

TEACHING, LEARNING, ASSESSMENT (& REPORTING) POLICY

Date of policy review:	June 2025
Date for Review:	September 2026
Lead for Review:	Deputy Head Academic

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Preface

At Guildhouse School, our approach to teaching, learning, and assessment is driven by our core values: *Aim High, Work Hard, Be Kind*. We are committed to delivering high-quality, inclusive education that challenges and supports every student. This policy sets out how we create engaging learning experiences, provide meaningful feedback, and promote academic growth, curiosity, and resilience in a supportive and respectful environment.

The purpose of our teaching, learning, and assessment practices at Guildhouse School is to:

- Measure progress against baseline levels.
- Maximise student progress, independent thinking, learning skills and overall development.
- Provide timely and constructive feedback to students to facilitate growth and development.
- Provide high quality lessons that student enjoy.

Ethos and Values

- Lessons will promote respect for others, with particular attention to the protected characteristics outlined in the 2010 Equality Act.
- Students should be effectively prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences of life in British society.
- Teaching will uphold fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs.
- Lessons will be underpinned by the school's values (Work Hard, Aim High, Be Kind) and strive to promote open-mindedness, resilience, and critical thinking.

Teaching and Learning Principles

Inclusive Education: We believe in inclusive education, welcoming students of all academic levels. Our diverse classrooms are supported by teaching methods tailored to varying levels of English proficiency, ensuring equal opportunities for all.

Mixed Ability Teaching: Recognising diverse abilities, we tailor our teaching to individual needs through differentiated strategies, ensuring progress for each student.

Progressive Pedagogy: We are a progressive school, and our teaching methods reflect this ethos. We encourage active learning, critical thinking, and independent learning. Teachers will use innovative approaches to engage students and foster their curiosity.

Technology Integration: We fully embrace technology in the classroom, using tools like Microsoft Teams and Office 365. These platforms facilitate communication, collaboration, and access to educational resources. Teachers are encouraged to integrate technology into their lessons.

Independent Learning: We believe that independent learning is a crucial skill for lifelong success. Teachers will promote self-directed learning, encourage research, and provide opportunities for students to take ownership of their education.

Planning

Heads of Department will regularly review schemes of work, lessons, and subject descriptors.

In the planning (and delivery), thought must be considered for:

- School wide events and milestones (for academic reports)
- Enrichment opportunities
- Differentiation and ALS needs
- Homework, flipped learning and Assessment for learning
- Opportunities for student feedback
- British Values, SMSC and EDI

The Learning Environment & Classroom Routines

- Classrooms should be environments that inspire and motivate students to learn.
- It is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to maintain an environment that nurtures students' interest in the subject.
- Classroom displays should be relevant and regularly updated.
- While diverse teaching styles and classroom management approaches are encouraged, it is crucial for consistency, positivity, and purpose in learning that teachers establish routines through careful lesson planning.
- Students are expected to be punctual to classes.

A Typical Lesson

- Objectives and intentions are carefully planned and reinforced in each lesson, with measurable outcomes to assess their success.
- Clear expectations are set for prompt arrival and good behaviour from all students.
- Lessons begin on time, and latecomers are addressed appropriately with a "late mark" and Shackleton note (if required).
- Students are consistently engaged throughout the lesson.
- Students are encouraged to articulate their thinking and reasoning.
- Differentiation should be a feature of every lesson, accommodating the diverse needs of students, including those related to linguistic ability, academic skills, additional educational needs, and cultural backgrounds.
- English should be used and promoted by both students and staff (except in language-specific subjects, such as MFL), although there may be occasions when explanations in a student's native language are beneficial (with a preference for paper dictionaries over electronic translators).

- Subject-specific literacy, including key vocabulary and terminology, should be emphasised throughout the lesson, alongside high expectations for developing reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.
- Lessons should explicitly aim to develop students' higher-order thinking and learning skills.
- Teachers should regularly assess students' understanding of lesson content and monitor their progress.
- Independent learning should be expected, encouraged, and facilitated.

Homework & Independent Study

- Homework should be relevant, extend lesson work, prepare students for future lessons, and be flexible enough to meet individual needs. It should not typically be used to complete unfinished classwork.
- Homework should be completed in a professional manner and stored (and set) for future reference using MS Teams where possible.
- Where students do not engage with their homework (regarding both quality and deadlines), a note should be put on Shackleton and the student should undergo the disciplinary process with the teacher and / or PD (if this is reoccurring across many subjects).

Assessment and Feedback

Formative Assessment: Regular formative assessments are used to gauge student understanding and provide timely feedback. This helps students identify their strengths and areas for improvement.

Summative Assessment: Summative assessments are used to evaluate a student's overall performance. These assessments are aligned with learning objectives and may include projects, presentations, and traditional examinations.

Assessment for Learning: Our assessments are designed to support learning. Teachers will use assessment data to identify gaps in understanding and adjust their teaching accordingly.

Feedback: Timely, constructive feedback is essential to learning. Teachers will guide students on how to improve, and students are expected to engage with and apply this feedback.

Student Feedback

Formative Feedback

Each term, students should receive at least four formative comments on their work, with specific targets set for improvement. Evidence of this feedback, including both teacher comments and student engagement in the assessment process, should be documented in student folders, either in hard copy or digital format. Feedback may also result from self-assessment, peer assessment, whole-class activities, or verbal exchanges, as we strive to provide diverse feedback methods to our students.

Expectations of Marking

Staff are expected to provide regular feedback, including detailed comments and improvement targets, at least twice per half term. Feedback may be delivered verbally, in writing, or through peer and self-assessment.

Marking should be regular and thorough, ensuring the identification of errors and inaccuracies in both subject knowledge and skills, including the use of English.

Marking should be straightforward, positive, and student friendly. Staff should consistently guide students on how to improve, often using the 'WWW / EBI' approach ('What Went Well' / 'Even Better If').

Written comments and verbal feedback should clearly communicate to students and their parents the student's strengths, areas for improvement, performance levels, suggested strategies for enhancing knowledge, understanding, and skills, as well as specific goals to achieve. This is particularly beneficial for parents who are actively involved in their child's education.

Teachers should not accept inaccurate or inadequate responses to written, verbal, or practical tasks without addressing them.

Proactive measures should be taken to address missing, incomplete, or poorly presented work.

Students should receive verbal feedback in every lesson where appropriate, and written work should be returned with written feedback within two weeks.

Assessment Guidelines

Assessments are conducted at least once every fortnight, with at least one assessment per half term administered under exam conditions, aligned with the standards of the relevant examination board (e.g., AO weighting).

- Most assessments consist of exam-style questions.
- Assessments may be conducted either in class or outside of class, and may be open book or closed book, depending on the subject and Programme of Study (PoS).
- Whenever possible, assessments should be administered and uploaded as a Teams assignment, whether completed on paper or electronically.
- All key assessment data must be recorded in the subject tracker and/or during data drops on Shackleton.

- Assessments should be noted in the Scheme of Work (SoW) and stored in the assessment folder on SharePoint.
- Assessments should be marked within one week of being administered and returned after a maximum of two weeks.
- Students are encouraged to review any questions where they did not achieve full marks, and to redraft answers if beneficial.
- For University Foundation Programme (UFP) classes, at least one assessment per half term should be administered on the Digi Exam platform.
- Half-termly assessments are typically designed to last for 50 minutes or more, as most external examinations exceed one hour in length. These assessments should include questions based on recently taught material, as well as synoptic questions intended to review earlier content.
- The questions should closely resemble those found in final examinations, balancing AOs and question types, with grading aligned to examination board criteria wherever possible.
- Assessments should be standardised and moderated within departments to ensure consistency.

Tracking and Targeting of Students

Student progress is tracked following each assessment period, with performance analysed against benchmarks such as ALIS. Students who achieve grades two or more levels below these benchmarks are identified as underachieving. Teachers and Personal Tutors (PTs) are expected to monitor these students closely and intervene as necessary. This may also prompt action from Curriculum Directors (CDs), Pastoral Directors (PDs), or Senior Leadership Team (SLT) members. A range of support interventions, including additional support classes, academic reports, and Individual Learning Plans (ILPs), will be implemented as needed. Records of actions taken, and targets set are meticulously maintained.

Student Voice

The school values the perspectives of students as an essential part of the continuous improvement of teaching, learning, and assessment practices. By actively seeking student feedback, the school aims to foster an inclusive and responsive learning environment.

Feedback Collection Methods:

Regular Feedback Sessions: Teachers will conduct informal feedback sessions with students during or after lessons. These sessions will focus on understanding students' experiences with teaching methods, classroom environment, and assessment practices.

Personal Tutor Meetings: During one-on-one meetings with their personal tutors, students will be encouraged to discuss any concerns or suggestions they have regarding their learning experiences. Tutors will document key points and pass them on to relevant staff for further consideration.

Online Questionnaires: Students will be invited to complete online questionnaires anonymously at least once per term. These questionnaires will cover a range of topics including teaching effectiveness, assessment fairness, homework load, and the overall school environment.

The results from both conversations and online questionnaires will be collected and analysed by the Deputy Headteacher and relevant Heads of Department. The data will be used to identify trends, areas of strength, and areas in need of improvement.

Student Reports

Depending on the Programme of study, teachers populate student reports that are addressed to students' parents / guardians to provide information on Academic Achievement, Attitude to Learning, and Attendance. These reports are available to students and form the basis of discussions.

Subject teachers are responsible for discussing progress, setting SMART targets, and providing individual learning plans via Shackleton as part of the reporting / assessment cycle.

Plagiarism

Students are informed about the dangers of plagiarism, and any detected instances will be reported to the Examination Board as necessary and if appropriate.

Students will usually receive a "U" Grade for assessments where plagiarism has occurred and found, and they will also receive a Stage Discipline according to the severity of their offence (they will be interviewed by the Teacher / CD and/or PD / AHA to establish the severity of the offence) with details recorded on Shackleton.

More detail can be found in the Academic Honesty Policy.

Scrutiny of work and Lesson Observation

Curriculum Directors and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will regularly scrutinise students' work as part of the school's commitment to continuous improvement. This scrutiny will focus on the organisation and quality of students' work, the quality of teacher feedback, and how effectively students respond to this feedback. It will also ensure that whole-school teaching and learning strategies are being consistently reinforced in classrooms.

All academic staff within departmental teams will receive both collective and individual feedback based on the outcomes of this work scrutiny.

Lesson observations, including peer observations, will take place regularly to:

- Ensure good teaching practices are being implemented.
- Support academic staff in developing their teaching skills.
- Contribute to any active research projects.
- Monitor the effectiveness of teaching strategies and provisions.

Lesson observations will be conducted in line with the school's Observation Procedures, using the BlueSky platform to record observations and provide feedback.

Typically, academic staff will be observed by their Curriculum Director and/or members of the SLT, with each staff member receiving a maximum of two formal lesson observations per academic year, unless there are exceptional circumstances or a request for additional observations for professional development purposes.

Regular learning walks are scheduled frequently and are included in the school calendar. These are carried out by Curriculum Directors and members of the SLT. Peer observations are also actively encouraged.

Use of ICT

Schemes of Work and planning should refer to ICT opportunities.

Staff should incorporate modern technology to enhance curriculum delivery whenever possible. Staff are required to use Microsoft Teams as an interface with students: a repository for lesson presentations, resources, lesson, and/or homework assignments. It is also to be used for students to submit work for teachers to monitor and provide feedback.

Use of laptops, mobile phones, and other similar electronic devices in class, should be monitored to ensure they are used effectively and appropriately by students. Mobile phone boxes should be used, and staff are encouraged to have some “technology free” lessons.

Diversity and Inclusion

We celebrate the international nature of our school and the multitude of cultures it encompasses. Our teaching and assessment practices embody our commitment to diversity, fostering a learning environment where students learn from each other.

Standards

All teachers are expected to adhere to the DfE’s National Teaching Standards, as well as the CGS Teaching Standards.

Cover Lessons

Teachers who have to be away during the day will provide cover for their lessons. If possible their Head of Department should arrange cover within the Department. If that is not possible then the teacher’s Head of Department should ask the Curriculum Team, a minimum of 24 hours beforehand, for cover to be allocated (when planned).

It is the teacher’s responsibility to provide instructions for the work to be completed in their lessons whilst they are absent (this should be done, where possible, on MS Teams). Work set should be able to be completed by students with the cover teacher’s supervision but should not require the member of staff providing cover to teach (unless previously discussed with the cover teacher).

Related Policies

Curriculum Policy

Academic Quality Assurance Policy

Curriculum

Appraisal

Exams

Student Behaviour

Academic Honesty



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