



Language and Communication Approach

Braidwood Trust School for the Deaf uses a Total Communication approach to the delivery of education. Total Communication (TC) is a philosophy of educating deaf learners that incorporates all means of communication; formal signs, natural gestures, fingerspelling, body language, listening, lipreading and speech. Braidwood learners typically wear hearing aids or cochlear implants. Our goal is to optimise language development in whatever way is most effective for the individual learner. Total Communication is truly a *philosophy* rather than a *methodology*. As a result, the implementation of the TC philosophy with one learner may look entirely different than its implementation with another learner.

Head Teacher..... **Date**.....

Our Communication Principles

The underlying principles of our communication approach are based upon:

- Appreciation and respect for the language and culture of Deaf people.
- Appreciation and respect for the language and culture of hearing people.
- The mutual goals of the removal of oppression and the empowerment of deaf people.
- Equality of opportunity regardless of language, disability, ethnicity, race, gender identity, and sexuality.
- The use of terms to describe deaf learners, which reflect linguistic and cultural preferences

Our learners are actively encouraged to wear, use and maintain their hearing aids and cochlear implants daily. Most of our learners have some residual hearing and use different types of hearing aids and cochlear implants. We endeavour to ensure that learners have the opportunity to develop the best use of their hearing in order to aid communication and to support their learning and development. Braidwood provides the very latest digital radio aid system for every learner able to benefit from their use.

The school maintains strong links with audiology clinics and is supported by an Educational Audiologist. We work with audiological clinics at a variety of local hospitals and companies to get the right amplification for learners. Our Audiological Technician manages learners' hearing aids and auditory programmes and learners at Braidwood have daily checks undertaken by the class teacher or designated teaching assistant. The daily checks ensure that problems are identified quickly and acted upon with minimal delay.

Speech and Language Support

We provide regular opportunities for learners to develop their English skills through speech and language programmes delivered by Teachers of the Deaf and Speech and Language Therapists and our Speech and Language Assistant.

The range of therapy offered includes:

- Focusing on specific aspects of communication in small group, paired or individual sessions.
- 'Live English' where deaf learners learn skills and strategies to communicate successfully with hearing people (using English, Sign Supported English, or BSL, depending on the child's needs).

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A minority of our learners started using BSL naturally, at a very early age and have been able to adopt BSL as a first language because their families have been able to supply full support and fluency. This has enabled them to develop age-appropriate language skills.

The majority of our learners however, have not had access to fluent users of BSL, nor English as a first language in the home and so are significantly delayed in terms of developing a fluent first language with which to think and learn. Braidwood provides a language rich environment, which means our learners have the opportunity to become equally fluent communicators through the Total Communication approach, e.g. clarifying using BSL, visual aids, communication in print etc., to enhance understanding

The sign language used in Total Communication is more closely related to English. Our English curriculum is designed to meet the particular needs of our learners, whilst satisfying statutory requirements of the National Curriculum. The public examination system provides access arrangements for deaf learners, however all examination candidates are required to be able to read and respond using written English. This is why we make English a priority in our school. We are preparing our young people to be as successful as they possibly can and to enter the workforce and enabling them to live productive and fulfilling lives.

Every learner at Braidwood has the opportunity to become fluent in British Sign Language (BSL) and BSL is part of the timetable commitment for every learner with examinations offered in Key Stage 4. BSL enables many many deaf learners and adults to communicate easily with each other and can form part of their deaf identity.

Whichever method of communication a young person selects, Braidwood School is happy to support their choice.