

Teaching and Learning Policy

2018



St Aloysius' College

Hornsey Lane,
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N6 5LY

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Executive Head's Signature:	<i>J. Heffernan</i>
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Teaching and Learning Policy: St Aloysius' College

1: Principles of the Policy

We recognise that all students within our community are children of God. Each possess unique 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. St Aloysius' College aims, through successful teaching and learning, to develop the whole child and to enable our students to become resourceful and resilient lifelong learners. The purpose of this policy is to aid the achievement of high levels of attainment and progress by ensuring that effective learning takes place in the classroom with a shared set of expectations for Teaching & Learning.

2: Aims

The overall quality of St Aloysius' College is directly related to the quality of our teaching, and the resulting learning.

The purpose of this policy is to aid the achievement of high levels of attainment and progress by ensuring that effective learning takes place in the classroom with a shared set of expectations for Teaching & Learning.

This policy should be read alongside other policies of the school, particularly:

Assessment and Reporting Policy
Marking Policy
Homework Policy
Behaviour Policy
Special Educational Needs Policy
Appraisal Policy

3: Responsibilities

Teaching staff are responsible for ensuring that their own teaching meets the national Teacher Standards as published by the DfE (September 2012). All teachers are to implement this policy by planning and delivering high quality learning experiences. This will be achieved through working collaboratively with colleagues to share best practice and improve teaching.

It is the responsibility of the Subject Leader or Head of Department, to monitor the quality of the teaching and learning within their department and to offer support as needed. Effective schemes of work must be put in place as a basic prerequisite by the Head of Department.

The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning across the school and to identify, with the support of the Head of Department, where development is needed. This monitoring will take the form of Learning Reviews, made up of department reviews, learning walks, classroom observation, and work scrutiny, together with accompanying support and development activities as required.

To ensure the quality of teaching does not remain static, there is a whole school Teaching & Learning Action Plan. In addition, each department will have an action plan which reflects the whole school priorities and their own identified areas for improvement or development. This work is led by the Deputy Headteacher (Teaching and Learning).

Governors have a statutory duty to monitor processes in place and that the school is addressing students' needs.

It is the role of those with parental responsibility to support the policy of the School, in line with the Home-School Agreement, by providing support for students at home, allowing them to continue to develop their learning effectively.

4: 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. Good teaching needs:

- Good subject knowledge
- Clear planning
- Assessment for learning
- Different teaching styles
- Effective differentiation
- Pace and challenge
- Organised classroom management
- Effective partnership with Teaching Assistants
- Good classroom relationships
- Relevant and challenging homework
- Monitored progress
- On-going feedback
- A stimulating environment
- Regular evaluation and review

5: Learning

“Learning is a process of active engagement with experience. It is what we do when we want to make sense of the world. It may involve the development or deepening of skills, knowledge, understanding, awareness, values, ideas and feelings, or an increase in the capacity to reflect. Effective learning leads to change, development and the desire to learn more.” *Campaign for Learning.*

Effective learning takes place when students know:

- How to make progress
- What they are achieving
- The success criteria they need to meet
- How to learn, including thinking and questioning skills, using methods and resources
- The attitudes needed in the classroom, including respect, interest, responsibility, responding to challenge
- How to work independently
- How to work collaboratively and without close supervision

6: **Progress**

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

- Performance data collated throughout the year shows that students are making good progress towards their agreed targets; 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 consolidating this in line with expectations.
- Students develop and apply skills 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.

Progress is made where lessons contain quality learning objectives; Effective questioning; Clear assessment for learning and a variety of well-planned learning activities designed to engage and stretch all learners. Further guidance on these aspects can be found in appendix 1.

7. **Evaluation of Teaching and Learning**

Learning Reviews:

We use Work Scrutiny, Department Reviews, Learning Walks, Lesson Observation and student progress standards to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. These activities are together named 'Learning Reviews'. There are three reviews a year the dates of which are provided in the school calendar in the autumn term. The 'overall' quality of teaching for individual teachers will be evaluated according to Teacher Standards and informed by Ofsted criteria in relation to the teaching, learning and assessment framework from the Inspection Handbook.

Learning reviews contribute to:

- The continued success of the school
- Raising achievement and school improvement
- Improved classroom teaching and learner experience
- Determining teachers' own development needs (CPD)

- Identifying the future development needs of the school
- Curriculum development
- Appraisal and management of performance

What will this look like at St Aloysius' College?

Work Scrutiny:

We scrutinise students' work to explore differences between classes or groups; develop a picture of whole school issues; track and monitor the progress and attainment of individual students and groups of students within and between year groups and to give the Head of Department an overview of the subject.

Exercise books (incl. folders and work stored and assessed electronically) will be reviewed throughout the year as follows:

- Half termly Head of Department scrutiny in which Head of Departments will complete a work scrutiny pro forma and discuss findings with their line manager / department with a view to share good practice and implement support as required to meet minimum expected standards of feedback.
- Termly SLT work scrutiny which focuses on a random selection of books across the key stages and all subject areas. Feedback will be given through the staff bulletin and to individuals if requested or necessary.

Dates for the Work Scrutiny will be in the school calendar.

Department Reviews

Department reviews are a monitoring process completed with Heads of Departments. Evidence collated by Head of Departments on the quality assurance of Teaching and Learning within their departments will be used to identify the strengths and areas for development within a department. This information will be used to inform departmental action plans.

All Head of Departments should have available if requested the following quality assurance systems

- Public Exams analysis
- Progress reports
- Department meeting minutes
- Moderation summaries
- Work Scrutiny report (all years)
- Curriculum plan
- Departmental Review Reports
- Learning review outcomes and actions

In addition to the above, Middle Leaders must ensure they have completed the Middle Leaders check list as directed by the Headteacher. This is usually issued in the summer term and should be completed by the end of the first week of July.

Learning Walks

Learning walks are a key aspect in evaluating the quality of Teaching and Learning at St Aloysius' College. As such, Learning Walks will take place throughout the school year in order to:

- Give a broad overview of current school practice.
- Inform the school CPD programme.
- Identify areas of strength to be shared on a peer-on-peer basis.
- Ensure Teacher Standards and raise achievement at all levels.

Staff will be informed of the theme or focus of the Learning Walk at least five working days in advance. The maximum time an observer will be in a lesson for a Learning Walk will be 15 minutes.

During Learning Walks there will be three key areas of focus:

- The engagement and application of students.
- The quality of work in books.
- The quality and regularity of diagnostic marking.

Those conducting learning walks will observe students, look at their books and may engage students in quiet 1-2-1 conversations. It should be noted that teachers will not be 'graded'. The three areas, detailed above, will be recorded as either 'Secure' or 'Not yet secure'. Verbal feedback, if requested, from the Learning Walk will be given within two working days. An overall summary report will be shared through the school bulletin.

The following will not happen:

- Asking teachers for prior data or lesson plans;
- Observation of specific teachers;
- Being obtrusive and undermining through intervention (e.g. behaviour control) with the exception of extreme circumstances;
- Talking with the whole class or groups in a way which would disrupt the lesson.

Lesson Observations

Lesson observations take place during Learning Reviews and at other times as indicated in the school calendar. For most teaching staff there will be a maximum of 3 observations of 30 minutes duration. A timetable will be produced a week in advance to inform staff which lesson will be observed. Verbal feedback from the Observation shall be given within two working days of the observation, and written feedback shall be provided within five working days.

Classroom observation is also used less formally, to support continued professional development in the school.

PLEASE NOTE: There is a different process for staff who are on a support programme.

Members of the Senior Leadership Team and other Middle Leaders (e.g. Heads of Department and Heads of Years) who are responsible for monitoring the quality of learning may also visit classrooms with a fixed purpose – for example checking recording of homework, equipment, monitoring critical students, etc.

Homework

Well considered, purposeful homework is critical in both the consolidation and development of our students' subject knowledge. Please see Appendix 2 for full details of St Aloysius' College Homework Policy.

8: Continuing Professional Development

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.

St Aloysius' College 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. These CPD activities include strategies such as sharing best practice, presentations by current staff and outside trainers, peer observation, professional discussions, coaching and mentoring. Provision will be made to meet the needs identified through the monitoring of Teaching and Learning.

Appendix 1: High Quality Lessons to promote good progress

Quality Learning Objectives

Learning objectives should be specific and outline the learning expected to take place in that lesson. They should not be too broad and general. They should be level appropriate.

Effective plenaries

- The teacher will regularly return to the success criteria and encourage all students to evaluate the progress they have made during the lesson.
- The strategy of question and answer, peer or self-assessment may be appropriate, or a related extension task may be used.
- Students' achievement/progress should inform planning for the next lesson.

Success Criteria

Success criteria describe to students what the teacher is looking for and how they will know they are being successful in their learning. They need to be specific and related to the learning objectives and the tasks set by the teacher. Building appropriate success criteria into short-term planning is vital to ensure a focus on learning as opposed to activities.

Effective questioning and discussion which evidence learning

We aim to create effective classroom discussions, tasks and activities that elicit evidence of learning. We use questioning to provoke thinking and develop students' understanding whilst also gaining information to inform future teaching and learning.

Effective questioning:

- Allows students to engage with the learning process.
- Uses strategies such as no hands rule, and thinking time to promote extended responses from students.
- Provides links to the learning objectives of the lesson
- Promotes independent learning; giving opportunities for students to ask their own questions and seek their own answers.
- Enables teachers to use students as learning resources for one another.
- Creates a classroom climate where students feel secure enough to take risks, be tentative and make mistakes.
- Teachers plan questions of different degrees of cognitive complexity in order to challenge students and help them to develop their thinking.

Self and Peer Assessment

Good peer and self-assessment will be much more than students marking their own and other's work. In order to improve learning, it must be an activity that engages students with the quality of their work and in reflecting on how to improve it. Peer assessment, when done effectively, provides students with valuable feedback enabling them to learn from and support each other.

The opportunity to talk, discuss, explain and challenge adds a valuable dimension to learning, enabling students to achieve more than they would without such activities. Importantly, both peer and self-assessment promote independent learning, helping students to take responsibility for their own progress.

Planning for Progress: Lesson Structure

Introduction and starter activity

- There should be an orderly and timely start to the lesson.
- Students should place their school planner, exercise book and pencil case (incl. the agreed stationery and other subject specific equipment) on the desk at the start of the lesson.
- The lesson should be introduced clearly, normally by sharing the intended learning objectives and success criteria with students. These will usually be displayed on the board at the start of the lesson.
- Students should be encouraged to engage/interact with the objectives for the lesson and they should be revisited periodically. It is not necessary for students to write down the learning objective and success criteria.
- In most subjects a starter activity will take place in the first 5 – 10 minutes of the lesson.

Tasks Set

The task(s) to be undertaken are explained and resources identified. The tasks should be well structured and planned, relevant and differentiated. Planned use of support should be arranged in partnership with Teaching Assistants.

Tasks set will:

- Be matched to students needs and abilities
- Build on knowledge and skills acquired previously
- Relate to key questions, enquiry, investigation and problem solving
- Develop a range of student skills
- Use different teaching strategies
- Enable students to evaluate their own work
- Encourage students to apply what they have learned in other situations
- Relate to one or more of the success criteria (and may bring rewards and/or praise on completion)

The teacher will:

- Give clear instructions
- Link work clearly to learning objectives and success criteria
- Have high expectations
- Demand high quality in terms of work and effort
- Use target and technical language
- Display key words and/or write them on the board
- Facilitate learning
- Maintain a presence in the classroom
- Enable mini-plenaries to take place, where appropriate, so that students remain focused and evaluate their progress

The students will:

- Listen and respond positively to the teacher and each other
- Be kept on task

- Be stretched and challenged
- Be motivated
- Want to achieve well and achieve the success criteria

Appendix 2: Homework Policy

At St Aloysius we recognise the importance of setting challenging homework that is appropriate for the age and stage of all pupils. We believe that homework is a vital part of ensuring that all pupils reach their full potential and therefore, homework is an essential and integral part of the school curriculum. It is also a means by which the school can actively encourage the participation of parents in their child’s learning.

The following sets out clear guidelines which will ensure teachers set homework that will raise attainment for all. *(This document should be read in conjunction with the school marking policy.)*

The amount and frequency of homework:

The amount of homework set will vary from subjects and key stages. The table below should be used by departments to determine when homework should be set for each class.

	Core (English, Maths & Science)	Foundation
Key Stage 3 – <i>recommended minimum of 30 minutes per piece of homework</i>	3 pieces of homework per fortnight	2 pieces of homework per fortnight. <i>*Where subjects have only 1 lesson a week 1 piece per fortnight</i>
Key Stage 4 - <i>recommended minimum of 30 minutes per piece of homework</i>	4 pieces of homework per fortnight	3 pieces of homework per fortnight
Key Stage 5	It is expected that students will be set independent study that will require a minimum of 5 hours of study per subject, per week.	

A homework timetable will be issued to pupils at the start of the academic year.

Homework Content:

Whereas the specific content of homework will vary across departments in line with specification requirements, all homework set should:

1. Consolidate, extend and / or embed classroom learning.
2. Be differentiated to ensure challenge across all abilities.
3. Be well resourced and accessible to all.
4. Include an Optional Challenge (An optional task that is set in addition to the main homework. It will allow the pupil to further develop key skills / explore the topic in greater depth.)
5. Be varied to ensure a number of skill sets are developed. (Research, reading, worksheets, extended writing etc.)
6. Be able to evidence that the pupils have completed the work. (For example, a research task will require notes made to show that the task has been completed).

Recording of Homework:

Teachers must ensure that all homework is:

- Recorded on Show My Homework (SMHW) every week for key stages 3 – 5 inclusive. Detailed descriptions of what the pupils are required to do and all necessary resources must be uploaded onto SMHW by the end of the school day on Monday for that week.
- Set in keeping with the subject and time specifications as outlined above.
- In keeping with all of the 'Homework Content' criteria listed above.
- Given to pupils and recorded in their diaries at the start of each lesson.

Pupils must ensure that all homework is:

- Recorded in their diaries. Pupils will be expected to record the homework and 'due in date' in their diaries. It will be checked and signed by parents and tutors each week.
- Accessed via SMHW or that the necessary resources are collected as a hard copy from the teacher.

Quality and Consistency:

Teachers must:

- Keep a record of homework set in the Teacher Planner, along with records of the lesson.
- Ensure that homework deadlines are met and inform parents of any deficiencies with regards to homework.
- Mark homework according to the marking policy and keep a record of the marks achieved in individual tasks set.
- Comment on the quantity and quality of homework in the long reports.

Students must:

- Complete all homework tasks on time, to the best of their ability and with a high standard of presentation.
- Ensure that they have their diary signed each week by their parents.

Support for homework tasks:

- Pupils will be encouraged to attend the Homework Club which operates four nights a week in the Library.
- Teachers will also respond to requests from pupils for assistance and be pro-active in attempting to ensure that the quality of the work being completed is satisfactory.
- The school, through its communications with parents (Parental meetings, Parents Evenings, reports etc.) will ensure that the importance of homework is stressed. Parents will be provided with details of how to access SMHW. They will be encouraged to ask to see the homework being done, assist where possible, and insist on a repetition of the work if they consider it fails to reach an acceptable standard.