

Learning Support FAQs - The Communication Department (Comms)

- **Where do I go when I arrive in the morning?**

The Communication Department is open from 8am and has staff on duty. In addition to this the library and canteen are also open before school. Outside areas are accessible to all pupils who arrive at school before registration.

- **Can I wear ear defenders?**

Of course, you can wear ear defenders if they help with your learning and make you feel safe and secure.

- **Do I have to wear full uniform?**

Mrs Major or Mrs Morton can have a chat with your parents about your uniform at St Pauls and they can come to an agreement once the Head teacher has agreed. We can be flexible with some of the uniform requirements.

- **What can I do if I can't cope with busy/noisy breaks and lunchtimes?**

The communication department and the space outside the department are open during breaks and lunchtimes and have staff on duty. You are welcome to have a drink, snack and to eat your lunch in these areas.

- **What if I get lost or I am late to a lesson?**

To start with it will take time to learn your timetable and to find your way around school so it will be natural for you to occasionally get lost or be late for lessons. In time you will familiarise yourself with the school and will know the routine so you will be able to arrive on time to all of lessons. Teachers will understand and you will not get into trouble in the first few weeks if you get lost and are therefore late to your lesson. There is a warning bell after breaks and lunchtimes which tells the pupils to get organised and to make their way to their next lessons.

- **I don't like getting changed for PE as it is too noisy and busy....**

There is a small room in the communication department that can be used to change for PE. Alternatively there is a disabled toilet in the same block as the PE changing rooms that can also be used with permission.

- **Where can I have my lunch, as I don't like canteens, as they are too noisy for me...**

The communication department and the space outside the department are open during breaks and lunchtimes and have staff on duty. You are welcome to have a drink, snack and to eat your lunch in these areas.

- **What if I need to leave a lesson because I am anxious/stressed/can't concentrate?**

There can be a number of things that you can be offered. You could have a 'time out' card you can show the teacher or Learning Support Assistant if you need to leave class. You could ask or be encouraged to stand outside the classroom until you feel able to return to lesson. You will be also be encouraged by staff to use your anxiety or anger management strategies. If you still feel anxious/stressed/angry then you will be asked to go the communication department or can request to do so. When you arrive you will be given time to calm and then staff will have a conversation with you so they are able to understand and offer help. There is the rainbow room in the Communication Department that can be used for calming and quiet time as well as the classroom itself.

- **Do I have to study all the lessons on the timetable?**

We will have access to a broad and balanced curriculum at St Pauls. There may be times, following discussions with your parents and agreement with the Head teacher that you might remove a lesson from your timetable. The lesson will be replaced with supported study periods. See below.

- **What are supported study periods?**

Supported study periods will be on your timetable when you are not attending a subject and will be in the learning support department instead. Supported study periods can be used for a number of different reasons: project work, homework completion, numeracy and literacy intervention or reflection time. Specialist interventions such as social skills training, programmes to support emotional wellbeing and mental health and language intervention, by our Speech and Language Therapists, will also occur during this time.

- **What support will I receive in the classroom?**

There are Learning Support Assistants (LSA) in all subject areas who will be available to support you in a range of curriculum areas. Their support can vary from 1:1 to explaining a task or information and then they move away to promote independence. The class teacher will also interact with you on a 1:1 basis. To develop independence, and to avoid reliance on individual staff, we do not offer the same LSA full time so you will have different LSAs for different subject areas.

To support your written work you could also have access to alternative methods of recording ideas such as use of an electronic notebook.

- **What support will I receive outside of the classroom?**

Every student is different therefore the support you will receive outside the classroom can vary. You could have access to regular speech and language therapy and therapeutic intervention, 1:1 sessions to discuss incidents and behaviour issues as they occur, using coaching conversations and comic strip approaches. Opportunities to develop social skills in a safe and secure environment and access to visual prompts and interventions such as Social Stories and Comic Strip Conversations. Reading, numeracy and spelling programmes could also be offered.

- **I struggle with my organisational skills, what help will I receive?**

In the Communication Department there are 3 lockers so if there is one available then students can request one. All members of the communication department will have their own drawer where work and equipment can be stored. There is a bucket for school bags and PE bags to be left so that you don't need to carry both around school. There are also student timetables on display in the department to support organisational skills. At school there are 'warning bells' so that students are reminded to get themselves ready of their next lesson and staff will also provide regular reminders if you are in the communication department during breaks and lunchtime.

- **Can I bring in a toy/ things from home to help me feel settled in school?**

There are 'therapy' drawers in the communication department where you can store things from home that make you feel happy and secure but you will be encouraged to keep them in the department and not to be taken to lessons.

- **Fiddling with things helps me to concentrate and/or keep calm, is this ok to do in the classroom?**

We would always suggest that students have access to items that are small enough to fit in their pocket or pencil case so they can be used but do not distract or disturb the learning of their peers.