paper-based boards, or high-tech systems.

Belmont School has a full time member of staff who links with the Speech and Language Therapist to create a Communication & Interaction Team. They support AAC within classrooms, liaise with external agencies and provide ongoing support to the wider school team.

Belmont additionally receives support from an external AAC company who provide comprehensive communication assessments along with the planning and delivery of specialist therapy programmes. Berry Therapy have led a number of training sessions across the whole school.



Consistency

A “Symbol Policy and Communication Friendly Environment” document helps to ensure the consistency of visuals across different classrooms and around the school site. This helps during the transition period to new classes in September.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND LESSON VISUALS

At Belmont, we have large communication boards placed in key areas around the school site, including; library, hygiene room and the primary greeting area. Staff model the use of these boards by pointing to symbols as they communicate with pupils. From this, pupils have been spontaneously using these board to express their wants and needs.

The visuals themselves also act as a reminder that we are a Total Communication school and we have an inclusive communication and learning environment.

In our high-needs classes communication boards are created for certain lessons. This supports pupils to fully understand and learn new vocabulary, as well as providing an opportunity for them to use these communication boards within the lesson themselves.



GRIDPLAYER



Key members of staff across the school have the high-tech communication app called 'Gridplayer' on their iPad, which can be used across the school day.

These staff members have received additional training from the C&I Team. Staff are also able to create their own Grid sets to assist with their current learning needs.

Our Pathway 0 and 1 classes have access to Gridplayer on their large class screen. These are beginning to be used to support communication and learning across the day.

