
Communication



At Ysgol Maes Hyfryd we use many programmes to support pupils language and communication needs. This is to enable a best fit personalised approach for each individual.

This booklet provides you with information about the various programmes we use throughout school.



Makaton

Makaton is a unique language programme which uses symbols, signs and speech to enable people to communicate.

Makaton supports;

- The development of essential communication
- Attention and listening
- Comprehension
- Memory
- Recall and organisation
- Language and expression

Makaton is being increasingly used in the wider community such as in shops, theme parks and hospitals. Also, many children's TV shows now incorporate Makaton.

With Makaton, signs and symbols are used in spoken word order.

You can use Makaton in a variety of ways dependent on the persons understanding and ability.

- You may choose to only sign the functional words such as the verbs of a sentence.
- You may sign all the key words in a sentence.
- You could sign a sentence grammatically meaning all words in the sentence and word endings such as 'ing' should be signed.



To sleep (sign)

Tips for using Makaton

1. Learn the basic signs – these can be found in the communication Ysgol Maes Hyfryd network.
2. Use your dominant hand.
3. Speak clearly and in short sentences – signing the key word as you speak the word.
4. Encourage the person to imitate signs, you can guide their hands.
5. Keep it enjoyable.

Symbols

In YMH we use Makaton symbols across school to support pupils by offering them a visual to support understanding and increase independence.

All Makaton symbols are created out of lines and are black and white – this means they all can be replicated easily by drawing them. This makes it so much easier for a person to have instant access to a visual by their communication partner drawing it for them wherever they are.



To sleep (symbol)

In YMH, we have 2 Makaton tutors (Chris Griffiths and Geri Bryce) who support the use of Makaton across school.

Makaton videos of all core vocabulary (signs) can be found in the Teams network “Communication at Ysgol Maes Hyfryd”.

Core vocabulary symbols are also available to download from the network.

PECS

PECS stands for Picture Exchange Communication System. PECS begins by teaching an individual to give a picture of a desired item to a 'communicative partner', who then honours the exchange as a request.

There are **six phases** of PECS:

Phase 1

How to communicate.

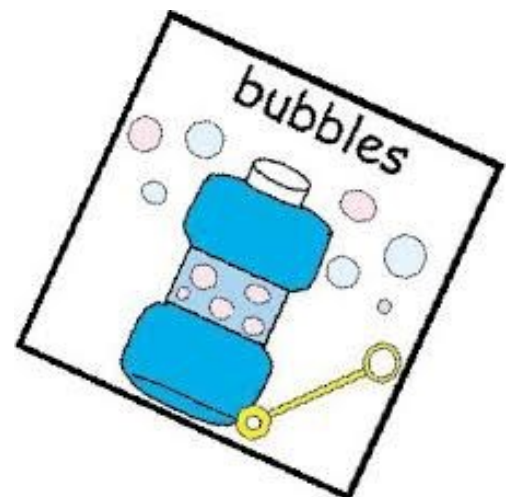
Pupils learn to exchange a single picture for an item or activity they really want.



Phase 2

Distance and Persistence.

Still using single pictures, pupils learn to generalise this new skill by using it.



Phase 3

Picture discrimination.

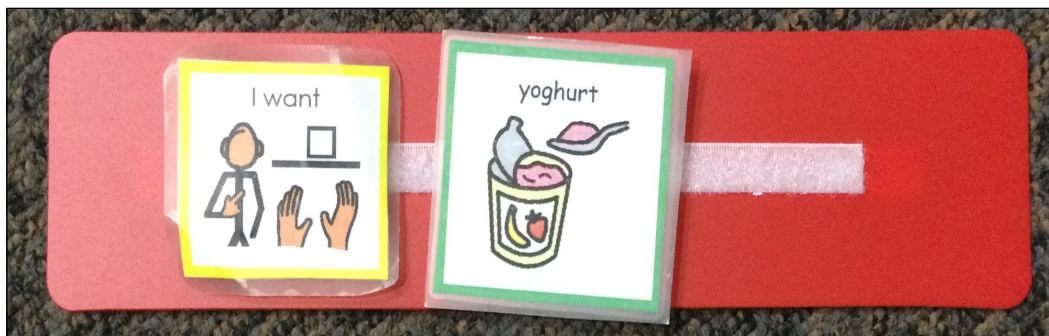
Pupils learn to select from two or more pictures to ask for their favourite things.

These are placed in a communication book where pictures are stored and easily removed for communication.

Phase 4

Sentence structure.

Pupils learn to construct simple sentences on to a detachable sentence strip using an 'I want' picture followed by a picture of the item being requested.



Phase 5 and 6

Attributes and Language Expansion

Pupils learn to expand their sentences by adding adjectives, verbs and prepositions.

PODD

Pragmatic Organisation Dynamic Display

PODD stands for Pragmatic Organisation Dynamic Display.

Pragmatics are the ways that we use language socially;

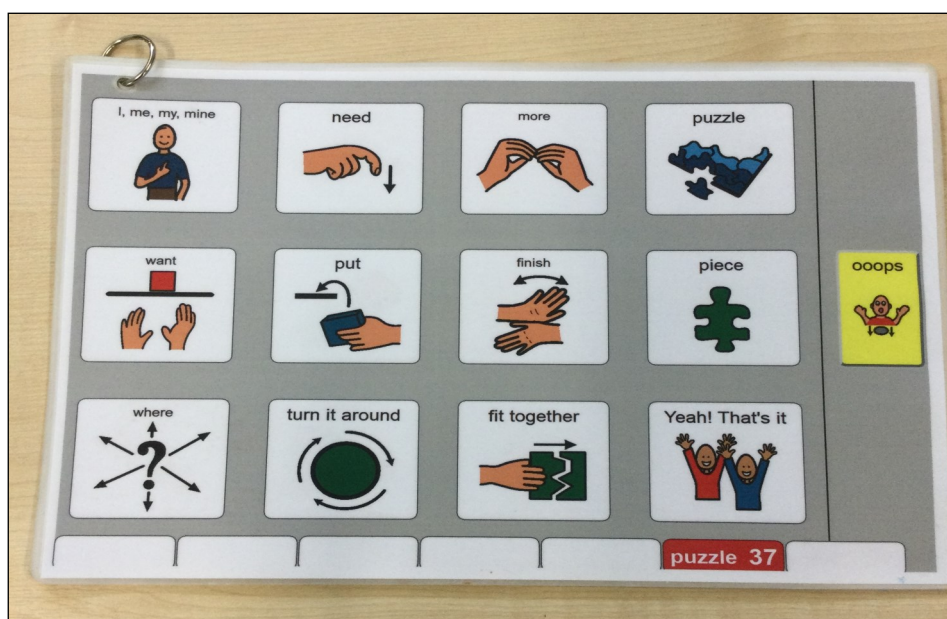
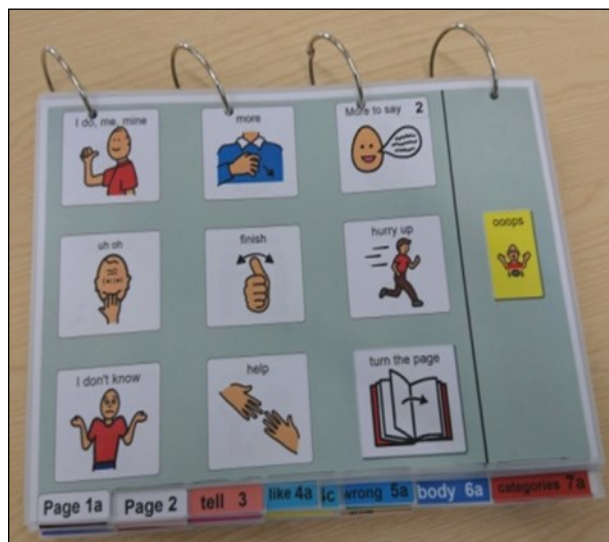
Organisation is the way words and symbols are arranged in a systematic way;

Dynamic Display means changing pages.

PODD has its own language system that is different from conversational speech.

PODD books are index books of symbols that can be used to aid pupils communication and is a means of selecting and organising symbols so that pupils and their communicative partners can communicate more easily. It promotes a language rich environment that our pupils need.

The aim of PODD is to provide vocabulary for a continuous communication all the time for a range of topics and in multiple environments.



Alongside PODD books, we also use Quick access pages. These are pages to support communication quickly during various activities because they have the appropriate language to aid that activity.

Blank Levels

Blank Levels is a model developed by Marion Blank that helps to support and further develop a child's understanding of abstract language and verbal reasoning. It gives us a tool to develop children's language in a structured way.

Blank levels help us recognise the type of questions the child understands which supports us in using a language with the child they understand and can relate to.

There are four levels of questioning:

1. **Naming**
2. **Describing**
3. **Retelling / Narrative**
4. **Justifying**

The levels encourage development of general language and vocabulary as well as skills in comprehension, reasoning, inferencing, predicting and problem solving.

Level 1 – Naming

Focus is on objects in the pupil's immediate environment and requires concrete thinking.

For example:

Find one like this (matching objects)

What can you hear?

What can you touch?

What is this? (Pointing to object)

Who is this? (Pointing to person)

What is doing?

Level 2 – Describing

Focus is on analysis such as grouping objects, describing and understanding object functions.

For example:

Find something that can (cut)

What is happening in this picture?

Where is the? (requires a location response e.g under the table, not just pointing)

Find something that is (red) and (spikey)

How are these different?

Which one is..... (fruit)?

Level 3 – Retelling

This level requires children to use their own knowledge to make basic predictions, assume the role of another, or make generalisations.

For example:

What will happen next?

How do you think he feels?

How do I make (a sandwich)?

How are these the same?

Level 4 – Justifying, problem solving and answering why?

This level requires children to use their own knowledge, own experience and ability to think about the past and future. The child has to problem solve, make predictions, give solutions and explanations.

For example:

What will happen if?

What should we do now?

What could do/use?

How can we tell?

What can't we?

How can you tell she is happy?

Why is it called.....?

Strategies to support and practice Blank Levels:

- Aim your level of questioning appropriately to support the child's understanding
- Re-adjust your use of questions by choosing the Blank Level below the child's level if the child is not able to answer your question
- Use everyday situations to ask Blank Level questions
- Allow sufficient time for the pupil to think through and provide an answer
- Use repetition after a pause
- Use visual supports to aid understanding such as pictures and diagrams

In Ysgol Maes Hyfryd, all pupils are assessed through a variety of blank level assessments. Each pupil has a level and is supported through the use of various activities to progress to the next level.

Each Hwb class has a selection of resources suitable for your child's class and you should have been made aware of the current level your child is at and what they are working toward.

Language for Thinking

Language for thinking is a programme we use to work on verbal reasoning skills which also corresponds with Blank levels.

We use verbal reasoning skills throughout our daily lives and they are a key aspect of learning.

Language for thinking helps us develop our verbal reasoning skills by supporting our understanding and answering of questions from level 2 – level 4.

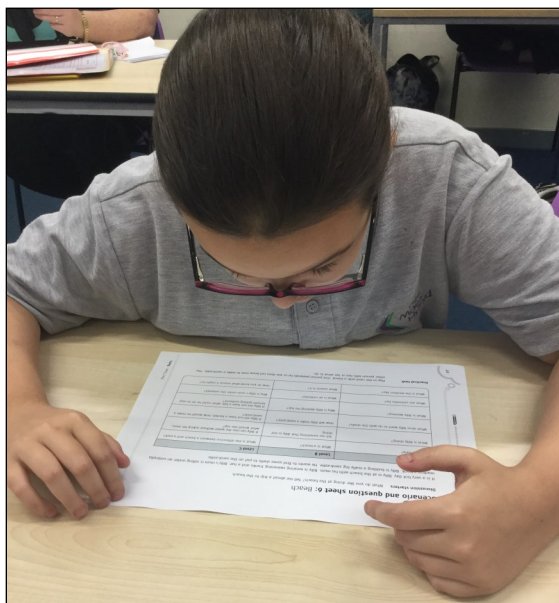
| Language for thinking | Blank level | Example questions |
|------------------------------|--------------------|---|
| Level A | Level 2 | What's happening? Who? What? Where? Function of objects |
| Level B | Level 3 | Definitions How others feel? What others say? What will happen next? |
| Level C | Level 4 | Why? Why will X happen? What would they do if..? How can you tell? |

During the language for thinking programme, the pupil will be shown a picture. To go with this picture sheet is a question sheet which also includes a short story corresponding with the picture.

The pupil has the picture, the adult reads out the short story then asks the pupil the correct level of questions.

For example, if the pupil had achieved Blank level 2 (A) then they would be asked questions B (Blank level 3) to support their progression.

Once a pupil has achieved Level 4 of blank levels, they move onto Text only. This is where the pupil will have the short story to read (encouraged to read alone) and will then answer all the questions A - C based on what they have read.

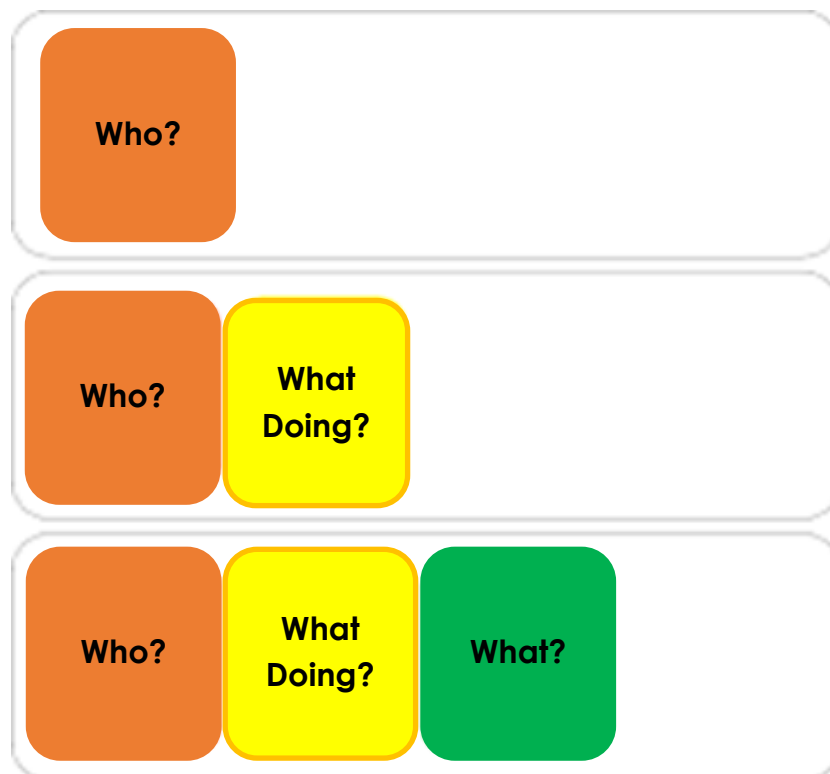


Colourful Semantics

Colourful Semantics is an approach created by Alison Bryan. It is aimed at helping children to develop grammar but it is rooted in the meaning of words (semantics).

This is a Speech and Language therapy technique which uses colour coded cards to help children to learn the Important elements of a sentence, and how to join them together in the correct order.

Colourful semantics reassembles sentences by cutting them up into their thematic roles and then colour codes them.



The approach has four key colour coded stages and
Each colour code represents a word or part of a
sentence:

Who – orange

What doing – yellow

What – green

Where – blue



There are further stages for adverbs and adjectives:

Who to – pink

What like – cloud words

When – brown

How – black

Why - purple

This intervention helps develop the child's ability to write grammatically accurate sentences and helps them understand word order and categories in the English language.

Why use Colourful Semantics?

It is a system to support spoken and written language learning across the curriculum. It can be used for:

- sentence development
- understanding questions
- developing narrative
- understanding written text
- developing vocabulary and learning facts
- understanding instructions and sentences
- following in discussions and to communicate their own ideas effectively
- reducing problem behaviours such as anger and aggression (if this is the result of frustration associated with language difficulty).
- a great visual support
- identifying key word level (how many words are understood)



Attention Autism

What is Attention Autism?

Attention Autism is a programme created by speech therapist Gina Davies.

The programme aims to build on children's joint attention, turn taking and independent working skills through 4 structured stages.

- Focus
- Sustain
- Shift
- Transition

Each stage has its own targets focused around the above skills and can be linked to LNF and SCERTS.

All stages can also be adapted to suit subjects and topics and can incorporate other strategies and activities such as Numicon, Jolly Phonics, stories or cooking.



Stage 1 – The bucket (focus)

The aim of stage 1 is to build the child's focus on an object shared with another person.

The attention group is presented with a bucket – the lead adult sings the bucket song to help build attention and will then reveal 3-5 items out of the bucket with excitement and enthusiasm naming the items to support understanding and meaning of words and develop their skills to show excitement and a desire for more.

The child does not get to touch the bucket toys as this helps their attention stay focused on watching in a shared attention space.

Stage 2 –The attention builder (Sustain)

Stage 2 aims to support the child in sustaining their attention for up to 5 minutes. A stage 2 activity has a sequence to it, which children have to watch so they can see the end product. Again in Stage 2 the child does not touch the resources to help build their shared attention with the lead adult and peers.

Stage 3 – Turn taking (Shift)

Stage 3 is where the child develops skills to shift their attention. The child will first watch a model of the activity then shift their attention to take part before again shifting their attention to observe again.

Stage 3 often involves a game to support turn taking or sometimes an activity such as sponge painting where the child comes up for a turn.

Stage 4 – Independent work (transition)

Stage 4 is where the child develops their skills to transition. Firstly the pupil will watch a demonstration of a work task then collect their individual resources; transition to a work area; complete the task independently before tidying resources and bringing everything back to the circle (bucket area).

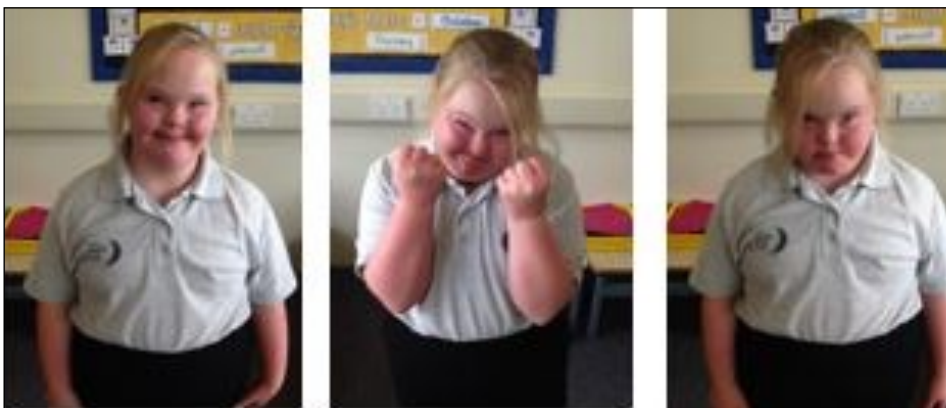
These tasks can be differentiated between pupils dependent on ability.



Talkabout

Talkabout is a scheme of work designed to develop social communication skills. It is a programme aimed at improving Social Communication Skills such as:

- Listening
- Conversational Skills
- Body Language
- Awareness
- Assertiveness



It uses a hierarchical method of developing skills where basic or foundation skills are taught before more complicated skills. The programme also helps pupils to develop an awareness of themselves and their own feelings, skills and ideas and increases self esteem and friendship building.

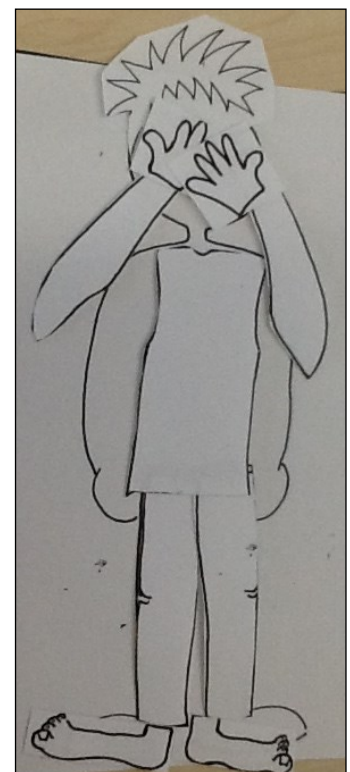
The programme provides an assessment of social skills in the following areas:

Body language = eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, distance, touch, fidgeting, posture and personal language.

The Way We Talk = volume, rate, clarity, intonation, fluency.

Conversation = listening, starting and ending conversations, asking questions, answering questions, being relevant and repairing.

Assertiveness = expressing feelings, standing up for yourself, making suggestions, refusing, disagreeing, complaining, apologising.



The Communication Matrix

The Communication Matrix is an assessment tool to help understand the communication status, progress and needs of pupils functioning at early stages of communication or using forms of communication other than speaking or writing.

The Matrix pinpoints an individual's current communication level and provides a framework for determining and crafting realistic future goals. It looks at aspects of communication such as the behaviours that someone uses to communicate (such as pointing), the messages that someone expresses (such as 'I want that') and the level of communication (such as abstract symbols).

The Matrix is organised into four major reasons to communicate based alongside the seven levels of Communication listed below. The four major reasons to communicate are to **REFUSE** things that we don't want, to **OBTAIN** things that we do want, to engage in **SOCIAL INTERACTION** and to provide or seek **INFORMATION**.

The Matrix is used to track progress and determine the next steps. It allows us to define and support pupils at what level they are at. It covers seven Levels of development:

Level 1 – Pre-intentional Behaviour

This level tells us behaviour is not under the individual's own control, but it reflects their general state such as comfortable, uncomfortable, hungry or tired. We interpret how the individual feels from behaviours such as body movements, facial expressions and sounds.

Level 2 – Intentional Behaviour

At this level behaviour is under the individual's control, but it is not yet used to communicate intentionally. We interpret the individual's needs and desires from behaviours such as body movements, facial expressions, vocalisations and eye gaze.

Level 3 – Unconventional Behaviour

Intentional communication starts here at Level 3. Communicative behaviours are 'unconventional' because they are not socially acceptable for us to use as we grow older. Communicative behaviours include body movements, vocalisations, facial expressions and simple gestures (such as tugging).

Level 4 – Conventional Behaviour

Communicative behaviours are ‘unconventional’ because they are socially acceptable and we continue to use them to accompany our language as we mature. Communicative behaviours include pointing, nodding or shaking the head, waving, hugging, and looking from a person to a desired object. Some vocal intonations may also be used at this stage.

Level 5 – Concrete symbols

Symbolic communication starts here at Level 5. ‘Concrete’ symbols that physically resemble what they represent, are used to communicate. Concrete symbols include pictures, objects (such as shoelace to represent shoe), iconic gestures (such as patting a chair to say sit down) and sounds (such as making a buzzing sound to mean bee).

Level 6 – Abstract symbols

Abstract symbols such as speech, manual signs, brailled or printed words are used to communicate. These symbols are ‘abstract’ as they are not physically similar to what they represent.

Level 7 – Language

Symbols (concrete or abstract) are combined into two or three symbol combinations ('want juice', 'me go out'). The individual understands that the meaning of symbol combinations may differ depending upon how the symbols are ordered.

| Level | A1 | A2 | | | | | A3 | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|---------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Level 1 Pre-Intentional Behavior | Expresses Discomfort | Expresses Comfort | | | | | Expresses Interest in Other People | | | | | | | | | | |
| Level 2 Intentional Behaviour | B1 | B2 | B3 | | | | B4 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Protests | Continues Action | Obtains More of Something | | | | Attracts Attention | | | | | | | | | | |
| Level 3 Unconventional Communication | C1 | C2 | C3 | C4 | C5 | C6 | C8 | C9 | | | | | | | | | |
| | Refuses, Rejects | Requests More Action | Requests New Action | Requests More Object | Makes Choices | Requests New Object | Requests Attention | Shows Affection | | | | | | | | | |
| Level 4 Conventional Communication | C1 | C2 | C3 | C4 | C5 | C6 | C8 | C9 | C10 | C11 | C12 | C13 | C14 | C15 | | | |
| | Refuses, Rejects | Requests More Action | Requests New Action | Requests More Object | Makes Choices | Requests New Object | Requests Attention | Shows Affection | Greets People | Offers, Shares | Direct Your Attention | Polite Social Forms | Answers Yes/No Questions | Asks Questions | | | |
| Level 5 Concrete Symbols | C1 | C2 | C3 | C4 | C5 | C6 | C7 | C8 | C9 | C10 | C11 | C12 | C13 | C14 | C15 | C16 | C17 |
| | Refuses, Rejects | Requests More Action | Requests New Action | Requests More Object | Makes Choices | Requests New Object | Requests Absent Objects | Requests Attention | Shows Affection | Greets People | Offers, Shares | Direct Your Attention | Polite Social Forms | Answers Yes/No Questions | Asks Questions | Names Things/ People | Makes Comments |
| Level 6 Abstract Symbols | C1 | C2 | C3 | C4 | C5 | C6 | C7 | C8 | C9 | C10 | C11 | C12 | C13 | C14 | C15 | C16 | C17 |
| | Refuses, Rejects | Requests More Action | Requests New Action | Requests More Object | Makes Choices | Requests New Object | Requests Absent Objects | Requests Attention | Shows Affection | Greets People | Offers, Shares | Direct Your Attention | Polite Social Forms | Answers Yes/No Questions | Asks Questions | Names Things/ People | Makes Comments |
| Level 7 Language | C1 | C2 | C3 | C4 | C5 | C6 | C7 | C8 | C9 | C10 | C11 | C12 | C13 | C14 | C15 | C16 | C17 |
| | Refuses, Rejects | Requests More Action | Requests New Action | Requests More Object | Makes Choices | Requests New Object | Requests Absent Objects | Requests Attention | Shows Affection | Greets People | Offers, Shares | Direct Your Attention | Polite Social Forms | Answers Yes/No Questions | Asks Questions | Names Things/ People | Makes Comments |
| | Refuse | Obtain | | | | | Social | | | | | Information | | | | | |

| |
|-----------|
| Not Used |
| Emerging |
| Mastered |
| Surpassed |

SCERTS

What is SCERTS?

In YMH, we use the SCERTS approach to support our learners with their communication and self-regulation, various classes use elements of the approach to meet the pupils needs. We use the SCERTS framework to guide IEP setting and in meeting outcomes.

SCERTS is an evidence-based framework that provides guidelines for helping an individual become a competent social communicator and an active learner.

SCERTS is a multidisciplinary framework that is based upon research in child development as well as research identifying the core challenges faced by children with autism and social emotional learning differences.

The SCERTS approach consists of 3 stages, the pupil is supported using transactional supports to reach the goals from social communication and emotional regulation to support their progress through the 3 stages.

- ◆ Social partner stage
- ◆ Language partner stage
- ◆ Conversational partner stage



SCERTS stands for;

Social

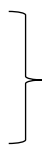
Communication



SC – provides a range of goals to help pupils become competent and confident to participate in social activities. This includes goals based around Joint attention; why some communicate and symbol use; how someone communicates.

Emootional

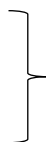
Regulation



ER – provides a range of goals to support self- regulation, helping pupils regulate their emotions to cope with the stresses of every day to support their learning and interaction. This include goals based around mutual regulation; how we cope with the help of others and self-regulation; how we cope on our own.

Transaction

Supports



TS – provides staff, parents and other agencies detailed guidance on how we can adjust our communication style and adapt our environment to meet the pupil's social communication and emotional regulation needs and support them with progression.

Social Scripts

Social scripts are short descriptions of a particular situation, event or activity, which include specific information about what to expect in that situation and why.

How do scripts help?

Social scripts present information in a literal, 'concrete' way, which may improve a person's understanding of a previously difficult or ambiguous situation or activity.

The presentation and content can be adapted to meet different people's needs.

They can help with sequencing (what comes next in a series of activities) and 'executive functioning' (planning and organising).

By providing information about what might happen in a particular situation, and some guidelines for behaviour, you can increase structure in a person's life and thereby reduce anxiety.

What are Social Scripts for?

Social scripts can be used to:

- develop self-care skills (eg how to clean teeth, wash hands or get dressed), social skills (eg sharing, asking for help, saying thank you, interrupting) and academic abilities
- help someone to understand how others might behave or respond in a particular situation
- help others understand the perspective of an autistic person and why they may respond or behave in a particular way
- help a person to cope with changes to routine and unexpected or distressing events (eg absence of teacher, moving house, thunderstorms)
- provide positive feedback to a person about an area of strength or achievement in order to develop self-esteem
- as a behavioural strategy (eg what to do when angry, how to cope with obsessions).

Visual Supports

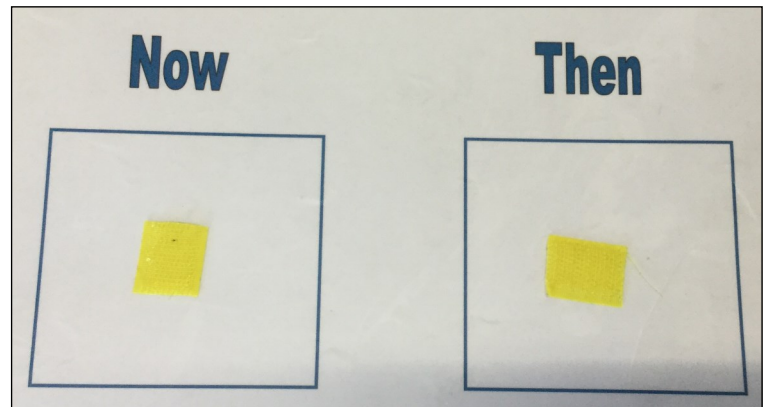
Visual supports enhance learning and communication. They are personal and what works for one person may not work for another. It can sometimes be helpful to use more than one type of visual support, however always introduce visual supports gradually.

There are many types of visual support and a wide range of items can be used as visual supports. Items can include tactile symbols / object of reference, photographs, short videos, miniatures of real objects, line drawings, symbols, written words and coloured pictures.

Visual supports can help to provide structure and routine, encourage independence, improve understanding, avoid frustration and anxiety, and can make communication consistent. They are also portable, durable, personalised and consistent.

At Ysgol Maes Hyfryd we use many types of visual supports:

- ◆ Choice Boards
- ◆ Now and Then
- ◆ Timetables
- ◆ Schedules
- ◆ Instruction strips
- ◆ Social scripts
- ◆ Quick access pages
- ◆ PODD books
- ◆ Core boards
- ◆ Labels for objects, storage and rooms
- ◆ Lanyard symbols
- ◆ Zones of regulation boards



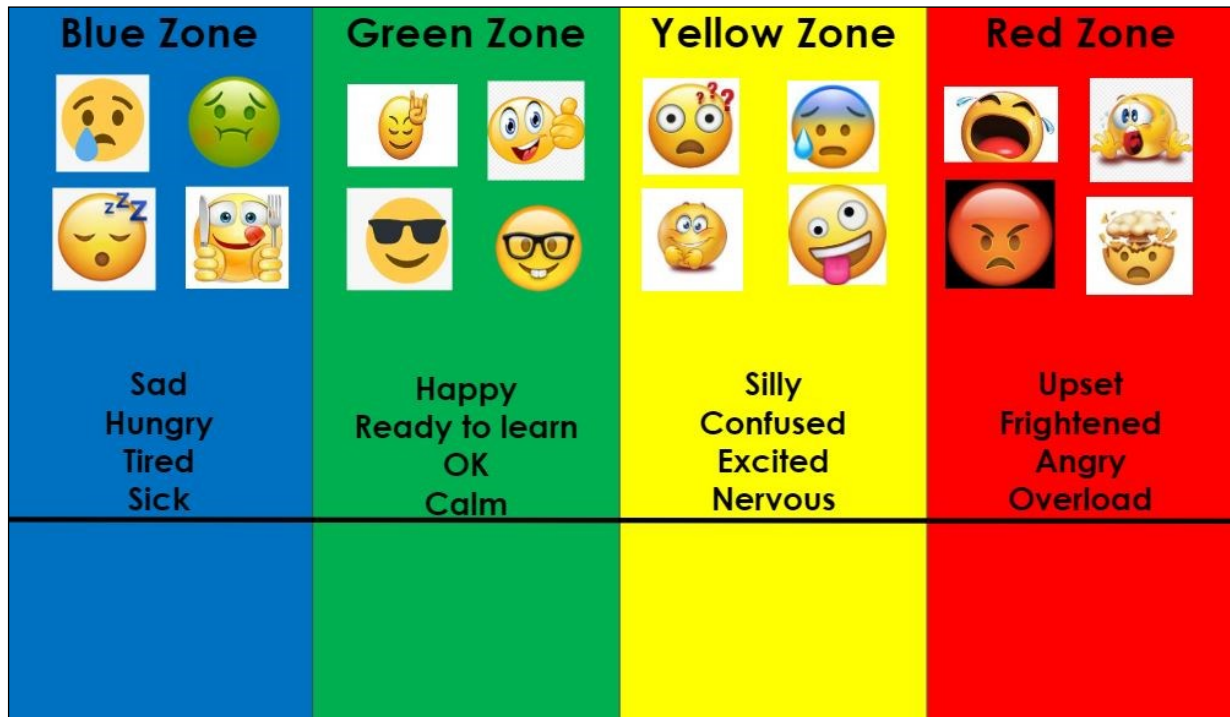
Sensory Stories

Sensory stories are stories told through a combination of words and sensory stimuli. They are often short stories where each line or every few lines will be accompanied by sensory stimuli, for example ice with the word 'cold'.

Using sensory stories help pupils with language difficulties experience stories in a similar way as others and helps them gain an understanding of the meaning of the language used within the story.

Sensory stories alert all the different senses and engages the brain to react to stimulate learning. The more of our senses we use enables us to learn more and give us better understanding and remembering. They can provide a safe place to explore different stimuli to support building a range of experiences which will help build confidence.

Zones of Regulation



The Zones of Regulation is a complete social-emotional learning curriculum, created to teach individuals self-regulation and emotional control. It's often taught in school or therapy settings but parents can use and teach the Zones of Regulation at home, too.

This program teaches a variety of social-emotional skills to children, starting with early emotional skills and advancing on to self-regulation and navigating social situations. The four zones are categories by different colours.

The four zones are categories by different colours:

The Green Zone The green zone is used to describe when you're in a calm state of alertness. Being in the green zone means you are calm, focused, happy, or ready to learn. This is predominantly the state you *want* your child to be in. It's also the state most needed in the classroom in order to learn.

The Yellow Zone The yellow zone describes when you have a **heightened sense of alertness**. This isn't always a bad thing, and you still have **some control** of your actions when you're in the yellow zone. Being in the yellow means you may feel frustrated, anxious or nervous. But, it could also mean you're feeling excited, silly, or hyper – **which is okay in the right situations**.

The Red Zone The red zone describes an extremely heightened state of intense emotions. When a person reaches the red zone, they're no longer able to control their emotions or reactions. This is the zone we experience during **meltdowns**. Being in the red zone means you're feeling **anger, rage, terror, or complete devastation** and feel **out of control**.

The Blue Zone- The blue zone is used when we are feeling **low states of alertness or arousal**. When you're in the blue zone you may be feeling down – **sad, sick, tired, or bored**. You're still in control but with low energy emotions.

Alert Programme

We use the ALERT Program® in school to help your child self - regulate their levels of arousal throughout the day.

In the ALERT Program® three categories are used:

Fast – This best describes the following; over-excited, angry, upset, frustrated, finding situations hard to tolerate.

Just Right – This best describes the following; feeling regulated, ready to attend in social situations and learning tasks.

Slow – This best describes the following; feeling low in energy, bored, tired, ‘switched off’.

These categories can be referred to as ‘engine levels’ and are demonstrated in the image on the next page.

When your child is in the 'slow' (blue area) we will work with your child to complete alerting activities to enable them to move into the green 'just right' area. When your child is in the 'fast' (red) area we will work with your child to complete calming activities and exercises to help them to regulate and to move again into the green area. For example, if your child appears 'fast', a proprioceptive strategy will have a calming effect, and if they appear 'slow', a vestibular activity will have an 'awakening' effect.

It is ideal to use this language with your child between home and school to provide consistency. Please contact school if you would like extra information on this or speak to your child's Class Teacher or the school Occupational Therapist Zara Trickett.



Narrative Therapy

What is Narrative Therapy?

When we talk about 'narrative', we are referring to the ability to tell a story or series of events with precision and clarity. This is a complex skill that requires remembering what happened, getting all the parts in the correct order, picking out the key information, finding and using the correct words in sentences and remembering grammar rules.

At YMH we use Narrative Therapy as an approach to develop pupils speaking and listening skills through narrative. The programmes raises awareness of the individual components of a simple story, to retelling and then generating their own ideas for stories.

The ability to tell stories is a big part of everyday communication. We tell stories to one another when we talk about what happened at school, on holiday or at the weekend. The ability to make narratives is a skill that can be difficult to master.

Narrative Therapy provides an approach that is:

- Highly structured
- Based on meaningful activities.
- Designed to address many skills including attention, listening, receptive and expressive language skills.

Pupils are taught to use a narrative structure through the use of colour coding and symbols on cue cards. Sign is also used to reinforce the individual story components. The use of sign and colour coded story component cards help to bring narrative to life act as visual prompts that not only support the pupils understanding of stories but reinforce the use of the Individual story components.

If you would like or need any support, further information or resources on any of the programmes or interventions we use within school then please don't hesitate to contact either:



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Glossary

| | |
|---------|---|
| YMH: | Ysgol Maes Hyfryd |
| PECS: | Picture Exchange Communication System |
| PODD: | Pragmatics Organisation Dynamic Display |
| LNF: | Literacy Numeracy Framework |
| SCERTS: | Social Communication Emotional Regulation Transitional Support |

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