

Key Skills Descriptors

There are six Life Skills embedded in the programme. The journey of each young person as they progress along the scales, will be monitored throughout. The scale of 1-5 is used, explained below for each Life Skill.

Communication (two way exchange of opinions, news and information by writing, speech or gestures including body language and facial reactions):

1. minimal verbal communication with other people or horses; may use facial reactions, body language or noises to communicate;
2. will answer questions specifically asked to them, usually using verbal language; will use short, repeated phrases, facial reactions or body language to communicate with other people or horses;
3. answers questions using more extended verbal language; holds conversations based on their choice of topic with others of a similar age;
4. initiates a conversation with others of a similar age; will offer longer answers to questions asked by adults; asks questions which are usually relevant;
5. initiates conversations with others; uses appropriate eye contact, facial reactions and body language; can keep a conversation going with others for an extended period of time sticking to the relevant topic and swapping it as appropriate.

Confidence (a feeling or belief that you can do something well or succeed at something):

1. will attempt an activity with lots of guidance and support, especially from people well-known but demonstrates a lack of belief;
2. requires minimal guidance and support to attempt an activity;
3. will attempt an activity regardless of whether support or guidance is offered, especially when focusing on an area in which they have specific interests;
4. will attempt an activity with guidance rather than excessive support; will try something again where they may have not been successful in a previous attempt;
5. shows a willingness to try a range of different activities and tasks, regardless of whether they have not been successful when trying previously; is usually happy to take on new challenges and move out of their comfort zone appropriately.

Building Relationships (the way in which two or more people or things are connected; the way in which two or more people or groups and behave towards each other):

1. struggles to look in the direction of someone else or a horse; chooses to be on their own over with another person/horse;
2. will look at someone else or a horse; will answer when someone greets them by name, especially if well-known to the participant;
3. will greet another person or horse by name; will answer when someone else greets them even if they are not well-known by the participant; smiles at other people/horses; is interested in other people/horses;
4. cooperates with others if it is instigated by another person/horse; actively shows interest in other people/horses;
5. demonstrates listening skills; tries to cooperate with other people/horses; shows a preference towards people or horses they know over unknown; shows appreciation of help; usually happy to encourage and help others.

Teamwork (the process of working collaboratively with a group of people in order to achieve a goal; teamwork means that people will try to cooperate, using their individual skills and providing constructive feedback, despite any personal conflict between individuals):

1. struggles to work as part of a team; needs a large amount of guidance and support to work with others; chooses to work alone if given the option; finds it very challenging to put aside personal differences when working with others;
2. will work in a pair if the other person is well-known to the young person; may either try to lead everything when working with a partner or to follow the other person with very limited contribution from themselves; will work in a small group with others with guidance if they are unknown to the young person;
3. will listen to others and contribute their ideas whilst working in a small group; may become quite reliant on working with a particular person when working as a team; is starting to lead at appropriate times;
4. able to work in small groups with no support, especially with other people who are well-known to the young person; will contribute ideas when working with others and will listen to others' ideas; cooperates with others in a small group and can work through problems within the group;
5. works in a small groups with other people who are not well-known to the young person without additional guidance or support; can complete a wide variety of tasks working in pairs and small groups to achieve the intended outcome; can identify strengths and skills within a team which will help achieving their goal.

Responsibility (the ability or authority to act or decide on one's own, without supervision having a duty to deal with something; being accountable for something):

1. struggles to follow instructions or to act in an appropriate way in a variety of situations; finds consequences of actions difficult to understand;
2. is starting to show a limited understanding of consequences of their actions; is beginning to show the ability to act appropriately in supported situations;
3. shows the ability to act appropriately if this is explained clearly to them; demonstrates some understanding of the consequences of their actions; beginning to make appropriate decision making and showing progress in this area;
4. acts appropriately the majority of the time if expectations are explained clearly to them; shows an understanding of the immediate consequences of their actions; continuing to develop decision making skills;
5. is showing ability to make own decisions independently and, most of the time, can act appropriately without support; shows an understanding of the consequences of their actions and is starting to try and make amends for any wrong choices made.

Perseverance (something that has been done or achieved through effort: a result of hard work and training; something accomplished through continued focus or courage):

1. will complete activities which are within their comfort zone with minimal effort; rushes in an attempt to 'get things done'; attendance may be poor;
2. shows more effort when completing a task within their comfort zone; demonstrates some effort when faced with an activity which they find challenging, sometimes with adult support; shows effort when completing a task in an area in which the young person is particularly interested;
3. shows enthusiasm for favourite activities; is able to recognise in which activities they have previously been successful – this then impacts positively upon their attempts to complete similar tasks;
4. demonstrates enthusiasm to complete a range of activities which they are able to complete independently; are willing to have a go at activities which are outside their comfort zone, with some support offered by an adult; will repeat tasks as needed;
5. keen and enthusiastic to join in a large number of activities; shows a willingness to learn; will stick at an activity if at first they do not succeed, regardless of whether adult support and supervision is offered; shows courage when faced with a difficult task or uncertainty; starting to set personal goals, therefore showing ambition.