



The Grove Education Centre

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Policy

Adopted by The Grove	
Date	August 2017 Governing Council ratified 13/9/17
Review Date	
Policy/ Procedure Checked by date:	

The Grove Education Centre is committed to ensuring all students with complex communication needs (CCN) will have and use an Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) system that is functional and practical for their individualised needs within school, home and community environments.

Communication Bill of Rights

The Grove Education Centre AAC policy has been developed in accordance with the guidelines of the Communication Bill of Rights.

Introduction:

Communication Bill of Rights



I have the right:

- to be given real choices
- to say no, refuse and reject choices
- to ask for what I want
- to share my feelings
- to be heard and responded to (even if the answer is no)
- to ask for and get attention and interaction
- to have and use my speech system all the time
- ask and know about my schedule and world

SCHEDULE	
1.	bus
2.	reading
3.	math
4.	lunch
5.	recess
- to be taught how to communicate
- to have my speech system in working order and to have a back up
- to be a full and equal member of my community
- to be treated with respect and dignity
- to be spoken with, not about
- to be communicated with in a sensitive manner

From the National Joint Committee for the Communicative Needs of Persons with Severe Disabilities. (1992). for meeting the communication needs of persons with severe disabilities. *Asha*, 34(Suppl. 7), 2-3. adapted by K. A.

The Grove Education Centre is a DECD R-12 school for students with an intellectual disability.

Communication is the foundation of all learning and we are committed to providing communication opportunities and supports for students to experience success. This policy outlines the aims, AAC procedures and expectations for communication at The Grove Education Centre.

Background

The communication data collected at The Grove demonstrates that we have students communicating at a range of different levels. Our aim is for all students to become autonomous communicators. This means that they can communicate what they want to say, to whoever they want to say it, wherever they want to say it. Data about student communication is collected using the Communication Matrix (Rowland, 1996).

Students within the school may currently be:

- Receptive communicators. These are students where everyone in their environment needs to model the use of an AAC or language system to help them to develop both receptive and expressive language skills. These students are not currently using the system themselves;
- Expressive communicators. These are students who are using an AAC or language system themselves. They might use one or more words/symbols each time they communicate and may need co-construction from their communication partner to be successful. They continue to need modelling of their language system from everyone around them to continue to develop their receptive and expressive language skills.
- Autonomous communicators. These are students who can communicate whatever they want to say, to whoever they want to say it, wherever they want to say it. They may use speech, AAC or a combination of both.

Aims:

The Grove Education Centre aims to:

1. Adopt a multi-modal communication approach throughout the school where students have access to individual communication systems throughout the day.
2. Create and provide opportunities for real life communication that is embedded in the curriculum and across school environments. Enabling students to practice and use their communication to the best of their ability.
3. Support staff, parents and caregivers to work together to provide productive learning communities, which support the communication rights and individual needs of all students.



Comprehensive Communication at The Grove

The Grove Education Centre recognises that every individual has the right to communicate. * All staff at The Grove Education Centre receive extensive training in best practice in AAC and in being good communication partners, and an understanding that a comprehensive AAC system (e.g. Proloquo2Go or PODD) supports an individual to develop in the four areas of communicative competence.

The Participation Model (Beukelman & Mirenda, 2013) is the current model of best practice in AAC. This provides an overall framework of considerations associated with enabling people with complex communication needs to communicate as their peers do.

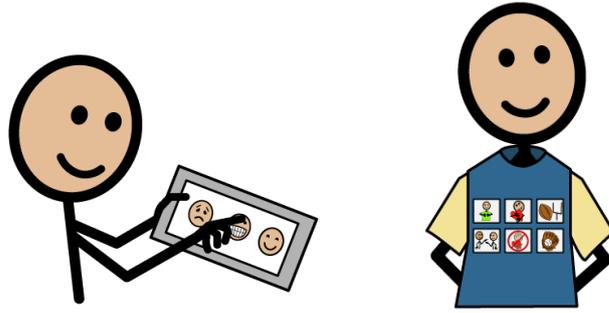
Working within the parameters of the Participation Model, we aim to support each individual to be the best communicator that they can with their current communication system. We also provide support for them to reach a higher level of communicative competence, including supporting a system that students will use in the future.

We recognise that there are many strategies good communication partners use. These include presuming competence and attributing meaning when interacting with emergent communicators. We also recognise that aided language stimulation throughout the day is an important technique and that a comprehensive AAC system is required for us to be able to do this throughout the school day.

Finally, we understand that all communication is multimodal and that all forms of communication are as valid as each other – this includes facial expression, natural gesture, signing, high and low tech aided AAC.

Beukelman, D., & Mirenda, P. (2013). *Augmentative and alternative communication: Supporting children and adults with complex communication needs* (4th ed.) Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

*(See Communication Bill of Rights, From the National Joint Committee for the Communicative Needs of Persons with Severe Disabilities. (1992). s for meeting the communication needs of persons with severe disabilities. ASHA, 34(Suppl. 7), 2–3.)



High Tech and Low Tech AAC at The Grove

The Grove Education Centre uses aided language input and output in all classrooms.

We believe that every individual with complex communication needs is entitled to both low and high tech AAC to give them a voice in all environments.

Many classrooms at The Grove use Proloquo2Go. Proloquo2Go is available as an iPad app. There are also some low tech resources available to support its use, such as the Core Board and posters. These are also in common use in the school.

We also model the use of PODD in many classrooms. PODD is available both as a low tech communication book and also as an iPad app.

It is important that each student (and staff member) has access to both low and high tech AAC for a range of reasons. For example, there are times in every day when an iPad might not be available for modelling. This could be due to lack of battery, the environment e.g. during a water play activity, or just because it is out of reach. The low tech boards ensure we still have AAC available at all times without having to worry about these factors. They also have the advantage of being wearable so they are with us at all times.

We also understand the importance of high tech as it produces voice output, enables access to features such as text-to-speech and offers more just-in-time AAC features that let us add vocabulary on the go.

Please note: The Grove recognises that there are a range of AAC options and that different individuals may require different options. We are happy to support any comprehensive AAC system recommended by a speech pathologist for an individual student.

AAC Responsibilities

The Grove aims for best practice in AAC implementation. Everyone involved with each student should be aware of the Dos and Don'ts of AAC (Farrall & Niemeijer, 2016)

DO's and DON'Ts of AAC

- | | |
|---|---|
| ✓ Do use the AAC system to talk yourself | ✗ Don't expect the AAC user to communicate without you modelling how |
| ✓ Do aim high | ✗ Don't demand prerequisite skills |
| ✓ Do use a well designed, comprehensive vocabulary e.g. core vocabulary or PODD | ✗ Don't provide an AAC system with only a handful of choices |
| ✓ Do provide enough wait time | ✗ Don't do all the talking |
| ✓ Do ask open ended questions | ✗ Don't ask questions the AAC user knows you already know the answer to |
| ✓ Do focus on key words when modelling | ✗ Don't think you need to always model grammatically complete sentences |
| ✓ Do respect multi-modal communication | ✗ Don't say "And now say it on your talker" |
| ✓ Do allow exploration and access to the whole vocabulary | ✗ Don't create custom pages for specific activities |
| ✓ Do make sure AAC is available all day, every day | ✗ Don't limit access to the AAC system |
| ✓ Do describe what you want to say using core words | ✗ Don't focus on adding lots of vocabulary |

Learn more: www.assistiveware.com/aac-do-dont



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Based on a presentation by Jane Farrall and David Niemeijer, May 2015