



Nendrum College

COMBER

TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT POLICY



Signed Chair Board of Governors: _____

Date Ratified by Board of Governors: _____

Review Date: 24 September 2025

Member of staff responsible for policy: Mr S Cowden

Date approved by Board of Governors: September 2025

Date of next review: June 2027



Introduction

Learning and Teaching is the core business within Nendrum College. High quality planning, teaching and assessment for successful learning is one of our key priorities and is underpinned by our school vision and values, whereby we are committed to providing a nurturing, inclusive, and aspirational learning environment, where every student is supported to reach their full potential, in a modern and digital world, academically, socially, spiritually, and emotionally. We continually strive to offer excellent learning experiences in a caring and nurturing environment, where success is celebrated and underperformance challenged.

Our vision is for all our students, regardless of background and circumstance, to make meaningful progress, to achieve grades which will provide appropriate pathways and opportunities in the future and to develop as confident, compassionate, and engaging young people who are prepared to make meaningful contributions to both local and global society. Through high expectations, mutual respect and a culture of personal growth, we encourage educational excellence. These principles, embedded in our core values of nurture, commitment, and community, aim to foster a strong sense of belonging and responsibility in everyone.

The “Teaching and Learning At Nendrum College Framework” (Appendix A) is guided by evidence-based research, particularly “Making Every Lesson Count” (Tharby & Allison, 2015) (Appendix B), and all staff follow this approach. Regular opportunities for professional learning (for teaching and classroom support staff) and the collaborative development of pedagogy through sharing effective practice, are prioritised and scheduled within the directed time schedule and school development days.

POLICY AIMS

- To ensure that children at our school are provided with high quality learning experiences that lead to consistently high levels of student achievement.
- To guide what students do, what teachers do, how time is managed, the organisation of the classroom and what the school as an organisation does to create an effective and well managed learning environment in which the needs of each individual child can be met.
- To ensure that our provision is based on the needs of the individual child with an expectation that all learners can and will achieve high standards in line with their aptitude, with the right guidance and support.

PRINCIPLES GUIDING THIS POLICY

- All staff are guided by action plans within the school development plan to improve teaching and learning.
- That the success of our students will be dependent upon the quality of our provision and should not be defined by their socio-economic background, gender, disability or ethnicity.
- That our provision is adaptive and based upon the needs of the individual child with an expectation that all learners can and will achieve high standards with the right guidance and support
- Varied teaching methods and strategies will be used effectively and appropriately to accommodate differing learning styles.
- The use of self evaluation tools by staff and students to strive for continuous improvement, identifying priorities for development as part of the planning cycle.
- Professional development is essential for supporting all adults to develop their own learning. The College supports all staff to take an active interest in and responsibility for developing their professional practice and knowledge.



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Students

At Nendrum College, students are expected to EMBRACE learning (Appendix C). This code of conduct has been developed and agreed by the Student Council and is displayed in all classrooms. Students will:

- Be prepared for lessons and get equipment out ready at the start of a lesson.
- Be mindful and respectful of others.
- Take pride in their work with neat and accurate presentation, giving their best effort always.
- Respond to questions and make positive contributions to class discussions.
- Ask for help if required.
- Embrace the challenge of learning and take responsibility for improving their own learning.

Classroom Teachers

It is the responsibility of all teachers to provide the highest quality teaching, focusing on positive relationships and professional practice.

- **Plan lessons for progression:** Ensure every lesson has a clear structure following the 'Teaching and Learning at Nendrum College' Framework (way in, way through, way out) with explicit learning outcomes and success criteria shared with students.
- **Differentiate for all learners:** Tailor resources, tasks, and outcomes to meet the diverse needs, abilities, and learning styles (visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic) of all students, including those with special educational needs. Be aware of students' Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and ensure targets are supported within lessons, contribute to the design and review of IEPs and work collaboratively with classroom support staff to ensure students are appropriately supported in their learning.
- **Foster a supportive environment:** Create a stimulating and welcoming classroom where students feel respected and engaged. Establish and embed classroom routines that allow teaching and learning to proceed in a structured, predictable and efficient manner. Utilise the ASPIRE strategies to promote positive relationships within the classroom. Use displays of recent student work to recognise achievement and promote learning.
- **Encourage engagement:** Actively engage learners throughout the entire lesson to maintain focus and promote participation through a range of pedagogical strategies.
- **Use effective resources:** Utilise a variety of high-quality, stimulating resources, including ICT and e-learning, to provide appropriate support, pace and challenge for all learners.
- **Adhere to school policies:** Ensure all planning and delivery aligns with the College's literacy, numeracy, and ICT policies, as well as departmental schemes of work and external requirements.
- **Assess and mark regularly:** Consistently assess and mark student work through formative and summative assessment approaches. Provide meaningful feedback to students that highlights strengths and areas for improvement.



- **Use data to inform teaching:** Analyse assessment data to inform your teaching, track student progress, and set clear targets to ensure all learners are reaching their full potential. Where a student is underperforming, provide the necessary support and interventions to address and improve attainment.
- **Communicate effectively:** Maintain open and positive relationships with students and parents. Inform parents, Head of Department and Senior Leaders of student progress or underachievement as required.

Classroom Support Staff

Classroom support staff play a vital role in supporting teaching and learning.

- **Support student learning:** Assist teachers in the implementation of lesson plans by providing targeted support to individuals or small groups of students to reinforce learning.
- **Contribute to an inclusive environment:** Help create a positive and safe classroom atmosphere, supporting students' emotional, social and physical well-being.
- **Assist with resources:** Aid in the preparation, organisation, and management of classroom resources and displays to ensure they are available and ready for learning activities.
- **Communicate effectively:** Maintain clear and consistent communication with teachers and other relevant staff regarding student progress, needs and any concerns.
- **Maintain confidentiality:** Handle all student information and sensitive matters with the utmost confidentiality and professionalism.

Heads of Department

Heads of Department are responsible for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning within their subject area and providing leadership to their teams.

- **Oversee curriculum development:** Regularly review and update departmental schemes of work and curriculum maps/plans to incorporate new initiatives and ensure relevance and a smooth progression throughout and between key stages.
- **Monitor lesson quality:** Ensure all teachers are planning and delivering lessons that are appropriate for the age and aptitude of the students, and that they are consistently accounting for the range of student abilities and learning styles.
- **Ensure adequate resources:** Provide all teachers with access to appropriate and sufficient resources that meet the diverse needs of their students.
- **Provide support:** Ensure that all teachers have access to the support they need to be effective in their roles.
- **Promote professional growth:** Use data to monitor and evaluate the quality of student learning in the subject area and lead the implementation of effective plans to address areas for improvement.



Pastoral Teams

Form Tutors and Heads of Year are responsible for monitoring the wellbeing and academic progress of individual students, including:

- **Providing support:** Offering social and academic advice and guidance to students.
- **Monitoring progress:** Tracking academic progress and attitudes to learning through regular data analysis and parental consultations.
- **Overseeing student conduct:** Monitoring behaviour, homework, use of planners, rewards, sanctions, uniform, and attendance.

Senior Leadership Team and Principal

The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for monitoring and leading improvements in the quality of teaching and learning across the entire school. This involves:

- **Curriculum oversight:** Ensuring the curriculum is broad, balanced, challenging, and meets the needs of all students while being cost-effective.
- **Strategic planning:** Ensuring an agreed Learning and Teaching Policy is embedded, with effective practices for its implementation. Putting in place the processes for developing, monitoring, and quality assuring learning, teaching, and assessment.
- **Resource and staff management:** Ensuring the effective use of school accommodation, resources, and staff deployment to meet the needs of the curriculum and students. Advise the Board of Governors on staffing to ensure the effective delivery of the curriculum.
- **Professional development:** Ensuring all staff have access to appropriate CPD opportunities focused on improving pedagogy.
- **Leading innovation:** Fostering experimentation and innovation in all areas of learning, teaching, and assessment, rooted in evidence-based research, as well as leading the sharing of good practice.

Board of Governors

The Board of Governors has a statutory duty to oversee school processes, ensuring that the needs of all students are being met.

- **Strategic governance:** Ensuring the curriculum is broad, balanced, and in line with the NI Curriculum, including relevant guidance from the Department of Education.
- **Staffing and resources:** Employing staff and deploying resources to facilitate the effective delivery of the curriculum.

MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

Effective monitoring and evaluation are central to Nendrum College's commitment to continuous improvement. We will systematically review the quality of teaching and learning to ensure high standards are maintained and that all students are making excellent progress. This will be achieved through a cycle of monitoring, evaluation, and quality assurance that includes:



- **Formal Observations:** Regular classroom observations will be conducted as part of the Performance Review and Staff Development (PRSD) scheme. These observations will be used to identify strengths, share best practice, and pinpoint areas for professional development.
- **Work Sampling:** Heads of Department and the Senior Leadership Team will sample student classwork to ensure quality and consistency in marking, feedback, and student outcomes across all subject areas.
- **Learning Walks and Student Pursuits:** Planned visits to classrooms will be used to gather a quick snapshot of teaching and learning in action, focusing on specific elements such as student engagement, classroom routines, starter and plenary activities, etc.
- **Data Analysis:** A rigorous approach to data analysis will be used to track student performance against prior attainment, standardised data and national benchmarks. This data will inform our strategic planning and target setting at a school, departmental, and individual student level.
- **Self-Evaluation:** All staff will be encouraged to engage in self-evaluation of their practice, with a focus on their impact on student learning, at both classroom and departmental level. This reflective practice is fundamental to professional growth and is a core component of the PRSD process.
- **Student Voice:** We will regularly seek feedback from students through surveys, focus groups, and the Student Council to understand their experience of learning and identify opportunities for improvement.

ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

Assessment is a fundamental part of the teaching and learning process, providing valuable information to measure performance, guide instruction, and support student progress. Nendrum College employs a wide variety of assessment methods, both formal and informal, to gather a comprehensive picture of each student's attainment and skills.

Summative Assessment (Assessment of Learning)

Summative assessment is used to evaluate student learning, knowledge, proficiency, and academic attainment at the conclusion of a specific teaching period. The main examples of summative assessment in the school include:

- **Public Examinations and Internal Tracking Assessments (TAs):** Used to measure a student's overall performance in a subject.
- **End of Unit Tests:** Clearly identify the standard of a student's attainment at a specific point in their learning.
- **Portfolios of Evidence and Controlled Assessment:** These are used to assess aspects of a subject that cannot be readily measured by an external examination, and are completed and reviewed on an ongoing basis.

Formative Assessment (Assessment for Learning)



Assessment for Learning (AFL) is a major feature of our approach to teaching and learning. It is defined as the ongoing process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there.

Departments engage in the following elements of AFL within their schemes of work and daily lessons:

- **Sharing learning objectives** with students.
- **Effective questioning** to check for understanding and promote deeper thinking.
- **Sharing Success Criteria** to provide a clear understanding of what is expected.
- **Effective feedback**, including marking for improvement.
- **Self and peer evaluation** to encourage students to take ownership of their own learning.
- **Retrieval Practice** to help students consolidate and recall information.
- **Plenary activities** to check for understanding and inform the next steps in learning.

In addition to formal academic assessment, teachers continuously monitor and informally assess other thinking skills and personal capabilities such as managing information, self-management, working with others, creativity and problem-solving during class activities and through our programme of extra-curricular activities.

HOMEWORK

Homework is set regularly across all departments to promote good practice and reinforce classroom learning. It is designed to meet the needs of students and align with the specific demands and requirements of each subject, including any associated controlled assessment. Students are expected to use a Homework Diary to help them manage their workload effectively. Support is provided to students through the daily lunchtime library club, afterschool homework club and within departments as required.

MARKING AND FEEDBACK

Research has shown that awarding grades or marks without comments is not an effective way to raise standards. In fact, most students focus on the grade rather than the comments and therefore are left with a basic perception of their progress rather than usable knowledge on how to improve. Black and William (1998) discovered a 30% improvement in students work where comment based feedback has been used rather than generic grades or marks. The use of developmental comments, alongside effective marking is proven to be more likely to raise the standards of student work as well as help them to understand the purpose of their learning.

Effective Feedback can be verbal or written, and must be:

- specific
- timely
- goal focused, suggesting areas for improvement and next steps in learning
- personal and address the student by name
- positive and constructive
- helpful to parents/guardians in understanding a student's strengths and areas for improvement.

Staff will use an agreed set of common marking codes to ensure consistency and help students to understand the feedback and action required to improve their learning/work (Appendix D).

REPORTING

Reporting on student performance to parents is carried out electronically through SIMS and is based on individual student assessment. There are two main types of reports issued to parents:



- **Full Reports:** These reports are issued once an academic year. They include an attainment grade (KS4) or score (KS3), effort grade, subject-specific teacher comment and a Form Teacher's comment.
- **Tracking Reports:** These reports are issued after each Tracking Assessment. They provide an individual target and a grade (KS4) or score (KS3) from each subject teacher.

We hold Parent Consultations throughout the year where parents are invited to discuss their child's performance and achievements with subject teachers. Parents are also welcome to contact the school at any time to arrange an appointment with any member of staff to discuss their child's progress.

APPENDIX A

TEACHING & LEARNING AT NENDRUM COLLEGE



CLASSROOM CULTURE

Creating a positive classroom culture includes valuing every student, building a learning-focused environment where every student is supported, and promoting good behaviour, while enhancing students' creativity, curiosity and desire to learn.

- Ensure psychological safety
- Expect active engagement
- Establish routines
- Set rules and expectations
- Use praise well
- Provide challenge and support
- Avoid distractions

Classroom routines...allow teaching and learning to proceed in a structured, predictable and efficient manner.

Carol Ann Tomlinson (2010)

PREPARED

- All students are expected to:
- Arrive on time to lessons.
 - Bring all necessary books and equipment.
 - Be respectful to others at all times.
 - Ask for help when needed.
 - Fully engage in learning.

WAY IN

Students need to understand the purpose of the lesson and how it connects with their prior learning. It is important that students are engaged quickly with learning, as this establishes clear expectations for the lesson.

- | | | | | |
|------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------|--------------|
| Secure Attention | Learning Intentions | Recall Prior Learning | Starter Activity | Do Now Tasks |
|------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------|--------------|

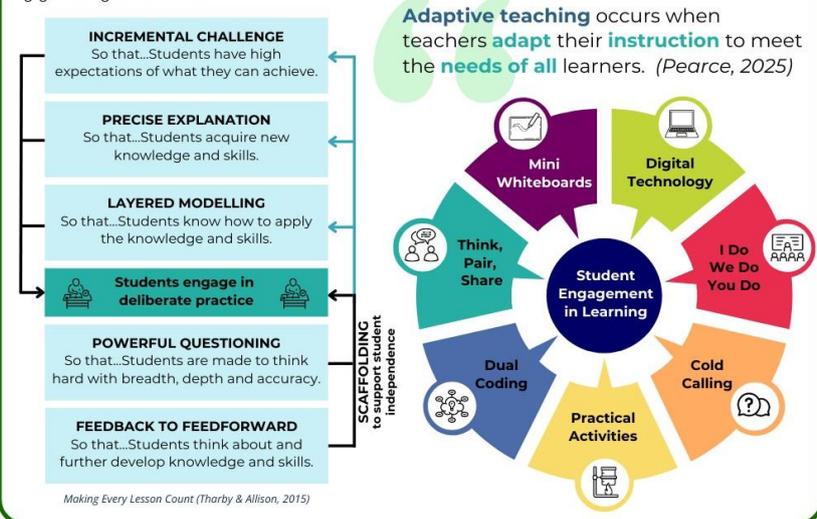
ASPIRE

Classroom Management Strategies

- Positive greeting
- 3 - 2 - 1
- Use of name
- Positive correction
- Physical proximity

WAY THROUGH

"Making Every Lesson Count" advocates evidence-based teaching focused on six key principles. By strategically integrating these elements, teachers create **engaging and effective lessons**. This model encourages reflective practice to maximise learning impact. Ultimately, it empowers teachers to **improve student outcomes through impactful strategies**. "Through the application of these six principles, the ultimate goal is to lead students towards independence." (Allison et al., 2015). For new knowledge to be encoded in long-term memory, we must drive thinking and ensure that students are cognitively engaged throughout the lesson.



CONNECTED

Cross-Curricular Skills

- Using Mathematics
- Communication
- Using ICT and Digital Skills

Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities



Other Areas of Learning



Assessment

To monitor pupil progress, class teachers will regularly conduct **low-stakes assessment activities**. Students will sit **three formal tracking assessments** each year. This combined approach informs teaching, identifies learning needs, and supports all pupils to achieve.

William and Leahy (2015) stresses that "feedback should be more work for the recipient than the donor". This implies that **feedback** should be clear, helpful and actionable with the intention of improving the learner.

WAY OUT

Each lesson should conclude with a **plenary activity** which allows the teacher to check for understanding and inform the next steps in learning.



- Exit Tickets / Post-it Notes
- Low-stakes Quiz / Kahoot
- Multiple Choice Questions
- RAG or 3-2-1 Self-Evaluation
- Mini Whiteboards

HOMEWORK

Homework is vital in helping students practice and learn independently. This should be a mix of **instructional practice and consolidation activities** that help build knowledge and fluency, with some **open-ended, creative approaches**. Research indicates that more specific and precise homework has a greater impact on all learners (Quigley et al, 2018).



EXCELLENCE through **ENGAGEMENT** and **RESILIENCE**

NURTURE **COMMITMENT** **COMMUNITY**



MAKING EVERY LESSON COUNT

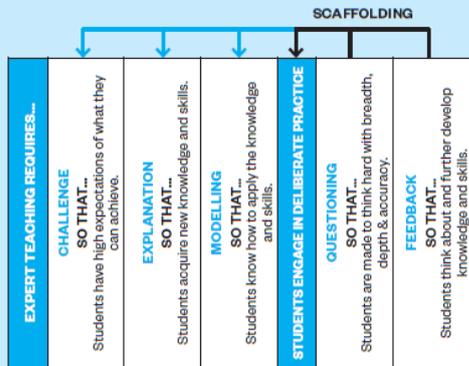
SIX PRINCIPLES TO SUPPORT GREAT TEACHING AND LEARNING

This one-pager summarises the principles of great teaching from the 2015 book *Making Every Lesson Count* by Andy Tharby and Shaun Allison.



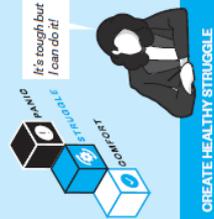
ANDY THARBY & SHAUN ALLISON

PRINCIPLES OF GREAT TEACHING LEADING STUDENTS TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE



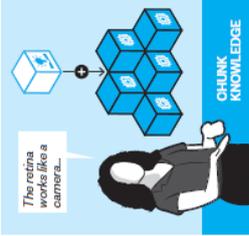
CHALLENGE

HIGH ACHIEVEMENT EXPECTATIONS
 Students must be given challenging work to make them think deeply. The skill of an effective teacher is to push all students just far enough so they are engaged in healthy struggle and then be responsive to support students where necessary. Set high expectations by scaling up work so that it is just beyond students' expected skill or knowledge level. Raise the standards and quality of students' work by sharing it publicly.



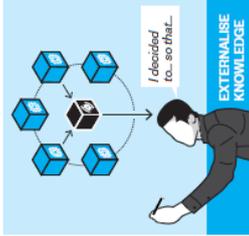
EXPLANATION

ACQUIRE NEW KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS
 Explanations should be tied to something students already know and broken down into manageable chunks to avoid overloading working memory. Explanations transform abstract ideas into more concrete ones. Find where students are at before initiating explanations and prepare in advance for any common misconceptions or errors. Tell stories that appeal to emotions; focus on conflicts and how they are overcome. Analogies and metaphors are powerful and provide a bridge between current knowledge and material to be learnt.



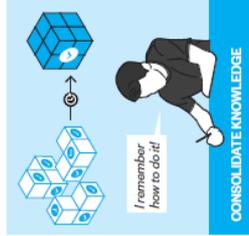
MODELLING

APPLY NEW KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS
 To learn how to do something, students need to watch and listen to experts as they guide them through the process. Modelling is the first step on students' journey towards independence (followed by lots of practice). Research shows that modelling is done best when delivered in small step-by-step blocks using worked examples. Live modelling and simultaneously thinking aloud enable teachers to reveal and externalise their thought processes. Questioning and critiquing models throughout gives insight into an expert's decision-making so that students can see what success looks like.



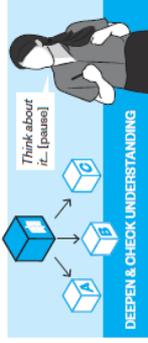
PRACTICE

ENGAGE IN DELIBERATE PRACTICE
 Dedicate time for students to practise new material to build fluency. This helps to create consolidated knowledge and skills that they can call upon. Students should also engage in deliberate practice so they are tackling tough material to make them think. Without thinking, no learning will take place. Over time, aim to expose students to information in new and different ways so they become familiar with the underlying structures of the concepts. Mix up and space practice sessions to promote long-term retention.



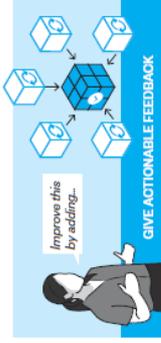
QUESTIONING

THINKING HARD WITH ACCURACY
 Questioning serves to test, deepen and develop one's understanding of a new concept and create a classroom culture of rich discussion. Ensure students engage in cognitive work by using probing questions, involving everyone through cold calling, multiple choice hinge questions, and orchestrating discussion to check for understanding. Mix up open and closed questions and provide students with adequate thinking time before sampling or randomising responses.



FEEDBACK

DEVELOPING KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS
 Teachers must show students what they need to aim for, set them off and then keep their learning on track through precise and timely feedback. It is a reciprocal process that aims to close a learning gap. Feedback can be verbal, written, given by peers or self-generated. Providing actions and dedicated time to edit and improve their work ensures feedback is acted upon. Utilise different methods of feedback such as marking live, or conducting a gallery peer critique activity (using kind, specific and helpful feedback comments).



APPENDIX C

**AT NENDRUM COLLEGE WE
EXPECT ALL STUDENTS TO
EMBRACE LEARNING**



E

EQUIPMENT READY

M

MINDFUL OF OTHERS

B

BEST EFFORT ALWAYS

R

RESPOND TO QUESTIONS

A

ASK IF UNSURE

C

CHALLENGE YOURSELF

E

ENGAGE WITH LEARNING

As agreed by staff and Student Council in June 2025.

APPENDIX D

MARKING AND FEEDBACK AT NENDRUM COLLEGE



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- specific
- timely
- goal- focused, suggesting areas for improvement and next steps in learning
- personal and address the student by name
- positive and constructive
- help parents understand a student's strengths and areas for improvement.

COMMON MARKING CODES

Dev	Further development of answer needed
○	Spelling mistake or missing/incorrect punctuation
NP//	New paragraph needed
^	Missing word or add specific word provided
~~~~~	Poor grammar or incorrect homophone
✓	Good/correct answer
X	Incorrect answer
T.I.	Action need to improve



**EXCELLENCE** through  
**ENGAGEMENT** and  
**RESILIENCE**

**NURTURE**  
**COMMITMENT**  
**COMMUNITY**



