



CHILDREN WITH DYSPHAGIA/EATING and DRINKING DIFFICULTIES POLICY

Rationale

At Willow Dene there are a number of children who have difficulties in eating and/or drinking as a result of oromotor difficulties, developmental delay, neurological conditions, sensory based difficulties or degenerative conditions. These children will require input from a combination of school, therapy and nursing staff in order to ensure that they benefit from appropriate input to improve or maintain their eating and drinking skills and a healthy nutritional intake

Aims

- To ensure safe and appropriate input to maintain or further the eating and drinking skills of children at Willow Dene
- To ensure clarity of roles and procedures
- To ensure that clear programmes and training are provided for school staff who are working with individual children who have eating and drinking difficulties
- To provide clear information regarding good practice in safe eating and drinking

Equal Opportunities

At Willow Dene we believe that every child is entitled to safe and appropriate provision of food and drink in order to stay as well nourished as possible and maintain/further their existing skills in eating and drinking. We recognise the importance of the social opportunities provided at mealtimes and will provide a range of contexts to allow all children to experience this. We promote a positive and healthy attitude towards nutrition regardless of medical complexity and individual diversity. We foster an ethos of teamwork and will strive to ensure that all members of staff feel supported, informed and comfortable in working with children who have eating and drinking difficulties

Roles and Responsibilities

The role of the Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT) will be to

- Liaise with classroom staff and other professionals regarding information about the immediate eating and drinking provision for new children on arrival in school
- Assess children's eating and drinking on arrival in school as required by statement or when it is felt by previous placement, educational or nursing staff that SaLT input is appropriate
- Liaise with parents, school staff and wider professionals to gather information regarding the eating and drinking skills of individual children
- Provide guidelines for parents, school and other relevant professionals
- Provide support on implementing guidelines which may include home visits, class team meeting or joint working
- Attend meetings and appointments which are related to the eating and drinking skills of individual children and give accurate and prompt feedback to the professionals involved

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- Review the eating and drinking guidelines which have been provided for individuals on a regular basis according to the needs of individual children or sooner if requested
- Be involved in the provision of training both individuals and groups of school staff in accordance to their need in the rationale behind and good practice in the management of children with eating and drinking difficulties
- Alert appropriate professionals if there are concerns regarding the safety or health of individual children

The role of the SMT member who is coordinating provision for children with dysphagia/eating & drinking difficulties will be:

- To ensure that policy for the management of children with eating and drinking difficulties is made available to all members of staff
- To ensure that members of staff are aware of and familiar with procedures and the roles of other professionals
- To provide induction regarding good practice for new staff members and to ensure that staff only work with individual children when they have had appropriate training and information
- To provide regular training in conjunction with the school and SaLT team to an appropriate level for the complexity of the children that staff are working with who have eating and drinking difficulties
- To ensure adequate provision of resources and staff to be in line with individual guidelines for eating and drinking
- To ensure consistent and appropriately trained staff work with individual children

The role of class teachers will be

- To ensure that they are familiar with eating and drinking programmes for children in their class and that programmes are followed
- To ensure that individual eating and drinking guidelines are available to all staff working with those children
- To ensure that staff have read eating and drinking guidelines for individuals prior to working with them at eating and drinking times and that food is not offered to children by unfamiliar adults
- To notify school coordinator if there are concerns or problems regarding the eating and drinking of children
- To ask for SaLT input via the school coordinator or SaLT referral forms prior to making any changes to the way that children are offered food and drink

The role of class staff will be

- To read the policy for the management of children with eating and drinking difficulties and ensure that they are familiar with roles and procedures
- To read individual guidelines for children who they are working with before offering them food and drink
- To follow guidelines and ask for further advice where appropriate
- To take part in training regarding the management of children with eating and drinking difficulties
- To report any changes, concerns, problems or progress to class teachers

The role of the school nurse will be

- To notify SaLT about medical history which may relate to aspiration
- To provide background information to SaLT which may be relevant to the management of a child with eating and drinking difficulties

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- To support other professionals in conveying information to parents
- To liaise with and inform community doctors
- To observe and raise staff awareness of levels of children's oral hygiene
- To observe signs of swallowing, digestion difficulties in children who are gastrostomy or NG fed
- To liaise with dietitian

Monitoring and Assessment

- Continuing Professional Development coordinator will monitor the provision and quality of training and induction for individuals and groups of staff on a regular basis according to central record kept of induction training and update training for individuals. Training will be provided by SaLT & school coordinator for individuals and groups
- Nursing team will monitor ongoing health issues in relation to individuals with eating and drinking difficulties
- SaLT will assess and review the management of children with eating and drinking difficulties including new referrals and existing caseload
- Class room staff will monitor and evaluate the implementation of programmes for the management of individual children with eating and drinking difficulties

Related Documentation

- SaLT operational policy for safe management of children with eating and drinking difficulties/dysphagia

Policy Approved by Governing Body:	
Policy showed with staff:	
Policy to be reviewed:	