



# Brentwood School

## SENIOR SCHOOL TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

### **Introduction**

At Brentwood School we actively promote the concept of lifelong learning and we believe that all staff, pupils and parents are participatory members of a multifaceted learning community committed to engendering creativity and inspiring critical thinking. We begin from the premise that learning should be an enriching and enjoyable experience for all. Through our teaching we endeavour to equip pupils with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to enable them to make informed choices about important aspects of their future lives. We believe that appropriate teaching and positive learning experiences help children to lead happy and rewarding lives and to fulfil their personal, social, creative, spiritual and intellectual potential. We are committed to educating the 'whole person' and embrace a holistic approach to nurturing and supporting each individual child. By consideration of concepts such as internationalism and environmentalism, pupils learn about the interconnectivity of discrete academic disciplines and develop a growing awareness and appreciation of the world beyond School. We promote the fundamentally British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

### **Aims and objectives**

We develop internationally minded young people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, strive to create a better and more peaceful world. As an IB World School, *The IB Learner Profile* underpins our Teaching and Learning Policy for it identifies ten key attributes which we work hard to help our pupils to develop during their time at School. We want our pupils to be:

**Inquirers:** We nurture curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We help pupils to develop the skills necessary to learn independently and with others. We inspire pupils to sustain their love of learning throughout their lives.

**Knowledgeable:** We promote the use of conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We encourage pupils to engage with ideas that have local and global significance.

**Thinkers:** We focus on developing critical and creative thinking skills in order to enable our pupils to analyse complex problems and to develop responses which demonstrate an ability to think laterally.

**Communicators:** The communication skills of all pupils are nurtured at every level throughout the School. Pupils are afforded many opportunities to work collaboratively and they are encouraged to listen carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.

**Principled:** Pupils are expected to act with integrity and honesty, and we expect them to demonstrate a strong sense of justice and respect for the dignity and rights of all people. They are taught to take responsibility for their actions and consequences.

**Open-minded:** By critically appreciating their own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others, pupils become increasingly receptive to new ideas and experiences.

**Caring:** Pupils are expected to show empathy, compassion and respect.

**Risk-takers:** Pupils are taught to approach uncertainty with forethought and determination and to work independently and co-operatively in order to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. They develop resourcefulness and resilience in the face of challenges and change.

**Balanced:** Pupils are taught to understand the importance of balancing different aspects of their lives – intellectual, physical, and emotional – to achieve well-being for themselves and others. They are encouraged to recognize their interdependence with other people and the world in which we all live.

**Reflective:** We encourage pupils to consider the world and their own ideas and experiences. We work to help them understand their own strengths and weaknesses in order to support their learning and personal development.

We believe that each individual pupil learns best in different ways. We provide a rich, varied, and appropriately differentiated learning environment that allows all children the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

### **Effective learning**

We acknowledge that people learn in a variety of different ways (e.g. visual, kinaesthetic, aural etc.) and we recognise the need to develop strategies that allow all pupils to learn in ways that best suit their own learning styles. We offer opportunities for pupils to learn in a variety of different ways. These include:

- structured investigations and the utilisation of lateral thinking for problem solving;
- independent research;
- individual/pair/group/whole class work;
- seminars/workshops/lectures
- asking and answering questions;
- use of ICT and digital media
- fieldwork, educational visits (both in the UK & overseas) to places of cultural, historical, scientific, geographical or religious interest;
- creative activities;

- debates, role-plays and oral presentations;
- designing and manufacturing objects;
- participation in athletic or physical activity.

We encourage pupils to take an increasing level of responsibility for their own learning as they progress up through the School. Pupils are expected to become actively engaged in all forms of assessment. Diagnostic and remedial assessment, framed in positive and constructive language, encourages all pupils to proactively reflect upon the steps that they need to take in order to make substantive progress. Much emphasis is placed upon developing the acquisitive intellectual skills necessary to become successful learners and this is reflected in our clear focus upon critical thinking and independent learning. We also encourage peer assessment with all pupils taking an active role in providing constructive advice to support future progress. Pupils work collaboratively with tutors to set personal academic targets and this constitutes an important aspect of the reporting process.

### **Effective teaching**

Teaching at Brentwood School motivates and inspires children whilst building upon their existing skills, knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. We use subject specific schemes of work to guide and inform our teaching and these detailed documents, which are responsive to curricular developments, clearly articulate the broad aims and objectives of each sequence of lessons or educational phase. Furthermore, these carefully differentiated schemes of work signpost opportunities for cross-curricular learning and the promotion of higher order learning skills.

We base our teaching on our knowledge of the pupils' current levels of attainment. Our prime focus is to develop further the knowledge, understanding and skills of all pupils. We strive to ensure that set tasks are appropriate to each pupil's level of ability. When planning work for children with special educational needs we give due regard to information provided by the learning support teachers. This includes those pupils who may be gifted or talented or have English as an additional language. We have high expectations of all pupils, and we encourage them to achieve the highest possible standard and to become the very best versions of themselves academically.

Our staff are expected to demonstrate excellent knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught and they routinely make good use of classroom resources in terms of quality, quantity and range. Clear learning objectives guide and inform the design of classroom tasks, the resources needed, and the most appropriate modes of assessment to be utilised. We regularly evaluate our teaching so that we can modify and improve through the sharing and implementation of new pedagogic and technological innovations. Through active engagement with external agencies and institutions and by means of a whole school, departmental, and personal approach to appraisal, INSET, and CDP, our teaching benefits from the sharing of good practice at all levels. The Director of Teaching and Learning leads this aspect of our provision and works in collaboration with the Deputy Head (Academic), Deputy Head (Staff & Development) and all heads of departments.

All our teachers reflect upon their relative professional strengths and weaknesses and they plan their professional development needs accordingly. We do all that we can to support our teachers in developing their skills, so that they can continually improve in terms of their practice. Teachers are given time to plan, prepare and assess lessons, and they are encouraged to observe others teaching as frequently as possible.

Our teachers place especial emphasis on the importance of constructing and nurturing positive and friendly relationships with pupils in their classes. We treat all children with kindness and respect. We treat them fairly and provide them with frequent opportunities to participate in class activities. All our teachers follow the school policy with regard to rewarding good work and promoting the highest standards of behaviour. We expect pupils to comply with the School and classroom rules that we have devised with the expressed purpose of ensuring optimum learning opportunities for all. We praise children for their efforts and, by so doing, we help to build positive attitudes towards school and learning in general. When children misbehave we consistently follow the guidelines for sanctions as outlined in our school behaviour and discipline policy.

We ensure that all tasks and activities that the pupils do are safe. When we plan to take pupils out of school, we carry out thorough risk assessments as appropriate.

We provide age appropriate careers guidance to pupils and this supports and guides them towards making informed subject choices at KS4 & KS5. Similarly, we guide and support pupils through the university application process (both in the UK and overseas) and provide information about apprenticeships, internships and fulltime employment. We are supported by a growing network of School alumni who provide contacts and opportunities for our pupils. Those applying for medicine/veterinary courses, or to Oxbridge or other prestigious institutions, benefit from a programme of enhanced support that includes seminars, CCT classes, tutorials and interview practice.

Our classrooms are attractive and dynamic learning environments with subject displays which celebrate the work completed by our pupils and illustrate/reflect the topics that they are studying.

We conduct all of our teaching in an atmosphere of trust and respect for all. We celebrate difference and promote equality, regardless of age, sexuality, gender, disability or faith. Similarly, throughout the curriculum we implicitly and explicitly promote fundamental British values such as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

### **The role of parents**

We believe that parents have a fundamentally important role to play in terms of actively nurturing, guiding and supporting their sons and daughters throughout their educational journeys. Excellent communication with parents underpins our success and we inform parents about what and how their children are learning by:

- sending regular diagnostic and remedial reports to parents in which we explain and celebrate the progress made by each child and clearly indicate what steps the child must take to improve further;
- holding parents' meetings to discuss pupils' progress and, if necessary, explain how parents can further support their children;
- making ourselves available to meet with parents. Parents and teachers routinely meet at the start or end of the school day to discuss a pupil's progress;
- ensuring that parents feel that teachers are approachable and communication with the school is effective;
- issuing a weekly newsletter for parents which also appears on our website;

- publishing and issuing detailed handbooks and curriculum booklets to help parents understand and appreciate teaching and learning within the school;
- providing meetings on such matters as internet safety to help their sons and daughters at home.

We believe that parents have the responsibility to support their sons and daughters and the school in implementing all school policies. We expect parents to:

- ensure that their sons and daughters have the best attendance record possible;
- ensure that their sons and daughters are equipped for school with the correct uniform and equipment;
- do their best to keep their child healthy and fit to attend school;
- inform school if there are matters outside of school that are likely to impact upon a pupil's performance or behaviour at school;
- promote a positive attitude towards school and learning in general;
- contact form tutors/subject teachers if they have any concerns or issues concerning their child's progress or welfare at school.

### **The expectations of pupils**

We expect pupils to:

- have the highest expectations of themselves in all aspects of School life;
- commit themselves to maintaining a positive work ethic and good behaviour
- ensure that they are punctual and well prepared for lessons;
- produce a quality of homework commensurate with their ability whilst ensuring deadlines are met;
- engage in independent learning to develop and extend knowledge and understanding beyond the confines of the curriculum
- complete work missed due to absence;
- revise rigorously and effectively for tests and examinations;
- work effectively by themselves, in paired or in group work in order to achieve their targets;
- be responsive in lessons and activities and demonstrate a commitment to answering questions orally;
- seek assistance when necessary;
- attend support sessions and commit to co-curricular activities.