



Brentwood School

Teaching and Learning Policy

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	Behaviour Management Policy	Curriculum Policy	Equal Opportunities Policy
	Languages Policy	Progression Policy	Relationships and Sex Education Policy
	AI Guiding Principles		

TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

Our mission at Brentwood School is to inspire life-long learning within a nurturing, culturally creative and intellectually dynamic community. We are committed to character education, encapsulated in our School ethos of “Virtue, Learning and Manners”. Teaching and learning should engage pupils and support pupils to become actively responsible for their own development. In the Prep School, this includes promoting learner agency and developing the skills and dispositions necessary for inquiry-led, transdisciplinary learning, in line with our adoption of the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP).

We believe that appropriate teaching and positive learning experiences help children to lead happy and rewarding lives and to emerge as intellectually curious, resilient, enterprising and independent young people, with good moral character. We are committed to educating the ‘whole person’ and embrace a holistic approach to nurturing and supporting each individual child, ensuring they are safe, valued, enabled to fulfil their potential and achieve the best possible academic results. We promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, justice, equality, human rights, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. We ensure that our approaches to teaching and learning do not discriminate against pupils on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Our Brentwood Learner Profile (based on the *IB Learner Profile* and *IB Approaches to Teaching and Learning Guide*) underpins our Teaching and Learning Policy. In the Prep School, the PYP framework further enhances the learner profile, with pupils explicitly guided by the IB Learner Profile attributes¹. These attributes encourage students to reflect on and embody them through purposeful action and inquiry, supporting the development of internationally minded, compassionate learners. In parallel, the **Approaches to Learning (ATL) skills** are explicitly taught and embedded throughout the Prep curriculum. These five key skill areas—thinking, research, communication, social, and self-management—equip children with the tools they need to become effective, reflective and independent learners across subject areas.

We recognise that our pupils will enter the workplace at a time of almost unprecedented change; that many will have a number of different careers in their working lifetime; and that some of them will do jobs that don't yet exist. A significant part of our role is to help our pupils understand this and develop the skills, habits and dispositions they will need

¹ The ten attributes of the IB Learner Profile include being inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, courageous, balanced, and reflective.

in a changing world. If living our values ensures our pupils develop a good moral compass, developing their expertise in our learner profile attributes will maximise their chances of success in their eventual chosen field(s).

The key attributes and attitudes that a Brentwood pupil aims to be are:

- **Knowledgeable Thinkers**

We engage with our thinking and learning across a range of subject disciplines, developing conceptual understanding, thinking critically about complex problems and ideas.

- **Inquirers**

We pursue knowledge and understanding with a sense of genuine curiosity, both within and beyond the classroom.

- **Communicators**

We work independently and cooperatively with others, building the skills for creative and confident self-expression orally, practically and in writing, while listening and learning from others.

- **Reflective**

We reflect on our own learning, analysing our strengths and areas for improvement, to take the initiative in progressing and prioritising our own development.

- **Resilient**

We build resilience and resourcefulness in the face of challenges and uncertainty, take responsible risks to push ourselves, show determination, commitment and ambition, knowing that personal growth is always possible.

- **Open-minded**

We seek out perspectives that are different to their own and are receptive to new ideas, which helps foster open-mindedness and personal growth.

- **Prepared**

We manage our time and resources, ensuring that we are always ready for learning, meet deadlines and maintain high standards of personal organisation.

- **Caring**

We show respect for staff and peers, treating others in the School and wider community with consideration, empathy and compassion.

- **Principled**

We conduct ourselves with integrity, honesty, and fairness, taking responsibility for our actions and demonstrating a strong sense of justice and respect for the dignity and rights of all people.

- **Balanced**

We combine our academic learning with enthusiastic engagement in the co-curricular programme, developing our physical, creative and leadership skills, and recognise the importance of wellbeing for ourselves and others.

We recognise the attributes and attitudes of effective learners through the rewards, prizes, colours and reporting systems, as well as the Headmaster's Academic Endeavour Award in the Senior School and the Head of Prep Award at the Prep School. Pupils should be actively identifying and reflecting on the ten key attributes of a Brentwood pupil in their attitude towards learning and when setting targets and goals.

In order to enable pupils to develop these attributes and attitudes, we emphasise the following in terms of teaching and learning:

- i. Teaching adapted to support, challenge and stretch all learners;
- ii. Teaching and learning informed by assessment;
- iii. Teaching and learning focused on communication and collaboration;
- iv. Teaching and learning which encourages inquiry and higher-order thinking;
- v. Teaching and learning to develop autonomy and resilience;
- vi. Teaching and learning relevant to the real world *and transdisciplinary in nature (Prep School)*.

The attributes and attitudes, and approaches to teaching and learning, are delivered in age-appropriate ways across the whole School, from EYFS through to Sixth Form.

Our staff are expected to demonstrate excellent knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught and routinely make good use of classroom resources in terms of quality, quantity and range. Clear learning objectives guide and inform the design of classroom tasks, the resources needed, and the most appropriate modes of assessment to be utilised. Departments use subject-specific schemes of work to guide and inform their teaching and these detailed documents clearly articulate the aims and objectives of each sequence of lessons. Teachers are given time to plan, prepare and assess lessons, and they are encouraged to observe others teaching as frequently as possible. Teachers regularly evaluate their teaching so that they can modify and improve through the sharing and implementation of new ideas. Reflection and discussion with colleagues takes place in collaborative department meetings. Teachers actively engage with lesson observation, work scrutiny, cross-department collaboration, appraisal, as well as whole-School, departmental, and personal professional development, so that teaching benefits from the sharing of good practice at all levels.

Our staff place especial emphasis on the importance of constructing and nurturing positive relationships with pupils in their classes. We treat all children with kindness and fairness. All our teachers follow the School policy with regard to rewarding good work and promoting the highest standards of behaviour. We expect pupils to comply with the School and classroom rules in order to optimise learning opportunities for all. We praise children for their efforts and, by so doing, we help to build positive attitudes towards School and learning in general. Our classrooms are attractive and dynamic learning environments with subject displays which celebrate the work completed by our pupils

and reflect the topics that are studied. We ensure that all tasks and activities that the pupils do are safe. When we plan to take pupils out of School, we carry out thorough risk assessments as appropriate.

i. Teaching adapted to support, challenge and stretch all learners

The prime focus of teaching is to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills of all pupils. As such, teaching is specifically targeted to meet the needs of all learners, and based on teachers' thorough knowledge of the pupils' current levels of attainment. Teachers strive to ensure that set tasks are appropriate to each pupil's level of ability, providing suitable challenge and stretch, whether a pupil is lower-ability, mid-ability or able and talented. Adaptation for different needs is actively outlined and planned for in schemes of work and lesson plans. Adaptation and ensuring challenge and stretch for all learners is necessary whether teaching in a "mixed ability" or setted or banded class, since there will be a range of ability in any group of pupils. When planning work for children with special educational needs or English as an Additional Language all teachers give due regard to information and advice provided by the Learning Support and EAL departments. Teachers have high expectations of all pupils, and encourage them to achieve the highest possible standards, to become the very best versions of themselves.

ii. Teaching and learning informed by assessment

Teaching at Brentwood School motivates and inspires children whilst building upon their existing skills, knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. We base our teaching on our knowledge of the pupils' current levels of attainment, and ensure that pupils make progress in each lesson. Planning and teaching is informed by regular assessment, both formative and summative, in order to encourage and enable the development of pupils' skills and understanding. Teachers and Heads of Department use the School Assessment policy, and ensure that schemes of work clearly outline the content, scheduling and marking of formal assessments. Teachers also encourage peer assessment with all pupils taking an active role in providing constructive advice to support one another's progress.

Successful learners are curious, engaged, ambitious and have self-knowledge about how they learn, appreciating that this takes commitment and perseverance. Pupils are expected to be actively engaged in all forms of assessment. Diagnostic and remedial assessment, framed in positive and constructive language, encourages all pupils to proactively reflect upon the steps that they need to take in order to make substantive progress. Pupils are able to use assessment as a formative tool to help them improve, maintain and develop their subsequent learning, guided by their own individual progress and aims. Pupils are given opportunities to reflect on their achievements and progress after each summative assessment task, in order to develop self-awareness about their own learning and identify personal goals for improvement. Future learning therefore

becomes founded on pupils' metacognition, and their own understanding of how they learn. This furthermore provides pupils with the space to evaluate their own learning practices, helping them take responsibility for their own learning and help develop intrinsic motivation. Pupils work collaboratively with teachers to set personal academic targets and this constitutes an important aspect of the reporting process.

iii. Teaching and learning focused on communication and collaboration

Teaching is planned to allow opportunities for pupils to develop effective communication and collaboration skills. This will be tailored to the academic requirements and skills of each subject area, but may involve written work, group tasks, group projects, debates, role-plays, or other activities with shared goals. Within collaborative tasks, the teacher aims to act as a "guide-on-the-side", allowing pupils the scope to collaborate with their peers, and encouraging pupils to view learning as a joint endeavour, in which the benefits, challenges, and products are shared.

Working together with both peers and teachers helps enhance pupils' interpersonal skills, as well as providing an opportunity to learn from one another. Pupils demonstrate adaptability, cooperation, improved communication, listening and reasoning strategies. They also gain increased understanding of the impact of their behaviour on others, and the differing perspectives of others, while improving their negotiation and conflict resolution skills. Collaborative learning requires pupils to demonstrate teamwork, responsibility and leadership. Communication skills include the ability to communicate, in oral, practical or written form, and understand, or make others understand; the ability to listen to and understand others, and to speak concisely and clearly; the ability to read and understand different texts; the ability to write for different purposes; the ability to formulate one's arguments, in speaking or writing, in a convincing manner and take full account of other viewpoints.

iv. Teaching and learning which encourages inquiry and higher-order thinking

Schemes of work provide opportunities for inquiry and the application of higher-order thinking, in order to encourage pupils' deeper understanding. In the Prep School, the PYP explicitly structures these opportunities around units of inquiry, allowing children to pursue conceptual understanding across disciplines through guided and open-ended investigation. These tasks, which may be independent or co-operative, may be unstructured and open-ended to allow the pupils to adopt their own approach or to pursue their own personal areas of curiosity and interest, encouraging their own innate desire for knowledge and understanding. In such activities, teachers adopt a supportive, non-didactic role, in order to promote questioning, problem-solving, self-management, and collaboration.

Throughout the course of their learning, pupils will progress from using the thinking processes of remembering and recalling, to more complex skills such as planning, analysing, evaluating, and synthesising understanding to create unique interpretations or knowledge. Pupils will develop their skills in working with volumes of information, developing the ability to classify, summarise, and organise knowledge. Pupils strive to implement and apply their understanding to a range of situations, whilst developing their skills in analysis, interpretation and inference. Pupils build confidence in utilising their own judgement to evaluate and form criticisms. Ultimately, these skills provide pupils with the foundation to generate their own original ideas and theories.

v. Teaching and learning to develop autonomy and resilience

Through teaching and assessment teachers aim to improve pupils' resilience. Teachers promote a growth-mindset approach where pupils use their mistakes to help them improve, treat failures as feedback, and know they can progress with further hard work. Pupils are encouraged to focus on their next steps or targets for learning, rather than focusing on a summative grade or rank order.

Pupil resilience involves being mindful of their learning, persevering and being self-motivated. They learn to deal effectively with setbacks and difficulties, learn from mistakes, are willing to take responsible risks, accepting the possibility of frustration or failure, but relishing challenges. All pupils are involved in setting personal targets which are included in their reports. To meet these targets pupils should be self-motivated and organised. Pupils develop self-management skills, taking responsibility for their own learning and progress, managing time and tasks effectively, working methodically and consistently throughout the year, recognising that persistent hard work pays off, meeting deadlines without last-minute panic, breaking down assignments into achievable steps, planning revision, timelines, and study plans, developing strategies to aid organisation.

vi. Teaching and learning relevant to the real world

Pupils are given opportunities to explore concepts in all subjects and, in the Prep School, through transdisciplinary themes in order to make connections and to apply what they have learnt to new situations. Teachers frequently use real-life examples taken from the pupils' own experience in order to promote relevance, interest and authenticity. Teachers also provide opportunities to consider and explore ideas within their real-world contexts, which may take the form of solving real problems, considering the ramifications of authentic scenarios, or situating their subject knowledge within a local or international context. International mindedness is promoted, encouraging pupils to see themselves as members of local and global communities.

Pupils are expected to develop their abstract thinking skills, making connections between concepts and contexts. They apply the ideas that they have learned to new situations. Learning is based on open-mindedness as the pupils need to ground their ideas and knowledge in their own experiences and the world around them. Pupils are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. Pupils are encouraged to be open to change and to be willing to try new experiences that will allow them to grow. In the Prep School, this may also involve aligning units of inquiry with real-world global challenges, such as those represented by the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to foster compassion, awareness and responsibility for the wider world.

The role of parents

We believe that parents have a fundamentally important role to play in terms of actively nurturing, guiding and supporting their children throughout their educational journeys. Parents can support their child in their learning by:

- ensuring that their child has the best attendance record possible;
- ensuring that their child is equipped for School with the correct uniform and equipment;
- doing their best to keep their child healthy and fit to attend School;
- promoting a positive attitude towards School and learning in general;
- talking with their child about their work and showing an interest in their learning;
- providing a suitable study environment for undertaking homework, checking homework is being completed, and supporting their child in meeting deadlines;
- celebrating their child's achievements and successes;
- informing School if there are matters outside of School that are likely to impact upon a pupil's performance or behaviour at School;
- contacting the form tutor, subject teachers or the Head of Year if they have any concerns or issues concerning their child's progress or welfare at School.

The role of pupils

Pupils will best enable their own success by:

- having the highest expectations of, and aspirations for, themselves in all aspects of School life;
- committing themselves to maintaining a positive work ethic and good behaviour;
- celebrating one another's achievements and successes;
- ensuring that they are punctual and well-prepared for lessons;
- producing a quality of homework in line with their potential whilst ensuring deadlines are met;
- completing work missed due to absence;
- revising rigorously and effectively for tests and examinations;

- working effectively by themselves, in paired or in group work in order to achieve their targets;
- being engaged and responsive in lessons and activities, and demonstrate a commitment to answering questions orally;
- engaging in independent learning to develop and extend knowledge and understanding beyond the confines of the curriculum;
- seeking assistance when necessary;
- attending support sessions and committing to co-curricular activities
- In the Prep School, pupils are also encouraged to take action based on their learning, through environmental initiatives, community engagement or classroom-driven projects, as part of their development as active, principled learners.