



# **BLESSED TRINITY COLLEGE**

Learning & Teaching Policy

**SEPTEMBER 2018**

## RATIONALE

Learning and Teaching is the core business of Blessed Trinity College (BTC). This policy provides recognition of current good practice, and clarifies the means of consolidating and developing our work towards further improvement. The implementation of the Learning and Teaching policy is the responsibility of all who are involved in the life of BTC including students, staff, parents, governors and the leadership of the College at all levels.

## VISION FOR LEARNING & TEACHING IN TRINITY COLLEGE

Based on our Staff Voice activity (August 2017), we have a shared vision of what constitutes an effective teacher, learner & lesson; this is further drilled down to a wide range qualitative and quantitative evidence indicators. Via our CPD programme, teachers are encouraged to ensure that classrooms are welcoming and positive learning environments, where students' work is displayed and celebrated with pride. The concept of learning walls is twofold, not only showcasing student work, but also to support and scaffold the learning and teaching within the classroom.

Our work is linked to the targets set and agreed for teachers, departments and the College as a whole, with our SDP strategically outlining our pathway to success – this is outlined in section 7 of the SDP. The central focus of effective learning and teaching is directed by and through a clear understanding of **what makes an effective learning experience**, and the necessity for learning to be achievable for all students and relevant to the real world.

Teachers are aware of the accountability measures in ensuring high standards in student outcomes and public examination results; a key feature in BTC is the extended leadership review and accountability meetings with SLT. The Extended Leadership Accountability Meetings take place following analysis of August outcomes, to discuss targets set for KS4 & Post-16 classes, & to analyse & challenge subsequent tracker score input throughout the school year, with a view to identifying underachievement & implementing appropriate intervention strategies in a timely manner.

Lessons should always be well planned, structured, and paced appropriately to meet the needs of individuals, groups and classes – age & stage appropriate. AfL approaches should be incorporated into L&T planning, particularly in relation to effectively planned questioning and longer-term project-based Mfl approaches. Assessment and reporting should inform and support the on-going improvement of students' work, and provide guidance to students regarding how their work can be improved; implementing intervention strategies to support &/ challenge students, as appropriate.

Expectations should always be appropriately high; each learner should experience L&T strategies which stretch and challenge him/her to achieve his/her full potential. Students are supported to become resourceful, resilient, independent learners, who are well prepared to successfully meet the challenges of adult life and life-long learning; this can be evidenced via the Personal Development Programme overviews, assembly content & induction programmes throughout the school year.

## **EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS**

ALL students should...

- Attend school every day and be punctual
- Come to school prepared and equipped for each lesson
- Respect his/her own right and the right of others to learn
- Be well behaved/adhere to BTC expectations & make positive choices
- Be an active learner & take progressive responsibility for his/her own learning – ask for clarification, support &/ guidance, as appropriate
- Complete classwork, homework, assignments etc to the highest possible standard and submit on time
- Take pride in the presentation of their work
- Have high expectations of self and others
- Be encouraged to engage in extracurricular activities and clubs
- Make a positive contribution to life in BTC

## **EXPECTATIONS OF TEACHERS**

As the professional adult in the classroom, the teacher assumes responsibility for ensuring, through effective classroom management and lesson planning, that a supportive and secure learning environment is in place. Agreed routines, habits and a consistent and predictable approach from staff should encourage students to lead and facilitate aspects of their own learning, thereby growing in confidence, independence and autonomy. During Term 2 2017-18, we launched BTC Consistencies to promote a collegial & transparent approach to key aspects of the lesson e.g. entering the room, taking out HW diaries etc.

Planning for the delivery of quality lessons, for active student engagement and for positive outcomes, is underpinned by on-going teacher/student dialogue, characterised by clear focus, purpose, suitably high expectations, challenge and support, and is evident in students' articulation of their experiences, students' workbooks, assignments and projects. During Term 3 2017-18, we engaged in a number of Student Voice Focus Group activities; the findings & feedback from our students will continue to inform our approach to L&T. This has proven to be a most valuable way to gain quality student feedback, & we will continue to consult with our students in this manner to bring about improvement.

ALL teachers should...

- Be child centred
- Be a positive role model for all
- Foster and develop positive respectful relationships with students & each other
- Be well prepared for each lesson – exploring opportunities to extend learning beyond the classroom
- Plan and deliver stimulating/interesting lessons and review the quality of L&T, to ensure the needs of all students are being met (personalised learning)
- Promote high expectations with all
- Be consistent & predictable in approach – clear expectations and standards for both learning and behaviour
- Effectively manage the classroom to meet the needs of students – inextricable link between Care & Learning across the curriculum – implement key learning points / recommendations from Positive Behaviour for Learning CPD sessions

- Set targets – Monitor, Evaluate & Review, as appropriate, in line with agreed whole College approach to tracking progress to bring about improvement
- Assess effectively (summative/formative) and provide meaningful feedback to improve learning
- Promote and provide a positive, caring, inclusive and stimulating learning environment, where students' work is showcased
- Recognise, reward and celebrate students' achievements and success
- Engage and work in partnership with parents and other stakeholders to support students in their learning
- Report & communicate effectively to parents
- Engage in CPD and self-evaluation

## **EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS / CARERS**

### **ALL parents / carers should...**

- Ensure their child comes to school every day and arrives on time
- Ensure their child is well prepared/equipped for school & learning
- Work in partnership with the College - communicate concerns and attend meetings, when appropriate or requested, with staff to discuss &/ resolve any issues relating to their child
- Be proactive in engaging with the College community in supporting the on-going holistic development of their son &/ daughter
- Support College policies, agreements, expectations and procedures
- Encourage high standards of behaviour and respect for all, including self
- Check and support child in completing homework and assignments – the HW diary/student planner is an essential home-school communication tool
- Attend all scheduled parent teacher consultations, seminars and events, as appropriate, for their child

## **RELATIONSHIPS**

As with all of our work, the Learning and Teaching experiences in BTC are characterised by positive relationships, & are inextricably linked to our Core Values:

- ***Care & Inclusion***
- ***Respect & Responsibility***
- ***Aspiration & Expectation***

BTC teachers should ensure that classroom management is of a high standard, and create the conditions for effective learning and teaching to take place. This includes consistently implementing standards & expectations for punctuality, how students enter and leave the classroom, the common practices for asking and answering questions, and other issues related to everyday practice. Teachers are expected to make full and effective use of Learning Support Assistants &/ Subject Technicians to enhance and support the learning experiences of students. The classroom experience should promote a warm, purposeful, respectful relationship between teachers and students, whereby students are encouraged to positively interact and become involved in their learning. Appropriate praise should be incorporated into the learning experiences in classrooms, and should not be based on ability alone - but relate also to effort and recognition of hard work.

## LEARNING & TEACHING STRATEGIES

*“Teachers use a range of effective approaches that: provide open-ended activities and challenges; focus on explicit thinking; encourage children’s questioning; enable collaborative learning; promote independent learning; and make meaningful connections beyond the classroom.”*

ISEF: Effective Practice & Self-Evaluation Questions for Post-Primary, ETI (January 2017)

- Teachers use a wide range of methodologies which meet the needs of all of the students in their care. These will ensure that students are actively involved in their own learning, and that there is recognition of and planning for the range of learning styles.
- Schemes of Work, Programmes of Study & Lessons, taking cognisance of available student data, are planned effectively to meet the needs of all students, and ensure that they are stretched and challenged to improve.
- Time should be allocated for students to evaluate assessed work, seek clarification &/ support, if required, and make necessary improvements.
- Lessons are effectively planned and structured with clear learning outcomes, success criteria, planned questioning and plenary elements.
- Lessons should be planned to match learners’ abilities, needs and interests.
- Strategies for personalised learning will be evident and used effectively; the needs of SEN students will be met, including the effective use of Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs).
- Students benefit from the use of new technologies, using ICT to learn, in addition to completing learning tasks, as appropriate.

## LEARNING STRATEGIES & SKILLS

**LEARNING TO LEARN** is an important aspect of the Learning and Teaching Strategies in BTC. It is intrinsically linked to, and underpinned by, the need to ensure positive examination outcomes and the achievement of a learner’s full potential.

This is reflected in:

- ✓ Ensuring students understand their responsibilities as learners.
- ✓ Encouraging & promoting the development of students as independent learners.
- ✓ Developing students as inquisitive, collaborative and co-operative learners.
- ✓ Developing students as reflective learners in relation to their own input, their outcomes and learning experiences in general.
- ✓ Developing the capacity of each student to record, track, revise, and process their learning progressively across the Key Stages.
- ✓ Ensuring students are confident learners, willing to ask for help, clarification and guidance in relation to all aspects of their learning.
- ✓ Encouraging and challenging students to make connections with other aspects of their learning experiences within and across each area of learning – inclusive of the development of thinking skills and personal capabilities.
- ✓ Maximising natural subject-based opportunities for students to improve their skills, confidence and competence in literacy/communication, numeracy/UMaths & ICT across the curriculum.

## LEARNING & TEACHING ENVIRONMENT

Learning environments (the areas within and outside of classrooms/learning areas) are enhanced by displays of students' work/successes. This is used to acknowledge, reward, motivate and inspire all of those involved in the learning experiences, and to showcase the excellence in L&T within BTC to the wider school community, visitors etc.

Seating arrangements &/ seating plans should be appropriate to learner age & stage, context of learning, and safe and secure for all involved. Classroom management of positive learning environments should convey a clear message relating to the on-going raising standards agenda, an appropriate work ethic, and produce a positive, productive & rewarding culture of learning.

## REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

As reflected in Extended Leadership Annual Reports, CPD evaluations, & our SDP evaluation processes – section 4 of the SDP in particular, teachers in BTC are self-evaluating, reflective practitioners who engage in on-going reflective practice. Consequently, they question:

- The extent and effectiveness with which they share and agree learning and teaching strategies, learning intentions, success criteria and evaluate the extent to which learning has been achieved (Plenary). PLAN – DO – REVIEW
- The extent to which the learning needs of all learners have been met.
- The quality of relationships in each classroom, and the degree to which it is based on mutual respect.
- The extent to which students are encouraged to ask questions and are challenged to extend their learning.
- The degree to which each classroom provides a positive learning environment.
- The quality of feedback provided to consolidate and promote further/deeper learning - scaffolding.
- The degree to which students are encouraged to move beyond the middle ground, and to take risks in their learning, leading to further/deeper learning and increased autonomy.
- The extent to which students are actively involved in their lessons and to which there is a focus on ensuring effective personalised learning.
- The extent to which own teaching has been or can be improved, through professional dialogue with others – sharing good practice, observing/discussing good practice through use of TCN, CBD etc.
- Effectively devised Student Voice Focus Group activities may be employed to gather student input and feedback, regarding the L&T process, and how this could be improved in moving forward.

In August 2018, we launched our **9 Principles of Learning**, as our agreed *“Language of a Lesson”*:

- **Data & Evidence**
- **Learning Intentions & Success Criteria**
- **Recapping**
- **Explaining**
- **Modelling**
- **Guiding**
- **Scaffolding**
- **Questioning**
- **Assessing**

We will continue to work on developing the 9 Principles to enhance L&T within the classroom in moving forward, & to inform our on-going MER processes in relation to L&T.

As with all whole school policies, Excellence in Learning & Teaching is inextricably linked to other related policies, our core values, expectations and consistencies, as outlined below:

**BTC CORE VALUES:**

- Care & Inclusion
- Aspiration & Expectation
- Respect & Responsibility

**BTC EXPECTATIONS:**

1. We come to school every day on time, ready and willing to learn.
2. We care for, value and respect ourselves, others and our school environment.
3. We complete our work with pride and always to the very highest standards.
4. We always listen and take turns to speak.
5. We move safely and quietly on the left hand side around the school.
6. We follow our school dress code and take pride in our appearance and uniform.
7. We follow the school rules regarding electronic devices.

**BTC CONSISTENCIES:**



## Trinity Consistencies



**1. We arrive on time to morning registration at 8.50am and take our Homework Diary out.**

**2. We always listen and take turns to speak.**

**3. We turn phones and earphones off and keep these out of sight, from 8.50am-3.05pm.**

**1. We line up outside the classroom door, on one side.**

**2. Teachers will meet and greet learners, managing entry and exit, as we arrive and leave.**

**3. In every lesson - books, equipment and planners out. Bags down.**