



# Royal Cross Primary School

Lancashire's school for deaf children

<b>Policy Title:</b>	Audiology Policy
<b>Date of Issue:</b>	15/03/2023
<b>Date of Review:</b>	Spring Term 2024
<b>Author and Role:</b>	Lisa Hughes, QTOD and Audiology Coordinator
<b>Ratified by:</b>	Governors Policy Committee
<b>Responsible Signatory:</b>	Clive Gregory
<b>Date of signature:</b>	Signature removed for GDPR purposes.
<b>Details:</b>	This Policy: details colleagues' responsibilities for audiology and sets out school's procedures for maintaining the best possible access to high quality sound for all our pupils no matter the hearing loss or communication system.
<b>Cross reference:</b>	Single Equalities Policy SEN Procedure Single Equalities Information Report Teaching & Learning Policy

## EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Royal Cross School is committed to the fair treatment of all in line with the Equality Act 2010. An equality impact assessment has been completed on this policy to ensure that it can be implemented consistently regardless of any protected characteristics and all will be treated with dignity and respect.

## POLICY REVIEW

To ensure that this policy is relevant and up to date, comments and suggestions for additions or amendments are sought from users of this document. To contribute towards the process of review, please contact the author of the policy.

## About Audiology for deaf children

In the UK babies are screened for hearing impairment at birth. Those children are referred to Audiology services for assessment and issue of hearing aids. Some children are assessed to see if cochlear implantation would be more appropriate. For all children there are local multi-disciplinary teams who work to optimise the child’s language and communication skills, in line with parental wishes and the child needs.

Regular assessment and monitoring of audiological needs is an essential component in the overall provision for deaf children. Given the ever-changing needs of pupils in an educational setting and the development of new technologies, it is important that audiological assessment is an integral part of educational provision. At Royal Cross School, as part of our policy of Child-Centred Communication, we strive to ensure that the audiological needs of our pupils are met promptly and appropriately.

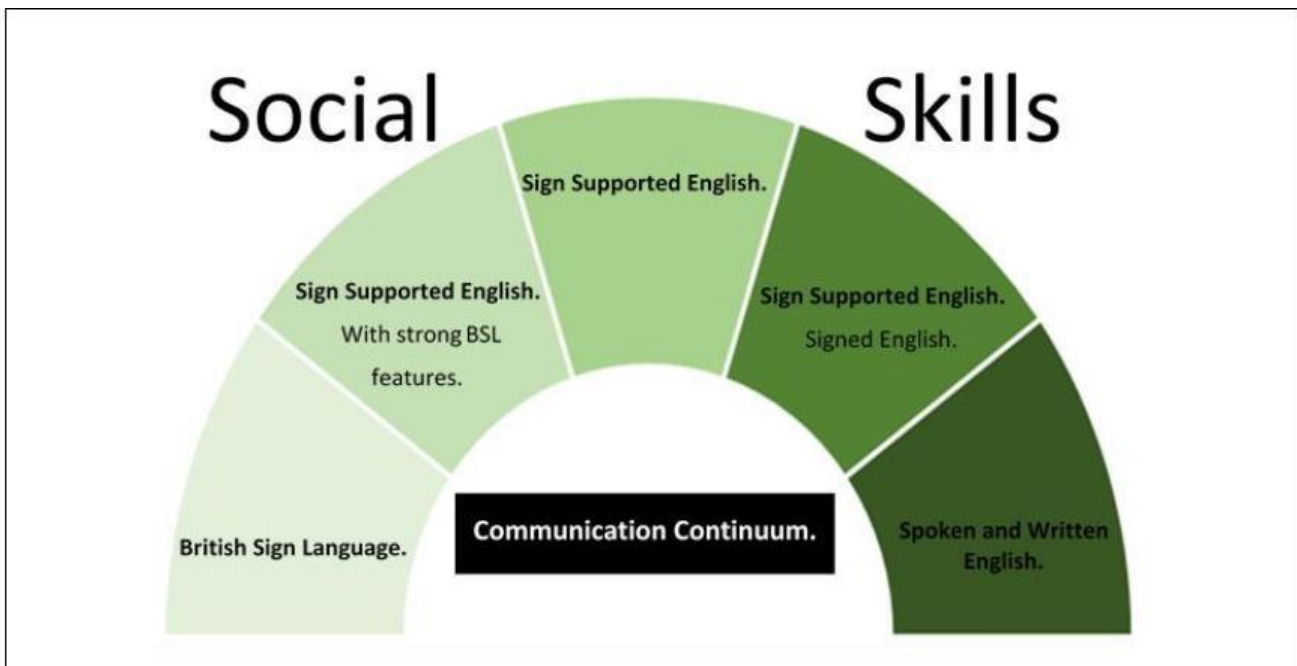
We recognise that the benefits of amplification vary from pupil to pupil. This being the case, we regularly review the audiological, speech and language and communication support provided for each pupil. In order to do this, we operate a multi-disciplinary approach to meeting pupils’ needs, working alongside the internal and external agencies involved with individual pupils.

Audiological provision for pupils at Royal Cross School is delivered on an individual basis. Each child’s needs are different, and audiology is provided in a variety of ways.

Throughout this document the terms “deaf” and “deafness” are used to denote all types and degrees of hearing loss.

## Introduction

We look at communication in terms of a continuum. Children attending Royal Cross School develop using Sign Supported English (SSE) & British Sign Language (BSL).



The development of BSL and spoken/written English are equally valued and respected. This child-centred approach to communication means that all forms of communication are regarded as equally valid and valued

We acknowledge that deafness has a marked impact on children's ability to listen and the development of their spoken language skills. Many deaf children have the potential to develop and use their residual hearing through the use of amplification i.e. hearing aids and cochlear implants (CI) and the wide range of technological developments that support these amplification systems.

At Royal Cross School, we recognise the importance of supporting the use of residual hearing and the importance of the correct audiological management of equipment to ensure that optimal listening experiences are achieved for all our deaf children.

This policy contains shared aims and objectives for the children attending Royal Cross School. It is recognised that the daily management of pupils' audiological needs will vary in response to the age and individual needs of each pupil.

### **School Objectives:**

- To ensure that all pupils' amplification systems are in good working order.
- To ensure that all radio aid systems and/ or Sound field systems are correctly maintained and used appropriately.
- To ensure that using amplification is encouraged and seen positively throughout the school.
- To work with each child's audiology service to ensure that pupils are provided with appropriate amplification and to liaise where needed with the Education Audiologist.
- To support staff, parents and other agencies to work together to ensure that amplification is used consistently.
- To ensure that audiological training for all staff is updated.
- To keep abreast of audiological developments and research and implement them in the school when they will be of benefit to the pupils or staff.
- To involve staff and pupils in the daily checks of hearing aids and cochlear implants and to promote pupils developing independent self-care skills.
- To develop pupils' understanding of their own deafness and to encourage their self-advocacy.
- To monitor ear mould condition closely and to contact parents when replacements are needed.
- To continually review and improve the audiological provision in the school.
- To raise pupil awareness of
  - The importance of audiological assessment and monitoring.
  - The benefits of amplification for detecting and identifying sounds in the environment and for their speech and language perception and production.
  - The benefits of radio aids, Sound field systems and other assistive technology.

### **Pupil Objectives:**

- To recognise the value of wearing their personal amplification.
- To develop a positive attitude towards developing the use of their residual hearing.
- To take responsibility for the maintenance of their audiological equipment as is appropriate for their age and stage of development.

### **Provision of Amplification:**

While a pupil is at Royal Cross School it remains the responsibility of their local health trust to provide appropriate hearing aids or cochlear implant (CI). Particularly in the case of CI's, this may be contracted out to a third party. Royal Cross School will work closely with the provider and professional colleagues to monitor the function and benefit of the equipment.

In addition, At Royal Cross, there is a Sound field System in the school hall and in each classroom. Radio aid systems are obtained where appropriate through discussion with the Sensory Support Teams of the LA or through the school budget. Royal Cross School's Policy on Radio Aids is an appendix to this Policy Document.

### **Consistent use of amplification**

It is known that maximum benefit from amplification will only be achieved if it is used consistently and if pupils are given opportunities and support to develop their auditory experience. Staff adopt a positive attitude to the appropriate prescription of hearing aids and cochlear implants to pupils and good role models exist throughout the school.

### **Managing the amplification needs of pupils at Royal Cross**

- Staff monitor the use of hearing aids and cochlear implants daily. If used, radio aids are also checked daily to ensure that they are working optimally to provide each child with the best possible listening experience.
- An updated list of amplification users and their provided technology is held in the class Audiology File.
- Hearing aids will be tested electro-acoustically half termly (6 x per year) by the audiology coordinator.
- If a hearing aid /CI is in need of repair, parents will be informed as soon as possible by telephone, Class Dojo or text.
- Ear mould condition is monitored regularly by staff. Where new ear moulds are needed, parents will be informed.
- Where appropriate, radio aids should be available for pupils' use in both school and other working environments i.e. on school trips and in other settings.
- All staff will receive training in the use of Sound field and radio aids. Staff will be regularly updated to any changes in technology. Visitors will be made aware of the use of radio aids and Sound field Systems and will be provided with basic training to enable them to use the

technology correctly.

- The use of hearing aids and amplification will be discussed at least annually, usually at the Educational Health and Care Plan Review meeting. This is the appropriate time to discuss any change in expectations for hearing aid usage. It is unsatisfactory for change of use to be allowed as a result of 'slippage' or 'pupil whim' without discussion of the implications with the pupil and the adults who care for them.

### **Routine checking and care of audiological equipment**

A system of daily checks by staff responsible for each teaching group has been developed and forms the basis for monitoring hearing aid use and condition in the school.

The hearing aid checks involves assessing mould and tubing condition, conducting a listening check and recording whether the pupil is wearing the aid. The details for cochlear implant wearers are personalised on their needs and the type of speech processor being used.

Each teaching room and care area has been provided with a box of equipment and materials to facilitate the day-to-day care of hearing aids. Training has been provided for existing staff and is available as part of induction for new staff.

### **Class Resources**

- Class Audiology Files
- Class packs - audiology equipment for maintenance of hearing aids & cochlear implants
- Sound field Systems in use in school hall and classrooms
- Radio aids provided by school / LA
- Batteries provided by parents from home
- Visual resources to support the independent management of audiological equipment
- Auricle HIT test box stored centrally

### **Hearing aids for repair**

If a hearing aid is in need of repair it is returned to parents in a named sealed envelope by end of day. Parents will be informed by Class Dojo, phone, text or e-mail as appropriate. Details will also be entered in the pupil's audiology file.

### **Speech processors for repair**

If a speech processor or component is in need of repair or replacement it is returned to parents in a named sealed envelope by end of day. Parents will be informed by Class Dojo, phone, text or email as appropriate. Details will also be entered in the pupil's audiology file.

### **Ear moulds**

Ear mould condition is monitored regularly by staff. Whenever necessary, parents are signposted to their local audiology clinic for new impressions.

This should happen within a week of the need becoming apparent. From the clinic, impressions are sent to a paediatric ear mould service and are normally available for the pupil within 14 working days. Class staff maintain a record of when new moulds were fitted in the audiology file.

From time to time, alternative mould types may be used to improve user comfort, prevent allergic reactions or to improve acoustic performance.

### **Monitoring**

The school has a designated Audiology Lead who will monitor audiology files and support teachers with any difficulties that may arise. Teachers and the Audiology Lead should follow the agreed objectives for the management of amplification equipment.

### **Role of the Audiology Co-ordinator**

- To maintain a good stock of 'spares' for all equipment.
- To maintain good communication with the paediatric audiological services.
- To maintain staff training/professional development
- To conduct electro-acoustic checks 6x per year.

### **Staff CPD**

Through their membership of professional organisations and Continuing Professional Development, staff will continue to develop their audiological knowledge and expertise.

Senior management, in conjunction with the Audiology Lead will identify whole school training needs and facilitate these within the school's staff training programme.

## Appendix A

<b>Policy Title:</b>	Radio Aid Policy
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## Radio Aid Policy

'Every deaf child should be considered as a potential candidate for provision with a personal radio aid....'

*QS1 (Quality Standards for the use of personal radio aids, National Deaf Children's Society 2017).*

Royal Cross School aims to meet QS1 through effective management of the specialist equipment budget which takes account of the available resources.

Radio Aids are purchased by school or provided by the Local Authority and issued to individual named pupils for use in school. Currently, most of the equipment in use in school is by Roger Touch.

Radio Aids are expensive pieces of equipment it is therefore essential that the equipment is looked after and kept safely by the school and the family if used at home.

Under the Equality Act 2010, local authorities and education settings have a duty to 'make reasonable adjustments' to ensure that deaf children are not disadvantaged. There is a specific duty to provide 'auxiliary aids' when they are needed. A Radio Aid is an example of an 'auxiliary aid'.

## Pre-school children

- Radio aids are issued by the Service following discussion with the family, Teacher of the Deaf (QToD), health professionals and the Send Service. The timing of the issue of the equipment will be led by these discussions and will be different for each child.
- All children under 5 are fitted with integrated, tamperproof receivers in line with health and safety guidance issued by the NHS National Patient Safety Alert, December 2019 so that the younger child is unable to access the batteries in the hearing aids.
- The Teacher of the Deaf will support the management of the Radio Aid at home and work with parents to develop their knowledge and expertise in using the equipment effectively, ensuring that it is working optimally.
- If the equipment is no longer working or a fault is identified, it will be sent off for repair by the Service. A temporary replacement, if available, may be given.
- For children who have cochlear implants the decision and timing of the issue of a radio aid will be determined in collaboration with the family and the Cochlear Implant Centre.
- In pre-school educational settings, care is taken to assess if the use of a Radio Aid is appropriate to the activity being undertaken. This is assessed alongside the immediate listening / acoustic environmental conditions that the child is working in.



## School-aged pupils

- In school all pupils use hearing aid technology in line with their individual audiological needs. The management of these devices is outlined in the school's Audiology Policy.
- Pupils who can benefit from a Radio Aid will be able to access Radio Aid systems within school.
- School staff will ensure that all Radio Aid equipment is well-managed and that risk of losing the Radio Aid or receivers is low and the need for replacing the equipment should not arise.
- School staff are asked to ensure they have a procedure for keeping the equipment safe in class and that the young person is able to access their equipment easily at the beginning of the day and are able to charge it at night.
- In the event of a piece of equipment no longer working, the Teacher of the Deaf will check and identify any faults and if necessary will arrange for the system to be sent for repair. This may mean that the pupil is without their equipment for a short period of time. A temporary replacement, if available, may be given.

## Balancing and verifying educational amplification

'The personal radio aid must be set up with the child's individual hearing aids or implants to ensure that the radio signal provides the desired advantage....'

*QS3 (Quality Standards for the use of personal radio aids, National Deaf Children's Society 2017).*

'The child's listening response must be checked with the complete system in place ...'

*QS4 (Quality Standards for the use of personal radio aids, National Deaf Children's Society 2017).*

Royal Cross School aims to meet QS3 through effective management of the specialist resources and expertise available within school and externally through the Local Authority specialist services.

- The Teacher of the Deaf and/or the LA specialist will set up the radio aid and balance the additional equipment to the personal amplification (hearing aids or cochlear implants)
- The radio aid will routinely be verified in the test box by the visiting LA specialist or a Qualified Teacher of the Deaf, at intervals recommended in the Good Practice Guide for Radio Aids
- Whenever possible, Radio Aids will be objectively verified once per year using the SPiN Procedure (Speech in Noise) and subjectively via user feedback.

## References

- Quality Standards for the use of personal radio aids, National Deaf Children's Society 2017 [www.ndcs.org.uk](http://www.ndcs.org.uk)
- Good Practice Guide for Radio Aids [www.fmworkinggroup.org.uk](http://www.fmworkinggroup.org.uk)
- National Patient Safety Alert
- NatPSA/2019/003/NHSPS