



# Merchant Taylors' School

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# Teaching and Learning Policy MTGS

## Teaching and Learning Policy

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Last Amended: January 2021

Review: January 2022

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Merchant Taylors' Girls' School ("MTGS") seeks to create a culture in which learning is highly valued and well supported so that all pupils fulfil their potential and leave school with a love of learning. Learning is the central function of MTGS. Teaching is distinct from learning. The role of teachers is to facilitate the learning of the pupils. This policy sets out how teaching is to be undertaken so as to best promote learning. This policy also considers the role of agents other than the classroom teacher in the learning process.

### **2. PROMOTING LEARNING EFFECTIVELY**

A pupil can only be an effective learner if she is involved in the process of learning and can then apply that process to different contexts. To achieve this, we strive to meet the following eight learning objectives:

- I. Pupils learn with a sense of purpose and are interested in the subject matter
- II. Pupils have a belief that their attainment is a function of the manner in which they approach their learning and not pre-determined by personal characteristics
- III. Pupils recognise that they have a range of learning skills and an awareness of which ones they should employ in a given context
- IV. Pupils have a clear understanding of the success criteria when undertaking a learning activity
- V. Pupils are informed as to how well they are performing and what they need to do to improve
- VI. Pupils learn in an environment which is purposeful, open, collaborative and respectful so that they feel safe to test their ideas, ask questions and take risks. Mistakes are viewed as an inherent part of the learning process.
- VII. Pupils have access to high quality learning resources
- VIII. Pupils are set tasks which challenge all pupils regardless of prior learning and natural abilities

### **3. PROMOTING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL**

The School will always seek to ensure that it creates a positive and inclusive learning environment for all. We aim to ensure that our teaching practices are inclusive and that suitable adjustments are made to procedures and policies as far as reasonable, to ensure pupils with disabilities or SEN needs are not put at a substantial disadvantage.

Teachers will treat all pupils with dignity, value them as individuals, build relationships rooted in mutual respect and at all times observe proper boundaries. They will also have regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being in accordance with the School's statutory obligations to do this.

### **4. ONLINE AND REMOTE TEACHING**

In the event that the School needs to revert to remote/online teaching due to circumstances beyond its control e.g. national lockdown due to a pandemic, the School will revert to its contingency plans for its delivery of lessons during this time to ensure that teaching can continue for all pupils accordingly. The school has a separate policy and protocol for remote learning during such circumstances.

The School will also ensure, in line with its Curriculum Policy, that all pupils will receive a suitable education upon their return to School and if necessary, will bridge any gaps in pupils' progress that are identified through appropriate assessment strategies. Reasonable and suitable adjustments will

be made (such as choices about what to prioritise) and an action plan will be put in place to get pupils back on track.

#### **4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The eight pupil focused objectives rely on a range of agents fulfilling their roles and responsibilities which are designated as follows:

##### **4.1. Teachers**

- The learning objectives pupils are working towards should be shared with a class.
- The teacher should ensure that pupils are active learners by setting tasks which focus on the learning objectives and are both accessible and challenging to all pupils rather than merely presenting information to passive pupils.
- Assessment by the teacher of pupils' learning plays a key role in the learning process. It should be used to inform the teacher when planning future lessons and tasks. It should be used by the teacher to give informative feedback to pupils. Feedback should help pupils and teachers to set targets for future learning. Success criteria should be clearly communicated. Assessment should take place during a lesson via listening and observing pupils' work. Within MTGS, each department has its own assessment policy that is approved by the Deputy Head/Director of Studies and sets out the average minimum frequency a pupil in a given year group should receive written feedback from a teacher over the course of an academic year. Both the school wide Assessment and Recording Policy and departmental assessment policies give further guidance to the form written feedback should take.
- Teachers should, where appropriate provide opportunities for peer and self-assessment to encourage pupils to be reflective and to understand better success criteria. Teachers should encourage and support pupils to give constructive feedback to their peers. Both homework and class-work is suitable for peer or self-assessment.
- Dialogue between a teacher and pupils and between a pupil and other pupils is a powerful learning tool: it reveals hidden misunderstandings, is useful in ensuring targets set are appropriately challenging, is an essential tool for assessment and can also be used to promote higher order thinking. Teachers should consider carefully the questions they ask do not just test whether pupils have absorbed information. Questions in lessons should include open ended ones designed to uncover pupils' insights and misconceptions and to push them towards a better understanding. This also helps pupils to learn new ideas from each other. Teachers should also promote written dialogue when they mark work by providing opportunities for pupils to demonstrate they have taken on board and acted upon the targets they have been set.
- Teachers should consider the language they use. Praise should focus on the way pupils have completed a task rather than just the outcome or a pupil's innate qualities. Where possible teachers should try and appear to include themselves in the learning journey by using "we" rather than "you". Where appropriate they should consider language that promotes a culture of enquiry rather than an environment where there are only facts and falsities by using "it might be the case that" or "it could be that" rather than "it is" or "it isn't".
- Teachers should maintain high standards of behaviour so that pupils feel safe and are focused on their learning. Expectations of behaviour should be made clear and the teacher should model behaviour conducive to learning. If pupils are not meeting the required expectations of behaviour the teacher is responsible for taking action proportionate to the offence in accordance to the Behaviour Policy. If a pupil is either persistently and over a series of lessons failing to meet expectations with low level poor behaviour (e.g. talking when the teacher is talking) or is guilty of a serious offence

(one considered potentially harmful to another person's wellbeing or school property) they should inform the Head of Department, Form Tutor and the Head of Section.

- Teachers should maintain records to inform themselves, parents, line managers or pastoral teams of each pupil's performance. This should be sufficient to track progress accurately, to inform report writing, completion of monitoring grids and lesson planning, and to enable the teacher to set meaningful academic targets. SEND and EAL information should be included.
- Teachers should collaborate with peers to share good practice and useful learning resources.
- Teachers should take advantage of opportunities to develop their practice such as: engaging with training, evaluating the impact of their pedagogy, observing others and seeking advice from colleagues.
- Teachers should be aware of and implement guidance from the Learning Support Department to help pupils with additional learning needs achieve their full potential

#### **4.2. Heads of Department**

- The Heads of Department should monitor the learning experience of pupils to ensure an appropriate level of consistency across the department. In order to do this they should undertake: lesson observations of their team members' lessons, exercises in pupil voice, and scrutiny of pupils' work and staff marking ("book looks"). The Head of Department should use this information to work out priorities for future departmental developments. If the Head of Department uncovers instances of standards not being met they should take action to address the issue and then continue to monitor the situation to check the issue has been resolved. The Deputy Head (Learning and Innovation) should be kept informed if instances of underperformance are not rectified, repeated or are considered sufficiently serious.
- Records of monitoring activities described in 2.1 and minutes of department meetings should be kept.
- If a teacher indicates that there is a pupil who is having problems in terms of their performance or behaviour then the Head of Department should offer support and advice and ensure that parents and pastoral teams have been informed. The Head of Department should actively try to find out from their team whether there are pupils who are a cause for concern. The Head of Department should facilitate department wide discussion about strategies to help pupils with difficulties to encourage the sharing of good practice. The Head of Department should review the monitoring grid submissions of their teams.
- The Heads of Department should support the teachers of their department by facilitating the sharing of good practice and resources by all members of their team. They should help staff within the team to plan and build on existing skills, enhance performance and to provide a strategic input to MTGS's future success.
- The Heads of Department are responsible for ensuring that the curriculum on offer is well-balanced, stimulating, challenging and interesting and fulfils the requirements of public examinations. They may delegate the writing of departmental schemes of work to willing members of the department but the Head of Department maintains responsibility.
- Heads of Department should ensure that teachers and pupils have access to the most appropriate resources to support learning within the constraints of MTGS's budget.

### **4.3. Senior Management Team (SMT)**

- The SMT is responsible for coordinating and monitoring the different sections of the MTGS community to achieve the best possible learning outcomes.
- The SMT should facilitate and support the development of teaching skills.
- The SMT is responsible for whole school curriculum decisions with the aim being to well-balanced, stimulating, challenging and interesting and fulfilling the requirements of public examinations.
- The SMT should set the agenda for the future direction of teaching and learning in terms of: the focus of staff training, priorities set for Heads of Department to monitor and annual evaluation of the learning experience of pupils across MTGS.
- The SMT should set school rules and ensure they are enforced to ensure pupils feel safe and in the right frame of mind to learn.

### **4.4. The Learning Support Department**

- The SEND Department should support staff in identifying those with Special Educational Needs and Disability.
- The Learning Support Department should provide strategies for pupils and teachers to enact which will help SEND pupils fully access the school curriculum and learn as effectively as possible.

### **4.5. Library, IT, and Premises Teams and Departmental Technicians**

- These agents are responsible for ensuring that the resources purchased, maintained and made available to pupils are focused on supporting learning outcomes, enriching the learning experience, and creating a safe and purposeful environment.
- The Library and IT teams should support pupils and teachers to acquire the skills and knowledge to access and make use of information efficiently as possible.
- The Librarian should support the development of independent learning skills and information literacy skills across the year groups by identifying specific needs and addressing them through targeted provision in PSHE and drop in sessions.

### **4.6. Pastoral Teams**

- The Pastoral Teams should monitor pupils' learning progress across the range of subjects by using school reports, exam results, pupil voice and work scrutiny.
- They should communicate with parents and teachers if there is a cause for concern in a pupil's learning progress with a view to determining the cause and finding a solution.
- They should help pupils monitor and evaluate their own learning and help them set targets or offer advice.
- They should communicate with parents and teachers to help identify behavioural or emotional impediments to a pupil's learning and help find strategies to help pupils and teachers cope with these.

### **4.7. Governors**

- The Governors responsibility is to hold the SMT to account in its efforts to best provide for pupil learning.

## **5. TRACKING AND MONITORING OF TEACHING AND LEARNING**

Through work scrutiny, pupil voice forums and surveys, and the tracking and monitoring and intervention procedures we have in place within School, we will endeavour to track and pupils' progress and the quality of our teaching provision.

### **References**

- 1.** Admissions Policy
- 2.** Assessment and Recording Policy
- 3.** Behaviour Management Policy
- 4.** Curriculum Policy
- 5.** Equal Opportunities Policy
- 6.** Pastoral Policy
- 7.** Remote Learning Policy and protocols
- 8.** Reporting and Feedback Procedures
- 9.** SEND Policy
- 10.** Supporting Pupils with Long Term and Serious Medical Conditions in School Policy