

Belfast Boys' Model School

Learning and Teaching Policy



Policy Details

| | |
|---|---|
| Summary of Policy | To outline BBMS' approach and individual responsibilities pertaining to Learning and Teaching |
| Purpose | To ensure clarity of purpose and responsibility. |
| Operational Date | November 2025 |
| Review Date | November 2027 |
| Date last reviewed & approved by Board of Governors. | |

Rationale

At Belfast Boys' Model School, we want our pupils to be confident, aspirational, independent, and lifelong learners. We recognise that our teachers and support staff play an important part in that journey. We are self-reflective educators that seek to establish a caring, disciplined and supporting environment where all pupils can strive to fulfil their full potential.

The Boys' Model School encourages aspirational thinking in their pupils who are from a wide range of social backgrounds. We believe that pupils will benefit from working with others, both within the school community and on as many occasions as possible from partners in their community and beyond, to give them life experiences to generate new thinking, new viewpoints, and innovative ideas.

The aims of our Learning and Teaching Policy and all the policies in Belfast Boys' Model School are developed alongside the new ETI Framework and their Learning Insight Profile are consistent with the aims of 'Every School a Good School,' 'Preparing for Success.'

Learning and Teaching processes are at the core tasks of Belfast Boys' Model School and are the business of the whole school. Our policy promotes the highest standards of learning and teaching as it directly affects and determines students' progress and their experiences as learners. We have three principal areas that are our focus:

- Learning and Teaching Pedagogy with a focus on Questioning, Retrieval Practice, and classroom teaching strategies to ensure 'Quality First Teaching' is at the forefront of all our teachers' thinking.
- Literacy with a focus on reading and oracy
- Skills development designed to develop 'soft' skills that are desirable to employers and universities

Policy Statement

- At Belfast Boys' Model School, we will consider how we can develop classroom strategies that allow our pupils to reach their full potential across the curriculum. These strategies are based on evidence-informed literature and focus on how pupils at all stages of their learning can access new information, understand it, and use it effectively to empower our learners to achieve their potential and to make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives.

The objectives are to develop the young person as:

- an individual
- a contributor to society and
- a contributor to the economy and environment

Our school aims are therefore to encourage all pupils to:

- develop abilities to be learners who enjoy learning for success in life and work
- develop positive attitudes, good relationships, and caring behaviour
- develop confidence to make informed choices and become aspirational
- develop skills and interests to enrich their lives

To achieve these aims staff at Belfast Boys' Model School will create a learning environment for all our pupils that develops:

- a culture of dialogue
- a culture of high participation
- a culture of challenge

In doing so we will embed effective pedagogical practices that enable our pupils to successfully access a curriculum that caters for all e.g., Effective Questioning, Modelling, Scaffolding, Robust Assessment, Effective Feedback and Retrieval Practice.

- An evidence-based approach to Teaching and Learning is employed which includes Staff and Pupil Voice.

Objectives of policy

This policy details what we consider to be best practice and clarifies the expectations the school has for staff and pupils, thus ensuring that all our pupils learn to the best of their ability in every lesson.

Principles of the policy

Teachers will:

- Support and challenge pupils to achieve their best
- Provide high quality, dynamic and engaging lessons
- Provide high quality feedback, both individual and whole class
- Encourage independent learning

Pastoral staff will:

- Promote a culture of learning within the Year Group
- Ensure pupils are ready to learn each day
- Liaise closely with CL and class teachers to address areas of concern regarding pupil learning
- Be aware of Pass Data to help address issues relating to Teaching and Learning

Pupils will:

- Rise to challenges, working in collaboration with and being supportive of their peers
- Participate and engage fully in lessons

- Respond positively to feedback and make every effort to improve their work based on effective teacher feedback
- Take an independent and active part in learning within and beyond the classroom

Definition of Learning

Learning is acquiring new, or modifying existing knowledge, behaviours, skills, values, or preferences and may involve synthesising different types of information. Learning does not happen all at once but builds upon and is shaped by what we already know. To that end, learning may be viewed as a process, rather than a collection of factual and procedural knowledge.

Definition of Teaching

Teaching is the sharing of knowledge using appropriate methodology. It generates and encourages enthusiasm about the subject matter. It develops specific skills and enhances talents, develops habits of mind, and encourages inquiry.

Organisation for the delivery of Learning and Teaching

Learning most often takes place within classrooms and in subject lessons, however, it also takes place in other contexts and situations.

A. Curriculum Planning and Implementation.

Belfast Boys' Model School will:

- ensure that all staff will meet the needs of the pupils in accordance with the Northern Ireland curriculum
- evaluate pupils' and teachers' responses to the taught curriculum and use these to inform future planning
- ensure that our curriculum is broad and balanced, and in line with the relevant statutory guidance and circulars from DE
- ensure that our curriculum is coherent and demonstrates progression from years 8 to 14
- ensure that the required skills and capabilities are integrated within the curriculum and promoted consistently and across all Areas of Learning
- ensure that the organisation of classes and timetables enables the curriculum to be delivered effectively
- ensure that, where appropriate, opportunities to develop pupils' numeracy and literacy skills are embedded in planning documentation.

B. Climate for effective learning

Teachers in Belfast Boys' Model School will:

- identify the specific needs of individual pupils

- aim to meet the needs of individual pupils by taking account of their stage of development – strengths and areas for improvement
- challenge pupils and have realistically high expectations of their performance, reflected in appropriate differentiated, planned, learning outcomes
- adopt a no-opt out environment in the classroom
- use effective questioning – Directed and Non-Directed
- encourage appropriate and effective pupil talk through dialogic lessons
- plan effective questions and encourage pupils to ask more questions in class – Teacher/Peers
- be expected to deliver and endeavour to improve the use of the functional skills of Communication, Using Maths, and ICT in their curriculum area
- ensure every classroom environment is well maintained, organised and attractive, displaying up to date pupil work, which exemplifies standards
- clarify learning outcomes and success criteria at the beginning of lessons/topics and have a structured lesson including a plenary (Informed by the Four Phase Lesson Plan, (Mike Hughes)
- aim to motivate pupils and encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning and be actively involved in the learning process
- encourage creativity
- use a range of teaching strategies
- encourage pupils to think and do for themselves through open ended tasks, problem-solving, investigation and personal research
- use praise appropriately
- provide stimulating and suitable resources for boys' learning, including Digital Skills
- set robust assessment tasks that prepare them for the next stage of their learning
- use a variety of appropriate assessment processes and tools to monitor pupils' learning including; teachers' observations, discussion with pupils, checking for understanding, marking, written tests and peer and self-assessment
- mark pupils' work regularly in line with our marking, assessment, recording and reporting policies to highlight strengths and areas for improvement
- engage in the target setting process to bring about pupil improvement
- use assessment data to inform teaching and improve learning
- develop strong partnerships with parents.

Planning and Preparation:

Curriculum Leaders have overall responsibility for their subject area, ensuring Schemes of Work and Timelines are effective and include resources and activities that meet the structure of the Four Phase Lesson Plan (Mike Hughes):

1. Overview (Clear Learning Intentions and Success Criteria)
2. Input (Providing new information in small chunks)
3. Processing (Checking for pupil understanding)
4. Plenary

Belfast Boys' Model School recognises that Schemes of Work are 'working documents' which will evolve and develop depending on the embedding of effective and subject appropriate pedagogical practices that enhance pupil learning:

- Effective Questioning – Cold Calling, Check for Understanding, Probing Questions, Think, Pair, Share, Say it again but Better, Process Questions, Show Me Boards
- Scaffolding
- Live Modelling
- Metacognitive Talk
- Setting The Standard
- Literacy (including Oracy)- Closing the Reading Gap, Building Confidence in Reading, Dyslexia and Barriers to reading, Reading for Meaning, Oracy and Questioning.
- Retrieval Strategies

All teachers should have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the specification they are teaching, planning resources, including ICT to enhance learning. Revision Lists should be used as a resource for pupils to engage in self-evaluation and develop their metacognitive skills.

All staff are expected to familiarise themselves with the academic and pastoral data relating to their classes, allowing them to plan effective questioning strategies and activities that provide opportunities for pupils to improve their knowledge and develop their skillset. When planning, teachers will consider the valuable resource of the Classroom Assistant both inside and outside the classroom.

All classes will have an MS Class Team and Learning Resources will be on the team, as well as Revision Lists and key dates e.g., Class Tests. Homeworks will be communicated by teachers on SIMs to parents on Parent App.

Data to be used when planning includes:

- Data and information on SIMS (such as FSM/SEN, etc.).
- PASS Data
- PTM/PTE/NGRT
- CAT Data
- CCEA Adaptive Testing data

Relevant data is available on an individual pupil data profile and collated observations MS Team – Whole School Data Channel – Year Group Broadsheets. Other data may be used for specific interventions e.g., Literacy and Numeracy (FFT Reading Quest, Amira, IXL).

Subject teachers will use relevant data to create data-informed seating plans for each of their subject classes to ensure pupils are best-positioned within the classroom to maximise learning according to need.

C. Attainment

Teachers in Belfast Boys' Model School will:

- adhere to BBMS's marking and assessment policy
- adhere to BBMS's recording and reporting policy
- use baseline data to inform teaching and learning
- monitor pupil attainment to try to ensure progression
- compare the results of statutory assessment and predicted data at the end of each key stage with those of similar schools and take corrective action, as necessary.

Tracking student progress

Assessment is the process of obtaining, analysing and interpreting evidence for use by both pupils and teachers to enable the review, planning and improvement of learning. It is fully integrated with the delivery of the curriculum and is an essential component of effective classroom practice.

All staff have the responsibility to assess each pupil's attainment regularly and accurately, tracking the progress made through the three class tests. This is reported to parents on two occasions as tracking information on SIMS Parent App and in one annual written report. All teachers will identify pupils in their class in need of additional support, including vulnerable groups SEN pupils and the most able.

All subject leaders and pastoral leaders have the responsibility to monitor assessment across their department or year group, to identify individuals or groups who are making less progress than expected and to intervene where necessary to ensure pupils get back on track.

D. Implementation of the Code of Practice for SEN Provision

Belfast Boys' Model School will:

- endeavour to address the needs of all our pupils
- adhere to the structure and procedures established by the SENCO to ensure that the Code is implemented effectively
- aim to identify, diagnose, and plan provision for the special educational needs of individual pupils
- maintain suitable records for individual pupils and review these regularly to monitor progress

E. Artificial Intelligence in Learning and Teaching

Belfast Boys' Model School recognises the growing role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education and is committed to its ethical, safe, and purposeful use to enhance learning and teaching. AI tools will be integrated to support, not replace, high-quality pedagogy and teacher expertise. Their use must align with our core values, promoting fairness, transparency, and accountability. Staff and pupils should use approved AI platforms (e.g., those accessible via C2K) to ensure privacy and data security. AI-generated content must adhere to academic integrity standards, avoiding plagiarism and misinformation. Teachers

will guide pupils in developing critical thinking and metacognitive skills when engaging with AI, ensuring that technology is used to deepen understanding rather than shortcut learning. Misuse of AI, including for academic dishonesty or inappropriate content, will be addressed in line with school policies and JCQ guidelines.

AI and Retrieval Practice

Belfast Boys' Model School recognises the value of Retrieval Practice as an evolving strategy for strengthening long-term memory and improving learning outcomes. Artificial Intelligence can support this process by providing adaptive, personalised tools that help pupils revisit and consolidate prior knowledge. Approved AI platforms may be used to generate low-stakes quizzes, flashcards and spaced repetition activities tailored to individual learning needs. Teachers will guide pupils in using these tools effectively, ensuring that retrieval activities remain purposeful and aligned with curriculum objectives. AI should complement, not replace, teacher-led questioning and metacognitive strategies. All AI-supported retrieval tasks must adhere to ethical standards, avoiding over-reliance on technology and promoting critical thinking. Misuse of AI for shortcuts or academic dishonesty will be addressed in line with school policy.

F. ACCOUNTABILITY in Learning and Teaching

The Board of Governors is expected to:

- ensure that our curriculum is broad and balanced, and in line with the NI Curriculum to include relevant guidance and circulars from DE
- employ staff and deploy resources to facilitate the delivery of the above curriculum
- implement the policies relating to staff welfare so that effective teaching and learning can take place

The Principal is expected to:

- have in place an agreed Learning and Teaching Policy along with effective practices for its implementation
- advise the Board of Governors on staffing with regard to the delivery of the curriculum.

The Senior Leadership Team is expected to:

- ensure the processes for developing and monitoring learning and teaching are in place
- ensure a challenging and stimulating curriculum is on offer
- provide prior attainment data for analysis and set targets for school areas of learning and pupils
- monitor and review school progress against these targets
- ensure access to CPD opportunities focused on improving learning and teaching
- plan, monitor and evaluate Staff Professional Learning (SPL) in teaching and learning.

The Learning and Teaching Leaders are expected to:

- employ an evidence-based approach to improving learning and teaching
- develop experimentation and innovation across all areas of learning and teaching
- lead the processes for sharing and developing good practice
- lead the processes that quality assures learning and teaching.

Curriculum Leaders are expected to:

- exemplify the policy in the teaching of their own areas of learning
- ensure appropriate medium and long-term plans are in place for all teaching groups, incorporating homework, assessment procedures and guidance on teaching strategies
- ensure that the most appropriate examination syllabuses are used and review these regularly with staff
- ensure that Department Policies and Evaluations are updated annually
- lead monitoring of learning and teaching, including the use of benchmarking data
- lead areas of learning target setting to improve learning and teaching
- ensure staff have access to appropriate SPL opportunities
- monitor and review department attainment through examination reviews and departmental self-evaluation framework

Teachers are expected to:

- endeavour to promote positive relationships with pupils and parents
- plan for every lesson
- adhere to departmental schemes of work and timelines for lesson content and progression
- Create revision lists and assessments
- Create and maintain a class MS Team
- Equip pupil with relevant retrieval strategies
- Notify pupils/parents of assessment preparation and dates through the pupils' MS Class Team
- Populate the class MS Team with relevant learning materials
- make pupils aware of the learning intentions at the start of every lesson/topic
- make pupils aware of the associated success criteria at the start of every lesson/topic
- be actively involved with the class throughout the lesson, implementing stages 2 and 3 of the Mike Hughes' Four Phase Lesson Plan
- conclude lessons constructively
- employ pedagogical strategies modelled by SLT Teaching and Learning
- display examples of pupils' work, which inform learning, within their rooms
- share good practice within their department
- share good practice with SLT responsible for Pedagogy
- model effective Retrieval Strategies appropriate to their subject

- allow pupils time to practice Retrieval Strategies in class
- monitor and assess pupil use of Retrieval Strategies in their subject
- Create and adjust, if necessary, their data-informed seating plans
- regularly reflect on and evaluate their professional practice through processes such as the BBMS Trusted Colleague Network

Support Staff are expected to:

- support teachers and pupils in the implementation of the Learning and Teaching Policy.
- liaise with and inform teachers on the individual needs of pupils with SEN.

Pupils are expected to:

- attend school regularly
- be punctual to school and all lessons
- be well-mannered and polite
- behave in a manner which will promote their own learning and not disrupt the learning of others
- co-operate with staff and fellow pupils
- come to school equipped for lessons
- work to the best of their ability
- complete homework/controlled assessments/portfolios on time to the best of their abilities.
- make use of Revision Lists
- Make use of Retrieval Strategies

Parents are expected to:

- ensure their son attends regularly
- ensure their son is punctual to school
- promote behaviour which is conducive to learning
- ensure that their son comes to school equipped for lessons
- bring to the attention of the school any concerns about their son's learning
- support the school's ethos, aims and objectives
- consult student Revision Lists and ensure that their son completes assessments
- help their son use Retrieval Strategies and monitor their preparation for assessments using Revision Lists

Related Documents

- 1:
- 2:
- 3:
- 4:
- 5: