



Durham High School

# **Teaching and Learning Policy**

This policy applies to the Whole School and is published to staff

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Updated: September 2022  
Next review: September 2023

*This policy should be read in conjunction with: Anti-Bullying Policies; Assessment, Reporting and Recording Policies; Behaviour Policies; Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy; Complaints Policy; Curriculum Policies; English as an Additional Language Policy; Equal Opportunities Policy; Health and Safety Policy; Homework Policy; Marking and Feedback Policies; Pupil Code of Conduct; Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy, RSHE Policy and PSHCCE Policy.*

## **Aim**

The Aim of this Teaching and Learning Policy is to make explicit and accessible the shared, agreed, broad principles and practices upon which teaching and learning are based. This policy will act as an “umbrella” policy for other school policies and guidelines in that, along with the aims of the school, it will provide the philosophical framework for them.

We believe that learning is a continuous process which involves acquiring knowledge, skills and concepts, and developing positive and worthwhile attitudes. This learning process is designed to enable the learners to take on levels of responsibilities depending on their age and stage of development.

We believe that the purpose of teaching is to promote active learning and that there are four main elements which affect the learning process, namely:

- what the pupil brings to the School;
- what the School offers to the pupil;
- the influence of parents/guardians; and
- the influence of the wider community.

The ethos and atmosphere underpin the agreed aims of the School. Teachers will provide a broad and balanced curriculum, which will develop the skills, concepts and knowledge necessary for future learning. In the course of their daily work the staff will contribute to the development of this ethos in a variety of ways.

## **The Pupil**

### **1. To acknowledge that pupils bring previous experiences, expectations and styles to their learning.**

- Observation of pupils in School.
- In Senior Department, the ‘Welcome to School Booklet’
- Communications between staff at transition times (eg Nursery to Reception; EYFS to Year 1; Years 2 to 3; Years 6 to 7; Years 9 to 10; Years 11 to 12).
- Sharing information with parents/guardians.
- Time available for sharing language, experiences, ideas, artefacts and knowledge.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to build on experiences other than those in School.

### **2. To acknowledge that individual pupils develop academically, emotionally, socially, physically and spiritually at different rates.**

- Pupils enter School at different stages of development; they learn in different ways and at different rates of progress. In the course of learning pupils develop their skills through a variety of processes which include: investigation; experimentation; listening; observation; talking and discussion; asking questions; practical exploration and role play; retrieving information; imagining; repetition; problem-solving; making choices and decision-making.

Teachers should provide opportunities to allow pupils to have access to these processes.

- Differentiate the curriculum in all areas and at all levels by: task, outcome and teacher/adult support.
- Maintain purposeful and informative planning, record-keeping and assessment documents, in line with the respective Assessment, Reporting and Recording Policy.
- Offer open-ended activities where appropriate.
- Value and celebrate pupils' successes and achievements, e.g. displaying their work, presentations in assembly.
- Provide pupils with meaningful, purposeful tasks.
- Encourage a sense of 'awe and wonder'.

### **3. To acknowledge that pupils need feedback and information on their progress in School.**

- Conversations with pupils about their work and progress.
- Setting targets both formally and informally.
- Marking written work, at times with pupils or using peer assessment, and writing meaningful comments.
- Regular assessments of pupils' work in order to establish their level of attainment, and to inform future planning. Record-keeping and assessment procedures are defined in the respective Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy and the respective Marking, Rewards and Feedback Policy.
- Using the Rewards and Sanctions system.
- Reviewing targets set by pupils and staff.

### **4. To acknowledge that pupils' involvement in their own learning is a strong positive influence.**

- Providing a learning environment that encourages choice and gives pupils opportunities to explore their own ideas.
- Encouraging pupils to work collaboratively where appropriate.

## **The School – Learning**

### **1. To build self-esteem and encourage respect for all other individuals.**

- Providing a calm, quiet and effective working environment at all times, in which each pupil can achieve their maximum potential.
- Providing a fair and disciplined environment. Refer to the School's Behaviour Policy and Pupil Code of Conduct.
- Providing a welcoming environment, in which courtesy, kindness and respect are fostered.
- Staff to be an example to pupils, e.g. working collaboratively, valuing and praising the contributions of others (staff and pupils).
- Provide positive models of relationships and behaviour by staff and other adults in School.
- Encouraging the constructive discussion of issues in the classroom.

### **2. To include all pupils in a variety of opportunities to enable them to have equal access to the whole curriculum.**

- Refer to SEND and EAL Policy.
- Refer to School's Equal Opportunities Policy.
- Differentiate learning tasks and activities.
- Provide open-ended activities.
- Use a range of teaching organisations - class, group, individual - to enable staff to focus on individuals.
- Use planned support effectively.

- Provide adequate and appropriate resources.

**3. To encourage pupils to develop independent learning skills.**

- Develop good classroom organisation and provide appropriate and easily accessible resources.
- Ensure that pupils feel comfortable and happy with their routines.
- Plan to provide a progression of skills.

**4. To teach pupils a range of interpersonal learning skills to enable them to make full use of the curriculum offered.**

- Systematically encourage and develop the skills of collaboration, e.g., listening, taking turns, building on the ideas of others.
- Pupils presenting their work to each other.
- PSHCCE Learning Skills to promote readiness for the world of work.

**5. To promote positive attitudes to learning and self-discipline.**

- Refer to the respective Behaviour Policy, Pupil Code of Conduct and School Aims.
- Make pupils aware of the staff's high expectations, e.g., by sharing and praising good work, marking work constructively.
- Setting challenging but achievable tasks and activities.
- Encourage opportunities for self-assessment and self-reflection.
- Enthuse and motivate pupils in their learning.

**6. To encourage the development of critical thinking.**

- Plan for investigative activities where possible.
- Help pupils to use well-structured questioning techniques, e.g. Why? When? Where? Who? How?
- Positive appraisal of the work of others, e.g., in PE, Drama.

**7. To make speaking and listening important parts of the learning process.**

- Provide structured opportunities and unstructured situations for individual feedback - one-to-one, staff to pupils, pupil to class (presentations, relating experience), paired work (sharing a book, computer work), group work, class discussions.
- Assemblies (Whole School and Key Stage Assemblies).
- School Council Meetings.
- Drama and role play.
- PSHCCE content discussions.

**8. To provide opportunities for pupils to take an active part in their learning.**

- Make sure that everyone feels secure in School routines.
- The starting point of activities may reflect the interests and experiences of the pupils.
- Opportunities for pupils to make choices and express preferences.

**9. To encourage pupils to become reflective learners.**

- See (6) and (7) above.
- Develop re-drafting skills where appropriate.
- Develop self-evaluation/assessment skills, e.g. positive feedback before negative, starting with what they can do.

**10. To maintain an attractive physical environment to motivate pupils' learning.**

- Provide displays which reflect current work or contribute to the learning experience.
- Well-organised classrooms and corridors.

## **The School – Teaching**

- 1. To ensure the curriculum has breadth and balance and provides progression and continuity.**
  - Have schemes of work/curriculum plans in place.
  - Liaise between Key Stages.
  - Liaise between Year groups.
  - Offer a wide range of extra-curricular activities.
- 2. To plan, deliver, monitor and evaluate the curriculum effectively across the School.**
  - Regular Year group plans.
  - Daily/weekly individual plans.
  - Up-to-date schemes of work.
  - Ongoing evaluations of work to inform future planning.
  - Use data to track attainment.
- 3. To employ a range of teaching strategies to include the learning needs of all the pupils.**
  - See respective Homework and SEND Policies.
  - Pupils learn in a variety of ways, and for this reason it is necessary to ensure that planning incorporates as many styles as possible. These styles include: individual learning, collaborative learning in small groups, or pairs, one-to-one learning with an adult, or more able pupil, whole class, independent learning.
- 4. To regularly assess each pupil's learning progress.**
  - Discussions of individual's work and behaviour.
  - Planning for assessment and learning outcomes.
  - Formal assessments and tests.
  - Sampling of pupils' work.
  - Moderation of standards across classes and Year groups.
  - Set appropriate targets for pupils.
- 5. To deploy all available resources appropriately to promote the most effective teaching.**
  - A range of resources, well-organised and accessible, in the classroom; pupils taught to take care of resources.
  - Co-ordinators/Heads of Department to organise and maintain resources for their areas.
  - Effective management of the School budget.
  - Staff being responsible for returning equipment and maintaining tidiness.
  - Staff inform the relevant personnel of the need for the replacement and repair of stock.
- 6. To use the physical environment to the best possible teaching advantage.**
  - Arrangements of furniture to suit teaching styles.
  - Easy access to all relevant areas and resources.
  - Designated areas for different purposes.
  - Maximise and plan for the use of non-classroom areas, both indoor (eg. Hall) and outdoor (playgrounds, grounds).
  - Use the locality for teaching purposes.

## **Parents and Guardians**

**1. To acknowledge the importance of the learning which takes place in the home environment.**

- Refer to respective Homework Policy.
- Encourage pupils to bring their home culture/interests/language into School.
- Provision of resources which reflect those cultures, interests and languages.
- Remember that the starting point for learning is what the pupils *can* do.

**2. To involve parents and guardians appropriately in the work and life of the School.**

- Provide information to parents/guardians about the curriculum to be followed.
- Ensure all parents/guardians are aware of special events, displays, exhibitions, concerts, performances, and are encouraged to attend.
- Encourage parents/guardians to contribute any special skills.
- Encourage parents/guardians to bring to School their cultures/interests/languages.
- Encourage all parents/guardians to be active members of the Parents and Friends.

**3. To inform parents and guardians of their pupils' progress and involve them in their pupils' learning.**

- Keep parents/guardians informed through Parents' Evenings and reports.
- Provide a variety of opportunities to talk to parents about their child, both formally and informally.
- Issue formal written reports.
- Ensure parents know the appropriate channel to contact School should they have any concerns about their child's progress.

**Parents'/Guardians' Role**

Parents are encouraged to support their child's learning by:

- Ensuring that their child comes to School feeling confident and positive.
- Ensuring that their child arrives at School punctually and is only absent when it is absolutely necessary and informing the School promptly of reasons for their child's absence.
- Sharing with the teacher any problems in School that their child is experiencing.
- Supporting their child by attending School events and other Parents' Evenings.
- Ensuring that all contact addresses, email addresses, and telephone numbers are up to date and correct.
- Ensuring that their child arrives at School wearing the correct uniform/dress code and bringing the correct equipment, eg. pens, pencils, books etc.
- Agreeing to the School's policy concerning a pupil's behaviour.
- Agreeing to, and supporting, the School's Homework Policy.
- Responding to letters/emails sent home from School.
- Informing the School of any significant matters at home which may affect their child's progress, happiness or behaviour.
- Supporting extra-curricular activities such as, plays, concerts, sports fixtures.

**The Wider Community**

**1. To maintain and actively develop links with the wider community.**

- Visit local organisations and community services.
- Welcome visits from members of the local community (eg. students, work experience pupils).
- Hold fund-raising events for national and local charities.
- Maintain and develop links with other educational establishments.
- Establish collaborative projects with other schools and institutions.
- Where appropriate, make local purchases.

- Develop links involving other countries.
- Recognise and celebrate the contribution of surrounding communities which reflect the School's intake.

**2. To ensure the School ethos reflects the wider community.**

- Develop the community lets.
- Display any events celebrating and valuing a variety of cultures and languages.

**3. To promote the ethos of the School within the wider community.**

- Advertise School functions locally, eg. in the press, social media, shop windows.
- Participate in community sponsored activities, eg. Rotary sponsored Swimathon, NSPCC Carol Concert.

**4. To acknowledge that all members of the local community are involved in the learning process.**

- Co-opt governors from local businesses and establishments.
- Value pupils' achievements outside School, eg. Brownies, Drama, Sport.
- Invite speakers into School, eg. religious leaders, police, road safety, fire-fighters, local politicians.

**Review, Monitoring and Evaluation**

This policy will be kept under review by the School's Senior Leadership Team. The monitoring and evaluation of this policy will be the responsibility of the Senior Leadership Team. This policy is a working document and therefore is open to change and restructuring as and when the need arises.

**Appendix 1**

## **Aspects of Teaching and Learning Reflecting Good Practice**

### **Planning and Preparation**

- The teacher plans effectively to achieve progression in pupils' learning, using the scheme of work as a guide.
- High expectations of each pupil regardless of individual differences.
- Appropriately challenging tasks and targets set for individuals and for groups, building on prior attainment.
- Awareness of specific needs within the group and plans work accordingly.
- Clear learning objectives are communicated at the start of the lesson and understood by the pupils.
- Good lesson structure.
- Materials are well produced.
- Review of work both during and at the end of the lesson.

### **Subject knowledge, understanding and enthusiasm**

- The teacher has very good subject knowledge and understanding.
- Subject material is appropriate for the lesson.
- Knowledge is made relevant and interesting for pupils so that intellectual curiosity is stimulated.
- Teacher communicates enthusiasm.
- Opportunities to improve pupils' language, numeracy and ICT skills, as well as independent and collaborative study skills needed for effective learning.
- Opportunities to contribute to wider educational development including Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development.

### **Teaching strategies**

- Teaching methods used enable all pupils to learn effectively.
- The lesson is linked to previous teaching and learning.
- The ideas/experiences of pupils are drawn upon.
- A variety of activities and questioning techniques are used.
- Instructions and explanations are clear and specific at all stages, eg. from the outline of the content and aims at the start to a summary of key points at the end.
- All pupils are involved, listened to and responded to.
- High standards of effort, accuracy and presentation are encouraged.
- Methods should cover Visual, Audio and Kinaesthetic (VAK) learning approaches.

### **Classroom and behaviour management**

- High standards of behaviour are expected and insisted upon.
- Pupils are praised for effort and achievement.
- Prompt action is taken to address unacceptable behaviour.
- All pupils are treated fairly.

### **Assessment and recording**

- Pupils' understanding is monitored and assessed throughout the lesson-



- Mistakes are recognised and used constructively to facilitate learning.
- Pupils' written work is assessed regularly and accurately and positive feedback is given including how to improve.
- The teacher makes effective use of assessment information on pupils' attainment and progress in teaching and planning future lessons.

### **Classroom atmosphere and pupil outcomes**

- The teacher creates a positive, co-operative atmosphere where pupils feel safe and are confident about taking risks in their learning.
- Pupils understand what is expected of them.
- Pupils are engaged throughout the lesson and make progress.
- Pupil outcomes are consistent with the objectives set at the beginning of the lesson.

### **Use of time and resources**

- The teacher makes effective use of time and resources.
- A good pace is maintained throughout the lesson, from a purposeful start to a structured end.
- A range of learning resources is used, including ICT where appropriate.
- The learning environment is attractive.
- The organisation of the room, including furniture, meets the needs of the group or activity.

### **Homework**

- Homework is used to reinforce and extend learning and takes a variety of forms over time.
- Learning objectives are explicit and relevant.
- Feedback is given to the pupils.
- Homework is marked promptly.

### **Enrichment**

- Classroom activities are often supplemented by excursions, theatre visits, workshops, field trips, links with the community and study days.

### **Individual needs and Learning Support**

We aim to meet the needs of individuals through differentiation in lessons, although extra support is provided when necessary by the Learning Support Co-ordinator.