



Communication Policy

Policy Statement

At Clare House Nursery, communication is at the heart of everything we do. It underpins our nurturing ethos, our relationships with children and families, and our commitment to providing high-quality early education and care. We believe that every interaction is an opportunity to build trust, develop language, promote wellbeing and inspire a lifelong love of learning.

We are committed to creating a warm, inclusive and respectful environment where every child, family and member of staff feels valued, listened to and understood. As early years educators, we recognise that the quality of our communication has a significant impact on children's emotional wellbeing, language development and learning. We continually develop our own communication skills through reflective practice, professional development and ongoing training.

Effective communication is embedded throughout every aspect of nursery life. Through high-quality interactions, sustained shared thinking and a communication-rich environment, we support children to develop the confidence, vocabulary and communication skills they need to express themselves, build positive relationships and thrive as lifelong learners.

Being an Effective Communicator

At Clare House Nursery, we recognise that effective communication is fundamental to children's learning, wellbeing and development. It is central to building secure relationships, supporting emotional wellbeing and enabling every child to feel valued, listened to and understood. We continually reflect on and develop our communication skills to ensure our interactions are purposeful, inclusive and responsive to the needs of every child, family and colleague.

Our Communication Principles

To support high-quality interactions, we will:

- Recognise that communication is a two-way process, valuing listening as much as speaking.
- Give children time to think and respond, allowing **at least 10 seconds** where appropriate.
- Position ourselves at the child's level to encourage meaningful interactions.
- Be sensitive to individual communication preferences, recognising that some children may not be comfortable with direct eye contact.
- Observe, wait and listen before responding, aiming to **listen and observe approximately 70% of the time and speak 30%**, allowing children to lead conversations and play.
- Mirror children's actions and interests, using comments rather than excessive questioning to extend learning.
- Avoid interrupting or finishing children's sentences, giving them time to express themselves independently.
- Ensure communication is meaningful, linked to children's interests and based on their first-hand experiences.
- Use gestures, signs, facial expressions, objects, photographs, symbols and visual prompts to support understanding and inclusion.
- Use positive language to guide behaviour and model respectful communication.

- Support children's emotional literacy by naming and discussing feelings and emotions.
- Plan opportunities for children to communicate through play, social interaction, music, stories and everyday experiences.
- We use comments more often than questions, responding to children's interests and shared experiences to encourage conversation, build confidence and extend language through meaningful interactions.
- Model respectful, warm and encouraging communication so that children develop confidence and understand that communication is enjoyable and valued.

These principles underpin every interaction at Clare House Nursery and help us create a communication-rich environment where every child can develop the confidence, language and communication skills needed to thrive.

Communication Within the Staff Team

At Clare House Nursery, we recognise that we are role models for children, families and one another. We are committed to maintaining a culture of open, honest and respectful communication, where everyone feels valued, listened to and supported.

We communicate professionally and courteously at all times, whether through face-to-face conversations, telephone calls, written records or electronic communication. We ensure that information is clear, accurate, confidential where appropriate, and shared in a timely manner to promote children's safety, wellbeing and learning.

We expect all communication to be respectful, inclusive and free from discrimination, prejudice or offensive language. Any inappropriate or unprofessional communication will be challenged in line with our Code of Conduct, Equality Policy and Whistleblowing Policy.

To ensure our practice continues to develop, staff regularly participate in professional development relating to communication, including:

- Inclusive Communication
- Every Child a Talker (ECAT)
- Speech, Language and Communication development
- Communication-friendly environments

Through reflective practice, supervision and ongoing training, we continually develop our communication skills to ensure every interaction supports positive relationships and the best possible outcomes for children and families.

Communication with Parents and Carers

At Clare House Nursery, we believe that parents and carers are a child's first and most important educators. We are committed to building open, honest and respectful partnerships, recognising that effective communication between home and nursery is essential to supporting children's wellbeing, learning and development.

We value the knowledge that parents have of their child and work collaboratively to ensure care and learning are consistent across both home and nursery. We recognise that every family is unique and take time to understand individual communication preferences, languages, cultures and family

circumstances. Where required, information can be translated or adapted to ensure it is accessible to all families.

Parents and carers are always welcomed into our nursery and are encouraged to speak with their child's key person or another member of staff whenever they have questions, concerns or information to share. We believe that regular communication promotes sustained shared thinking, strengthens relationships and enables us to provide the very best outcomes for every child.

We keep parents informed about their child's learning and development through a range of methods, including:

- Daily conversations and handovers.
- Planned parent meetings and informal discussions.
- Tapestry observations, photographs and learning updates.
- Focus Month reviews and personalised learning plans.
- The statutory Two-Year Progress Check.
- Telephone calls, emails or text messages where appropriate.

General information about nursery life is shared through:

- Our nursery website.
- Parent Portal updates and notices.
- Information displays within the nursery.
- Photographs and introductions to the staff team.
- Current Ofsted registration and insurance certificates.

We actively encourage parents to contribute to their child's learning journey by sharing achievements, interests and experiences from home. Working together enables us to provide meaningful learning experiences and supports continuity between home and nursery, helping every child to thrive.

Communication with Children

Communication is central to our practice as early years educators and underpins every aspect of children's learning, development and wellbeing. We recognise that every interaction is an opportunity to build relationships, extend language, promote thinking and support children's confidence. We adapt our communication to reflect each child's age, stage of development, individual needs and preferred method of communication.

Our daily routines and learning environments are carefully planned to maximise opportunities for communication throughout the day. We are particularly mindful during transition times, ensuring children feel secure through clear, consistent and supportive communication.

To support children's communication and language development, we:

- Model high-quality language and positive communication.
- Use actions, gestures, signs, visual prompts and objects of reference to support understanding.
- Encourage conversations through play, stories, songs and everyday experiences.
- Promote sustained shared thinking by listening carefully, commenting on children's play and extending their ideas.

- Create a communication-rich environment where every child feels confident to express themselves.
- Recognise and value all forms of communication, including verbal and non-verbal communication.

We monitor and celebrate each child's communication and language development through ongoing observation and assessment using:

- Practitioner observations.
- Our curriculum.
- Birth to 5 Matters.
- Development Matters.
- The EYFS Educational Programmes.
- The Statutory Two-Year Progress Check.
- Focus Month assessments and six-monthly reviews.
- Every Child a Talker (ECAT) monitoring tools.
- Home and Preschool Communication Profiles, where appropriate.

This ongoing assessment enables us to identify children's strengths, celebrate progress and plan personalised experiences that support every child to become a confident communicator.

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

At Clare House Nursery, we celebrate the rich cultural and linguistic diversity of our families and recognise that a child's home language is an important part of their identity, learning and wellbeing. We understand that children learning English as an additional language develop at different rates and that acquiring a second language is a gradual process.

We encourage parents and carers to continue using their home language, as a strong foundation in a child's first language supports the development of English and promotes confidence in communication.

To support children with English as an Additional Language, we will:

- Work closely with parents to understand each child's communication skills, interests and abilities in their home language.
- Provide a language-rich environment with meaningful opportunities for speaking, listening and social interaction.
- Use gestures, signs, visual supports, photographs, objects and symbols to aid understanding and communication.
- Value and celebrate children's home languages and cultures within the nursery environment.
- Adapt our communication to meet each child's stage of language development, allowing time for understanding and response.
- Access translation and interpreting services where required to ensure information is accessible to families.
- Work in partnership with external professionals and support services, where appropriate, to ensure every child receives the support they need.
- Use a range of communication resources, including Talking Pens and familiar books from home, to strengthen the link between home and nursery, embed familiar stories, extend vocabulary and promote sustained shared thinking with children and their families.

We recognise that every child follows their own unique language-learning journey and are committed to providing an inclusive environment where all children feel confident, valued and able to communicate successfully.

Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)

At Clare House Nursery, we recognise that every child develops communication skills at their own pace. Some children may require additional time, patience and support to understand or express themselves, and we are committed to identifying and responding to these needs as early as possible.

Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) may affect a child's ability to understand language (receptive communication), express themselves (expressive communication), or participate in conversations and social interactions. Children may:

- Have speech that is difficult to understand.
- Find it difficult to use words, sentences or express their thoughts.
- Have difficulty understanding spoken language or following instructions.
- Find it challenging to listen, take turns or engage in conversations.
- Have reduced attention and listening skills.
- Present with a combination of speech, language and communication needs alongside other identified needs or disabilities.

Communication and Language is a **Prime Area** of learning within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), and we recognise that strong communication skills underpin all aspects of children's learning, wellbeing and development. Where children require additional support, communication will form an integral part of their personalised planning and next steps.

Practitioners carry out ongoing observations to identify children who may benefit from additional support. Children's progress is monitored using a range of assessment tools, including:

- Practitioner observations.
- Birth to 5 Matters.
- Development Matters.
- Every Child a Talker (ECAT) monitoring tools.
- Communication Profiles.
- Clare House Curriculum Framework and developmental outcomes.

Where additional needs are identified, we work closely with parents and, where appropriate, other professionals, including Speech and Language Therapists, the Area SENCO and other specialist services. Individual support strategies are planned and reviewed regularly and may include one-to-one, small group or whole-group communication activities, ensuring every child is supported to reach their full potential.

Our practitioners are trained in a range of evidence-informed communication strategies and continually develop their knowledge through professional development, enabling us to provide high-quality, inclusive support for every child.

Inclusive Communication

At Clare House Nursery, we believe that every child has the right to communicate and to be listened to. We recognise that communication is much more than spoken language and that children communicate in many different ways before, during and beyond the development of speech.

We value and respond to all forms of communication, including:

- Facial expressions and eye gaze.
- Body language and movement.
- Gestures, pointing and signing.
- Vocalisations and spoken language.
- Behaviour as a form of communication.
- Objects of reference, photographs, symbols and visual supports.

Our staff are trained in **Inclusive Communication** and use signs, gestures, visual supports and other communication aids alongside spoken language to promote understanding, encourage participation and support language development. These strategies benefit all children and are embedded throughout our daily practice.

For some children, signs, symbols, photographs, communication boards or other visual communication methods may become their main way of communicating. We work closely with families and other professionals to ensure every child can communicate their choices, thoughts, feelings and needs with confidence and participate fully in nursery life.

We recognise that the environment plays a vital role in supporting communication. Our learning spaces are carefully organised to encourage conversations, social interaction and sustained shared thinking. We provide a wide range of communication resources, including photographs, symbols, visual timetables, Talking Pens, familiar books and objects of reference to support children's understanding and strengthen the link between home and nursery.

To ensure our provision remains effective, we regularly undertake **Communication Environment Audits** and use children's communication and language outcomes to evaluate and continually improve our practice, ensuring every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Communication with Professionals

We work in partnership with a wide range of professionals to ensure children receive the best possible support. This may include Health Visitors, the Inclusion Officer, Speech and Language Therapists, Portage, Educational Psychologists and other health and education professionals, where appropriate.

Effective communication between professionals, parents and nursery staff enables us to identify children's needs early, plan personalised support and promote the best possible outcomes. Information is shared with parental consent and in accordance with our Confidentiality, GDPR and Information Sharing Policies, ensuring that all personal information is managed securely and professionally.

Communication with the Wider Community

Clare House Nursery is committed to building positive relationships within our local community. We welcome enquiries from prospective families, professionals and members of the wider community and are proud to share information about our nursery, our ethos and the high-quality care and education we provide.

Information about Clare House Nursery, including our curriculum, policies, news and upcoming events, is available on our website:

www.clarehouse.org.uk

We also work in partnership with local schools, health professionals, training providers and community organisations to promote positive outcomes for children and families. By maintaining strong community links, we help children develop a sense of belonging and strengthen the support available to our families.

