



AYLESBURY
GRAMMAR SCHOOL
Founded 1598

LEARNING & TEACHING POLICY

This policy is updated and approved by the Governing Body every three years

This version was approved September 2021

The next update will be due by September 2024

SIGNED: _____

Richard Williams (Chair of Governors)



LEARNING & TEACHING POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At Aylesbury Grammar School we place learning at the centre of all we do. To be an exceptional and successful school we appreciate the need to have a shared vision of key habits and characteristics that will define effective learners (the AGS Learner). Students, staff and parents must be aware of the role they play in enabling and supporting high quality learning at AGS.
- 1.2 Learning and Teaching at AGS will promote students' intellectual and emotional character development and thus prepare them for the challenges, opportunities and responsibilities of higher education, employment and adult life. By nurturing their character, we enable students to define for themselves their place in the world.
- 1.3 The majority of impact will come as a result of classroom based learning and associated home learning. However the wider curriculum, including assemblies, visiting speakers, activity days, visits, clubs, sporting and artistic activities are important in providing students with a variety of learning experiences which increase their awareness of learning as a life skill beyond school and help prepare them to become the leaders of tomorrow.
- 1.4 By ensuring our curriculum is broad and well matched to students' abilities and interests and by delivering teaching that is challenging and inspiring, we will provide the platform for our students to excel and develop into respectful and aspirational members of society.

2. The AGS Learner

- 2.1 Feedback and discussions involving Students, Staff and Parents have identified the following skills and characteristics that are key to establishing the AGS Learner:

Ownership	Students who take ownership understand the global world and their responsibility within it. They take care of themselves, respect others and show compassion to those around them. They value equality, diversity, sustainability.
Motivation	Motivated students commit to their aspirations and understand how to be successful through learning. Despite encountering challenges along the way, they demonstrate a hunger to learn and to be inspired.
Resilience	Resilience is the emotional strength not to give up in the face of challenge. In order to advance, resilient students are adaptable and accept that sometimes they need to reflect and change direction in order to take their learning forwards.
Innovation	Innovators embrace curiosity and discovery as they seek to apply knowledge in fresh ways. They enjoy the freedom to imagine what is possible.
Courage	Brave students find the inner strength to create their own path, admitting to self-doubt and reaching out to others to give and accept help. They learn from their mistakes and accept this as a key part of learning, making greater progress as a result.

- 2.2 It is important that all students are fully aware of the above and how they can plan and evaluate their learning to develop into successful learners. Lessons and Personal Development sessions include activities that will support the growth of these key skills. Guidance to parents in order to enable them to effectively support their child. This is achieved through regular and positive communication between all groups.

3. Whole School Literacy

- 3.1 Teaching literacy is the responsibility of all teachers across every subject. Whilst literacy does not look the same in each subject, reading remains the primary means for gaining knowledge; writing the primary means of assessment.
- 3.2 Within the context of the school, we understand that our students make greater gains in the curriculum when they read around subjects, write fluently in the style appropriate for the specialism, and discuss ideas in an articulate and engaging manner. Providing a literacy-rich environment supports students in the classroom in every subject, in their home learning and also in their endeavours – academic and otherwise – beyond AGS.
- 3.3 We also acknowledge that a portion of our students find the curriculum at AGS challenging. For those individuals, the literacy strategy offers support. We narrow the gap regarding vocabulary and reading, grow students' cultural capital and hone their skills and confidence to communicate with those around them.

4. Digital learning

- 4.1 Digital learning is integral to whole school Learning & Teaching and is an important aspect of effective classroom practice and the development of character.
- 4.2 There are many benefits of using technology, in and out of the classroom, that can enhance teaching in all subject areas and therefore aid student learning such as:
- Improved engagement and participation
 - Increased opportunities for both personalised and collaborative learning
 - Greater ability to research and explore ideas
 - Allowing for more immediate teacher monitoring and feedback
 - Development of skills needed for future life
- 4.3 Staff will be given training on the effective use of technology for learning and in addition staff can seek support from the Digital Learning Leaders.
- 4.4 As part of their approach to effective learning and teaching, each department will have a list of regularly updated digital resources and platforms which support learning.

5. Inclusion (also see SEND Policy)

- 5.1 The aim of Aylesbury Grammar School is to deliver high quality education that enables every student to achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes.
- 5.2 Students differ in their natural ability and in the ways in which they best access learning.
- 5.3 Details regarding learning needs and challenges for students are shared with all staff who then in turn can adapt lessons and resources to ensure that learning can be suitably accessed by all. Information on individual students is available to all staff on the SEND report (via iSams) and in addition there is a strategy bank with ideas to support the most common SEND needs.

- 5.4 Staff are familiar with the abilities and needs of their students to ensure that learning can be differentiated – not necessarily involving a range of different activities but planning for effective use of activities that can suitably challenge students of all ability. High quality inclusive teaching (known as Quality First Teaching) is always our first step in responding to students with SEND.
- 5.5 Some students will need extra guidance from staff and parents to help them manage their own learning. This should be supportive but must not result in students becoming less independent and less able to take ownership over their progress.

6. Home Learning (also see Assessment and Feedback policy)

- 6.1 Home learning is an important factor in supporting the development of the AGS Learner and tasks should enable students to embed, improve, develop, extend or apply their learning.
- 6.2 Tasks set should support in-class learning, allow students to research ideas and prepare for future learning, revise and review key concepts and develop effective approaches for independent study.
- 6.3 Each subject area provides appropriate and challenging tasks, checks and monitors progress, provides feedback and ensures that opportunities for reflection and acting upon feedback are included in lesson time.
- 6.4 Home learning tasks will:
- Build on or support in-class learning
 - Provide suitable challenge for students
 - Be acknowledged or marked
 - Include opportunities for feedback and reflection

7. Assessment and Feedback (also see Assessment and Feedback policy)

- 7.1 It is vital that students take ownership and are able to manage their own learning. However, staff have a key role in providing effective feedback to allow students to develop into independent, confident and self-aware learners.
- 7.2 Feedback from staff can take several forms including informal verbal comments in lessons, responses to questions and answers, written comments on marked learning, results (grades or comments) on assessments, verbal feedback at parents' evenings, report grades and comments.
- 7.3 Feedback is effective when:
- It is clearly linked to developing students' knowledge and skills
 - It reduces the gap between current and desired outcome
 - It provides challenging and specific goals for the student to act on
 - Time is built into lessons to allow students to reflect and act upon the feedback
 - It allows students to redraft their own learning
 - It is clear and given a short while after the learning has taken place
 - It is motivating and supportive to students, rewarding effort and strategy not innate ability
 - It forms a positive two way process between student and teacher
 - It results in more effort, thought and time for learners than teachers
- 7.4 Across the school there are minimum expectations regarding written feedback:
- All students must receive at least one piece of high quality feedback each half term – this is likely to be more frequent in core subjects or in higher Key Stages and in exceptional circumstances this may not always be possible. This feedback should inform the students of how they are progressing and what they need to do to improve. Evidence of this feedback

will take a variety of forms, but there must be an opportunity for the students to provide evidence of acting upon the feedback so as to progress their learning

- Some marking may be carried out by students themselves or by peers as this can further inform students of their progress as well as aiding collaboration
- Some marking may be cursory and simply recognise the completion of notes.
- Not all learning needs to be marked

7.5 Each department area will have additional guidance and can provide examples and advice to staff covering effective strategies for effective learning and feedback, which will be regularly reviewed.

8. Characteristics of high quality, personalised learning and teaching

8.1 Teaching excellence is a universal characteristic of high achieving schools. Outstanding learning and teaching is defined as that which leads to improved student achievement. At AGS teachers take responsibility for improving teaching through appropriate professional learning, enabling the following:

- All students to make sustained progress which leads to outstanding achievement.
- Learners are motivated, challenged and engaged by their learning and with the support of teachers are committed to develop into successful learners.
- Excellent subject knowledge and subject pedagogy go hand in hand to respond and adapt to the learning needs of all students.
- Staff have consistently high expectations of all students. Higher order, challenging and effective questioning, lateral and critical thinking, assessment and feedback are employed and their impact measured against student performance.
- Teachers extend and enrich their students beyond national specifications and guidelines to ensure engagement and aspiration in learning.
- Teachers use technology effectively, in and out of the classroom, to improve and enhance the learning experience
- Teachers are given opportunities for sustained professional learning
- Teachers act as role model learners and actively seek learning opportunities in order to develop their own practice (also see 11. Research)
- Teachers promote high standards of literacy, oracy and Standard English whatever their specialist subject

9. Curriculum

9.1 Our uncompromised curriculum is designed to offer students experiences which develop their character, knowledge and understanding. In addition, students are challenged to learn and achieve outside of their comfort zone.

9.2 Each subject area has a departmental handbook which provides details of how schemes of work are designed to ensure effective student learning and progress. Subject specific guidance is given to staff relating to the development of the AGS Learner, including examples of strategies and resources which can be used with classes.

9.3 The sharing of good practice between subject staff is encouraged as an effective way of supporting staff development and is a regular feature of formal and informal meetings.

9.4 Each subject area will provide a wide-ranging curriculum which promotes equality, diversity and inclusion, challenging stereotypes and celebrating contributions from all communities.

10. Wider Curriculum Opportunities

- 10.1 Students are provided with safe experiences that link learning in class to the wider world. There are limitations of the classroom environment and we have a responsibility to ensure that students are equipped with the character, skills and knowledge that they will need after leaving formal education.
- 10.2 Each department provides opportunities to enhance the enjoyment, engagement and motivation of learning in their area and therefore positively contribute to the AGS Learner, including enrichment in and out of lessons.
- 10.3 Planning of visits includes details of the learning and development benefits to students. In addition, after visits have taken place, staff evaluate the effectiveness using the following to ensure that improvements can be made to any future activities:
- Review of whether the visit successfully met the initial aims, completed by the visit leader
 - Formal and informal student feedback focussing on the impact of subject learning and the development of the AGS learner
 - Formal and informal staff feedback focussing on the impact of subject learning and the development of the AGS learner
- 10.4 Although it is not always possible to measure or evidence the impact of visits on learning development, each department and extra-curricular area will regularly review their activities and visits.

11. Research

- 11.1 AGS keeps abreast of educational research on effective learning. In particular, evidence summaries and guidance reports from the Education Endowment Foundation and research from the Chartered College of Teaching are recognised as having value to developing learning at AGS. Staff, parents and students will be able to access information on such research and how this supports the AGS Learner through the School's publication of Flagship, the journal for evidence-engaged practice, the AGS Learner section of the school website, staff and student forums and other learning links via the school website. The Assistant Headteacher (Professional Learning) monitors the latest research on learning and character development. In addition, membership of groups such as the Association for Character Education, Challenge Partners network, the International Boys' Schools Coalition and Boys' Academic State Schools help to ensure that the school can be aware of and at the forefront of the latest research projects.
- 11.2 The improvement of learning and teaching to improve student outcomes forms the key focus of internal and external staff training. All staff reflect upon and evaluate any training opportunities for their effectiveness in promoting the development of the AGS Learner.

12. Roles, Responsibility and Accountability

- 12.1 All members of the Aylesbury Grammar School community play an important role in promoting exceptional learning and the development of the AGS Learner.
- 12.2 The Governing body is responsible for approving, reviewing and supporting this policy.
- 12.3 The Headmaster, working with the leadership team, is responsible for ensuring that:
- This policy is implemented across the school.
 - The curriculum meets legal requirements.
 - Learning and teaching are of the highest standard possible.
 - Appropriate monitoring and evaluation are in place.

- 12.4 Heads of Department are responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented in their subject area. This will be managed through the annual departmental self-evaluation process and will be supported by their team of staff.
- 12.5 Teaching staff are responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented with their classes and for being aware of whole school and subject level guidance on all aspects of learning and teaching.
- 12.6 All staff are responsible for supporting, cooperating with and encouraging their colleagues and students to promote outstanding learning. Professional learning and support for staff will be managed through the annual appraisal system.
- 12.7 Heads of Year are responsible for ensuring that the key messages in this policy are shared in assemblies. They are responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the delivery of Personal Development sessions in their year group and supporting Form tutors where required. Additionally, they are responsible for monitoring the progress of students in their year group, in line with internal and external targets and supporting those at risk of underachievement.
- 12.8 Heads of House are responsible for ensuring that the key messages in this policy are shared through assemblies as well as monitoring the involvement and engagement of students, specifically in the wider curriculum and supporting and encouraging those who are not gaining the full benefit of learning experiences outside of the curriculum.
- 12.9 Form tutors are responsible for ensuring that the key messages in this policy are shared during PSHE and Personal Development sessions. Additionally, they are responsible for providing individual support to students through target setting discussions and mentoring.
- 12.10 Students are responsible for being well prepared for their learning and acting upon guidance aimed to improve their skills in all aspects of the AGS Learner.
- 12.11 Parents/Carers are responsible for supporting their children in their studies and developments in all aspects of the AGS Learner. The school supports parents in this role through effective parental engagement and communication.

13. Monitoring and Evaluation

- 13.1 In order to monitor learning and teaching, a range of indicators are used, including the following:
- Examination results: analysed by subject area, analysed for value added (MIDYIS, YELLIS, ALIS), compared with similar schools
 - Destinations of school leavers
 - Annual departmental self-evaluation reports
 - Observations of learning and teaching
 - Student engagement
 - Parental engagement
 - Reports to the Governing Body
 - Individual student indicators: progress grades, internal exam results

14. Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body every three years.