

TEACHING & LEARNING POLICY



1. Purpose

Howard House School's ethos is a child centred approach, designed to provide every student with the structure, security and success required to build confidence and self-esteem in preparation for adult life.

At Howard House School, we are committed to high quality teaching and learning in order to raise students' progress and achievement emotionally, socially, and academically, during their education.

2. The aims of this policy are:

- To foster an understanding amongst all staff of the importance of varied teaching and learning strategies and how to implement these in the classroom.
- To raise classroom standards and assist students' development by supporting them in becoming more independent and reflective learners.
- To ensure that the quality of teaching and learning at Howard House School is of the very highest standard.
- To develop confident and motivated students who have the desire and passion to succeed and become lifelong learners.
- To create an environment where students' social and emotional successes are valued as highly as their academic achievements.

3. Learning Environment

At Howard House School, we believe a positive learning environment, that is stimulating and structured, promotes students' attitudes and behaviour towards their own and others learning.

Staff should develop strong, positive and appropriate relationships with students and understand their individual needs in order to provide an environment where students feel valued, confident, and motivated to learn.

Students will get the opportunity to develop and build their social skills and emotional learning through and alongside the curriculum with the use of a variety of activities. For example:

- Games to build social skills
- Use of role play
- Off-site activities/visits
- Use of distraction activities
- Use of ICT

The learning environment will be managed in such a way as to facilitate different styles of learning. This could include:

- Whole class teaching
- Pair or grouped work (organised to an appropriate criteria i.e. ability, mixed ability, friendships, dynamics of the groups, etc.)

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- One to one teaching
- Independent learning
- Practical activities (investigations, projects, experiments, sports drills, etc.)
- Use of ICT (computer rooms, laptops, iPads, etc.)
- Student led learning.

Classrooms and learning areas will provide stimulating and purposeful environments, including displays that are student friendly, thought provoking and engaging.

4. Learning Objectives

In order to encourage independent learning, students need to know what they are expected to learn and how they can achieve it. Providing objectives within lessons allows students to engage with the process of learning.

Teachers must make the learning objectives and outcomes explicit to all students. This will usually happen at the start of the lesson but could happen at other stages in the lesson.

Learning objectives could be delivered in a variety of different ways, for example:

- Written or projected onto the whiteboard
- Orally
- Printed on handouts
- Written by students into their books

In order for students to take responsibility for their own learning it is important for teachers to make it clear.

5. Learning Displays

Classroom displays are an important tool for both students and staff. They should be used to create an engaging and positive learning environment where students feel inspired to learn.

Consider the purpose of displays. They should be used as a chance to celebrate student success, so that students can feel proud of their achievements and other students can aspire to achieve the same. Staff may incorporate the use of displays into their teaching, referring to student work as model examples and by using any other displays as teaching points or visual clues and prompts for students in lessons. This will help encourage students to become independent learners.

We are aware that some students because of their SEMH needs do not like having their work displayed publicly and therefore this will be taken into account by all staff before being used. To accommodate this, readymade displays and posters could be used instead as a tool to engage, stimulate and promote students learning.

It is also necessary to note that due to ASD, some of the students on roll at Howard House School may object to "busy" wall displays, it is appropriate that some learning environments may be left clear or minimal as displays can become over stimulating and distracting for some students.

6. Role of the Teaching Assistant/Subject Associate

Teaching Assistants/Subject Associate are deployed to almost all classes at all times, as such they represent a significant investment in additional support for learning, behaviour and attainment. Teaching Assistants at Howard House are highly skilled and qualified.

All teaching assistants/subject associate can:

- Supervise and provide targeted support for students, based on a good understanding of the student's profile and EHCP;
- Assist with the creation of resources and the delivery of lessons;
- Manage, support and sustain high levels of student behaviour;
- Encourage positive participation and engagement with learning;
- Set challenging targets and maintain high expectations;
- Provide feedback, mark and support planning;
- Administer tests;
- Work 1:1, with groups or the whole class as required;
- Provide admin/clerical support, including work for displays;
- Pastoral support or other intervention;
- Assist with creating student profiles, EHCPs etc.

Teaching assistants at Howard House have a vital and pivotal teaching role and are central to the success of the school as a whole.

7. Classwork

Student's exercise books need to reflect the high expectations we have of learning at Howard House School including pride and high-quality work. Classwork is a record of the learning and progress that takes place in a lesson and can provide formative feedback to teachers on what to plan next in lessons.

At the start of each lesson, students should be expected to record the date, the title of the lesson or title of the piece of work (as appropriate). LO's will already be stuck into students' workbooks prior to the lesson. Work should be neatly presented, with the appropriate use of rulers, pencils for drawing etc.

8. Teaching Strategies and Styles

Howard House school does not advocate one teaching style over any other and has no common expectations for how learning should be planned or delivered. We encourage teachers to take risks and to experiment with a range of approaches so that they can determine what works well for the child, for the group and for the curriculum – above all, teaching must support every student's learning and progress. We recognise that teaching styles are likely to change over time, as the demands of the curriculum change and students preferred learning style develops and matures.

To encourage and promote learning, teachers may choose to use appropriate rewards in order to engage the reluctant learner and impact on their social, emotional and mental health development.

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Where effective practice is seen, through observation or feedback, this is recorded in student's profiles. It is expected that all staff, teachers and teaching assistants, routinely read and reflect upon the effective practice seen elsewhere, both within the school and where present, at off-site provisions.

9. Differentiation

It is expected that every teacher and teaching assistant plans for learning that is informed by students' prior attainment. This will include a review of students' attainment data from previous schools, in-school data and student profiles. Typically, there will be a wide range of ability within every class, it is therefore typical to see common learning objectives accompanied by a variety of tasks designed to provide, stretch and challenge students of all abilities.

10. Sharing Good Practice

Sharing good practice is an important part of teaching and helps to develop staff performance. Through sharing good practice across the school, it ensures that ideas and strategies are communicated and used effectively to promote students' emotional and academic progress. Howard House School encourages pooling the wealth of experience and expertise throughout the school.

Effective practice is shared in a number of ways:

- Staff briefings
- Teaching & Learning Groups
- Curriculum meetings
- Observations – formal and informal
- Peer observations
- Staff supervision
- Use of student profiles

11. Lesson Observations

People should expect one formal lesson observation per half- term for the purpose of performance management.

Additional observations may be scheduled for professional/personal development and the Head of School and Senior Leaders reserve the right to use drop-in sessions as required.

When there is surplus staffing, all teachers are given time off timetable, at least once per term, to observe other teachers. This is a form of sharing good practice.

12. Marking and Feedback

Marking and feedback will typically be provided as the work is progressed within the lesson through a variety of formal and informal means. Typically, this will include extensive verbal feedback from the teacher or subject associate that informs the quality of the work as it progresses, which is then reflected with the students work as they continue.

Providing quick feedback can be achieved in many ways:

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- Good circulation in lessons
- Verbal feedback to individuals in lessons
- Live modelling of what good looks like
- Whole class feedback if a specific immediate issue has been picked up on by the teacher
- Clear expectations of work and students held to account on meeting these

We note that many of our students are very resistant to repeating or drafting large sections of work, and for many students this is a facet of an identified Autistic Spectrum Disorder. Marking should therefore focus on the skills or knowledge or other attribute needed to improve attainment within the remainder of that task or a subsequent task, which will ideally follow within that lesson or the next.

It is expected that selected pieces of work should be marked for accuracy, attainment, spelling, punctuation and grammar on a routine basis; this is likely to be at least once each half-term for most subjects (for practical subject, a specific skill or other attribute may be identified). Teachers or teaching assistants should identify the focus on the marking with students in advance and should ensure that time is provided for students to reflect on their written feedback. Wherever possible, marking should include an opportunity for students to respond, by making corrections, or attempting a challenge or extension task, so that they can demonstrate mastery.

Teacher and subject associates' marking should be easily identified through the use of a green pen.

13. Assessment, Recording and Reporting

All teachers and subject associates are required to record students' progress through the routine assessment of students' work. Students' verbal contributions to a discussion, performance pieces, responses to questions, artwork and other forms of expression are given equal weighting to written responses in terms of assessing students understanding and development – we do not require students to make a written record for the sole purpose of informing an assessment process.

A learning objectives tracker is used by every teacher, which highlights progress students are making, as well as noting which work has been missed by a student. The learning objectives tracker is completed by using a 'RAG' approach and is dated, to show progress over time.

Teachers are required to maintain a record of student progress and to use this when completing assessment.

Teachers are required to reflect on student's progress and to plan accordingly for gaps in learning, changes in students rate of learning and overall attainment when preparing lessons, medium and long-term planning.