



Policy/Procedure Name:	SMT088		
Policy/Procedure Number:	School Literacy Policy		
Date of Approval:	7 <sup>th</sup> May 2023		
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Revised Date:	January 2025		
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Policy/Procedure Author:	Head of School		
Policy/Procedure Owner:	Principal		
Management Committee Approved By:	SMT		
Governor /Trustee Committee Approved By (where appropriate):	NA		
For Action By:	All School Staff		
For Information to:	All Staff Parents		
Approval requested to upload on the Treloar's Website:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> (tick if requested)		
Who is carrying out EIA? <small>(see details of EIA in appendix)</small>	Lj Woodcroft	Date of EIA?	31 <sup>st</sup> Jan 2025

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## **1. Wider curriculum**

Literacy is essential for the development of young people as individuals to enable them to function with independence as members of society, both now and in the future. Literacy is a tool and medium for effective learning in other curriculum areas taught within the school.

At Treloar School we do not accept commonly recognised limitations. We break down barriers through our exemplary multi-disciplinary holistic approach to education and develop personalised and bespoke curriculums, which enables students to achieve their best and meet their full capabilities.

Our multidisciplinary holistic approach ensures that students develop literacy skills at their own level. This includes, for some, developing functional communication strategies through bespoke interventions.

## **2. Treloar's students**

To become fluent at reading and writing, student need experience, knowledge and ability to understand and use spoken language, together with involvement and knowledge of the world around them. Acquiring literacy skills for many of our students is a much more complex and problematic process than for many typically developing students.

For some students, damage to the brain which has affected physical skills may only be limited to areas associated with movement and there may be no other impairments. For some language difficulties are due to the damage on the language areas of the brain, or due to poor control over speech organs or muscles. Students with speech difficulties are at a disadvantage when learning literacy skills because it is through continuous use and practice that awareness develops. Research demonstrates the strong link between a student's difficulties in spoken language and their difficulties in learning to read and write.

Many of the prerequisite skills (visuo-motor, auditory, motor, phonological and language) may be significantly delayed, deficient or disordered, and students will require structured, individual teaching programmes to maximise and further develop the abilities they have. For some students it is counterproductive to expect significant progress in the development of some / all of their literacy skills. Our highly specialist staff continue to monitor students' progress and demonstrate sensitivity to limitations and ensure that student self-esteem and dignity is maintained.

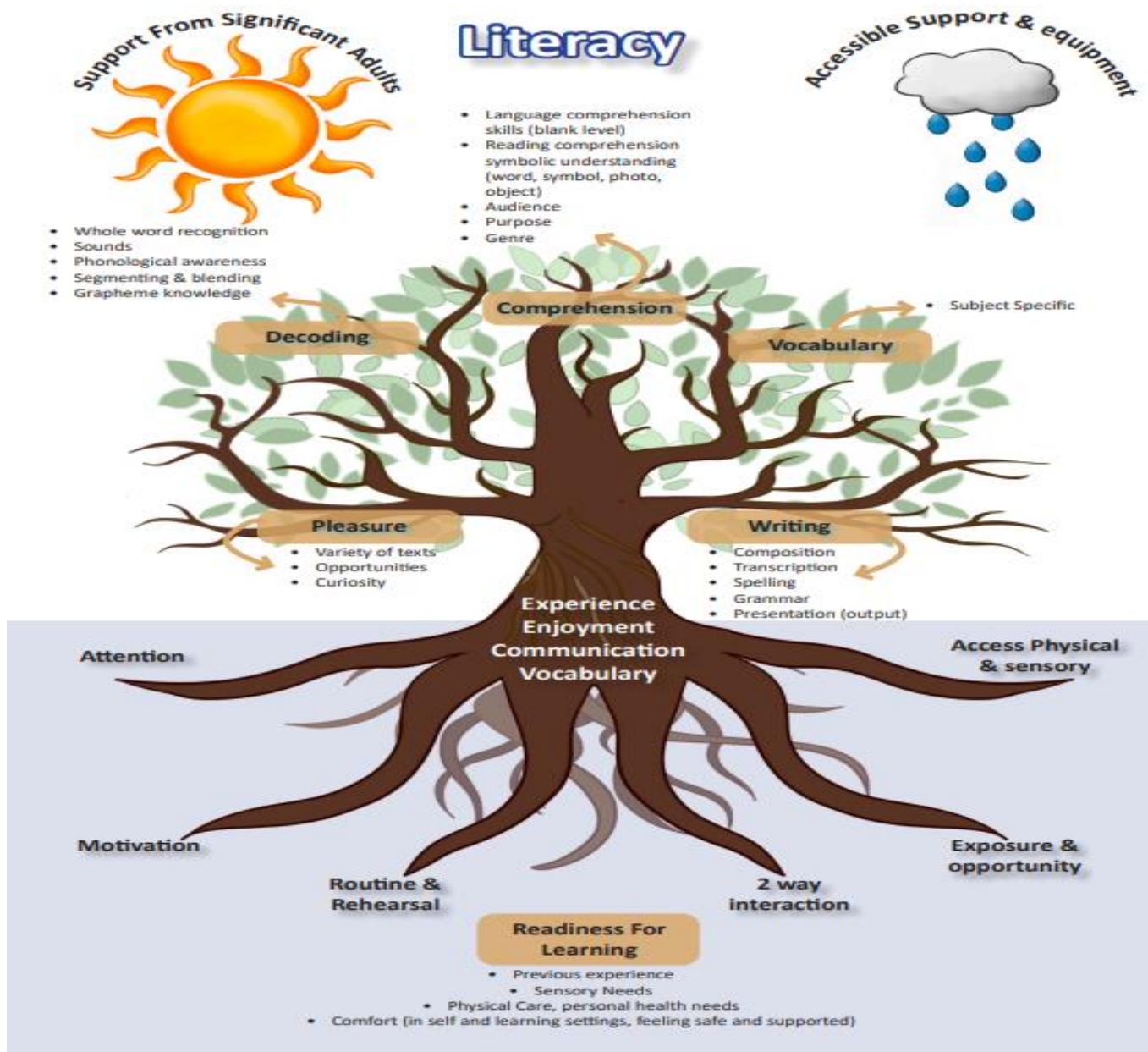
## **3. Aims**

Treloar School aims for students to:

- develop strategies to communicate effectively
- develop the ability to read, understand and respond to all types of written communications through carefully planned, personalised and meaningful learning opportunities across the curriculum
- communicate, read and write with increasing confidence, fluency and understanding
- make use of these skills and be empowered to communicate and develop their thoughts, ideas, feelings and identity and connect themselves with the world they live in
- develop their ever-growing vocabulary, through an interest in words and their meaning
- Be equipped with a command of their Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) or verbally to acquire a wide vocabulary.
- Be encouraged to develop a love of reading and to read for enjoyment
- Experience a range of text/media types and genres, across a range of contexts, to develop their understanding
- Learn to write and respond to a variety of styles and genres and be able to apply characteristic features of texts in their own work
- be able to use a full range of reading cues, to monitor their reading and correct their mistakes
- have the opportunity to develop their creativity and imagination

#### 4. Research and Development

Our Literacy policy is grounded in the extensive work undertaken on the development of our Treloar's Literacy Tree in identifying the ingredients for a strong dynamic, broad and knowledge-based curriculum whilst celebrating the importance of multi-disciplinary working with Speech and Language Therapists who shape and inform interventions and Communication and interaction aids for our students. The framework has been designed and continues to be reviewed by our own English working party alongside an English specialist from the University of Sussex.



## 5. Literacy Overview

The Literacy overview is our termly planning map. It is used as a 'vehicle' to develop the knowledge and skills of each branch of our Literacy Tree. The overview is based upon national frameworks and specialised curriculum models (IMPACTS, Early Years Foundation Stage and National Curriculum). It has been created to ensure continuity and progression and ensures provision is related to attainment, not age and reflective of over 70% of students working below [Pre-key stage 2 standards - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

The structure of the overview enables students to develop knowledge of the language they need to meet their needs and keep them safe in life beyond Treloar's. Our students will rely on the physical support of others for the rest of their lives and will need to offer information, explain, instruct, persuade and recount events to ensure their needs are met. The structure provides the practice, over learning and the generalisation that many students need.

Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
<b>Information</b>	<b>Narrative</b>	<b>Instruction</b>	<b>Recount</b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Persuasion</b>
To classify and / or describe	To inform, educate or entertain	To instruct someone on how to do something	To retell a series of events / steps in a simple procedure	To explain how or why something occurs	To persuade by arguing one side of an issue To discuss one or more sides to an issue

## 6. Organisation

When timetabling, priority is given to developing clear communication methods and fostering increasing independence and knowledge in the use of language through joint working with education and therapy teams. Specialist materials, resources, and assistive technology devices are used to deliver the teaching programme (English lessons, SLT sessions and reading sessions). The teaching approach is diagnostic and adaptable, considering each student's unique difficulties and abilities whilst also reflecting students' age, ability, interests, and maturity.

Termly curriculum documents are shared with students and their families capturing what they will be learning in English, Why and how will they know they have made progress. Individual programmes are regularly reviewed internally, when necessary, input from an Educational Psychologist will be sought.

## 7. Picture Communication Symbols

Symbols are used for different reasons and purposes across the school:

- For many of our students, symbols are the way they can access information, express their thoughts, needs and opinions and make sense of the world around them.
- Many students benefit from the visual nature of symbols to support their literacy and understanding. Symbols can help to support students with communication, independence and participation, literacy and learning, creativity and self-expression, and access to information.
- Using symbols to support the meaning of text providing a visual representation of the word.

A Core Symbol Assessment is used to show progress and development of skills.

## 8. English strands (Reading, Writing, Speaking & Listening) linked to National Curriculum

English strands are embedded into all student's curriculum programmes. For students working up to and including Year 6 age related expectation the strands are interwoven. Developing Communication Skills is central to the Curriculum. For many students speaking/communicating is reading and writing, particularly for AAC users. This approach is under annual review to ensure we respond to need whilst responding to changes in research and legislation.

## 8.1 Speaking & Listening

Our students communicate in different ways some use their voice, AAC strategies or gesture. Letter, picture boards or sophisticated computer-based systems may help a student to communicate effectively. SLT undertake regular formalised assessments of students. Through our Multi-Disciplinary Teams, incremental steps are agreed for each student to develop their communication skills; help them to express their own ideas as clearly and as confidently as they can in a safe and supportive environment.

All staff in our school model the use of language, appropriate to the assessed level of vocabulary and understanding for each student and in line with SLT targets. Using the communication and language system that the student is using themselves e.g. modelling sentence construction with symbol-based vocabulary grids.

Students will experience communication opportunities in a range of settings and be exposed to both formal and informal use of language (e.g. public speaking versus text speaking) and via discussion, debating, oral recitation of poetry, plays, singing and signing and exploring musicals and drama. Key texts, anthologies of poetry and plays will be identified for each year group and topic to ensure progression, interest and challenge.

Learning activities develop:

- **Expressive language** which encompasses the symbols, words, sentences and phrases to convey meaning, including tone, volume, pauses and inflections: vocabulary, structure, meaning and use of language
- **Receptive language** which is the understanding of language expressed by others. Includes literal and non-literal meaning.
- **Functional communication** which includes the methods, systems and strategies used to successfully and effectively engage in communication exchange

## 8.2 Reading

The development of reading skills is a priority across all phases with every student seen as a reader. From inferring meaning from multi-sensory cues, images and symbols to reading fluently both formal and informal texts. Students will access materials in a variety of multisensory, visual, print and digital formats. E.g. Book creator, RNIB Reader for iPad, large print, AAC devices.

The education and therapy team have developed a bespoke analysis tool to review students reading which groups students into 3 categories; Daily Emergent, Combined or Daily Conventional readers. The framework gives suggested direction of how to further support development. (See diagram on next page)

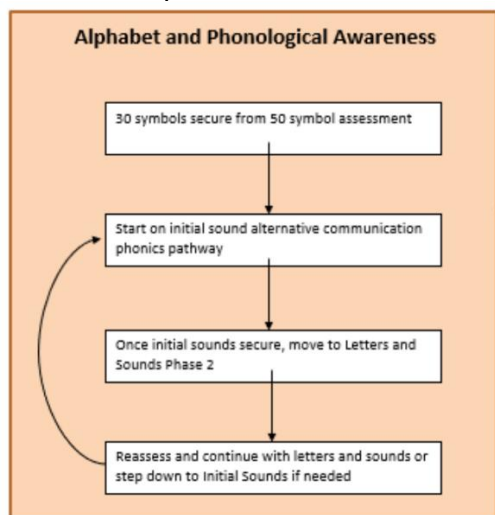
The literacy tree demonstrates how fluency is embedded within our entire literacy curriculum. This begins with the roots of our tree in particular 'Routines and rehearsal' to expose students to language that they will revisit time and time again to develop 'automaticity' (Rasinski, 2014). Students are given opportunities to understand the contribution reading can have in developing their knowledge and increasing the impact on their wellbeing. We aim to create readers who choose to read for pleasure or purpose.

### Decoding

The need for decoding skills increases for students with learning difficulties and even more for those who use AAC devices. For students with more complex AAC systems decoding skills enable them to find a word in their device demonstrating awareness of connections between words and themes which can develop to connection between phonemes and their corresponding graphemes.

At Treloar's, we strive for students to develop alphabet and phonological awareness. Phonological awareness is a component of language development and word recognition which requires further explicit teaching and direction for those students who have existing Speech, Language and Communication Needs. Phonics is taught in context as well as through systematic structured teaching. Promoting phonological

awareness, linking with letters and understanding print gives a comprehensive and accessible environment for the development of these skills.



(See enlarged image on the next page)

Our Initial Sound Programme for AAC users which for some becomes the foundations of the Letters and Sounds.

Phonic sessions are taught either in 1:1 or class groups. Students receive many opportunities to apply their skills in other learning. The pace of the programme is personalised to suit the students' needs and assessments are completed to identify interventions needed to support access. As a student gets older this assessment is reviewed to see if they are still progressing through learning phonics and if it is still appropriate.

Our reading scheme matches the student's phonics level to enable them to successfully decode words. Phonics is only one of the strategies that student can use to help decode words. It is an important strategy, but students should also be aware of other approaches they could use, including recognition of whole words or chunks of words; using pictures or other contextual cues etc.

### Text selection

All subjects engage students in reading for meaning, pleasure and understanding and have access to age appropriate and disability aware resources.

#### Does the book...

- Have a strong narrative that will sustain multiple readings?
- Extend student's vocabulary?
- Have illustrations which are engaging and reflect students from all backgrounds and cultures?
- Help students connect with who they are?
- Help students to understand the lives of people whose experiences and perspectives may be different from their own?
- Elicit a strong response / emotion – curiosity, laughter, anger, excitement, empathy?

*"We know that emotional engagement is the tipping point between leaping into the reading life or remaining in a studenthood bog where reading is endured only as a means to other ends". Maryanne Wolf*

Our work with English specialist from Sussex University has enhanced the creative approach to reading. Teachers within key stages collaborate with Treloar's librarian to identify a core set of texts for termly topics that meet each class need. Texts are reviewed regularly, collated and shared across key stages as well as with parents and carers.

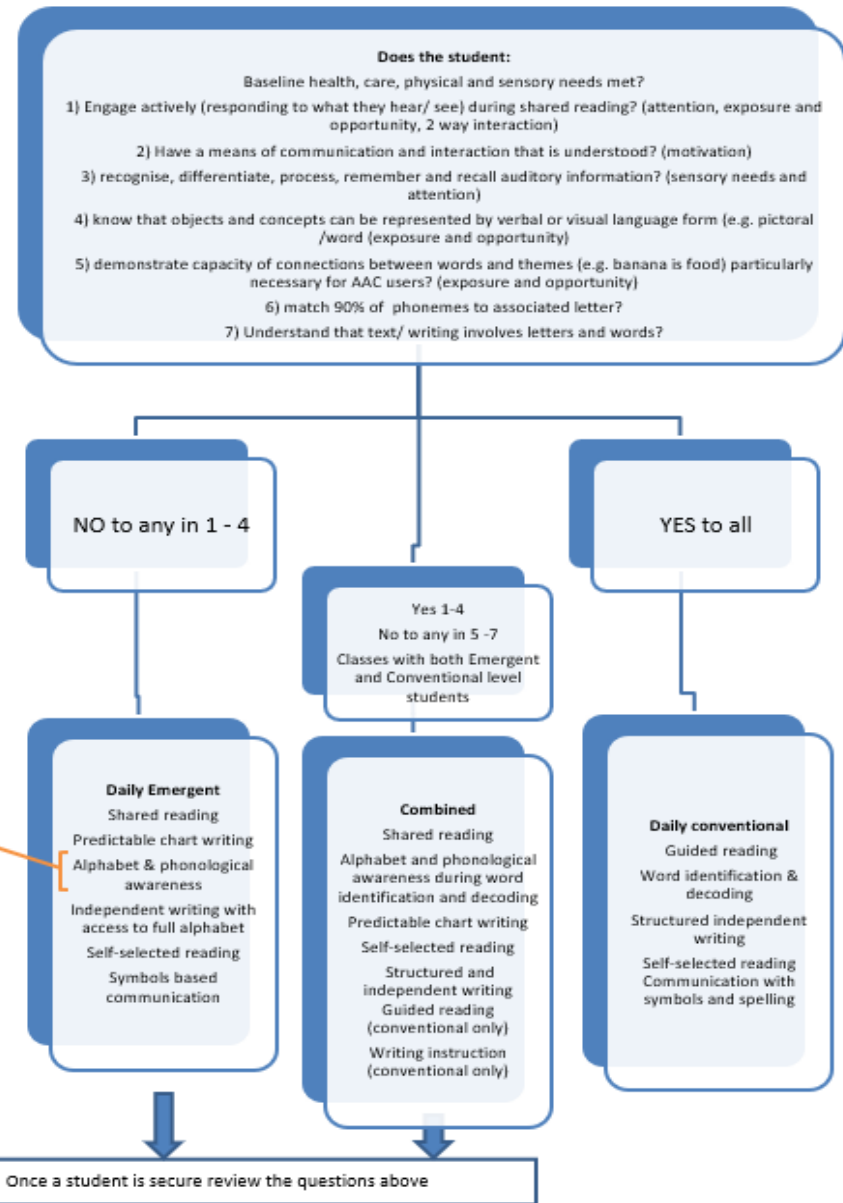
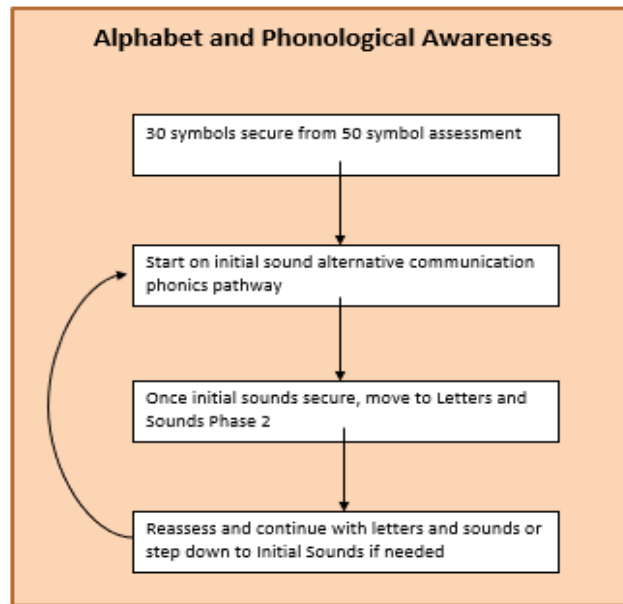
Regular whole class or group reading sessions focus on improving reading and comprehension skills and giving students opportunities to apply new knowledge and skills. With all students having access to text enables them to follow words and images as well as developing visual tracking skills:

- fixation (the ability to hold eyes steady on a target)
- saccades (the ability of eyes to make accurate jumps as we change targets)
- pursuits (the ability of eyes to follow moving targets)

With 60% of our students, using AAC systems these tracking activities offer opportunities for them to practice skills to develop their use and fluency of their personal communication system. By listening and responding to more language heard in texts students will develop a greater understanding and this will increase the amount of vocabulary they have access to on their AAC.

As part of their learning students regularly visit our onsite Bradbury Learning Centre (BLC), to enrich and broaden their experience of literature and increase their independence. The BLC promotes regular Reading Challenge events throughout the school year, which are curriculum related and have a whole school focus. The success of individual students is celebrated in Literacy and Reading Assemblies across the school year.





### 8.3 Writing

We aim to develop student's enjoyment in communicating their thoughts, opinions, wants and needs whilst developing their writing/recording skills.

Students develop their writing (recording) skills, appropriate to individual need and explore writing in a range of formats and in the wider environment. Styles of writing are explored half-termly (See English Overview) with students revisiting and developing their knowledge and skills each year. Students develop curiosity and an understanding of the contribution writing makes to their communication, knowledge and well-being.

Students are exposed to high diverse quality writing /texts, which underpin English lessons and the wider curriculum. Students have frequent opportunities across the curriculum to write, record or dictate to a scribe. Students are encouraged to articulate their thoughts and ideas and engage in collaboration with their peers. Students have opportunities to reflect on and improve writing/recording through editing and continuous self /peer/teacher assessment appropriate to students level of need which provides clear next steps for learning.

Students develop their writing (recording) skills, appropriate to individual need and explore writing in a range of formats and in the wider environment. Styles of writing are explored half-termly with students revisiting and developing their skills each year. Students develop curiosity and an understanding of the contribution writing makes to their communication, knowledge and well-being as they are able apply these skills in everyday life.

The multidisciplinary holistic approach enables students to access writing / recording, the team completes regular assessment to review student's access and capacity to 'write', dictate and respond.

### 9 Assessment

Students' literacy skills are regularly assessed and tracked to ensure that every opportunity has been taken to develop their knowledge and application of skills.

- **Alphabet / Phonics assessment** for students who are non-Daily Conventional readers
- **Reading Age** for students who are Daily Conventional readers
- **Reading Development assessment** - Daily emergent /Combined /Daily conventional
- **Pre- Key Stage Standards** – Annually
- **Literacy termly targets** updated sooner if target achieved
- **Communication targets** set alongside Speech and language therapist
- **BKSB** for students joining 6<sup>th</sup> Form
- **Accreditations / Qualifications** – Key Stage 4 and 6<sup>th</sup> Form
- **Annual Review** captured progress within literacy demonstrating progress and achievements since last AR

## 10 Implications of Policy/Procedure

### Training Requirements

- Head of School will ensure all relevant staff are trained in the requirements of this policy
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### Communication Requirements

How will the Policy/procedure be communicated:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharepoint</li> <li>• Teachers Meetings</li> <li>• Staff Briefings</li> </ul>
Who will ensure the above communication is carried out:	Head of School Head of College
Do the changes made to this policy/procedure affect any other policies/procedures? If yes, has this been communicated to the policy/procedure author/owner	NA

### Inclusive communications

If you require this document in an alternative format, such as large print, audio description or a colour background, please contact [quality@treloar.org.uk](mailto:quality@treloar.org.uk)

### Other Implementation Requirements

NA

## 11 Monitoring and Review

- The policy will be reviewed annually (or sooner in the event of revised legislation or guidance)

## 12 Links to other related policies, procedures or documents (internal)

- Total Communication Policy
- Student Curriculum documentation

## 13 Revision History

Listed below is a brief audit trail, detailing amendments made to this policy procedure in last 4 years

Date	Page/para No.	Brief description of the change(s)	Change made by
April 23		Complete rewrite of policy	Lisa Bond involving Caroline Weighton
Oct 23		Updated flow diagram on page 11 Updated literacy tree on page 5	Caroline Weighton Lisa Bond
Jan 2025		Streamlined the policy	Lisa Bond

**IMPORTANT NOTES:**

It is essential for those with designated responsibilities to familiarise themselves with the sources of information, referred to above.

Policy documents describe mandatory minimum standards and will be subject to audit and review. Line managers are required to ensure suitable and sufficient arrangements are in place to meet policy requirements, including the provision of information and instruction to staff.