

# Mount Temple Comprehensive School



## Learning and Teaching Policy

Ratified October 2022

## Introduction

Learning and teaching are the key functions of our school. In 2006/2007, Mount Temple teaching staff began a process which culminated in the development of a learning policy. Always looking to the future, the Mount Temple Learning Policy linked the school's ethos, vision and direction to what is taught and learnt in the school. Its combined values and aspirations with a response to issues that are central to our school as a learning organisation, providing a guide for subject planning and curriculum development.

In 2011/2012, the policy was revised to take account of the changed context in which we operate and the growing recognition that global and local change are at the heart of the educational process. Young people need to be equipped with the skills and competencies necessary to engage in lifelong and life-wide learning. The policy also recognised that the rapid pace and nature of change, and changing modes and models of learning, will shape learning in the school. The policy is continually reviewed by the policy sub-committee of the Parents' Association and all the stakeholders of Mount Temple.

## Basis and purpose of the Policy

The Mount Temple Learning & Teaching Policy is based firmly on the ethos of the school. The school mission statement states:

*"All of us are different, all of us are equal." We respect this diversity and promote inclusion. We endeavour to create an environment in Mount Temple in which all members of the school community have the right to feel safe and to be protected; and to enjoy learning, teaching, working and extra-curricular activities in the school. The school emphasises tolerance, appreciation of diversity, politeness, courtesy, co-operation and respect for others and their property as basic principles of behaviour."*

The Mount Temple Learning & Teaching policy also articulates the values underlying the ways in which we learn. As a Comprehensive school, a comprehensive education seeks to include all students equally, with their diverse needs - including those with additional learning needs, with particular giftedness and with specific talents. The Learning & Teaching policy states that the community of Mount Temple recognises the creation of tolerance, the challenge of inclusiveness, the securing of a learning space where difference is embraced is not something accomplished once and for all, but is an educational path travelled every day.

The policy also reflects the reality of school life, and highlights what is best about learning in Mount Temple. Whilst drawing on our strengths, traditions and existing good practice, it also seeks to address challenges, weaknesses and priorities for improvement.

This policy forms the basis for the curriculum section of the School Plan. It will inform relevant whole school policies, subject planning and areas such as Transition Year and Additional Educational Needs. It will also inform the school's involvement in, and response to, various initiatives such as curriculum reforms, local and national strategies. While the learning policy is aspirational, in that certain elements are yet to be achieved, it is based on existing good practice, and aims to be realistic and attainable.

## Learning Commitment

Learning is at the heart of what happens in Mount Temple.

- Mount Temple is a learning school. Staff and students seek to learn from experience - both success and failure. We are a learning community. We offer a curriculum that promotes spiritual, moral, cultural, physical, mental and emotional development. We provide a rich and varied context and experiences to help students develop a wide range of skills.
- Learning is not value-neutral. What is learned here reflects the values outlined above.
- How learning and teaching takes place here seeks to reflect these values.
- Nothing is taught here which denies, denigrates or undermines these values.
- School life outside the classroom is also consistent with these values.
- The other policies of the school reflect these values.
- Staff and management attempt to embody these values.
- Exams are important tools for the assessment and improvement of learning; learning is primary, exams secondary.
- We strive to ensure that students achieve their best in terms of learning, and recognise and celebrate when they do their best to learn well.

## We believe that students learn best when they:

- Are engaged, involved and happy in their learning
- Achieve academically.
- Develop and practice social skills.
- Develop and practice independence.
- Work cooperatively and collaboratively.
- Are creative.
- Engage in peer mentoring.
- Learn leadership skills.
- Use their initiative.
- Make decisions.
- Solve problems.
- Improve speaking and listening skills.
- Develop and discuss their own ideas.
- Explore areas they are interested in.
- Develop and practice life skills.
- Receive support.

**Learning takes place in a safe environment which:**

- Is inclusive.
- Is welcoming.
- Is challenging and stimulating.
- Is peaceful and calm.
- Is happy and caring.
- Is organised.
- Is well resourced.
- Makes learning accessible.
- Is encouraging and appreciative.
- Provides equal opportunities.

### **Planning for Teaching and Learning**

We believe that all teaching should be of a high quality leading to each student making significant and rapid progress academically, socially and emotionally and in relation to any other specific need or individual target. This is achieved by:

- A culture amongst all staff that is focused on continual improvement together, sharing good practice and achieving the best outcomes for every student. In Mount Temple we have an Assistant Principal 1 who leads a Learning & Teaching group and a Digital group. The establishment and operation of these groups is to examine resources, good practice and digital teaching aids. This group(s) meets regularly to develop some of the below points. Depending on the current or emerging needs of the school community, there may be a set focus on one or more of the following areas:

- Identification and examination and reporting on both hard and software.
- Identification and provision of both internal and external Continuous Professional Development on the above.
- Examination of teaching strategies.
- Demonstration of classroom management and practice through open classroom sharing/teacher observation.
- Examination of teaching resources.
- Coordination of planning and assessment practices.
- Reporting and trialling of alternate timetabling.
- Development and trialling of alternate curriculum.
- Involvement in policy creation and revision in the Learning & Teaching area.
- Interaction and communication with Additional Educational Needs and assessment areas.

- Every member of staff with responsibility for delivering teaching has a detailed understanding of the specific learning needs of their students and planning accordingly to allow each student to make significant progress. This may involve: consulting with the Additional Education Coordinator about the needs of individual students.
- Differentiating work, resources and engagement strategies for individual students, including differentiating lesson planning for students in the same lesson.
- Effective assessment of the ability and needs of a student on entry, which is used to set individual targets for students that are achievable and if met will mean significant and rapid progress both academically and in relation to individual specific needs.
- Monitoring student progress against targets and making timely and effective intervention where students are not making progress; tracking progress and intervention in each subject in a consistent manner to contribute to whole school planning.
- Establishing positive behaviour in class, following the Code of Behaviour and Discipline Policy and ensuring incidents of appropriate and poor behaviour are shared with others so that all staff can understand the whole picture of each student.
- Planning for each student to develop the ability to evaluate and take responsibility for their own learning and behaviour.
- Monitoring attendance, punctuality, rewards, sanctions, and where appropriate, independent learning tasks / homework.
- Regular high quality Continual Professional Development (CPD) to support the development of all staff and meet identified training needs in keeping with the school development plan.

### **Planning and Preparation of Teaching**

Regardless of the setting, all students have a right to expect to receive lessons that should lead to their progress. This expectation applies to lessons delivered in Mount Temple, at home or by on-line means. This progress should be evident over time. Lessons will only lead to progress if they have a clear direction over time and will only meet the needs of individual students if those needs are planned for. Therefore, staff must be able to provide evidence that subject department plans have been well thought out. Staff are expected to do this in a collaborative way, for example by splitting tasks between all those who deliver a subject or by planning as a team. Guidance and Continuous Professional Development are provided to help align all department subject planning to the highest standard and meet expectations required by national curriculum and Department of Education and Science standards.

**Lessons are expected to:**

Be inclusive of all students.

- Ensure students' progress in their learning.
- Clearly support learning.
- Use a clear structure.
- Have elements, such as plenaries, that allow students to summarise their learning and teachers to assess their progress in the lesson so they can help students understand how to improve.
- Allow students to develop over time and practice higher order thinking skills such as creativity, analysis, problem solving, decision making and application.
- Be differentiated for the individual needs of the student by task, resource and / or outcomes.
- Use stimulating resources which engage the individual student.
- Use IT or e-learning when appropriate.
- Provide pace and challenge for each student.
- Use effective questioning, feedback and reflection techniques to engage, challenge, encourage and develop students' understanding and progress.
- Incorporate numeracy, literacy, IT skills where appropriate.
- Meet any external requirements.
- Be informed by prior learning and tracking of progress.
- Be enjoyable and interesting.
- Take account of the varying needs of differing groups of students, such as gender, ethnicity and so on.

Teachers should maintain examples of previous work, showing clear progress, creativity or other positive features.

Teachers should also maintain data and records to inform planning and improve their own teaching practice.

## Teaching Strategies

All staff should use teaching strategies which:

- Provide students with a balanced education so that they are not always experiencing exactly the same thing.
  - Use positive behaviour management and encouragement for students to achieve, including praise and rewards.
- Allow students to learn in a variety of styles, including teaching students how to learn in a variety of ways and to recognise what to do when a teaching style is making it difficult for them to understand what is being taught.
- Encourage students to work independently or collaboratively with others;
- Nurture students' creativity.
- Take account of individual academic and non-academic targets of individual students.
- Make use of good practice developed by colleagues within Mount Temple.
- Provide clear feedback to students so that they know what to do to improve.
- Include regular opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning and understanding.
- Make learning enjoyable and incorporate fun where it leads to progress.

## Students are expected to:

- Be ready to learn.
- Be in class on time.
- Listen to others and expect to be listened to.
- Follow instructions.
- Use appropriate and positive language.
- Look after the building, displays and equipment.
- Follow classroom rules / Mount Temple rules / staff expectations for health and safety.

Students are expected to take responsibility for their own learning and work with staff to make progress in both academic and non-academic ways. The views of students to inform planning and delivery are therefore important and students should be listened to and treated with respect when they discuss their own barriers to learning, what engages them and what helps them succeed.

## **Quality Assurance of Learning & Teaching**

A robust and rigorous quality assurance process will ensure the quality of teaching is continuously improving and, therefore, the outcomes for students will continuously improve. All those who are involved in teaching students are expected to contribute to the quality assurance process. The quality assurance process will:

- Identify key aspects of teaching for development.
- Identify good practice, how it can be shared and how it can be implemented as widely as possible.
- Track progress of teaching and learning.
- Support the development of staff.

## **Continuous Professional Development (CPD)**

All staff should:

- Update their subject knowledge regularly.
- Explore new topics or areas within their subjects that are relevant to the interests of students and could be used in the class.
- Keep their teaching practice and strategies up to date with current trends and initiatives.
  - Actively discuss and share good teaching and learning strategies, especially those that have worked hard to reach children.
- Proactively input to their personal CPD programme.
- Actively engage with whole staff training.
- Support the development of colleagues through collaborative planning and where possible shared developmental lesson observations.



**Management's commitment to Learning & Teaching:**

The Management of Mount Temple Comprehensive School are committed to excellent learning and teaching. Where possible the following will be undertaken annually:

- Management will support teachers to access the training they require
- Students will be given access to the widest possible curriculum.
- Commitment to encourage teachers to teach in a consistent manner across the subject department.
- Commitment to standardised assessments.

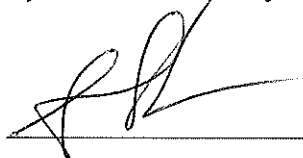
The Board of Management sets priorities and targets for improvement of learning and teaching at a whole school level. This is based on a range of factors including evidence gained from quality assurance processes, progress monitoring, behaviour monitoring and staff collaboration. Whole school targets are identified on the School Improvement Plan (SIP).

**The Board of Management will:**

- Ensure that all students receive a broad and balanced curriculum based on their individual needs and abilities.
- Set high expectations for students' progress and the quality of teaching.
- Establish and implement high quality practices and procedures for assessing, recording and reporting on student progress.
- Analyse, interpret and evaluate data on student performance against targets and external comparative data
- Develop the capacity of teachers to enable and empower them to lead in these areas so that there is effective devolved leadership throughout the organisation.

**Ratification**

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management on: Date: 5/10/2022

Signed:  \_\_\_\_\_ Chairperson \_\_\_\_\_

Next Review Date: OCT 2025

