

# Learning and Teaching Policy

For

# Carrickfergus Academy



Version	Date	Revision/ Author	Summary of changes
1	May 2021	J. McCready	N/A
2	November 22	J. McCready	Addition of feedback principles
3	June 23	BOG ratified	7 <sup>th</sup> September 2023



## **Carrickfergus Academy Learning and Teaching Policy**

### **Rationale**

Continued and sustained improvement is dependent upon improving the quality of learning and teaching that is taking place on a daily basis. Our expectation is that all pupils are provided with high quality learning experiences that lead to consistently high levels of pupil achievement and skills for life.

### **Aims**

To provide consistency of learning and teaching across every year group and class

To enable teachers and support staff to teach as effectively as possible

To outline some of the key elements which are crucial to raising standards in learning and teaching

To set out a broad structure for lessons, based on best practice and research linked to how we best learn

## **Carrickfergus Academy Learning and Teaching Quality Indicators**

(August 2018, reviewed August 2019)

At Carrickfergus Academy teachers will:

- Have realistic high expectations
- Challenge and inspire pupils
- Have clear learning intentions
- Make clear what the pupils need to do to succeed in the lesson by discussing success criteria
- Indicate how pupil learning fits with what they already know and their interests
- Actively engage pupils in their learning
- Teach lessons that are well-paced
- Include a range of teaching styles and activities to motivate pupils
- Develop pupils' learning skills, enabling them to become increasingly independent and creative
- Encourage purposeful collaborative work
- Use Assessment for Learning to help pupils reflect on their learning
- Reinforce what they have been learning through effective questioning and retrieval practice
- Support development of pupils' thinking skills and personal capabilities and cross-curricular skills
- Create an environment that promotes learning in a settled and purposeful way (refer to the section below from the Policy for Promoting Positive Behaviour for Learning)
- Consolidate the learning via plenary

These Quality Indicators will be achieved through the following:

- a) Professional values
- b) Climate for Learning
- c) Lesson Design
- d) Strategies and Techniques
- e) Supporting the Learning Experience
- f) Feedback
- g) Teacher Professional Learning

and will result in many learning outcomes for students, amongst which are:

- demonstrating gains in knowledge, understanding and skills
- showing engagement and making progress
- learning to work independently
- understanding how well they are doing and how they can improve.

### **a) Professional values**

We believe that the following professional values, exhibited by effective staff, make a difference to the learner’s achievement and attainment. The teacher will:

#### **1. Have continuous high expectations of the learner**

Constantly demand and encourage improvement

Use modelling - personal presentation - punctuality - meeting and greeting - mutual respect and exhibit energy and enthusiasm

#### **2. Leading Learning**

The teacher will:

- through encouragement of intellectual curiosity, develop a thirst for knowledge and a desire to achieve
- be a clear communicator
- be a curriculum expert with excellent subject knowledge which motivates and develops confident and independent learners.

#### **3. Building quality relationships**

The teacher will:

- create trust and confidence as well as providing challenge and support to enable every learner to be successful
- demonstrate fairness and consistency in clear actions and words
- know students as individuals and celebrate their identity
- be able to anticipate and pre-empt situations by using appropriate strategies for particular circumstances

## b) Climate for Learning

Through active participation staff and pupils have worked together to create a Class Plan for Learning which forms part of our **Policy for Promoting Positive Behaviour for Learning**. This identifies 9 key behaviours that both pupils and staff recognise as important and conducive to effective learning in any classroom. We have linked these together with our Pivotal rules and consistencies to produce this plan:

Ready	Respectful	Safe
Arriving on time to classes, bringing the appropriate equipment.	Following the instructions of the teacher or other adult as quickly and effectively as possible to ensure that effective learning can take place at the appropriate pace.	Keeping ourselves safe in corridors and in playgrounds by interacting with others in a positive manner.
Wearing the school uniform properly and with a sense of pride.	Taking care of all equipment, materials and the environment of our classrooms and school.	Keeping our hands, feet and unkind words to ourselves in order to keep ever
Arriving ready to learn and with an attitude of openness to the learning process.	Listening to the person in our classrooms that is meant to be talking, whether that is an adult or another pupil. Listening actively and respectfully to the opinions and suggestions of others.	Keeping ourselves and others safe on our way to and from school.

### **Classroom Climate**

As pupils have the responsibility to adopt and agree our class plan for learning, teachers also have a responsibility to create a classroom climate that promotes behaviour for learning.

### **Staff in Carrickfergus Academy aim to create a climate within the school that will:**

- Promote learning for all pupils
- Act as a positive role model. This includes modelling expectations of behaviour and use of appropriate language
- Make it possible for teaching and non-teaching staff to work effectively
- Clearly display classroom/Pivotal rules
- Ensure seating plans are in place for all classes
- Enhance pupils' self-esteem and foster self-respect and respect for others
- Encourage pupils to regulate their behaviour so that they and others will learn more effectively
- Ensure that pupils are treated fairly and with respect

- Pay 'first attention to best conduct' in the Pivotal way
- Recognise, acknowledge and reward high standards of behaviour; 'over and above' school expectations

### **c) Lesson Design**

Lesson design and structure will vary by subject and within schemes of work to ensure learners maximise their achievement. In lesson planning, departments should be supportive of an ethos of innovation and challenge

To ensure that all students learn effectively, lessons will have

- Clear learning objectives and intended outcomes, shared with students, taking into account ability, gender, disability and cultural diversity
- Appropriate structure and pace, designed to meet the needs of the learners and the desired outcomes. Lessons will take into account prior learning and learning context and will have an effective start, a series of carefully selected strategies and techniques to achieve learning objectives, incorporating high quality resources and an effective ending/plenary
- Opportunities for assessment are integrated into all lessons to monitor the learner's progress and inform future planning. Teachers will plan appropriate, quality lessons when they are unable to take the lessons themselves.

### **d) Strategies and Techniques**

Teachers should use a wide and varied range of strategies and techniques to deliver their planned learning objectives. These regularly include:

- Target setting.
- A range of activities that is appropriate to support learner need, including SEN, G&T, bilingual and EAL students and different learning styles.
- Active engagement activities, e.g. starters
- Modelling.
- Effective questioning.
- Explaining
- A variety of individual/paired and group work.
- A balanced use of visual, auditory and kinaesthetic activities.
- Sensitive intervention and monitoring to ensure active engagement
- Assessment strategies and techniques integral to lessons, including peer and self-assessment.
- Strategies to make effective use of classroom support
- Strategies and techniques to make effective use of available resources, including ICT.
- Strategies to celebrate diversity and recognise the individuality of students
- The promotion of positive role models.
- The use of rewards and praise
- Plenaries

## e) Supporting the Learning Experience

We understand that learning can be made more effective by

- involving adults other than teachers to support student learning in the classroom
- encouraging students to access the skills of other adults within the school community.
- ensuring that form tutors communicate our high expectations of students
- strengthening school/student/parent links into an active partnership where learning is supported at home
- providing high quality resources within and beyond the school day
- developing within the students the necessary skills to undertake independent learning encouraging mutual student support, both formally in peer mentoring programmes and informally inside and outside the classroom recognising the important learning going on in other places of learning in the community.

## f) Feedback

Students will receive regular feedback to improve their understanding based on the following principles:

- Feedback should be specific and move individual learning forward  
It may take the form of verbal, written or whole class feedback as appropriate.
- Feedback should be timely, at times live, and respond to the needs of the individual student so that they can actively engage with the feedback
- When marked work is returned to students it is important to allow time for improvement and reflection time (D.I.R.T) so that students can read the comments and engage with the feedback.
- Where appropriate students should be encouraged to assess their own work against the learning objectives and success criteria
- Peer, group and self-feedback using mark schemes or success criteria are valuable tools for learning that should occur regularly, carefully structured by the teacher
- Whole class feedback may be used at times to highlight common mistakes or misconceptions. Model answers will allow the opportunity to reflect upon their progress
- 'Four quarter marking' (William) may be adopted by staff to ensure a balanced range of feedback and manage workload, whilst also ensuring student ownership of the feedback process

## f) Teacher Professional Learning

At Carrickfergus Academy we believe that teachers must remain learners, looking to share good practice, supporting and being supported through continual Teacher Professional Learning in a process of team and self-reflection. This Policy allows for the development of pupil skills, qualities and knowledge as outlined in the Northern Ireland Curriculum (2006) at KS3, 4 and 5. However we recognise that Teachers will wish to embrace the most up to date research in Learning and Teaching, and use an even wider range of pedagogies in their classrooms. **DENI "Learning Leaders – A Strategy for Teacher Professional Learning"** states that teachers should have opportunities to work in collaboration with other teachers in networked groups across partnerships and learning communities. **The ISEF Self-Evaluation Framework** highlights the importance of "continuous

improvement with regular opportunities for all staff to review and refresh pedagogical practice and build expertise and capacity”.

To support Teacher Professional Development, staff at Carrickfergus Academy will:

- Engage in the PRSD or Induction/ EPD process, identifying both whole school and individual Learning and Teaching priorities
- Have access to the Academy Trusted Colleague Network (TCN), to participate in peer observations and professional dialogue on Learning and Teaching
- Be encouraged to keep up to date with current research in Learning and Teaching pedagogies through, for example, the Learning and Teaching Library on the Senior Campus and the Learning and Teaching Working Group
- Engage with outside organisations such as CCEA, EA and other partner schools to participate in high quality Teacher Professional Learning.

J. McCready  
June 2023