Emmbrook Junior School

Inclusion – Total Communication Base - Audiology Policy

Responsibility of: Pupil Outcomes, Parental Communication and Curriculum (POPC)
Date of Policy: July 2021
Date of Review: July 2023
Date of next review: July 2024

Mission Statement

We provide an inclusive, positive environment in which we nurture and empower our children to develop life-long learning skills. This enables them to grow into reflective, successful, well-rounded individuals in our global community.

TCB statement – We use the terms deaf/hearing impaired to refer to any child with a hearing loss, irrespective of cause or degree.

Aims

Staff at Emmbrook Total Communication Base strive to ensure that the audiological needs of our pupils are met appropriately via robust monitoring of their equipment.

We ensure maximum use of children's residual hearing to develop their spoken language, communication and learning.

We aim to provide an enhanced listening environment through acoustically treated bases and the use of the sound field systems throughout both schools.

We are committed to enabling our pupils to become effective managers of their own deafness. We aim to give them increasing independence, believing that developing an understanding of audiology early on will benefit children throughout their lives.

At Emmbrook Hearing Impaired Provision we work together in partnership with parents, school, hospital/clinic staff, Educational Audiologist, Speech and Language Therapists in regards to our children's audiological care.

Total Communication Base Objectives

- To ensure that optimum use is made of the children's amplification equipment.

- To ensure that all equipment is functioning correctly and to arrange/carry out repairs as necessary.
- To communicate closely with parents re the working of the pupil's equipment; ensuring that issues are reported swiftly to the hearing aid/cochlear implant hospital as appropriate.
- To advise and encourage parents in their understanding of the functions and benefits of the equipment.
- To carry out basic audiological and acoustic assessments.
- To provide an enhanced listening environment through the use of regularly serviced sound field systems across both schools.
- To promote access to the curriculum through the optimal use of the equipment throughout the school day.
- To continually review and improve the audiological provision and listening environment in both the Hearing-Impaired resource bases and schools via the HIRB Action Plan. (HIRB)
- To involve pupils in the daily checks of hearing aids and cochlear implants and to promote pupils developing self-care skills.
- To work closely with each child's audiology service (e.g. the Royal Berkshire Hospital/cochlear implant hospital/Berkshire Sensory Consortium's Educational Audiologist) to ensure that pupils are provided with appropriate amplification.
- To keep staff informed of audiological developments and research and enable all staff to use the equipment effectively.

Pupil Objectives

- To recognise the value of maintaining their equipment at school and at home, according to the pupil's age and stage of development.
- To be aware of the benefits of amplification for detecting and identifying sounds in the environment and for the pupil's receptive/expressive speech and language skills.
- To be aware of the benefit of the pupil's radio aid equipment as a means of providing a louder signal in background noise.
- To explain their needs to school staff in the mainstream classroom and report faults.

Provision of Amplification

Each child is provided with hearing aids or cochlear implants as appropriate by their hospital/audiology clinic/ Cochlear Implant Centres etc. The HIRB will work closely with the providers of each pupil's equipment to monitor the function and benefit of the equipment.
Sound field systems are provided in each classroom and in the school hall at both schools. The sound field systems are checked regularly by a specialist technician and batteries are replaced on a yearly basis.

Radio aid equipment is loaned via the Sensory Consortium Service. This can be made available for loan at home too. The schools are also supported by a local Educational Audiologist on a termly basis.

Staff will receive training about personal amplification including daily checks and troubleshooting, the use of Sound field and radio aid systems.

Mainstream staff and visitors will be made aware of the use of radio aid equipment and sound field systems and will be provided with basic training to enable them to use the technology correctly. They will be provided with deaf awareness and tips regarding communication with children who are deaf.

Monitoring

Pupil Records:

Audiology profiles include a note of all information on the child's equipment and include:

• A running record of the pupil giving details of age aided and any changes to pupil's hearing and subsequent changes to type of hearing aids/ cochlear implants to date

• The child's most recent audiogram

• Details of hearing aid/cochlear implant make, model, programmes, settings, serial numbers etc

• Details of radio aid make and the type of receivers

• Any modification made to the mould or elbow (e.g. type of mould: full, carved, skeleton, material used, type of tubing: standard or thick walled, libby horn, vent or damper)

Hearing Aid Review Appointments

The children have regular reviews of their hearing aids at their hospital/audiology clinic who monitor any changes in the pupil's hearing and adjust the settings of the hearing aid as appropriate. Children with cochlear implants attend their implant centre on a regular basis. Lists or review appointments are circulated by the hospitals or the cochlear implant.

Teachers of the Deaf ensure that:

• Parents are reminded to let the school know of the appointment

• Teachers of the Deaf are given the opportunity to attend review appointments

• Records are amended following hearing aid/ cochlear implant reviews

Systematic Checks of Equipment

Hearing Aids

Hearing aids are checked by the LSA or Teacher of the Deaf on a daily basis and records kept of these checks. Attenuators are used with high powered aids to enable checking at user volume setting for Health and Safety reasons to prevent the testers' hearing being affected.

Checks are made of the following:

• Casing and switches

• Elbow for cracks, debris or moisture

• Ear moulds and tubing for cracks, moisture, blockage and flexibility (plastic hardens with time)

• Tubing for brittleness or blockages

• Batteries working and inserted in the right way

• Cleanliness of the battery compartment and contacts

• Listening to the hearing aid using a stetoclip and attenuator to check sound quality

• Squeeze or shake casing whilst listening to check for intermittent faults

• Assess the sound quality using Ling sounds.

If having done this a problem is identified, the hospital audiology department will be informed as a matter of urgency.

Cochlear Implants

• Check the processor is using the programmes advised by the cochlear implant centre

• Check the batteries are the approved type. Check disposable batteries are not corroded and are in date, rechargeable batteries are charged. Rechargeable batteries lose their ability to charge over a

period of time and so need to be monitored for being replaced (as advised by the relevant implant centre)
• Check the batteries are fitted correctly
• Check that the battery contacts are clean and do not show any signs of rust
• Check that the leads/coil are not damaged
• Check the function of the microphone/ speech processor through the listening Earphones (if available)
• Assess the sound quality using Ling sounds.
• Check the transmission of the coil using a signal check device
If having done this a problem is identified, the cochlear implant centre will be informed as a matter of urgency.

Bone-anchored hearing aids (BAHA)

- Check that the microphone is working.
- Check the batteries are charged and correctly inserted.
- Listen to ensure that the sound quality is good (no distortion, crackling or intermittent sound).
- Check that the volume increases and decreases without distorting.
- Check the transducer is vibrating.

Combined Hearing Aid/ Cochlear Implant/ BAHA/ Radio Aid Check

- Check leads and connections
- Listen to radio aid alone
- Fix connecting lead onto hearing aid or cochlear implant and listen in
- Check integrity of system by speaking into transmitter at least 4 metres from
- the listener
- Encourage child to use the FM Toolkit descriptors to describe the sound quality.

Equipment
The Resource keeps a small supply of spares. Termly orders are made of audiological equipment to ensure the children are catered for. The children are encouraged to manage their own audiological equipment from an early age. For the younger children this means praising any attempts to change batteries or insert moulds without help. As children become older they are encouraged to take responsibility of their equipment e.g. charging their radio aid. Often this becomes part of their ISP targets.