# Weald of Kent Grammar School
**Teaching and Learning Policy**

## 1. Purpose and Vision

Our approach to teaching and learning is rooted in the belief that all students are entitled to a rich, rigorous and ambitious education, regardless of their starting points. Our mission is to create classrooms where knowledge is valued, thinking is visible, and excellence is pursued. Teaching at our school is driven by five interconnected principles outlined in our Teaching and Learning Framework:

- Understanding the Content and Context
- Creating the Conditions for Scholarship
- Explicit Instruction
- Thinking Hard
- Responsive Teaching

These principles are underpinned by our school values of:

- Curiosity – a desire to explore, question, and understand deeply.
- Compassion – respect for others, support for learning, and a commitment to inclusive excellence.
- Courage – taking intellectual risks, persisting through challenge, and striving for continuous improvement.

## 2. Principles of Effective Teaching

A. Content and Context

- Our curriculum is ambitious, broad and challenging, and sequenced to enable students to develop deep, secure understanding over time. Students will actively engage with the cultural capital needed to take advantage of the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.
- Teachers connect content to its context: within the subject, across subjects, and to the wider world — helping students see both the purpose and relevance of what they are learning, with links made to the bigger picture through retrieval.
- Teachers understand the needs of all students, including SEND and PP and employ adaptive strategies to build inclusive learning environments.
- Curriculum plans place emphasis on powerful knowledge, core concepts, and key misconceptions, allowing all students to access and master subject content.

B. Creating the Conditions for Scholarship

- Classrooms are calm, purposeful, and intellectually focused — places where students can think deeply, articulate ideas through oracy skills, and take pride in their learning.
- Scholarship is nurtured through deliberate routines that promote discipline, reflection, and academic confidence. Students are taught the routines for the classroom environment, including the start and end of lessons to ensure there is certainty in expectation.
- All lessons begin with a 'do now' activity and end with students standing behind chairs in silence. Some subjects adapt this approach to suit their setting, i.e. in practical subjects.
- Teachers maintain high expectations for behaviour, effort and academic rigor, ensuring all students are engaged and accountable for their learning in a positive learning environment.
- Compassion is shown through inclusive and adaptive practice, where every student is supported to participate, question and succeed.

- Teachers place emphasis on literacy and wider reading, encouraging learners to engage in challenging content beyond the classroom.

## C. Explicit Instruction
- Teachers develop metacognitive strategies to enable students to think explicitly about their own learning and to become active and motivated participants in their academic progress by reflecting on their own learning, acting upon feedback and learning from mistakes.
- New learning is taught through clear, structured explanations, with modelling, examples, and scaffolds to support understanding.
- Teachers guide students through a gradual release of responsibility: from explicit instruction and modelling to guided practice and independent application.
- Instruction is precise, purposeful and aligned with learning goals, ensuring no time is wasted and all students understand what they are learning and why.
- There is explicit teaching of new vocabulary and subject terminology to build confidence and understanding.

## D. Thinking Hard
- Lessons are designed to challenge students to think deeply and deliberately about subject content.
- Teachers create opportunities for independent practice, elaboration, problem-solving, and metacognition, ensuring students retain and connect knowledge over time.
- Cognitive challenge is not reserved for the most able — all students are expected and supported to engage in hard thinking.
- Curiosity is cultivated through rich questioning, deep dialogue, and tasks that require independent thought and intellectual risk-taking.

## E. Responsive Teaching
- Teachers use frequent, low-stakes formative assessment, including questioning and retrieval practice to check for understanding.
- Feedback is targeted, timely and actionable, helping students' close gaps and deepen their understanding.  This is further explored in our feedback policy.
- Misconceptions are anticipated and addressed in real time, and lesson planning is responsive to students' needs and prior knowledge.
- Careful assessment that shows exactly what the students starting points are is key in making sure the balance between challenge and support ensures they are able to learn independently over time.
- We apply the graduated approach and see this as an essential process to providing increasingly intensive support as needed, and monitoring progress.
- Courage is modelled and encouraged — we support students to learn from mistakes and approach challenges with determination and resilience.

These strategies support all of our students, including those who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs.

## 3. Roles and Responsibilities
All Teachers will:
- Uphold the teacher standards to ensure high quality education and ethical conduct.
- Deliver lessons aligned to our curriculum intent and the five core principles.
- Uphold high expectations for scholarship, behaviour, and engagement.
- Plan for cognitive challenge, responsive feedback, and inclusive participation.
- Embody and model the values of curiosity, compassion, and courage in classroom interactions.

- Follow expectations for lesson routines (do now, start and end routines), whilst maintaining the autonomy beyond this that enables adaptive practice.
- Set meaningful homework aligned with both our Homework Charter and feedforward policy.
- Communicate effectively with relevant stakeholders, encouraging a culture of co-production.

Heads of Department will:
- Ensure curriculum is coherent, ambitious, and sequenced.
- Support subject-specific pedagogy aligned to whole-school principles.
- Monitor teaching and learning through lesson visits, learning walks, book looks, and student voice.
- Lead collaborative planning, moderation, and CPD within departments.
- Seek support through internal processes such as working with the Lead Practitioner Team.
- Communicate effectively with relevant stakeholders, encouraging a culture of co-production.
- Collaborate with other middle and senior leaders to promote effective practice and high standards.

Directors of Faculty and other Senior Leaders will:
- Provide clear direction, support and professional development to embed this policy.
- Monitor impact through a balance of quantitative and qualitative evidence.
- Ensure teaching and learning remain a central focus in school improvement.
- Communicate effectively with relevant stakeholders, encouraging a culture of co-production.

## 4. Professional Development and Culture
We are a school committed to professional growth. Our CPD programme is designed to develop expertise in:
- Curriculum and subject knowledge
- Evidence-based pedagogical practices
- Instructional coaching and deliberate practice through our CPD triads

All staff are part of a culture where reflection, collaboration and continual improvement are expected and supported. We also encourage opportunities to be outward facing, as we value the importance of working in partnership with other schools.

## 5. Evaluation and Impact
This policy will be reviewed based on:
- Feedback from Academic Board
- Student outcomes and progress
- Lesson visits and learning walks
- Staff and student feedback
- External reviews and quality assurance

Impact is judged not only on academic data, but also on the depth of thinking, quality of student work, and the ambition and inclusivity of classroom practice.

## 6. Use of AI and EdTech

Teaching staff may use AI and EdTech to support teaching and learning, particularly as part of adaptive practice, inclusive design and to minimise teacher workload. AI and EdTech has the potential to provide motivation and improve learning outcomes. However, teaching staff must maintain professional curiosity, integrity and consider the following:

- Whether the EdTech tool is pedagogically valid i.e. intended use should be specified and have clear benefits that outweigh the risks. Clear considerations as to how the approach will improve teaching and learning should be explored in depth.
- Students should only be using generative AI with appropriate safeguards in place, such as close supervision and the use of tools with safety and filtering and monitoring features.
- Compliance with regulations including GDPR.
- Mindful considerations for academic integrity and validity
- Ensure that the approach is focused on long term gains, rather than short term solutions.

## 7. Conclusion

Teaching and learning at our school is more than the delivery of content — it is the creation of a culture of scholarship rooted in knowledge, shaped by compassion, and driven by courage and curiosity. Through consistent and ambitious teaching, we aim to give every student the opportunity to succeed, think deeply, and contribute meaningfully to the world beyond school.

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