Accessible Communication Policy

Steffi Hesketh Tutoring – online one-to-one and group tutoring

Document control	**Details**
Document	Accessible Communication Policy
Organisation	Steffi Hesketh Tutoring (sole trader), online-only tutoring, based in Southampton, Hampshire
Business address	32 Inver Way, Southampton, SO19 1SF
Policy owner	Steffi Hesketh-Spells, Owner and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
Deputy DSL	Shim Amin, contactable via the business email (steffiheskethtutoring@gmail.com). If neither the DSL nor the Deputy DSL can be reached, follow the alternative route in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (contact children's social care, the police or the LADO directly).
Contact	steffiheskethtutoring@gmail.com, 07802 828910
Version	1.0
Effective date	November 2026
Review date	November 2027, or sooner after a serious incident, a change in law or guidance, or a change to the Hampshire contract
Applies to	Pupils, parents and carers, Steffi Hesketh-Spells, all self-employed tutors and anyone communicating on behalf of the business

Document control	Details
Contract	Hampshire County Council SEND Alternative Provision Register Agreement CS25116 and Tutoring Call-Off Contract CS25116A
Approved by	Steffi Hesketh-Spells. Signature: Steffi Hesketh-Spells, Owner and Designated Safeguarding Lead. Date approved: 9 November 2026

1. Purpose

We want every pupil and family to be able to understand us, be understood, and take a full part in decisions about their learning. This policy explains how we identify and meet the information and communication needs of pupils, parents and carers who have a disability, impairment or sensory loss.

It meets clause 12 of the Hampshire Call-Off Contract, which requires us to:

- communicate openly and clearly in line with the law and the Accessible Information Standard (clause 12.1);
- comply with the Accessible Information Standard when identifying, recording, flagging, sharing and meeting communication needs (clause 12.5);
- give every pupil an accessible information pack (clause 12.6);
- have, and publish or display publicly, an accessible communication policy (clause 12.7).

It also supports our duties under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments. It builds on our Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and SEND Policy.

2. Who this covers

This policy covers:

- Council-referred pupils and other pupils;
- their parents, carers and advocates;
- anyone else we communicate with about a pupil's tuition.

Examples of needs include:

- autism, ADHD, dyslexia, or developmental language disorder;
- learning disability;
- hearing or visual impairment;

- speech and language needs;
- physical disability affecting typing or handling devices;
- anxiety affecting spoken communication.

People whose first language is not English, but who have no disability, are not covered by the Accessible Information Standard. We will still try to meet their needs, for example with translated summaries or an interpreter, where we reasonably can.

3. The five steps we follow

Step 1 – Identify

- At referral and intake, we ask the pupil and parent or carer (and read the EHCP and referral papers) whether they have any information or communication needs. We ask about how they prefer to receive information and how they prefer to communicate with us.
- We ask again at every review, and whenever we notice a change.
- We never assume. We ask the pupil directly too, in a way that suits them.

Step 2 – Record

- Needs are recorded clearly in the pupil plan (01 Pupil Plan) under "Communication and information needs". Examples: "Needs written information in Easy Read with pictures", "Prefers chat to speaking", "Needs 10 seconds' processing time after questions", "Parent is Deaf and uses BSL; contact by email or text, not phone".
- We record the need and the support required, not just a diagnosis.

Step 3 – Flag

- The pupil's record in the AP Pupil Tracker and their secure folder carries a clear flag: **"Communication needs – see pupil plan"**.
- Tutors must check the flag before the first lesson, before any cover lesson, and before sending any written information.

Step 4 – Share

- With the consent of the pupil or parent (or another lawful basis under UK GDPR), we share communication needs with:
    - the tutor and any cover tutor (using 05 Cover and Handover);
    - the Council's SEN case officer;
    - other professionals involved in the pupil's provision.
- We share only what is needed, securely, in line with our Privacy Notice.

Step 5 – Meet

We provide information and support in the format the person needs. This can include:

- Easy Read or plain-English versions;
- large print or adjustable font sizes;
- dyslexia-friendly layouts (clear sans-serif font, cream backgrounds, short paragraphs);
- screen-reader-compatible documents;
- audio or video explanations;
- captions or live transcription in lessons;
- visual timetables and symbols;
- chat-based participation;
- extra processing time;
- a BSL interpreter where needed, using a qualified BSL interpreter or communication-support provider;
- communicating through an advocate or trusted adult where the person chooses.

The tutor adapts teaching materials and on-screen presentation (font size, contrast, reduced clutter, one instruction at a time) as set out in the pupil plan.

4. Our everyday standards

- We use plain English, short sentences and clear headings in all letters, reports and messages.
- Written reports for families include a short summary in plain language.
- Our website and documents aim to meet good accessibility practice: alternative text for images, readable contrast, and headings that screen readers can use.
- We confirm important information (session times, changes, reviews and complaints outcomes) in writing in the person's preferred format.
- We give enough time to read and respond, and offer to talk things through.

5. Accessible information pack

Every Council-referred pupil receives an information pack in a format that meets their needs (based on the 07 Family Guide). It includes:

- who we are and how to contact us;
- the personalised service agreed for the pupil;
- how we record and share information;
- how we gather feedback and review progress;
- how to make a complaint;
- how to raise a safeguarding concern.

6. Safeguarding and pupil voice

Children with communication needs may find it harder to tell someone they are being harmed. Tutors must:

- offer accessible ways to raise a worry, such as chat, writing, visual prompts, or a trusted adult;
- never assume that changes in behaviour are just part of a child's SEND;
- report any concern to the DSL using the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, which adopts KCSIE principles as good practice.

We capture pupil voice in the way that works for each pupil and record how it was gathered.

7. Training

All tutors receive training on this policy and accessible teaching practice at induction, with updates at least every year. Steffi checks that adjustments in pupil plans are actually being delivered when she samples session records.

8. Evidence for the Council

We keep evidence that we follow this policy and the Accessible Information Standard. This includes:

- completed communication-needs sections in pupil plans;
- flags on records;
- examples of adapted materials;
- information packs issued;
- feedback.

We will provide a copy of this policy and that evidence within 10 working days of a written request from the Council (Call-Off clause 12.7).

9. Publishing this policy

This policy will be published on our website (Policies page) and given to every Council-referred family.

10. Concerns and complaints

Anyone who feels their communication needs have not been met can tell their tutor, contact Steffi (steffiheskethtutoring@gmail.com, 07802 828910), or use the Complaints Policy. Complaints can be made in any format, and we will help people make them. Complaints from Council-referred families are reported to the Council within the timescales in the Complaints Policy.

11. Monitoring and review

Steffi reviews:

- communication-needs records each term;
- this policy every year, taking account of feedback, complaints and any updates to the Accessible Information Standard or the contract.

12. Related policies

- Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and SEND Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Privacy Notice
- Complaints Policy
- Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy
- 01 Pupil Plan, 05 Cover and Handover, 07 Family Guide