



## COMMUNICATION SKILLS (LITERACY) POLICY

This policy should be read in conjunction with

- The Literacy Marking Policy
- The English department Literacy Marking Policy
- The 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 online 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. These skills will allow them to progress onto exciting courses at university or onto high quality apprenticeships.

### **IMPLEMENTATION:**

#### **Verbal Communications Skills (Speaking and Listening)**

Within lessons in all subjects and through our 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
- developing vocabulary to sustain eloquent discussions within school and working environments
- prepare for job and apprenticeship interviews
- understanding how to adapt oral communication for different situations

### **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 responses to exam questions
  - writing CVs
  - writing letters of application
  - writing personal statements to support UCAS and apprenticeship applications
- 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

English teachers and, where appropriate, teachers of other subjects, teach students to use structured analyses within their writing. This framework allows them to state their opinion or point, use evidence from a relevant text and analyse both implicit and explicit meanings within language. Teachers will also allow them to develop their understanding of the author's intent, by building upon contextual factors within their analysis.

### **Expressive and Analytical Writing**

We develop students expressive and analytical writing within English lessons and, where appropriate, across the curriculum through:

- reinforcing the understanding of questions and theories
- providing evidence from texts to support their points
- exploring language, explaining their argument and how it supports their point
- focusing on keywords and devices to showcase perceptive and detailed responses
- understanding an author's purpose and applying it to their own writing
- showing awareness of historical contexts and expanding their cross-curricular knowledge about past times and places
- enabling them to create their own fiction and non-fiction texts:

- Fiction develops their ability to be innovative, creative and use the English language to produce original texts
- Non-fiction writing prepares them for real-life scenarios in which they will have to communicate effectively within the work place

Where relevant, curriculum plans in all subjects include opportunities to develop written 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/debates/research /reports
- 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 each subject's needs
- encouraging students to read a range of texts to support subject learning and wider cultural capital
- 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**

Reading is promoted throughout RDUTC in numerous ways:

- KS4 students have a weekly Reading Widely and Often lesson taught by English teachers. Students read and discuss a range of different novels and non-fiction texts carefully chosen because they are NOT on the GCSE syllabus, are 'great reads' and cover topics which support students understanding of Fundamental British Values.
- The Arco Reading Widely and Often Award. This award encourages students to read a range of modes in order to develop their understanding of the world around them and to develop empathy and imagination and help them to improve the quality of their own writing and vocabulary. All entrants are given a certificate to prove that they have participated and the overall winner from each Year group – both KS4 and KS5 – is presented with their award at RDUTC's annual Celebration of Achievement Evening. Employer Partners help raise the profile of this award by ensuring they ask students questions about it and the texts they have read at mock interviews, work experience interviews and during their apprenticeship selection processes.
- Displays of book reviews of 'good reads' by staff outside offices and classrooms
- Displays in social areas promoting 'good reads'
- Access to magazines and periodicals which are available in social areas
- Subject libraries. Each department has their own library of subject specific texts for student to borrow to read for enjoyment, and/or that will help them develop their specific subject knowledge and cultural capital
- Partnership with Hull Central Library. All KS4 and KS5 students have library cards to enable them to access a wider range of texts outside of the school

- Reading club partnership with BREW, a local coffee shop. KS5 students are taken there once a week to read; they enjoy a book and a drink outside of school
- Silent Book Club is promoted in English RWAQ lessons. Every Friday lunchtime, students are able to go and quietly read to promote reading for enjoyment and relaxation

### **Oracy**

- KS4 employer-led oracy. Each half-term, a brief is given to all Y10 English classes by one of RDUTC's employer partners. Throughout the course of the half-term, oracy skills of students are developed through planning, debate, and following key oral foci (audience, formality, tone...). The students deliver the presentations to the employers at the end of each half-term, focusing on the brief that was initially given. They develop their communication skills and apply them to a real-life career situation
- KS5 intervention. Students in need of oracy intervention are identified through mock-interview feedback and teacher's professional judgements. A one-to-one intervention programme is implemented, and impact is monitored to further prepare students for future interviews

### **Roles and Responsibilities:**

#### **Governors and Senior Leaders will:**

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

#### **The Lead Practitioner of English and Literacy will:**

- lead the development and implementation of the Communication Skills policy and whole-school marking policy
- line manage the Subject Libraries by ensuring they contain a wide range of stimulating fiction and non-fiction material to engage students
- oversee and monitor the partnership with Hull Central Library
- 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, monitoring impact and producing reports for the SLT and the Governing Board
- oversee the Arco Reading Widely and Often Award
- audit opportunities for cross-curricular Communication skills development across RDUTC
- use the audit to inform planning
- support departments to implement strategies to develop cross curricular communication skills
- carry out quality assurance of cross-curricular communication skills teaching and the Literacy 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 supports progression and ensures an even coverage of the four main skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing)
- support students to read and write independently with confidence, fluency and understanding, using a range of 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

**Heads of Department will:**

- contribute to the whole school communication skills audit
- use data to inform curriculum planning and implementation
- ensure opportunities to develop communication skills are identified, maximised and recorded on curriculum plans
- ensure the Literacy Marking policy is implemented within their departments
- work with the Lead Practitioner of English and Literacy to quality assure the teaching of agreed communication skills within their departments

**Teachers across the curriculum will:**

- identify students who may require communication skills intervention and refer them to the Lead Practitioner of English and Literacy
- teach agreed communication skills within their lessons in line with curriculum plans and this policy
- adopt the Literacy Marking policy when marking extended writing