Teaching for Learning Policy

- Policy for Abbey Community College.
- This Policy will relate to the Homework Policy, Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy, Assessment Policy, PRSD & CPD Policy.

Summary:

The purpose of this policy is to establish a shared understanding of what constitutes high quality teaching for learning and to state clearly what the expectations of Abbey Community College are in regard to teaching for learning; and to provide a framework for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of teaching for learning across the school.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

Policy Number: 2016/1

History:

Drafted: August 2015

By: C. McQueston

Discussed at Board of Governors:

Circulated to staff: Draft September 2015

To be reviewed: August 2016

Rationale

The aim of the Northern Ireland Curriculum is to 'empower young people to achieve their potential and to make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives.' Abbey Community College supports this aim and the concept of lifelong learning. The College strives to equip its students with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to make informed choices about the important things in their lives.

Teaching for Learning

"What's the best way to improve teaching? Focus on learning.
And the best way to increase learning? Move the focus off the teacher and onto the student"

(David Kolb, American educational theorist)

Learning and teaching are the core purpose of what we do. High quality teaching for learning, and subsequently achievement, are what every student at Abbey Community College deserves. We believe that the more we have a shared understanding of what constitutes effective teaching for learning, the greater our success will be. We believe that effective teaching for learning experiences help our students achieve, develop lifelong skills to succeed and to lead happy, fulfilling and rewarding lives.

Abbey Community College recognises that students learn best when they are:

- o motivated
- o enthusiastic
- o organised
- o engaged
- o aware of the relevance in their learning
- o happy
- o working co-operatively
- o achieving successes
- o clearly understanding the task
- o in the correct physical state for learning
- o feeling valued and respected
- o not afraid to make mistakes
- o feeling secure about asking questions
- o confident in their use of resources, including ICT.

Learning Environment

We recognise that students learn best when their environment and classrooms are stimulating, bright, colourful and student's work is on display. Classrooms are comfortable, well resourced (including ICT) and well organised. The classroom layout supports opportunities for active learning activities, group discussions and peer learning. Strategic seating can challenge underachievement and promote learning. Students learning should not be interrupted.

Positive relationships are vital to ensuring effective teaching for learning. Students learn best when:

- there is encouragement and praise from teachers and their peers.
- there is mutual respect between teacher and student, and student and student.
- there is no danger of ridicule or destructive criticism.
- their success is celebrated and students are encouraged to improve their work.
- Classroom behaviours have been agreed with and understood by students, positive behaviour is encouraged and sanctions are followed fairly and consistently.

Independent Learning

Students develop as independent learners when they:

- recognise how their learning is connected to previous learning
- know the big picture
- are aware of the learning outcomes
- can work collaboratively
- set and work towards targets
- are aware of their preferred learning style and different ways to learn
- become increasingly confident in their use of equipment (including ICT)
- are given opportunities to research topics.

Effective Teaching

Teaching for learning will be most effective when:

- there is evidence of good long, medium and short term planning in place to allow for suitable progression of skills, knowledge, and understanding.
- the structure of the lesson, and the wide range of tasks and activities are appropriate to the needs and abilities of the individual students, taking account of different learning styles, and teachers' expectations are realistically high.
- praise is used appropriately and the outcomes of assessment are used to impact on future learning.
- teachers are skilled at open-ended questions to promote learning and they encourage students to think for themselves.
- classroom assistants are fully engaged in supporting the children's learning.

Role of Teachers

Teachers at Abbey Community College will:

- demonstrate good subject knowledge and positive attitudes to their subject.
- plan for, and deliver well structured, effective lessons in accordance with the Abbey Community College 'Good Lesson Guide' (see Appendices) using a range of teaching for learning strategies, which will motivate, engage and support independent learning in students and allow for the progression of skills, knowledge and understanding.
- ensure teaching for learning strategies meet the needs of all students, including those with SEN, and planning will be appropriate to meet the needs identified on an IEP. Teachers will regularly review IEP targets for the students they teach.
- set homework which will support and enhance the students' learning, and meets the requirements of the agreed homework policy and rota.
- reflect, review and evaluate lessons, units and schemes of work to inform future planning.
- hold high expectations for every student, use positive language and actions and challenge students for achievement.
- support the Assessment for Learning process at Abbey Community College, set appropriate tasks/activities for students, give positive feedback, set individual targets, allow students opportunities for improvement and involve students in their own target setting.
- record regularly student progress and attainment and use a wide range of assessment for learning techniques to inform future planning.
- utilise the full range of teaching resources and information available to support every child's learning
- share good practice and resources with colleagues, and fully engage with the school's PRSD and staff development programme.

Role of Head of Departments

HOD's are responsible for Teaching for Learning within their Area of Learning. They will:

- ensure there are appropriate schemes of work in place, which will be continually reviewed and updated regularly and end of unit evaluations will inform future planning.
- expect high standards of teaching for learning within their department by the monitoring and evaluation of lesson plans, book scoops and conversations with students.
- play a key role in supporting and motivating teachers within their Department.
- evaluate the effectiveness and consistency of teaching for learning through monitoring students work
- ensure that teaching for learning is discussed at Departmental meetings and staff within the department have opportunities to share good practice.
- take part in the process of self-evaluation and review policy documentation.

Role of the Senior Leadership Team

We believe that all teachers have both the right and the responsibility to engage in continued and relevant professional development throughout their careers. Teaching for Learning in the classroom will be a focus in the School Development Plan for Abbey Community College. Staff Development in this area will be a priority. As such, the Senior Leadership Team, and in particular the Strategic Leader for Teaching for Learning and Assessment, will ensure high standards of teaching for learning across the curriculum by:

- carrying out a strategic programme of monitoring classroom practice through classroom observations, to evaluate planning, teaching, classroom management and learning environment.
- carry out a strategic programme of monitoring students' books to evaluate quality of students' work, the range of teaching for learning styles, suitability of work, nature and regularity of homework set, regularity of marking, evidence of formative and positive marking and student progress.
- regularly meet students to talk to them about their work and progress.
- regularly meet with HOD's to discuss Departmental performance and give constructive feedback.
- encourage and support teachers to reflect individually and in groups on teaching for learning and share good practice.
- support the professional development of all teachers, through the PRSD programme and staff development process in place in Abbey Community College.

Role of Parents

Parents have a fundamental role to play in helping their children to learn. The College has a responsibility to inform parents about their child's progress. Two reports will be sent home each academic year and parents will be invited to attend meetings to inform them on their child's progress, share success and highlight any areas of concern.
Parents are encouraged and welcomed to contact the College if they have any concerns about their child's learning or progress.

Role of Governors

Our Board of Governors will determine, support, monitor and review the school policies on Teaching for Learning on a regular basis.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The College will monitor and evaluate the curriculum, in terms of subjects, staff allocation, time allocation and resource provision to ensure all students receive the breadth and balance to which they are entitled. Throughout the year, Curriculum Council, Departmental Development work, Strategic Development Teams, Senior Leadership Team and Principal will discuss, determine, monitor and evaluate the extent of the implementation of the College's Teaching for Learning Policy in terms of the characteristics of a stimulating learning environment and effective teaching for learning. A Monitoring and Evaluation calendar (see Appendix) gives each member of staff a role in the process and an appropriate time scale to allow effective and useful monitoring and evaluation to take place. Particular responsibility for this work will lie with the Strategic Leader for Teaching for Learning and Assessment.

The Teaching for Learning Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

APPENDICES

Teaching for Learning Approaches

- Make links with prior learning
- Share (and revisit) learning intentions and success criteria
- Include a variety of teaching styles, resources, and activities
- Use effective questioning techniques
- Integrate opportunities for assessment for learning eg. traffic light system
- Involve students in a plenary activity

Classroom Management

- Welcome students and ensure they enter the classroom in an orderly fashion
- Take a register
- Apply and maintain consistent classroom routines
- Prepare well-planned, effective and engaging lessons
- Use a seating plan

Good Lesson Guide

Climate for Learning

- Create a positive classroom environment through up-to-date displays of students' work
- Use a classroom layout that allows opportunities for group work and peer learning
- Raise expectations of presentation, quality of work and homework
- Have high expectations for what all students can achieve
- Create and maintain positive working relationships

Meeting the Needs of all Students

- Use IEPs and learning styles to inform planning
- Make positive use of support staff
- Celebrate student success
- Set achievable yet aspirational targets for individual students
- Set differentiated targets and work for students, groups and the whole class

Abbey Community College

Monitoring & Evaluation Calendar January-August 2016

WHAT	FREQUENCY	WHO	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	AUG
Action Plans & Policies			■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Raising Standards Action Plan	Weekly	Principal/DP/SLT							
Strategic Development Team Action Plans	CPD schedule	Strategic Dev Team	■		■		■		■
Departmental Action Plans – progress to date	Monthly/meeting schedule	HOD							■
evaluations	Termly	HOD	■			■			■
Pastoral Action Plans – progress to date	Monthly/meeting schedule	HOY							■
evaluations	Termly	HOY	■	■		■			■
Policies & procedures	Annually	SLT lead	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Planning & preparation			■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Year 8 updated Schemes of Work	On-going	Strategic Leader							
Schemes of Work	Termly	HOD	■	■		■	■		■
Units of Work/end of unit evaluations	Half-termly (as per SOW)	Subject teachers/HOD	■		■				■
Departmental agendas & minutes	As per meeting schedule	Principal/DP							■
Teacher daily/fortnightly planning	Dept meetings - schedule	HOD/All Staff							
Teacher lesson planning	Termly/observations/PRSD	HOD/SLT/DP/Principal	■	■	■	■		■	
Classroom Practice			■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Teaching for Learning – sharing good practice	Dept/CPD schedule	HOD/SL/SDT							
Classroom observations - PRSD	Two (maximum)	Reviewers/Principal	■	■		■		■	■
Homework Rota & Schedule/Student Planners	Termly	Strategic Leader	■		■				■
Homework sampling	Half-termly	HOD/SL	■		■		■		■
Students' Work			■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Departmental Book scoops	Half-termly	HOD	■		■	■			■
Student Planners	Weekly	CT/HOY							
Student Interviews	On-going	Strategic Leader							
Pastoral			■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Pastoral Agendas & Minutes	As per meeting schedule	Principal/DP/HOS							
Attendance	Weekly	Class Tutor/HOY/HOS							
Lateness	Weekly	Class Tutor/HOY							
Outcomes			■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Examination Results	Annually	Principal/DP/SLT/HOD	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Assessment/Tracking Data	Termly/after tracking	DP/SLT/HOD/HOY/All	■	■		■	■		■