

# TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT POLICY

<b>Date adopted</b>	<b>June 2017</b>
<b>Signed by Chair of Teaching and Learning Committee</b>	
<b>Member of staff responsible for monitoring</b>	<b>Deputy Headteacher</b>
<b>Review frequency</b>	<b>Annual</b>



## **1. Aims and Principles of the Policy**

Northfield School's ethos is a child centred approach, designed to provide every student with the structure, security and success required to build confidence and self-esteem in preparation for adult life.

At Northfield School we are committed to high quality teaching and learning in order to raise students' progress and achievement emotionally, socially and academically during their education.

The aims of this policy are:

- To foster an understanding amongst all staff of the importance of varied teaching and learning strategies and how to implement these in the classroom;
- To raise classroom standards and assist students' development by supporting them in becoming more independent and reflective learners.
- To ensure that the quality of teaching and learning at Northfield School is of the very highest standard.
- To develop confident and motivated students who have the desire and passion to succeed and become lifelong learners.
- To create an environment where students' social and emotional successes are valued as highly as their academic achievements.

## **2. Learning Environment**

At Northfield School we believe a positive learning environment, that is stimulating and structured, promotes students' attitudes and behaviour towards their own and others learning.

Staff should develop strong, positive and appropriate relationships with students and understand their individual needs in order to provide an environment where students feel valued, confident, and motivated to learn.

Students will get the opportunity to develop and build their social skills and emotional learning through and alongside the curriculum with the use of a variety of activities. For example:

- Games to build social skills
- Use of role play
- Off-site activities / visits
- Use of distraction activities
- Use of ICT

The learning environment will be managed in such a way as to facilitate different styles of learning. This could include:

- Whole class teaching
- Pair or grouped work (organised to an appropriate criteria i.e. ability, mixed ability, friendships, dynamics of the groups, etc.)
- One to one teaching
- Independent learning

- Practical activities (investigations, projects, experiments, sports drills, etc.)
- Use of ICT (computer rooms, laptops, iPads, etc.)
- Student led learning

Classrooms and learning areas will provide stimulating and purposeful environments, including displays that are student friendly, thought provoking and engaging.

### **3. Learning Objectives**

In order to encourage independent learning, students need to know what they are expected to learn and how they can achieve it. Providing objectives within lessons allows students to engage with the process of learning.

Teachers must make the learning objectives and outcomes explicit to all students. This will usually happen at the start of the lesson but could happen at other stages in the lesson.

Learning objectives could be delivered in a variety of different ways, for example:

- Written or projected onto the whiteboard
- Orally
- Printed on handouts
- Written by students into their books

In order for students to take responsibility for their own learning it is important for teachers to make it clear

### **4. Learning Displays**

Classroom displays are an important tool for both students and staff. They should be used to create an engaging and positive learning environment where students feel inspired to learn.

Consider the purpose of displays. They should be used as a chance to celebrate student success, so that students can feel proud of their achievements and other students can aspire to achieve the same. Staff may incorporate the use of displays into their teaching, referring to student work as model examples and by using any other displays as teaching points or visual clues and prompts for students in lessons. This will help encourage students to become independent learners.

We are aware that some students because of their SEMH needs do not like having their work displayed publicly and therefore this will be taken into account by all staff before being used. To accommodate this, ready made displays and posters could be used instead as a tool to engage, stimulate and promote students learning.

It is also necessary to note that due to the ASD nature of many of the students on roll at Northfield School, it is appropriate that some learning environments may be left clear or minimal as displays can become over stimulating and distracting for some students.

## **5. Role of the Teaching Assistant**

Teaching assistants are deployed to almost all classes at all times, as such they represent a significant investment in additional support for learning, behaviour and attainment. Teaching Assistants at Northfield are either a grade 7 or 8 colleague. This is at least two grades higher than their mainstream equivalents, a decision made by governors to reflect the level of demand placed upon these colleagues and the nature of their day to day activities. As a guide, the following is extracted from the relevant job descriptions.

All teaching assistants are able to:

- Supervise and provide targeted support for students, based on a good understanding of the students profile and EHCP
- Assist with the creation of resources and the delivery of lessons
- Manage, support and sustain high levels of student behaviour
- Encourage positive participation and engagement with learning
- Set challenging targets and maintain high expectations
- Provide feedback, mark and support planning
- Administer tests
- Work 1:1, with groups or the whole-class as required both ad-hoc and long-term
- Provide admin/clerical support, including for displays

Grade 8 colleagues, in addition to the above, are able to:

- Take the lead on managing and delivering learning, pastoral support or other intervention
- Undertake complex assessments
- Assist with creating student profiles, EHCPs etc
- Support transition, including school and home visits
- Create and maintain assessment information
- Take a lead role in developing and implementing systems
- Manage other teaching assistants

The job descriptions for both grade 7 and 8 teaching assistants are available on the staff drive, or from the school office.

Teaching assistants at Northfield have a vital and pivotal teaching role and are central to the success of the school as a whole.

## **6. Classwork**

Student's exercise books need to reflect the high expectations we have of learning at Northfield School including pride and high quality work. Classwork is a record of the learning and progress that takes place in a lesson and can provide formative feedback to teachers on what to plan next in lessons.

At the start of each lesson, students should be expected to record the date, the title of the lesson or title of the piece of work (as appropriate). At the discretion of the teacher, the intended learning

objective may or may not be recorded. Work should be neatly presented, with the appropriate use of rulers, pencils for drawing etc.

## **7. Teaching Strategies and Styles**

At the start of each lesson, students should be expected to record the date, the title of the lesson, the title of the piece of work or the learning objective (as appropriate). Work should be neatly presented, with the appropriate use of rulers, pencils for drawing etc. Northfield school does not advocate one teaching style over any other, and has no common expectations for how learning should be planned or delivered. We encourage teachers to take risks and to experiment with a range of approaches so that they can determine what works well for the child, for the group and for the curriculum – above all, teaching must support every student’s learning and progress. We recognise that teaching styles are likely to change over time, as the demands of the curriculum change and students preferred learning style develops and matures.

To encourage and promote learning, teachers may choose to use appropriate rewards in order to engage the reluctant learner and impact on their social, emotional and mental health development.

Where effective practice is seen, through observation or feedback, this is recorded in student’s profiles’. It is expected that all staff, teachers and teaching assistants, routinely read and reflect upon the effective practice seen elsewhere, both within the school and where present, at off-site provisions.

## **8. Resources**

The school benefits from excellent teaching resources and specialist provision for PE, fitness, music, DT and art. Subjects are allocated an annual budget to support curriculum delivery and routine whole-school planning support the development of the schools overall physical resource and the development of any further specialist resource bases.

As a small school, we are able to support ad-hoc requests for additional resources and will make every effort to established personalised support in line with students EHCP and in-school profile.

## **9. Differentiation**

It is expected that every teacher and teaching assistant plans for learning that is informed by students’ prior attainment. This will include a review of students’ attainment data from previous schools, in-school data and student profiles. Typically, there will be a wide range of ability within every class, it is therefore typical to see common learning objectives accompanied by a variety of tasks designed to provide, stretch and challenge students of all abilities.

## **10. Sharing Good Practice**

Sharing good practice is an important part of teaching and helps to develop staff performance. Through sharing good practice across the school it ensures that ideas and strategies are communicated and used effectively to promote students’ emotional and academic progress. Northfield School encourages pooling the wealth of experience and expertise throughout the school.

Effective practice is shared in a number of ways:

- Staff briefings
- Teaching & Learning Groups
- Curriculum meetings
- Observations – formal and informal
- Peer observations
- Staff supervision
- Use of student profiles

## **11. Lesson Observations**

People should expect one formal lesson observation per year for the purpose of performance management. Two additional observations may be scheduled for professional/personal development and the Headteacher and Senior Leaders reserve the right to use drop in sessions as required.

## **12. Marking and Feedback**

Marking and feedback will typically be provided as the work is progressed within the lesson through a variety of formal and informal means. Typically, this will include extensive verbal feedback from the teacher or teaching assistant that informs the quality of the work as it progresses which is then reflected with the students work as they continue.

Providing quick feedback can be achieved in many ways:

- Good circulation in lessons
- Verbal feedback to individuals in lessons
- Live modelling of what good looks like
- Whole class feedback if a specific immediate issue has been picked up on by the teacher
- Clear expectations of work and students held to account on meeting these

We note that many of our students are very resistant to repeating or drafting large sections of work, and for many students this is a facet of an identified autistic spectrum disorder. Marking should therefore focus on the skills or knowledge or other attribute needed to improve attainment within the remainder of that task or a subsequent task, which will ideally follow within that lesson or the next.

It is expected that selected pieces of work should be marked for accuracy, attainment, spelling, punctuation and grammar on a routine basis; this is likely to be at least once each half-term for most subjects (for practical subject, a specific skill or other attribute may be identified). Teachers or teaching assistants should identify the focus on the marking with students in advance and should ensure that time is provided for students to reflect on their written feedback. Wherever possible, marking should include an opportunity for students to respond, by making corrections or attempting a new activity so that they can demonstrate mastery.

Teacher and teaching assistants' marking should be easily identified through the use of a different colour of ink.

### **13. Assessment, Recording and Reporting**

All teachers and teaching assistants are required to record students' progress through the routine assessment of students' work. Students' verbal contributions to a discussion, performance pieces, responses to questions, artwork and other forms of expression are given equal weighting to written responses in terms of assessing students understanding and development – we do not require students to make a written record for the sole purpose of informing an assessment process.

Teachers are required to maintain a record of student progress and to use this when completing assessment entries to ARBOR, the schools MIS.

Teachers are required to reflect on students progress and to plan accordingly for gaps in learning, changes in students rate of learning and overall attainment when preparing lessons, medium and long-term planning