

Snowfields Academy Teaching & Learning Policy

September 2023

Our Ethos

Our curriculum offers all students a broad, rich and balanced range of subjects, lessons and learning. At Snowfields everything is underpinned by the core moral drive to ensure that students leave us with all of the necessary knowledge, skills and attributes to successfully transition to their next stages of learning and life. Currently The Office for National Statistics (ONS) shows “just 22% of autistic adults are in any kind of employment.”

(www.autism.org.uk). We aim to challenge this figure by supporting all of our students to leave Snowfields with all of the necessary skills, knowledge and attributes to successfully contribute to society. Our curriculum not only teaches core knowledge but also develops the learner themselves. We challenge young people to become resilient and independent critical thinkers, and ultimately find joy in learning. Everything at Snowfields is underpinned by our five Core Values. Our goal is to provide all students with the skills and qualities in order to fulfil and live each of these values; hard working, safe, communicative, kind and ultimately happy individuals.

To learn more about our Ethos and the Snowfields IB curriculum please see our curriculum statement on our website.

Teaching and learning

Our principles:

- Every student, irrespective of starting point or individual characteristics, will be provided full and unimpeded access to the curriculum.
- Every student, irrespective of their starting point, will be provided an opportunity to learn rich content maximising/facilitating a broad choice when moving to the next stage in their education, training or employment.

Examination results or qualifications are the outcome of, not the motivation for, highly effective teaching and learning.

- Teaching will provide every student with a deep and broad knowledge of all subjects they study, so that they may work towards mastery of those subjects.
- Teaching will provide maximum possible opportunities to learn a well-designed curriculum.
- All teachers will draw on evidence based practice to secure their pedagogical knowledge against the teaching standards.
- Teaching will be monitored routinely against the teaching standards and teachers will be provided with feedback that supports them in applying their pedagogical knowledge in the classroom environment.
- Every teacher, irrespective of their experience, is a learner and is afforded the opportunity to enhance their practice.

Aim:

To ensure that high quality teaching is being delivered so that pupils are learning and acquiring knowledge so that they can develop the intellectual, personal, emotional and social skills to live well with their autism and lead meaningful and purposeful adult lives.

This will be achieved by:

- Developing knowledgeable students via lessons that meet the needs and aspirations of students;
- Establishing an agreed range of practices to guarantee a consistent approach towards teaching and learning - *The Snowfields Standards*
- Involving all staff in developing and improving the quality of learning and teaching;
- Providing all staff with developmental opportunities to extend and enhance their tautology of teaching and content knowledge.
- Ensuring that all staff are able to plan for and deliver skills beyond their subject specialism to incorporate cross curricular initiatives and teaching of reading, Literacy, Oracy, Numeracy and International mindedness;
- Identifying students' achievement through a range of assessment approaches and using rigorous monitoring to plan appropriate interventions to enhance their progress.

Academy Expectations

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will:

- Create and maintain an environment and code of behaviour which promote and secure good teaching, effective learning, high standards of achievement; good behaviour and discipline;
- Determine, organise and implement a full, broad and balanced curriculum;
- Ensure that effective and appropriate support and challenge is available and planned for all students;
- Ensure that all staff have access to high quality CPD to improve the quality of provision through all subject areas;
- Involve all staff in rigorous Monitoring, Evaluation and Review of the quality of teaching and learning as well as achievement of all students.
- Promote positive strategies which encourage respect for all members of the Academy community;
- Develop links with the community, including business and industry in order to extend the curriculum, deliver highly innovative enterprise initiatives, and to enhance the learning and teaching;
- Create and maintain an effective partnership with parents and carers to support and improve students' achievement, personal development and well-being;
- Ensure regular celebration of student achievement – sporting, cultural and academic.

Directors of Learning (DoL)/Lead Teachers will:

- Have in place clearly differentiated long, medium and short term plans and associated schemes of work which reflect whole school priorities.
- Lead the department by example and set high standards;
- Set learning and teaching priorities and targets for the department within the context of the academy improvement plan;
- Rigorously implement the programme for Monitoring, Evaluation and Review within their department;
- Be accountable for the standards of learning and teaching within their department.
- Participate in appropriate CPD and disseminate information to staff efficiently, effectively and promptly;
- Identify professional development requirements within the department and utilise subject area time to address appropriately to develop the standard of teaching and learning;

Teachers are required to:

- Plan effectively and deliver lessons appropriate for every individual within the teaching group, ensuring support and challenge as appropriate, incorporating Snowfield Values and Standards.
- Create a secure, stimulating and enterprising classroom climate that will motivate students to learn and to perform to the best of their ability;
- Support students in their learning and help them to become confident, independent and resilient learners.
- Provide opportunities for students to carry out regular self and peer assessment.
- Monitor students' progress through frequent formal and informal written and oral feedback and maintain effective records. Clear and detailed teacher feedback should be fully compliant with the marking and assessment policy. For more information on the [Snowfields Marking Assessment and Feedback policy](#).
- Ensure that assessment information, seating plan and any other documentation about each class is well organised and accessible in the classroom and/or google drive
- Follow the whole school Behaviour Policy consistently and follow/contribute to individual students' Behaviour Support Plans (BSPs). Teachers are also prepared to offer students regulation time with the support of Teaching Assistants

Support Staff (Teaching Assistants) are required to:

- Work collaboratively with the class teacher in planning for learning and teaching;
- Support students in specific aspects of their learning as agreed with the class teacher.
 - Provide meaningful and impactful support and feedback to extend and challenge learners.
 - Contribute to dynamic and in book assessment, marking or feedback to ensure their support or involvement in learning is disseminated and articulated within pupils' work books and/or virtual classrooms.
 - Follow teacher direction to lead small groups or individuals
 - Access relevant resources or support materials shared by the subject teacher.

- Access relevant resources and support materials to support students to regulate, build relationships and reflect (Subject Specific Google classrooms containing resources are available to staff)
- Support students to access regulation and sensory regulation activities that facilitate a student's ability to access their learning.

Students are expected to:

- Aim to achieve goals and meet targets and respect the right of others to do the same
- Take responsibility for their own learning.
- Actively participate in lessons, contributing to class/ pair/ group discussions and tasks in a mature and focused manner
- Prepare appropriately for each lesson and maintain high expectations of themselves.
- Have the correct equipment needed to learn
- Respect diversity within the classroom.

Parents and Carers are expected to:

- Work in partnership with the Snowfields in all aspects of their children's education;
- Support Academy initiatives which involve collaborative working to raise student achievement;
- Encourage and support their child to work to meet their potential;
- Attend consultative evenings or meetings to discuss student progress;
- Ensure their child is equipped to learn.

Procedures

Planning:

- All lessons should be planned carefully and be part of an overall scheme of work that is accessible to all other teaching staff and senior leaders.
- Long term and medium/ short term templates are to be used for planning in every subject area, for year 7, 8 and 9 teachers should be following the Snowfields MYP unit plans;
- When planning, all teaching staff should take account of the 'non-negotiables' in The Snowfields Standards.

- Lesson planning should demonstrate how the lessons will build on student recall, current knowledge, understanding and skills so that sustained progress can be made;
- Activities and tasks should be planned to reflect a well-balanced range of activities and to include a range of teaching and learning styles accommodating the individual needs of students;
- There should be a clear framework for assessment throughout lessons
- Lessons should be challenging and be differentiated to take into account learning needs of the students within the classroom and assessment data must be used to plan effectively to support and challenge every learner

Learning Environment:

- All teaching staff should take account of The Snowfields Standards;
- All classes must have a seating plan which should be followed in the lesson. Teachers work alongside TAs, the Therapy Team, SLT and parents to ensure seating plans are as manageable and appropriate as possible for students.
- Ensure that there is a positive and purposeful learning environment characterised by high teacher and learner expectations;
- Ensure that there are high quality displays in the classroom that reinforce expectations and provide inspiration and support for students during lessons;
- Display exemplar work around the classroom or the Academy;
- Make sure the classroom is well organised and tidy;
- The Snowfields Standards and Snowfields Behaviour Chart will be on display and should be referred to in every lesson.

At the start of each lesson:

- The teacher must be at the door to welcome the students into the room in an orderly fashion.
- The teacher should engage students' interest with a warm up or starter activity - 'Do it Now'. This could take the form of a quiz testing prior learning, a question related to the learning within the lesson, or a Think - but this must be linked to the recall of knowledge linked with the Knowledge Organiser for that module.
- A register must be taken for each lesson whilst students are attempting the 'Do it Now' activity;

Personalised Independent Learning:

- The lesson should use time well and be structured with appropriate pace and challenge.

- Learning questions and lesson objectives and outcomes should be shared with, and understood by the students;
- A balance should be achieved between whole class interaction, class teaching, individual work, group work, testing and assessment;
- Allow time for questions and thoughtful answers (factual, conceptual and debatable);
- Allow time for 'live marking'.
- Provide opportunities for reflection so that students are able to self and peer assess, thus developing independence;
- Praise and the utilisation of the behaviour chart to award points should be used, wherever possible, for achievement and effort;
- Build enjoyment into a lesson; the teacher should let love for the subject and personal enjoyment of learning shine to harness the enthusiasm of the students.

At the end of the lesson:

- A review of what students have learnt should take place, check learning against outcomes shared at the beginning of the lesson;
- Give praise to the class as a whole and reflect on the successes within the behaviour chart;
- Establish an orderly end to the lesson before students are dismissed;

Behaviour for Learning:

- Teachers must take account of The Snowfields Standards;
- Students must see that if they disrupt learning there will be a consequence;
- The teacher must follow the stages of the academy's behaviour system;
- Where a student settles the teacher should make sure praise is given for their work as soon as is practically possible;
- Where a student reaches red the teacher must be prepared to follow up with a meeting and/or sanction. It is very important to ensure there is a conclusion with the member of staff concerned, although line managers/SLT may be required to support in this;
- If a student is temporarily removed from the lesson the classroom teacher remains responsible for that student's learning. The teacher must ensure that the student is assigned appropriate work and that this work is marked alongside other students in the group.
- Teachers should use positive recognition as often as possible and foster participation through sensitive and productive handling of students' mistakes as this will boost self-esteem;

Blended Learning:

At Snowfields, we have the following expectations for facilitating Blended Learning:

- Every physical classroom should have a corresponding virtual classroom;
- All pupils should have access to a Chromebook;
- Both colleges should appoint digital champion(s), appropriately qualified to take on the role to promote and embed the use of technology in the classroom;
- All teachers and leaders should use Google tools and complete Google Educator Level 1 certification;
- All teaching assistants should be working towards Google Level 1 certification;
- Resources shared with pupils in the virtual classroom should be created using Google tools where possible and all extracts from texts should meet copyright laws and expectations.

Chromebooks will not be a substitute for exercise books and will be used when appropriate to support learning both in the classroom and at home. If there are tools from the Google Workspace that enhance and support learning, these will be utilised at the appropriate times.

Pupils will not necessarily use them for the entirety of a lesson or even in every lesson, but they will be used when appropriate to enhance learning in the classroom. We continue to prioritise knowledge acquisition and understand that without knowledge, the ability to find and select further information is limited. We teach knowledge explicitly alongside the skills to appraise the validity of sources of information. We want our pupils to question, justify, compare and evaluate.

Pupils will be expected to agree to the Acceptable Usage Policy upon receipt of their Chromebook, and follow it at all times. .

Marking & Feedback

Key Expectations:

- Marking within exercise books and on students' work should be completed inline with the Whole School Book Presentation and Marking Rationale.
- All Middle Leaders must ensure that all assessment procedures are integrated into Schemes of Work and are meaningful, attainable and

consistent. Every teacher should be aware of the assessment at the start of each module.

- Work should be marked against SFA subject criteria. Students should be familiar with the criteria and be able to articulate their next steps.
- Students will carry out all self-assessment in green pen, this includes any corrections made within lessons.
- Please refer to the [Marking, Assessment and Feedback Policy](#) for further details.

Quality Assurance and Development:

As part of their induction all teachers new to Snowfields Academy are assigned a mentor to support their professional development.

Quality Assurance for all teachers:

- Formal observations will be carried out by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), Lead Practitioners and DoL's/Co-ordinators during modules 1, 3, and 5.
- Formal observation cycles are clearly marked on the academy calendar. Information regarding the focus of the observations i.e. academy priority areas, year groups or specific student groups will be shared to staff in advance;
- Teachers are to be aware that formal observations will be undertaken using the LAT Teaching and [Learning Competencies Framework](#) Every observer should plan to hold a developmental discussion within 48r hours of the observation;
- Observation data is stored centrally and monitored by SLT;
- Staff who are deemed 'not yet effective' or 'significant improvement required' during the first formal observation of the year will receive mentoring by a Lead Practitioner and an informal plan will be put in place to support that member of staff.
- Continued under-performance could result in the formal capability process being instigated.
- Opportunities for staff to develop their practice are clearly evident in the CPD schedule;
- Opportunities for teachers to develop their pedagogy via the Leigh Academies Trust are encouraged and can be accessed through various providers;
- ECTs have a specified member of staff who coordinates their placements;
- Book scrutiny and monitoring will be regularly undertaken by SLT, DoLs and Co-ordinators;

- Teachers will provide cover resources for planned absence (for example: external CPD, planned hospital appointment etc);
- Opportunities to share best practice are available via CPD and briefings throughout the academic year.

The Leigh Academies Trust Teaching and Learning Competencies Framework
 The Teaching and Learning Competencies Framework is designed to support great teaching that leads to great outcomes for students. The focus is on evidence based teaching, that has an impact on learning and knowledge acquisition, not educational myths. Challenge is at the heart of what we do. We aim to ‘teach to the top’ and scaffold appropriately. We must aim to take our students beyond ‘the test’ and get them to think, speak and write like experts in our subject domains; to do so we must not overload their working memory.

Teacher autonomy leads to wide variations in teaching practice with each teacher making his or her own decisions about how to interpret and teach the curriculum. The framework guides the teaching of the curriculum and its Assessment.

The Teaching and Learning Competencies Framework:

- Lays out specific expectations for pupil learning, and specific strategies to guide teaching and assessment
- Specifies working practices that support learning
- Ensures that teacher learning (CPD) is properly focussed on what has to be developed
- Draws from Berger’s Ethic of Excellence, Hattie’s Visible Learning for Teachers, Rosenshine’s Principles of Instruction and The Sutton Trust’s report What makes great teaching? Review of the Underpinning Research

The most effective lessons contain all or some of the following:

- Retrieval practice
- Direct instruction
- Questioning
- Modelling
- Structured Inquiry
- Guided deliberate practice leading to independent practice
- Feedback, review, edit and redraft

Snowfields Standards

The Snowfields Standard are the consistent lesson expectations, book presentation, slide format/font use and icons to support Executive Functioning. Teachers will consistently utilise these standards across the curriculum to lend consistency to each subject and ensure that students are prepared for learning.

The Snowfields Standards have been developed to:

- Ensure cross campus consistency
- Support student regulation
- Reduce cognitive load
- Support working memory
- Increase inhibition control
- Decrease anxiety
- Provide consistency across subjects

SMSC/RSE

In order to ensure that students are fully prepared for life beyond school we recognise the importance of developing the whole person, and have a strong emphasis on Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development. We provide a range of opportunities for personal development, through a structured Wellbeing programme and assemblies in addition to the formal curriculum. There is an expectation that teaching staff promote SMSC through their wellbeing sessions in the morning and afternoon as well as all their lessons. Calendared events and co-curricular opportunities such as charity work, community links and guest speakers support this important aspect of learning. The School Libraries has a variety of books available to both students and staff that focus on understanding and supporting neurodiversity, mental health, diversity and inclusion.

The Snowfields core values permeate through the colleges and there is a focus on each one during the school week.

Monday - Work Hard

Tuesday -Be Kind

Wednesday - Communicate

Thursday - Stay Safe

Friday Be Happy

British Values

We undertake regular audits of our provision to ensure that our students are given opportunities to reflect upon and understand the importance of democracy, the rule of law and respect for individuals and different cultures. We also take care to ensure that our students know how to stay safe, lead a healthy lifestyle (physically and mentally), and are aware of the dangers that exist, particularly via the Internet and social media.

Careers

Impartial and Independent Careers Education, Information and Guidance are a key component for students in understanding how their learning directly impacts on their future aspirations. We provide a range of opportunities for students to engage with employers, training providers and further education providers. All faculties endeavour to provide opportunities to link student learning to developing the skills that will prepare them effectively for the workplace and enable them to understand how their learning can be applied in a wider context. This includes developing opportunities for learning outside the classroom through visits to employers, the use of external speakers and, where appropriate, work experience.

At Snowfields Academy we have a detailed careers programme to meet all eight Gatsby benchmarks, which addresses the needs of each pupil and links curriculum learning to careers. All students have access to the UniFrog platform for careers development. We also provide pupils opportunities to meet with employers, employees, workplaces, further and higher education, and personal guidance, in order to fully comply with the measures.