

# TEACHING & LEARNING POLICY

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Signature of Chair	
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*“It turns out that as long as you go to school (and that’s important), then it doesn’t matter very much which school you go to, but it matters very much which classroom you sit in” (Dylan William 2011)*

### **Principles of the Policy**

We recognise that all students/children possess a combination of skills, abilities and aptitudes and all have an entitlement to access a broad, challenging and appropriate curriculum. Every student is also entitled to experience a variety of teaching and learning styles which enable them to achieve their full potential. It is our aim, through successful teaching and learning at Fearnhill School, to develop the whole child and to enable The Fearnhill Student to make good progress and become a lifelong learner.

All teachers have a responsibility to plan and deliver lessons where teaching and learning is of the highest quality, with effective pace & challenge in all lessons and where the learning needs of all students/children are met.

### **Aims of the Policy**

- To ensure high quality teaching and learning experiences for students of all abilities and aptitudes
- To provide a framework of principles for great teaching and learning within which there is flexibility and scope for creativity
- To provide coherence of approach and consistency of expectation
- To make explicit the entitlement of all students
- To raise attainment by increasing levels of student motivation, participation and independence.
- To promote reflection on, and sharing of, good practice, through a variety of methods.
- To promote an understanding of how learning takes place;
- To make explicit a baseline for monitoring and evaluating the teaching and learning that takes place;
- To provide practical guidance and clear procedures;
- To provide a focus for development;
- To inform teachers, students, parents, governors and the wider community about the aims and processes of teaching and learning;
- To identify specific areas of responsibility at whole school, faculty and individual staff level

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Governors**

To ensure the effective and rigorous implementation and monitoring of the policy.

#### **Leadership Team**

- To provide appropriate support, training and resources for faculties, subject areas and individual staff
- To monitor and evaluate the delivery and impact of the policy
- To modify and update the policy in the light of ongoing developments and the changing needs of the school and its priorities

### **Heads of Department and Subject Leaders**

- To be responsible for the co-ordination of long, medium and short term planning of schemes of learning, taking into consideration the aims and objectives of the policy
- To monitor and evaluate consistent delivery of the policy at faculty and subject level
- To provide appropriate support to team members by providing training materials or advice and guidance.
- Support staff to take risks in new teaching methods

### **Teaching staff**

- To ensure their own teaching meets the national Teachers Standards, ensuring the application of High-Quality Teaching strategies
- To implement this policy by planning and delivering high quality learning experiences
- Actively seek to reflect on their practice and feedback
- Work collaboratively with colleagues to share best practice and improve teaching

### **All staff**

- To be aware of the principles of the policy and how they can contribute to it

### **Students**

- To work positively within lessons to enable staff to implement the policy effectively
- To engage with learning experiences outside the classroom by ensuring completion of the learning tasks set as self-study
- To be engaged and not passive in their learning
- To work effectively and purposefully in a range of contexts
- To come fully equipped and prepared to maximise the learning opportunity
- To be prepared to share their learning and ideas in an atmosphere of trust
- To ask questions where appropriate – of each other and the teacher
- To support one another, working collaboratively, recognising the contributions of all
- To undertake self-assessment or peer assessment with some confidence, becoming increasingly able to apply the criteria for success and to set appropriate targets for improvement
- To know where to go for help and recognise that further progress can always be made
- To develop a growth mindset and resilience in approaching problems and new learning challenges
- To be able to select appropriate learning resources to help develop their own learning
- To work with increasing independence, developing the skills to become life-long learners
- To make effective use of ICT to develop their learning, accessing a wide variety of sources and using appropriate methods to present their work
- To act on all assessment, marking and feedback
- To use initiative and develop more independent learning

### **Those with parental responsibility**

To support the policy of the school, in line with the Home-School Agreement, by providing support for students/children at home, allowing them to continue to develop their learning effectively.

## Definition of Teaching

The purpose of teaching is to promote learning and to raise standards of achievement. Teaching includes the whole range of activities that a teacher employs to promote learning and progress. This includes:

- Use of up to date, expert subject knowledge
- Planning of individual lessons and series of lessons to ensure all learners are challenged
- Having consistently high expectations of all students
- Implementing varied learning activities
- Lessons are objective led and progress driven
- Students must be made aware of the success criteria they are working towards
- Effective use of scaffolding & modelling to ensure the needs of all learners are met so that they make good progress relative to their starting points
- There is a quick start to the lesson with a 'Do Now' activity, ensuring learning is evident
- The pace of the lesson allows all students to make progress
- Students will receive regular feedback (oral and written) formative and summative assessment and reporting (see [Feedback policy](#))
- Teaching of reading, writing, communication and mathematics
- Establishing a positive climate for learning in lessons to encourage interest and engagement
- Ensuring high standards of Behaviour for Learning through adherence to the school's Behaviour Policy
- Providing intervention when underachievement is identified

## Definition of Learning

Learning is the process by which an individual makes sense of new experiences. Learning takes place when the individual constructs their own knowledge and understanding of a subject, skill or values. Learning often takes place through personal interaction; therefore, we believe that it is important to promote activities that allow the learner to work with others to solve problems, to explore concepts and to develop language as a means of learning and a tool for thinking.

We believe learning will most effectively take place when:

- The learning environment is secure, stable and stimulating (meeting the standards of "The Fearnhill Classroom Routines for Good Behaviour")
- Relationships between teachers and students/children are positive and respectful
- Students' self-esteem is high
- Students understand the purpose of the learning and see relevance to their own experience
- Students understand the ways in which learning takes place
- The learning builds on prior knowledge and understanding
- Success criteria are explicit and models are provided
- The learning is active and collaborative
- Student questioning, reflection, and discussion are encouraged to extend & guide discovery
- Independent learning and thinking is facilitated and encouraged
- There are opportunities for creativity and utilising different learning styles
- Students/children can self-assess, know what they need to do to improve and are able to set appropriate targets
- Students have opportunities to transfer skills, knowledge and understanding to other contexts

## **Definition of Progress**

To make progress in learning is to move forward towards a learning objective or an agreed target. All students/children are expected to make clear progress in their learning over time as follows:

- Performance data collated throughout the year shows that students are making at least expected progress towards their benchmark grades, in line with their starting points
- The quality of work produced by students shows that they are acquiring knowledge quickly, developing their understanding and skills and consolidates this in line with expectations for their age group and national averages
- Students develop and apply skills in reading, writing, communication and mathematics so that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education, training or employment
- Students can transfer their learning and apply this knowledge, skills and experience across other curriculum areas
- Where students' prior attainment is low or falls below that of all students nationally, the gap is closing over time

## **Expectations**

This section of the policy reflects our expectation that students/children enjoy the highest quality of teaching and learning at Fearnhill School. In order to achieve this aim, we need to establish a shared understanding of what constitutes High Quality Teaching.

The 'Fearnhill Toolkit' [here](#) is provided to suggest good practice. It is not expected to be an exhaustive list or a 'recipe' for a good lesson.

## **Continuing Professional Development (CPD)**

Teachers have a responsibility to reflect on their practice, enhance and update their professional knowledge and skills. This is to ensure that consistently high standards of teaching and learning are maintained and national Teacher Standards are met. Fearnhill School's CPD programme will provide opportunities for staff to participate in a variety of activities in order to support the individual professional needs of staff and build whole school capacity. See [CPD Policy](#)

## **Deliberate Practice**

Every half term, all teachers will have a lesson visit by a member of the Leadership Team at least once as part of our reviewing and development of teaching across the school. Deliberate Practice offers all teachers an opportunity to receive non-judgmental feedback on their teaching practice and allows them to reflect on aspects of High-Quality Teaching.

Where standards of teaching and/or learning fall below expectations, appropriate support will be given, and further monitoring will take place as appropriate. If concerns continue, further action will be taken in line with the [Teacher Appraisal and Capability Policy](#).

## **Aspects of Effective Teaching and Learning**

### **Lesson Structure**

### **Planning and preparation**

- Lessons are planned with clear aims and learning objectives, structure and challenge for all

students

- Students must be made aware of the success criteria they are working towards the expected outcome
- Lessons are planned to develop metacognition skills
- Lesson objectives are clearly linked to departmental long and medium term plans which are periodically reviewed
- Planning is linked with short, medium and long-term assessment opportunities
- Teachers make use of all available information, both statistical and personal, to set clear, realistic, yet challenging targets and to plan scaffolded learning opportunities
- Lessons are planned to build on prior learning and ensure continuity and progression
- Opportunities for developing The Fearnhill Student through literacy, numeracy, BV, SMSC, ICT skills and cross-curricular elements are integrated into lesson plans wherever possible
- Planning makes provision for the effective use of Inclusion Leaders when available

### **Consistency in Lessons**

We believe that consistency in lesson structure and approach is important to support an effective learning environment. At Fearnhill, we follow a set of classroom routines for [good behaviour](#) here and a High-Quality Teaching toolkit [here](#)

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **A framework for great teaching at Fearnhill School**

Our aim at Fearnhill School is to provide the best possible opportunities for student achievement, progress and learning. We also believe that the promotion of excellence in learning gives students a real chance to grow as individuals and to make positive contributions to communities. At Fearnhill School we recognise that the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom is one of the most influential factors in student success and achievement and therefore place considerable emphasis on teachers taking active responsibility for their own professional development. Our teachers are encouraged to develop their practice by being open to innovative and creative techniques in order to ensure our students receive stimulating learning experiences and develop the knowledge, attitudes, skills and habits that they require to find success in their lives.

We value the fact that teachers are unique individuals, all of whom have their own strengths, skills and preferred teaching styles and agree that there is no particular methodology demanded of our teachers. Fearnhill School has developed a set of agreed teaching and learning principles of the features of good practice which research and our own experiences suggest have the most impact on students' learning. Teachers have developed a consistent understanding of these principles as individuals and teams and we give prominence to these in our thinking, planning and practice. Underpinning our principles is what we refer to at Fearnhill School as the "Big Four," the FACE model (Feedback, Autonomy, Challenge and Engagement) and we have placed considerable time and investment in ensuring that all teachers are aware that we believe these features are at the core of exceptional teaching and learning. We have high expectations of teaching at Fearnhill School and these guiding principles and features of reflective and evidence-based practice represent the framework within which our teachers plan, teach and evaluate their impact on learning.

There is an infinite variety of ways in which our principles can be implemented and choice, creativity and individuality is important. There is also great value in collaborating and sharing best practice and our teachers are actively supported and encouraged to engage in working together. As a school we work to share practice through whole school, departments and year teams as well as during meeting time and through coaching conversations.

### **Fearnhill School Teaching and Learning Principles**

1. Teachers create a welcoming, safe and stimulating learning environment based on **mutual respect**
2. Teachers take time to know and understand the students in their classes. They prepare and plan lessons that **engage** and **challenge** students to reach their fullest potential
3. Learning and thinking skills are explicitly taught across the curriculum to develop student **autonomy**
4. Teachers regularly assess the progression of students to identify and reduce the gaps in their learning. A range of **feedback** strategies are used that recognise success and which enable students to be reflective and share a dialogue of growth
5. Teachers engage in their own professional **growth** and **development**. They demonstrate a critical understanding of developments in their subject; using excellent subject knowledge to ensure that teaching is inspirational and relevant
6. Teachers embody the values of the school and make a positive contribution to school life
7. High standards of literacy and numeracy are promoted by all teachers
8. Teachers continually assess and respond to students' understanding and progress; intervening effectively to encourage rapid progress
9. Teachers set **high expectations** which engender intrinsic motivation amongst students and promote high aspirations for all
10. Learning is planned and sequenced astutely based on prior learning and requirements of future learning. Lessons are purposeful

Specifically, this means:

1. Teachers create a welcoming, safe and stimulating learning environment based on mutual respect. Our teachers ensure a calm, orderly and purposeful atmosphere with clear and established routines enabling our students to learn in classrooms where it is acceptable to get things wrong. Students are encouraged to understand that failure is a vital part of the learning process. Classrooms are engaging and promote the creation of independent, resourceful and resilient learners. They include displays and resources that support autonomy in the learning process for students of all levels of ability.
2. Teachers at Fearnhill School know the needs of the different groups of students in front of them. They plan and teach inclusive, well-judged and inspirational learning activities that challenge and engage all students. They enable students to progress towards their aspirational targets. Our teachers have a clear understanding of assessment and its implications for individual students. They scaffold and model work to ensure that all students learn effectively. Teachers model a passion for their subject that encourages students to be inquisitive and keen to succeed. Our teachers have a secure understanding of how a range of factors can inhibit students' ability to learn, and support students to overcome their learning barriers.
3. At Fearnhill School the skills for learning and thinking are clearly identified and explicitly taught across the curriculum. As a result, students have frequent opportunities to be collaborative, lead their own learning and that of others. They develop the skills, strategies and confidence to accept

increasing responsibility for their learning and can use a variety of approaches to solve problems. Learning opportunities are planned which are open-ended, encourage resilience, creativity and resourcefulness. Students are offered choices in their learning and provided with opportunities to take risks and make decisions to develop meta-cognition. Questioning and thinking time is used to develop higher order skills and deepen understanding. Students, as well as teachers, routinely ask questions of themselves and others.

4. Accurate assessment is used regularly to support planning and student progress. Teachers effectively utilise a broad range of assessment opportunities within and beyond the lesson, choosing the most appropriate assessment method for each situation. Formal assessments occur at identified points to give an accurate picture of where students are in their learning, track progress and plan for future learning. Verbal and written feedback is sought from and given to students to provide a tangible understanding of what students did well, current position and how they can close the gaps in their learning. As a result of these processes students can clearly identify and articulate what knowledge, attitudes, skills and understanding they need to develop to make the next steps (Even Better Ifs) in their learning and progress even further. Time is given for students to reflect and act on their feedback so that they can improve their work, learn from their mistakes and address areas of weakness.
5. Fearnhill School teachers demonstrate a critical understanding of developments in their subject and use their excellent subject knowledge to communicate a passion for their subject and engender enjoyment. They demonstrate this high degree of knowledge when framing and answering questions, modelling, creating resources, making use of digital technologies, making dry topics interesting, and explaining and providing feedback. Teachers take responsibility for promoting, integrating and developing the skills that students require to be successful; preparing them for life after school in the digital age. They are able to clearly articulate to students how they will be assessed and are clear about the differences between grades, the requirements for each and how to enable students to achieve the highest possible levels of achievement. Subject knowledge is developed through reading, research, professional growth and development, peer discussions, observing others, and engagement in reflective enquiry.
6. Teachers at Fearnhill School make an effective contribution to school life through their promotion and involvement in a range of extended learning opportunities. They demonstrate a range of personal qualities and skills which lead to the formation of positive relationships with students based on the school's core values. Teachers consistently apply the school's behaviour and rewards systems. Consequently, our students show high levels of collaboration, engagement and cooperation in lessons and have enthusiastic attitudes towards learning; enabling learning to proceed without interruption.
7. High standards in literacy and numeracy are planned for and promoted by all teachers. They model the correct use of speech and grammar, insisting on well-constructed sentences both orally and in written form. Teachers encourage active use of key words and phrases. They plan for the development of reading and writing skills and actively encourage reading around their subject area. All teachers promote and support the development of extended writing. Complex problem-solving activities are an integral part of many lessons and a consistent approach to the teaching of numeracy skills is encouraged across the school. Assessment work is marked for literacy and numeracy, in line with whole school policy.
8. Our teachers systematically check students' understanding and are quick to respond when they recognise misconceptions or when work is not sufficiently challenging or too challenging. They make appropriate interventions to ensure that all students can engage in learning and make rapid



progress. Teachers adapt their plans in response to student needs. They make good use of lesson time to ensure learning proceeds at an appropriate and purposeful pace. Achievement leaders and other adults that are part of the learning experience are deployed effectively to support or further enhance students' learning.

9. Teachers at Fearnhill School have consistently high expectations of all students in terms of behaviour, achievement and the quality and presentation of their work. They model the positive attitudes, values and behaviours which are expected of our students. Teachers use a shared language for learning which motivates, promotes high aspirations and ensures that students adopt a positive attitude to learning. They aim to develop confident and independent learners who are intrinsically motivated by the reward of progress and achievement.
10. In our classrooms students have a clear sense of what is being learnt, how it relates to prior learning, other areas of the curriculum and real-life situations. Teachers' explanations of the knowledge and skills that students are learning are delivered with clarity. Learning intentions and success criteria are shared and discussed with students. Sequences of lessons are astutely designed, to ensure a logical flow in the development of the knowledge, attitudes, skills and habits students require for success. Homework is set in accordance with the school policy and is an integral part of the learning process. It provides opportunities for students to be challenged; to extend and consolidate their learning or prepare for future learning.