**Mount Lourdes Grammar School**

Learning and Teaching Policy

1. **Rationale**

The quality of teaching and the effectiveness of learning are central to the ethos of Mount Lourdes Grammar School. This policy reflects our school aims and sets out to achieve a consistency of practice throughout the school.

***School Aims***

Recognising that everyone is unique, the school strives to create a community atmosphere so that each student and member of staff is respected and appreciated as a person of importance.

* To motivate our students in the pursuit of a high standard of academic achievement and critical thinking by providing a varied range of learning experiences in a stimulating environment.
* To ensure that our students have access to a curriculum which makes explicit the links between school-based learning and Life and Work.
* To enable each student to make the most of her talents by providing opportunities for participation in a range of aesthetic, cultural, skill based and leisure activities.
* To create and maintain a pastoral environment in which the needs of the individual student are recognised; an attitude of self-discipline and responsibility and responsibility for her own actions is encouraged and a sense of self-worth is fostered.
* To foster a sense of team spirit among staff and to encourage each teacher to develop his / her personal qualities and professional expertise.
* To work in partnership with parents in the promotion of the overall good of the student, acknowledging the role of parents as primary educators of the young person.
* To help students acquire and develop Christian values, attitudes and moral standards – based on Catholic teaching – that will influence and inform their choices and behaviour throughout life.
* To promote among staff and students a sense of personal identity and citizenship and encourage mutual respect for cultural diversity.
1. **Learning and Teaching Responsibilities**

**Subject Teacher:**

*Subject Teachers are responsible for effective learning and teaching in the classroom.*

Subject Teacher should:

* Take account of the Learning and Teaching Policy when planning and delivering the subject at all levels.
* Use a range of learning and teaching strategies.
* Promote high standards of Numeracy, Literacy, ICT and TSPC in the teaching of the subject.
* Create and share resources that are adapted and differentiated so that they meet the needs of all students, including those with SEN and more able students.
* Where applicable, liaise with Classroom Assistant to ensure the needs of the statemented student are met.
* Agree targets, assess and monitor progress, identify underachievement and put support strategies in place to raise student attainment.
* Liaise with Head of Department and Form Teacher and Head of Year in supporting any student at risk of underachievement.
* Develop the students’ knowledge, interest and enjoyment in the subject taught.
* Participate in Quality Assurance practices.
* Identify, model and share best practice.
* Follow all department policies and procedures including those relating to assessment and reporting.
* Engage in the self-evaluation process to inform and guide subsequent planning, learning and teaching.

**Head of Department:**

*Heads of Department are responsible for quality assurance of subject delivery by monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching, standards of student attainment and achievement, setting targets for improvement and leading the PRSD process in their curriculum area.*

Heads of Department should:

* Take account of the Learning and Teaching Policy when planning, target setting, monitoring and evaluating the work of the department and when reviewing /updating departmental documentation and / or handbook (e.g. schemes of work, development plans and relevant documentation) in accordance with curriculum development, the needs of the student and in line with inspection reports.
* Take account of the Learning and Teaching Policy when establishing and implementing policies and practices for assessing, tracking, monitoring and reporting on pupil’s progress.
* Implement the school’s agreed practice on learning and teaching.
* Promote high standards of Numeracy, Literacy and ICT in the school by working with the designated co-ordinators in these areas.
* Work with the Learning Support Co-Ordinator/ Department in supporting student learning where appropriate.
* Ensure the provision of differentiated materials and teaching, where appropriate, to meet the needs of all students.
* Promote learning and teaching styles which will encourage students become independent learners.
* Have a knowledge and understanding of what constitutes good practice in relation to learning and teaching and identify, model and share best practice.
* Promote and use information and communication technology in learning and teaching.
* Monitor the quality of learning and teaching within the department and take action to secure improvement where it is necessary in consultation with the Principal.

**Form Teacher:**

Form Teachers are responsible for contributing to and monitoring the progression and well-being of individual students in their form group and for providing support and advice to those students. The pastoral programme encourages and develops in students the ability to take responsibility for their own learning by evaluating their performance and setting appropriate learning targets. Form Teachers monitor behaviour, homework and attendance in consultation with subject teachers and Heads of Year.

**Head of Year:**

*Heads of Year are responsible for monitoring and evaluation of the overall experience of individuals and groups of students within their year group.*

Heads of Year should:

* Promote high academic standards within the year group.
* Monitor the progression (using Sims tracking data) and well-being of all students in their year group.
* Liaise with the Pastoral, Citizenship and Employability Co-Ordinators to promote high standards in the content and delivery of the Learning for Life and Work programme.
* Promote learning and teaching style which will encourage students become independent learners including Study Skills for Year 8/11/12.
* Work with the Learning Support Co-ordinator/ Department in supporting student learning where appropriate.
* Ensure that all students within the year group are interviewed by the Form Teacher termly and that realistic targets are set for and reviewed with each student.
* Monitor the quality learning and teaching within the classroom delivery of the Learning for Life and Work programme and take action to secure improvement where it is necessary in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team or Principal.
* Monitor ‘attitudes to learning’, including attendance and homework.
* Meet regularly with Form Teachers to plan, review, evaluate and sharing good practice.

**Co-Ordinators:**

Co-Ordinators should:

* Take account of the Learning and Teaching Policy when planning, target setting, monitoring and evaluating the work in their area of responsibility and when reviewing / updating policies.
* Have knowledge and understanding of what constitutes best practice in relation to their area of responsibility.
* Promote a whole school approach to their area of responsibility.
* Provide in-service training to staff with a focus on learning and teaching strategies and appropriate resources.
* Monitor the quality learning and teaching within the classroom delivery of their area of responsibility and take action to secure improvement where it is necessary in consultation with the Principal.
* Work with the Learning Support Co-ordinator and Heads of Department to identify strategies for promoting their area of responsibility and disseminating good practice.

**The Senior Leadership Team:**

The Senior Leadership Team should:

* Take account of the Learning and Teaching Policy when making decisions about implementing, monitoring and evaluating all areas of the curriculum, assessment and when planning any changes which may impact on learning and teaching.
* Support staff and students in the Learning and Teaching process.
* Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor progress and achievements of all students.
* Ensure that procedures are in place to promote the sharing of good practice and that this is disseminated across the whole school.
* Promote whole school approaches that encourage learning and continuous improvement among students.
* Assess and provide for staff development which is aimed at raising standards and high quality learning and teaching.
* Review data and monitor standards of achievement in public examinations.
* Implement arrangements for the regular monitoring and review of the learning and teaching policy and strategies to promote student learning.

**3. Quality Indicators for Effective Learning and Teaching**

Quality Indictors for Effective Learning and Teaching have been identified and agreed following a whole school Learning and Teaching Audit. Quality Indicators are also informed by GTCNI Teacher Competency’s and ETI document ‘Together Towards Improvement’ and ‘The Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework’ (ISEF).

**Effective teaching is in place when teachers:**

* Share the intended learning and success criteria with students at the start of the lesson.
* Recap and link the work to previous learning, or set the work in an appropriate real-world context.
* Provide clear explanation or where appropriate modelling what the students should do.
* Use a variety of activities, including active learning and teaching methods, ICT and practical equipment, which involves the students working individually, in pairs, in groups or as a whole class.
* Provide opportunities for the students to develop Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities such as Managing Information, Working with Others, Thinking, Problem Solving, Decision Making, Self-Management and Being Creative.
* Provide opportunities for the development and integration of cross curricular skills – Communication, Using Mathematics, Using ICT.
* Integrate, when appropriate, opportunities for students to use ‘writing for learning’.
* Integrate, when appropriate, subject specific resources.
* Use effective questioning, challenging the students understanding and requiring them to draw conclusions and justify their thinking.
* Encourage students to ask questions.
* Relate on-going work to other areas of the course or other curriculum areas to promote Connected Learning.
* Engage the students fully by ensuring that the lesson has appropriate pace, challenge and progression.
* Enable all students, including students with SEN, to meet the set learning intentions (Differentiation).
* Integrate Assessment for Learning (AFL) opportunities (agreed learning intentions, shared success criteria, formative feedback, peer and self-assessment and self-evaluation, target setting).
* Encourage the students to think and talk about how they learn and what they have learnt through appropriate plenary sessions at the end of the lessons.
* Ensure homework is differentiated, clear and meaningful.

**Effective learning is taking place when students:**

* Show positive attitudes to learning, for example; are motivated, engaged and curious.
* Understand the tasks set and the reasons for doing them.
* Are able to acquire and apply new knowledge and ideas and increase their understanding.
* Are able to develop their Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities.
* Are able to develop their Key Skills.
* Understand how well they have done, and how to improve using a range of assessment for learning strategies.
* Make sustained progress towards the learning objectives within lessons and over time.
* Show interest and sustained concentration in their work.
* Actively participate in the lesson.
* Ask and answer questions.
* Work independently and collaboratively.
* Feel satisfaction and pride in their work and attainment.
* Enjoy their learning.

Homework provides students with opportunities to work independently and to consolidate and extend their learning. (See School Homework Policy)

**Student Responsibility for Learning**

Students should take responsibility for their own learning by:

* Being ready for learning and wanting to learn.
* Being actively engaged in class and group activities.
* Asking questions to further knowledge and understanding.
* Following the Behaviour Management code in the classroom.
* Being polite and respectful to teachers and other learners.
* Attending school and being in class punctually except in exceptional circumstances.
* Completing all assigned homework as required.
* Meeting deadlines for homework, controlled assessment, and course work.
* Evaluating her work and setting realistic targets for future learning.
* Developing the ability to take responsibility for her own learning.
* Make consistent use of Homework Diary.

**4. Other aspects that promote Effective Learning and Teaching**

**Planning:**

When planning for effective learning and teaching, teachers should:

* Take full account of Schemes of Work and Examination Board Specifications.
* Use baseline data
* Have well planned and well prepared lessons.
* Meet the needs of all students.
* Identify realistic learning outcomes and strategies for learning.
* Use stimulating resources.

**Environment for Learning:**

***Classroom management and organisation***

When managing the learning environment teachers aim to:

* Create and maintain a safe*,* supportive, positive*,* interactive and challenging learning environment.
* Secure and promote a standard of behaviour that enables all students to learn and is in line with the school’s code of behaviour.
* Provide support according to individual need and to liaise with the Learning Support Co-Ordinator where appropriate.
* Provide an environment which encourages active participation of all students.
* Provide an environment which encourages students to engage in and take responsibility for their own learning.
* Communicate high, clear and consistent expectations with appropriate levels of challenge for all students.
* Have well-structured and timed lessons.
* Demonstrate high expectations of students.
* Value student’s contributions and make use of praise to underline the value of achievement.

**Differentiation**

Differentiation takes into account the needs of all students and plans to ensure that all students are set challenging learning targets and make expected progress.

Teachers should;

* Recognise that different students have different needs.
* Be aware of the needs of specific groups such as SEN, EAL, LAC and provide the appropriate support.
* Identify, plan for and provide targeted support for students with IEPs.
* Plan lessons, select teaching resources and use student groupings taking into account the variety of student’s abilities.
* Choose a variety of activities to match a range of different learning styles including VAK. (Visual, Auditory and Kinaesthic).
* Ensure that the pace of learning enables students to achieve appropriate targets.
* Have varying degrees of challenge within teacher questioning and response.

**Students at Risk of Underachieving**

Teachers should;

* Set appropriate targets.
* Be aware of students who are making less than expected progress by using SIMS tracking.
* Identify area for improvement and strategies for improvement at classroom level using Risk of Underachievement form.
* Implement agreed departmental strategies for addressing underachievement.
* Monitor progress.

Where lack of progress is sustained, in spite of intervention, referral process outlined on Risk of Underachievement flow chart to be followed and appropriate support / mentoring put in place.

**Assessment**

Assessment may be both formative and summative. It is used to inform the learning process.

Teachers aim to:

* Use Assessment for Learning strategies and regularly reinforce the context for learning.
* Provide formative feedback on how students can improve.
* Provide regular opportunities for students to give feedback about their learning experiences.
* Be prepared to modify their classroom practice in response to student’s feedback.
* Incorporate strategies to encourage self-assessment and peer assessment.
* Assess work and encourage students to overcome difficulties by using a variety of feedback, for example grades, written and oral comments which show the student where and how to make improvements.
* Use Midyis/ Yellis outcomes to establish a baseline of each student.
* Use SIMS Tracking to monitor assessment data to inform further planning and practice according to school policy.
* Use homework effectively to consolidate and extend learning.

**Parental Involvement**

Effective links with parents increase parental understanding of the content, purpose and procedures within school and encourages parents to assist in the learning process.

* Parents are provided with information on courses, examinations and CEIAG.
* Parents receive clear and timely information on their child’s progress.
* Parents are encouraged to communicate concerns, interest and questions.

**Continuous Professional Development**

In order to deliver high quality learning and teaching, the drive for continued and improved professional development of staff, is embedded in the ethos of the school. Members of staff are encouraged to access opportunities for relevant professional development throughout their careers. (See Policy for Staff Development).

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

The quality of Learning and Teaching is regularly monitored with formal and informal evaluation as appropriate to the activities.

* Teachers should evaluate their lessons to inform and guide subsequent planning, learning and teaching.
* Teaching staff are observed annually by their Head of Department as part of the PRSD process.
* Heads of Department are observed annually by member of SLT as part of the PRSD process.
* Rigorous self-evaluation takes place at departmental and whole school level to identify strengths and areas for development.
* Newly Qualified Teachers and Teacher Training students are observed by Head of Department and Teacher Tutor.
* A range of additional monitoring and evaluating activities take place, as appropriate and in response to initiatives and perceived need. For example, sharing good practice during meetings, sampling of pupils’ work, classroom visits, pupil consultation, pupil pursuit.
* Progress is monitored by the Senior Leadership Team and Board of Governors.

**5. Continuity of Learning during Covid-19 Pandemic**

**Remote Learning, Online Learning and Blended Learning**

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, teachers have implemented a new routine of remote learning (any learning where the teacher and the learner are not together in the classroom), online learning and teaching (learning that is done using digital resources) and engaged educationally with learners in a wide variety of different ways.

The Department of Education’s ‘Northern Ireland Re-opening Schools Guidance: New School day’ (19/6/20) notes that there will be ‘a blend of face to face and independent/distance learning directed by the pupils’ teacher(s)’ at the beginning of the 2020/21 academic year.

Regardless of the approach to blended learning, the underpinning principle is that all students will have access to high quality learning and teaching opportunities both in school and at home.

During this time of disruption and due to the ongoing challenges our school community will encounter, the aims as laid out in this Policy will be upheld in so far as is possible. Teachers will follow the guidance on Blended and Remote Learning as outlined in Appendix 3.

**Related Policies and Practices**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies.

* Curriculum Policy
* Assessment Policy
* Homework Policy
* Literacy Policy
* Numeracy Policy
* Learning Support Policy
* Controlled Assessment Policy
* Behaviour Management Policy
* Self-Evaluation Policy
* PRSD Policy
* Staff Development Policy
* Acceptable Use Policy
* Access Arrangement Policy

**Appendix 1**

**9 Questions to Guide You Watching Yourself Teach**

1. Have I set up a culture of independent learning?
2. How good are my questioning skills?
3. How much do I ‘open’ up students’ minds with pertinent and differentiated questions?
4. How much do I allow the student to find the answers to questions themselves?
5. How much do I let students consider a challenge question before I step in?
6. Do I use wait time effectively? How Do I know?
7. How good am I at supporting the transition to learning like this?
8. How well do I tie in the learning objectives with the tasks presented?
9. How much do I encourage an environment of curiosity about learning, why it is being undertaken and how it links to other areas we have been focusing on?

**Appendix 2**

**John Hattie: Mind Frames**

1. Teachers believe that their fundamental task is to evaluate the effect of their teaching on students’ learning and achievement.
2. Teachers believe that success and failure in student learning is about what they, as teachers did or did not do… We are change agents!
3. Teachers want to talk more about the learning than the teaching.
4. Teachers see assessment as feedback about their impact.
5. Teachers engage in dialogue, not monologue.
6. Teachers enjoy challenge and never retreat to ‘doing their best’.
7. Teachers believe that it is their role to develop positive relationships in classrooms.
8. Teachers inform all about the language of learn.

**Appendix 3**

**Guidance on Blended Learning and Remote Learning**

**Key Principles:**

* We should **not expect to make similar progress** to taught lessons in any given period of remote learning.
* It will be necessary to **identify key learning priorities**, without necessarily sacrificing breadth across the curriculum. We will need to take a **pragmatic approach** to delivering the curriculum, prioritising key knowledge, understanding and skills in each area of learning.
* We should **aim to engage with pupils on an ongoing basis** through the wide range of elearning platforms available rather than provide hard copy or emailed resources alone. **Teacher presence is key** to students engaging with Learning and Teaching.
* The use of **e-learning platforms can provide additional opportunities** to motivate pupils, establish a daily routine and give ongoing feedback, helping to keep pupils engaged and enhancing their learning experience. This will also help to establish our students as **resilient learners**.

\*\*\* Source: Circular: 2020/05 \*\*\*

 *‘Guidance for Schools on Supporting Remote Learning to Provide Educational Continuity’*

**An ‘Exemplar’ Online Lesson:**

To ensure eLearning is meaningful and effective, C O’Hagan, Senior Lecturer in Education at Stranmillis College, suggests that in preparing and delivering eLearning we should aim to:

* Provide **explicit learning objectives** and **clear success criteria** to achieve a specific goal or for a specific reason in order to engage pupils.
* **Include a warm up** exercise to create a welcoming atmosphere where students feel comfortable and an environment is established that will encourage social and peer interaction.
* Recall and **check prior learning** and knowledge.
* Consider the **teaching strategies** we will use to present and teach online. Where possible, try to u**tilise the multimedia aspects of e-learning through visuals, video and audio**. e.g. **demonstrate** through use of online whiteboard <https://www.showme.com/> or <https://whiteboard.microsoft.com>, **explain** through a model answer, **explore** through <https://www.youtube.com>, **collaborate** through jigsaw method etc.
* Probe learning through the use of **effective questioning** (AFL) either verbally or via an online forum such as <https://www.mentimeter.com>. This will also help to create discussion, and debate.
* **Include an activity** if possible to engage students further either during the lesson or after (H/W) the lesson is complete. **Active learning strategies** such as participation online via Microsoft Teams and **collaboration** on tasks/ projects and will help students apply their knowledge and encourage them to communicate and work together.
* **Ensure Assessment for Learning** takes place, provide **self-assessment and peer-assessment opportunities**. A short quiz via <https://forms.office.com> can help us to review the learning that has taken place.
* **Summarise the lesson through a plenary** and establish what the next steps are for the students, e.g. HW/ Collaborative tasks/ E-tivities etc.
* Ensure that **eLearning** learning **lasts** around **30-45 minutes**.

**Other Tips to Establish ‘Exemplar’ Remote Learning Practice:**

* **Adjust existing resources** to ensure they can be used in a standalone way and provide simple and clear explanations to students.
* **Differentiate resources** in order to provide a positive learning experience for all pupils and avoid feelings of frustration and confusion.
* Include **model explanations and answers** to assist learning at home.
* H**ave hard copies of resources available**, (not all students will have access to printing facilities).
* Provide timely **feedback on students’ work** including whole class and individual work.
* Adopt the **‘Flipped Learning’** approach, a pedagogy where pupils first explore new course content before class by viewing a pre-recorded lecture, video or digital module, or completing a reading or preparatory assignment.

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| Home**Continuity of Learning Project*** A ***Continuity of Learning Project*** has been established to oversee the production and dissemination of a range of high quality support and guidance for teachers, parents and learners. Further information can be accessed on the Education Authority website: <https://www.eani.org.uk/supporting-learning>
* The project will work towards providing opportunities for schools to learn from each other's emerging practice by publishing a number of case studies.
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