Friends' School Lisburn
Learning and Teaching Policy

Principles
Learning and Teaching is the core business within Friends' School Lisburn. Excellent learning and teaching is underpinned by our school values, whereby we are committed to ensuring we have the highest expectations of, and aspirations for, every young person. We seek to enable all pupils to develop their academic potential and interests within a secure, stimulating, and happy learning environment.

Our vision is for all our pupils, regardless of background, to make outstanding progress, to achieve grades which will provide opportunities in the future, and to be equipped with transferable skills for life beyond school.

Learning and Teaching at Friends' is evidence-informed and is guided by educational research. All staff follow our Learning and Teaching Model (Appendix A). The Learning and Teaching Policy is set within the context of the Education (NI) Order of 2006 and takes account of the following Department of Education documents: *Every School a Good School (2008)*, *Together Towards Improvement (2003)*, *Learning Leaders (2016)* and *TransformEd (2025)*. Our Learning and Teaching Policy sits alongside our **Curriculum and Assessment Policy** and our **Positive Behaviour Policy**.

Aims
Friends' School Lisburn seeks to provide an environment, both inside and beyond the classroom, in which pupils, staff and parents are committed to excellence and where:
- learners have access to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum which will offer coherent pathways to success
- learners can make informed and appropriate choices at the end of KS3, KS4 and KS5
- learners will develop lively, enquiring minds, and an ability to question and argue rationally
- learners develop personal moral values
- learners are aspirational, creative, resilient, confident and independent
- learners fulfil their potential

Planning for successful learning
Planning for the delivery of quality learning and teaching takes place at whole-school, departmental and individual levels as well as in consultation with outside educational bodies in line with the statutory curricular requirements.

The 3-year School Development Plan provides the structure for coherent action planning for teaching and learning across all areas of the curriculum. Whole school priorities set out in the School Development Plan are reflected in the priorities in the annual Operational Plan and the plans of Heads of Departments, Key Stage and Curriculum Coordinators. The targets and actions set down are evaluated and reviewed against the success criteria established at the outset. Outcomes are used to inform future planning.
Planning for change and improvement takes place through meetings of the Leadership Team, Curriculum Committees, Curriculum Coordinators, and Heads of Department; in subject departments; and through staff as a whole.

Teacher Professional Learning will support priorities in Learning and Teaching. Staff training, either in-house or with external agencies, provides opportunities for self-reflection, sharing of good practice and planning for improvement. PRSD is used to bring forward shared priorities and to promote good practice.

Planning is informed by consultation with outside educational bodies, including CCEA and EA.

Schemes of Work provide long-term planning for the development and progression of learning within each subject at each Key Stage. Individual teachers carry out medium and short-term planning which promote continuity and reflect the aims and intentions of the Schemes of Work. Evaluation of pupil work at both individual teacher and departmental levels is used to inform future planning. Opportunities will be provided for pupils to share in the planning process through their self-review and target-setting.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Board of Governors will:
- ensure that the curriculum is broad and balanced, is in line with the NI Curriculum and reflects relevant guidance and circulars from DE
- employ staff and deploy resources to facilitate the delivery of the curriculum

The Principal will:
- have in place an agreed Learning and Teaching Policy along with effective practices for its implementation
- advise the Board of Governors on staffing required for the delivery of the curriculum

The School Leadership Team will:
- ensure the processes for developing and monitoring learning and teaching are in place
- ensure a challenging and stimulating curriculum is offered
- provide prior attainment data for analysis and set targets for school areas of learning and pupils
- monitor and review school progress against these targets
- work alongside the Learning and Teaching Coordinator to:
  - ensure access to TPL opportunities
  - plan, monitor and evaluate TPL
  - develop innovation across all areas of learning and teaching
  - lead the processes for sharing and developing good practice
  - deliver staff training, based on the latest educational research

The Learning and Teaching Coordinator will:
- produce an annual action plan in line with the priorities identified on the SDP
- participate in leadership of initiatives on the use of ICT and e-Learning
- chair a working group on a specific area of curriculum development
- take responsibility for the support of Beginning Teachers and those undertaking Early Professional Development, including completion of the relevant administration

HODs will:
- exemplify the policy in leading 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 specifications are used, and review these regularly with staff
- lead monitoring of learning, teaching and assessment, including the use of benchmarking data
- lead areas of learning target setting to improve learning, teaching and assessment
- ensure staff have access to appropriate CPD opportunities
- monitor and review attainment in individual subjects through analysis of examination results and the departmental self-evaluation framework

Classroom Teachers will:
- promote positive relationships with pupils and parents
- ensure a positive classroom climate and high standards of behaviour
- demonstrate excellent knowledge and passion for their subject area
- adhere to departmental schemes of work for lesson content and progression
- give meaningful homework

- challenge pupils and have high expectations of their performance, reflected in appropriate differentiated, planned, learning outcomes
- deliver and endeavour to improve the use of the functional skills of Communication, Using Maths and Using ICT in their curriculum area
- clarify learning outcomes and success criteria at the beginning of lessons and tasks encourage pupils to think for themselves
- provide stimulating and suitable resources for learning
- use a variety of appropriate assessment processes and tools to monitor pupils' learning, including teacher observations, discussion with pupils, marking, written tests, and peer and self-assessment
- mark pupils' work in line with our feedback policy to highlight strengths and areas for improvement
- engage in the target-setting process to bring about pupil improvement
- adapt their teaching to meet the needs of all learners, including those with additional needs
- work closely with their non-teaching colleagues who provide technical support in the practical subjects and who act as classroom assistants for pupils with Special Educational Needs
- know their impact by evaluating the effect they are having on students' learning and adjust teaching accordingly

Pupils are expected to:
- adhere to the school's Positive Behaviour Policy
- be ready to learn
- engage in learning activities and contribute positively in class
- complete all work to the best of their ability

The Learning Environment
Friends' seeks to ensure that pupil learning is enhanced through:
- The provision of a secure and happy working environment
- Planning which ensures a smooth curricular and pastoral transition between the Key Stages
- High expectations which aim to challenge pupils
- Use of an appropriate range of learning and teaching strategies and resources, including a range of technologies which support, engage, motivate and reward all pupils in their work
- Use of data to highlight individual abilities and areas for development
- Careers Education, Information and Guidance (CEAIG) across all Key Stages that provides opportunities to assist pupils make informed choices about career pathways
- Support for pupils' academic and personal development through school-based support teams and external support agencies, as appropriate
- The development of community links and partnerships to enhance work done in the classroom and extending opportunities for learning as set out in the Entitlement Framework
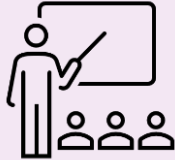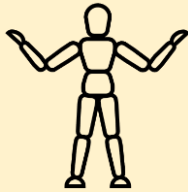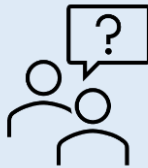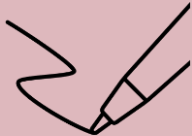
The Learning and Teaching Policy is kept under review by the Vice Principal (Curriculum) in conjunction with the Leadership Team and Heads of Departments.

Reviewed September 2025

FSL Learning and Teaching Model

	Challenge	Explain	Model	Question	Feedback
Teachers..					
Pupils..	Think	Engage	Practise	Communicate	Improve

Ref: Making Every Lesson Count, Allison et al*; Rosenshine's Principles in Action,* Sherrington*; The Great Teaching Toolkit,* Coe

Challenge

- **Anchor** in Challenge
- Set clear **success criteria**
- Make time for **pupil talk** about their learning
- Have **high expectations**
- Give learners **high levels of support** then gradually take that away
- Encourage a **growth mindset**
- Aim for an **inclusive pedagogy** where all pupils are challenged

✓ Are learning objectives challenging for all?
✓ Is appropriate support and scaffolding in place to enable all pupils to achieve?
✓ Is subject content relevant and challenging?
✓ Is success defined, celebrated and embedded for all learners?

Pupils **think…**	Pupils should be expected to rise to challenges, have high expectations of themselves and get involved in hard thinking.

Explain

- Prepare in advance for any **common misconceptions**
- Find **where students are at** before initiating explanations
- Break down into **manageable chunks** to avoid overloading working memory
- Aim for **concrete examples** to make the knowledge stick
- Use **analogies** to provide a bridge between current knowledge and material to be learnt
- Use resources and presentations that do not overload working memory, such as **dual coding**

✓ Is prior knowledge established and used to 'hook into' new knowledge?
✓ Does the explanation focus on the key learning points and success criteria?
✓ Is explanation clear and concise, especially when subject matter is challenging?
✓ Is teacher talk kind, enthusiastic and inclusive?

Pupils **engage**…	Pupils should engage with the material being taught, be intellectually curious and be enthused to find out more.

Model

- Make **explicit** what it is you are going to be modelling and why it is important
- **Show pupils** how to do each step
- Use the **I do – we do – you do** technique
- Point out **common mistakes and misconceptions** – and how to avoid these
- Use **examples of excellent work** to deconstruct, in order to demonstrate the high standards that the students should be aiming for
- **Model your own thinking** to help pupils develop their **metacognitive skills**, understanding the 'why' as well as the 'what'

✓ Is there careful modelling of process and outcome?
✓ Are examples of subject-specific work, including writing, shared and deconstructed with the pupils?
✓ Is "expert thinking" modelled by verbalising thought processes?
✓ Is modelling scaffolded to maximise the learning for all pupils?

Pupils **practise**…	Pupils should practise so that they move from novices into experts – not only in terms of their work, but also in their metacognitive skills.

Question

- Ensure that examples of effective questions are **planned** for and included in schemes of work
- Use questions throughout the lesson to **check for understanding**
- Try using key questions at the start of a lesson as a different way of sharing **learning objectives**.
- Use a variety of strategies such as **"Pose, Pause, Pounce, Bounce"** and **"Think, Pair, Share"**
- Regularly use **"no hands up"** to ensure all pupils are engaged.
- Embed **retrieval practice** in your practice
- Actively encourage pupils to **ask questions**

✓ Does questioning involve all pupils?
✓ Are reluctant pupils encouraged to respond by careful scaffolding?
✓ Is your classroom a safe environment for pupils to ask questions and make mistakes?
✓ Does questioning both deepen and develop thinking and check for common misconceptions?

Pupils **communicate**...	Pupils should aim to use their skills in oracy, growing in confidence and using the appropriate academic language.

Feedback

- Create a classroom culture where **feedback is welcome**
- Make sure that pupils know what **success looks like**
- **Track the learning** – refer to past work
- Give **specific feedback**; avoid vague, meaningless comments
- **Feed forward**, with a focus on next steps
- Use a mixture of **whole class** and **individual** feedback
- Refer to **examples of pupil work**
- Use lesson time to **review work in light of feedback;** learners should be given time to **reflect on advice and guidance** received

✓ Does feedback promote a culture of learning?
✓ Is there a good range of written and verbal feedback?
✓ Is feedback specific and helpful?
✓ Do you make use of methods that work for pupils but also manage teacher workload?

Pupils **improve**…	Pupils should act on feedback given in order to improve their performance and make progress in their learning.