



COMMUNICATION SKILLS (LITERACY) POLICY

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Personal and Employability Skills Development Policy
- SEND Policy

At RDUTC, we refer to Literacy Skills as Communication Skills.

Effective verbal and written communication skills and the ability to read widely are essential personal and employability skills because:

- a wide range of vocabulary (including technical and subject-specific vocabulary), expression and organisational control enables us to process and communicate thoughts, ideas and instructions verbally and in writing
- talking and writing helps us to sustain and order thought and express our understanding, opinions and ideas
- written and spoken language helps us to reflect, revise and evaluate the things we do and the things others have said, written or done
- responding to and posing higher order questions encourages the development of thinking skills and enquiry
- improving communication and learning has an impact on students' self-esteem, on motivation and behaviour - it allows them to learn independently and is empowering

Whilst verbal and written communication skills and reading are viewed as extremely important by Governors and staff at RDUTC, the majority of our students don't share our enthusiasm for them when they start with us. They have chosen to attend RDUTC because of our Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths curriculum, not because we offer English and English Literature as part of our Key Stage 4 core curriculum. Many, including a significant proportion of our most highly able students, are uncomfortable with all forms of communication other than on line communication, particularly communication which involves social interaction. Neither do they choose to read for pleasure. Many of our students have made poor progress in English at their previous schools, because they have 'switched off' during Key Stage 3. At RDUTC, therefore, re-engaging students with English Language and English Literature and fast-tracking the development of their Communication skills is both very high profile and more challenging than in many other schools.

INTENT:

By the end of their time at RDUTC, our students will have developed the necessary communication skills to enable them to succeed both in external examinations and in life and progress onto exciting courses at university or onto high quality apprenticeships.

IMPLEMENTATION:

Verbal Communications Skills (Speaking and Listening)

Within lessons and Employer Projects, we teach students how to communicate effectively verbally in formal and informal situations, whether in pairs and groups or delivering presentations to larger audiences of up to 200 people in our Conference Centre. This includes:

- using talk to develop, clarify, share and present ideas
- using talk to persuade or argue a point
- identifying the main points to arise from a discussion
- listening for a specific purpose to support learning, develop ideas, contribute to discussion and for evaluation purposes

Written Communication Skills

We develop students written Communication skills within English lessons and, where appropriate, across the curriculum through:

- teaching basic grammar and punctuation
- teaching how to write for specific purposes and audiences, including:
 - writing to inform, entertain, persuade, argue, describe and evaluate
 - writing reports
 - writing evaluations
 - writing letters of application
 - writing emails
 - writing responses to exam questions
- providing regular opportunities across the curriculum for students to produce a range of sustained writing
- engaging students in peer and self-assessment, sharing success criteria and allowing students to set personal targets for improvement
- providing students with diagnostic marking and feedback about their writing
- maintaining up-to-date displays of written work, punctuation and grammar rules

PEALA (Point, Evidence, Analyse (HOW & WHY), Language, Author's intent)

English Teachers and, where appropriate, Teachers of other subjects, teach students to use the PEALA framework to structure their writing:

- Point – State an opinion or point (this can be used to reinforce topic sentences)
- Evidence - Provide the proof to back up a point, (this may be in the form of a quotation)
- Analyse – Explore the evidence, explain how and why it backs up a point
- Language – Zoom in on any words or language devices and fully explain how these support ideas
- Author's intent – Why did the author write the text? Do they want to persuade or inform the reader of their opinions on something that was happening at the time the text was written?

Where relevant, all curriculum plans include opportunities to develop Communication skills.

Reading Skills

In English lessons we teach students to:

- read fluently
- read a wide range of texts: fiction and non-fiction, different genres, pre-twentieth century and modern
- read with understanding
- locate and use information
- provide evidence for arguments/research
- follow a process or argument
- summarise, synthesise and adapt what they learn from their reading

We also encourage students to read for pleasure.

Across the curriculum we promote reading through:

- teaching students how to read in ways that are specific and relevant to that department’s subject needs
- encouraging students to read a range of texts to support subject learning
- supporting students to use a range of reading strategies to improve their understanding
- encouraging students to organise and structure information and ideas gathered clearly
- reading for meaning within exams, to understand what examination questions require in terms of a response

Reading Widely and Often

Forensic Reading

Our Reading Widely and Often programme includes Forensic Reading delivered by English Teachers within weekly Independent Study sessions.

Students read a wide range of challenging fiction and non-fiction texts and articles, often about controversial issues e.g. misogyny. They analyse the view points and perspectives expressed and explore their context. They then share their findings with their peers in group and class discussions.

The texts are selected to develop the students’ cultural capital and promote thought and discussion about Fundamental British Values, particularly encouraging them to explore and challenge their own attitudes to equality, diversity and extremism.

Charlie’s Challenge

Students are encouraged to participate in ‘Charlie’s Challenge’

Charlie Spencer (Chair of Governors) challenges students to read:

- One Pre-twentieth Century Novel (excluding those studied in English lessons)
- One Biography/Autobiography
- One Leadership/Management Text from a selection provided by Employer Partners

Students receive a certificate from Charlie on completion of the challenge.



Charlie Spencer as William Shakespeare
(World Book Day 2019)

Roles and Responsibilities:

Governors and Senior Leaders will:

- oversee the implementation of the Communication Skills policy
- ensure Communication is high profile

The Assistant Principal English and Communication will:

- lead the development and implementation of the Communication Skills policy and Spelling and Grammar marking policy - see APPENDIX 1
- line manage the Librarian
- over-see reading, spelling and handwriting screening testing and share data with relevant staff to inform teaching and learning and access arrangements for exams and assessments
- identify students who require reading and spelling intervention and implement appropriate intervention programmes
- monitor students' progress on Intervention programmes
- produce termly Intervention Impact reports for Senior Leaders and Governors to evaluate the effectiveness of intervention
- carry out quality assurance of reading and spelling intervention programmes
- co-ordinate strategies to ensure students read widely and often
- audit opportunities for cross-curricular Communication skills teaching across RDUTC
- use the audit to identify further opportunities for cross-curricular Communication skills teaching
- support departments to implement strategies to develop cross curricular Communication skills
- carry out quality assurance of cross-curricular Communication skills teaching and the Spelling and Grammar marking policy (Lesson Visits; Work Scrutiny)

The English Department will:

- provide students with the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to read, write, speak and listen effectively
- give students access to a curriculum which support progression and ensure an even coverage of the four main skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing)
- support students to read and write with confidence, fluency and understanding, using a range of independent strategies
- support students to read, understand, analyse and discuss a range of text types and genres
- use reading, spelling and handwriting screening data to identify students requiring intervention and to inform curriculum planning and teaching
- encourage students to read for pleasure

The Librarian will:

- promote the importance of reading widely and often
- encourage students to read for pleasure
- ensure the library contains a wide range of stimulating fiction and non-fiction material to engage students
- manage the library lending service
- keep records of books borrowed by students
- ensure the library is a stimulating, relaxing and purposeful environment
- provide intervention for students whose Communication skills have been identified as needing support
- assess students' progress to measure the impact of intervention and inform intervention planning
- produce Intervention Progress reports for the Assistant Principal English and Communication

Heads of Department will:

- contribute to the whole school Communication skills audit
- use data to inform curriculum planning and implementation
- ensure the Spelling and Grammar Marking policy is implemented within their departments – see APPENDIX 1
- work with the Assistant Principal English and Communication to quality assure the teaching of agreed Communication skills within their departments.

Teachers across the curriculum will:

- identify students who require Communication skills intervention and refer them to the Assistant Principal English and Communication
- teach agreed Communication skills within their lessons (where appropriate)
- adopt the Spelling and Grammar Marking policy when marking extended writing

Implemented: 1st September 2019

Review date: 31st July 2020