



## Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy

### Mission Statement

St John Rigby College is a Catholic College dedicated to the education and development of the whole person and supporting all students to realise their full potential. In becoming an outstanding learning organisation SJR will have a strong sense of purpose and a commitment to shared values within a Christian community. We will provide a unique and challenging environment where every individual is valued, talents are recognised and nurtured, achievements are celebrated and dedication is rewarded. To achieve this as a community we will:

- Welcome all students who are happy to be educated within a Christian environment
- Value the uniqueness and dignity of each individual
- Provide the highest standards of teaching and learning
- All show a commitment to our work and the Christian values of the College
- Provide equality of opportunity, with mutual respect and positive encouragement
- Build and further develop local, national and international partnerships

Core values in daily life at St John Rigby College are expressed as:

- Genuine concern for others
- Support for and challenge of one another
- High standards and expectations
- Consistency and perseverance
- Recognition of talents, progress and achievements

### College Vision

To be an outstanding, inclusive Catholic sixth form college; valuing the individual, celebrating learning and raising aspirations.

### Strategic Objectives

The College's continuing strategic objectives are:

1. To embed a learning culture which improves the standards of student achievement, raises aspirations and promotes excellence across the full range of the College curriculum. We will focus on three key areas of outcomes for learners:
  - 1.1 *Improving the consistency of outcomes across all courses*
  - 1.2 *Raising student success rates and challenging all courses to exceed Sixth Form College national benchmarks*
  - 1.3 *Continuing to improve the proportion of students achieving high grades and achieving a positive value added score for all courses*
2. To widen student participation, in partnership with other providers, through the offer of a comprehensive range of high quality courses that meet the needs of our students and support developments and provision within partner high schools.
3. To work collaboratively with groups within the College's local and extended community.

4. To further develop the estate to provide an outstanding learning environment for the whole College community.
5. To sustain a culture where all staff are committed to SJR's core values, where continuous professional development is encouraged and organisational efficiency and effectiveness are achieved.
6. To maintain the College's financial stability in order to implement the College Development Plan.

### **Policy Statement:**

Effective teaching, learning and assessment is central to the vision and mission of St John Rigby College. It is our *raison d'être*. As identified in the most recent Ofsted inspection of the College in February 2017 in which the quality of teaching, learning and assessment was judged to be outstanding, inspectors found that, *'Teachers know their students' well and are committed to ensuring that they reach their full potential. Teachers' enthusiasm and passion for teaching and learning are infectious, motivating and challenge students to try their very best'*. This policy is a core component of the continued drive to raise educational standards at St John Rigby College and to bring the outcomes for learners on all courses to that of the best. The policy aims to:

- provide an overarching framework within which all teaching, learning, assessment and feedback activities at the College take place
- ensure a high quality teaching and learning experience for students of all abilities
- provide a framework of expectation for teaching, learning and assessment within which there is flexibility and scope for creativity
- raise attainment by increasing levels of student motivation, participation and independence
- ensure regular and effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching, learning, assessment and feedback
- develop the whole person and to enable our students to progress to their favoured career and become lifelong learners.

### **Eight Core Principles**

The College has identified eight Core Principles for successful teaching, learning and assessment. These Core Principles frame the College policy on Teaching, Learning and Assessment.

1. There is no ceiling to achievement.
2. Clarity is essential to allow students to fully access their chosen programmes of study.
3. Teachers must create and maintain a purposeful, safe learning environment. Teachers should develop positive relationships with students and be good role models in attendance, punctuality, preparedness and organisation
4. Lessons must be carefully planned and clearly structured and differentiated to meet the needs of all learners. Lessons should include a variety of learning activities and tasks which contribute to meeting the learning objectives.
5. Learning objectives that challenge each student and take their own learning forward must be shared explicitly with students and reviewed at the end of the lesson.
6. Effective formative and summative assessment in the light of learning objectives must be regularly undertaken.
7. High expectations are important, but to fulfil these high expectations students must be shown how to improve by their teachers.
8. Achievement must be recognised and celebrated. Underachievement must be challenged and addressed by teachers, not simply processed.

### **1. There is no ceiling to achievement.**

- Staff should aim to raise the aspirations of each individual regardless of GCSE point score or educational history to enable all to achieve the highest possible grade.
- We aim to provide the highest standards of teaching, learning and assessment to raise aspirations of our students and enable them progress to their favoured career and become lifelong learners. The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy considers ways in which the philosophy of this first Core Principle can be met.
- All teachers, through the use and promotion of the ASPIRE programme, should be encouraging students to have personal vision of 'aiming higher'.

### **2. Clarity is essential to allow students to fully access their chosen programmes of study.**

- Teachers should design and deliver schemes of work that address all aspects of the course syllabus/specification.
- Lessons should be planned to take into account, any learning difficulties and disabilities of students in the class.
- Lessons should, where appropriate, develop students':
  - communication, numeracy, literacy and employability skills
  - appreciation of equality and diversity, their awareness of stereotyping and ability to challenge stereotyping
  - understanding of safeguarding, extremism, radicalisation, and where possible the promotion of British values should be identified and integrated into the lesson
  - understanding of personal safety and welfare
- The register should be marked within the first 10 minutes to promote the importance of attendance and punctuality.

### **3. Teachers must create and maintain a purposeful, safe learning environment. Teachers should develop positive relationships with students and be good role models in attendance, punctuality, preparedness and organisation**

#### In lessons teachers should:

- Use and develop prior-learning activities and tasks in order to promote and build independence.
- Use and develop appropriate academic language and terminology.
- Make learning active and engaging by providing multiple short, differentiated tasks which enable students to deepen their understanding and knowledge and develop skills.
- Model activities and processes, making their thinking and decision-making explicit to students.
- Provide exemplar work so that students are aware of the sophistication of response expected.
- Provide appropriate levels of scaffolding to support students' learning.
- Use a variety of questioning techniques to probe and develop students' understanding.
- Promote active listening, inviting a range of different responses and building in time for reflection.
- Give constructive, positive feedback (both formative and summative as appropriate) on work in progress.
- Vary groupings and seating arrangements according to the task.
- Demonstrate flexibility in their approach and be prepared to deviate from plans where appropriate.
- Present lessons with clarity, enthusiasm and appropriate levels of pace.

#### During lessons students should:

- Work effectively and purposefully in a range of contexts.
- Come fully equipped and prepared to maximise the learning opportunity.
- Be prepared to share their learning and ideas in an atmosphere of trust.
- Ask questions where appropriate – of each other and the teacher.
- Support one another, working collaboratively, recognising that the contributions of all are valid.
- Undertake self-assessment or peer assessment with some confidence, becoming increasingly able to apply the criteria for success and to set appropriate targets for improvement.
- Know where to go for help and recognise that further progress can always be made.
- Access help and support through their teacher, personal tutor, and learning support.
- Be able to select appropriate learning resources to help develop their own learning.

- Work with increasing confidence and independence on the development of communication, numeracy, literacy and employability skills.
- Demonstrate a developing understanding of:
  - equality and diversity, and stereotyping
  - safeguarding, extremism and radicalisation
- Make increasing use of ICT to develop their learning, accessing a wide variety of sources and using appropriate methods to present their work.

**4. Lessons must be carefully planned and clearly structured and differentiated to meet the needs of all learners. Lessons should include a variety of learning activities and tasks which contribute to meeting the learning objectives.**

- The College does not require individual lesson plans for each lesson. However, teachers must be able to demonstrate effective planning through for example their TLA Teacher Planner or a detailed scheme of work.
- Assessment plans must be in place for all subjects and should follow the College Assessment Calendar.
- Lessons should have clear aims and objectives that are shared with students and demonstrate structure and challenge for all students.
- Objectives must be clearly linked to schemes of work which are reviewed / revised annually.
- Planning should allow for a variety of learning styles and provide opportunities for developing a wide range of thinking skills.
- Teachers should make use of all available student information e.g. GCSE average and MAG, English Initial Assessment results, study support plans, learning styles and previous assessment marks to set clear, realistic, yet challenging targets and to plan differentiated learning opportunities.
- Appropriate and stimulating resources should be organised prior to the lesson.
- Lessons should build on prior learning and ensure continuity and progression.
- Lessons should, wherever possible, actively develop employability skills.

**5. Learning objectives that challenge each student and take their own learning forward must be shared explicitly with students and reviewed at the end of the lesson.**

- The start of the lesson should have a clear focus, using activities that immediately engage the learner and which link back to prior learning.
- The expected learning outcomes and skills development should be shared with students, in the context of prior learning, to ensure they understand what they are doing and why.
- The success criteria by which the learning will be evaluated should be made explicit to students.
- Lesson objectives and outcomes should be reviewed at the end of lessons.
- At the end of lessons, students have the opportunity to identify their own progress and set themselves appropriate targets.
- The College bell marks the end of each lesson. Students should be working until the bell to ensure that teaching and learning time is maximised.

**6. Effective formative and summative assessment in the light of learning objectives must be regularly undertaken.**

- The College Assessment Calendar identifies whole College assessment dates and also details internal mock examination arrangements. The Assessment Calendar should be referenced when planning SOWs courses materials and assessment points.
- The nature and purpose of assessment may vary through the span of a course, for example at the start of the year it may be very different from that used towards the end of a two year programme. Staff should consider the purpose and nature of assessment at various points over the duration of a course.
- Assessment should relate to the criteria set up by the awarding body and has a clear understandable mark scheme. It should highlight what has been done well, using comments or signs that are consistent and understood by students.
- Where required, assessment should conform to awarding-body regulations.
- Assessment should be valid, accurate and fair, supported by standardisation (e.g. cross-marking) and/or by internal verification, as appropriate.
- Assessment should be carried out and returned as soon as practically possible, ideally within one week,

but for extended pieces of written work this should be no more than two weeks after the student submission deadline.

- Assessment should help students progress to more lengthy or complex tasks, key assessments or examinations.
- In addition to general assessment, all Assessment Checks should be set, marked and fed back to students in accordance with the College Assessment Calendar.
- Where possible, assessment strategies should support differentiation so that learners are challenged according to abilities, stages in learning and preferred learning styles.
- Assessment strategies should encourage students to judge the success of their own work and set themselves targets for their own improvement.
- The results of both formal and informal assessment should be recorded and inform future lesson preparation and planning.

Appendix A sets out expectations for regularity of assessment, record keeping and monitoring of assessment.

## **7. High expectations are important, but to fulfil these high expectations students must be shown how to improve by their teachers.**

- Feedback is defined as the process of communicating the outcomes of assessment activity, showing how the level of work compares with the relevant criteria and what needs to be done to improve.
- Students should receive regular developmental and motivational feedback in a variety of ways to enable them to progress.
- Frequent opportunities should be taken within lessons to provide immediate verbal feedback.
- Written feedback will normally include comments that recognise the strengths of a piece of work and identify targets for improvement in a constructive, personalised way.
- Feedback should enable students to act upon the advice they are given to improve their performance.

Students can expect that marking and feedback is:

- specific, clear and concisely written
- matched to individual needs and effectively critiques work and provides opportunities for re-drafting
- enabling the development of a growth mindset (see the work of Ron Berger and 'Austin's Butterfly')
- given in an appropriate medium, usually written
- provided in a timely fashion (see point 6 and Appendix A)
- clearly linked to learning outcomes / assessment criteria
- provided from the start of the course
- used to monitor progress in relation to their minimum acceptable grades
- relevant, useful and supportive
- supportive of equality of opportunity
- clear as to why marks/grades are allocated or withheld
- aiding future improvement by guiding subsequent action, exemplars and sources of information, as required
- related, where possible, to Study Support plans, Individual Learning Plans, personal targets and progress reviews
- providing an opportunity for self-analysis (e.g. on feedback sheet)
- provided in vocational or academic terms which are useful to the student
- enabling the correction of common mistakes and misconceptions, workings or calculations
- correcting spelling, punctuation, grammar or sentence structure or numerical errors. Appendix B details expectations for marking to develop literacy
- providing praise and recognition for what is done well, giving positive comments and areas for development on each student's script/feedback sheet.

## **8. Achievement must be recognised and celebrated. Underachievement must be challenged and addressed by teachers, not simply processed.**

- During lessons, teachers should provide opportunities for success for every student and seek frequent opportunities for praise.
- Reference to and use of the College's ASPIRE Programme should be commonplace in all lessons.
- Students should be supported to recognise their own strengths and also be encouraged to work on key

areas for development.

- College reward systems such as nominations for the ASPIRE Awards, use of positive pastoral logs and specific departmental awards, should be utilised wherever appropriate.
- Teachers should provide opportunities for progression that increase the level of conceptual challenge, the depth of understanding and the breadth of application of skills at all levels.
- Students should be stretched and challenged to develop higher order thinking skills.
- Homework tasks should be set to deepen, extend, or initiate learning and the group dynamics.
- Underachievement should be discussed with the student involved, the Head of Department and the Personal Tutor. Parents / Guardians should be involved at the earliest stage.

### **Teaching, Learning and Assessment Lead Practitioners**

In recognition of the importance of maintaining the highest standard of teaching, learning and assessment and supporting the successful implementation of the eight Core Principles, the College has invested in a dedicated team of Lead Practitioners. An outline of the purpose and role of a Lead Practitioner is outlined below and all teachers and departments are able to access the support they offer, including:

- a) To develop and implement staff development opportunities and strategies for effective teaching, learning and assessment.
- b) To provide effective coaching, mentoring and support to teaching staff across the curriculum to promote excellent teaching, learning and assessment.
- c) To conduct developmental lesson observations (non-graded lessons, supporting videoed lesson observations, peer observations) and coach staff on improvements to their current practice.
- d) To work with curriculum managers to identify priorities and implement actions designed to enhance the quality of learning across the College.
- e) To develop and promote teaching, learning and assessment resources in the College.
- f) To discuss and share strategies for learning, teaching and assessment with colleagues.
- g) To plan and offer bespoke INSET for whole staff and curriculum teams.

Lead Practitioners each have designated subject areas assigned to them. They will support and encourage shared good practice and will not make judgements. All teachers should see the role as an additional resource available to individuals and departments/subject teams.

### **Related Policies**

- Lesson Observation Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Examinations Procedures:
  - Verification / Moderation of Assessment
  - Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments
  - Appeals Procedure
  - Access Arrangements
- Excellence through Inclusion
- Equality and Diversity Action Plan
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy

St John Rigby College recognises the importance of clear, accurate and regular assessment, marking and feedback in supporting the education and personal development of students. In the most recent Ofsted inspection of the College in February 2017, inspectors noted that 'teachers assess students' work regularly. They provide concise and informative feedback, in line with the College's policy, to help students improve their work. Teachers have a very strong focus on the requirements of examinations and assessments and prepare students well through regular testing, formal assessments and homework.' In order to continue to provide outstanding teaching, learning and assessment to our students, this policy aims to provide a minimum expectation for all courses and informs the departmental assessment and marking policies.

#### **Regularity of assessment and feedback**

**Regular assessment** - Teachers are required to set an appropriate piece of assessed work each week. This could include:

- Preparation for a class test
- Marked and graded homework
- Homework that receives feedback
- Wider reading / research
- Assignment or coursework

**Substantial assessment** - More substantial pieces of work should be assessed against Awarding Body criteria and against minimum acceptable grades, in order to inform progress reviews. Assessment should be carried out and returned as soon as practically possible, ideally within one week, but for extended pieces of written work this should be no more than two weeks after the student submission deadline. For coursework and/or Btec assessment, this may vary depending on the assessment plan and the nature of the assessment.

**Assessment checks** - In addition to the weekly setting of assessment and in enabling students to receive regular assessment which is unseen and therefore in preparation for their externally set exams, all teachers are required to formally assess students in class under 'exam conditions'. These should take place in accordance with the College Assessment Calendar. The College Assessment Calendar indicates when whole College formal assessment points, progress review dates and internal mock examinations take place. The results of each assessment check point are recorded centrally and results of each are sent home. The Assessment Calendar will allow personal tutors, teaching staff, curriculum leaders, senior leaders and parents to gain an understanding of the progress each individual student is making over the duration of their course and enable effective interventions to take place.

#### **Records of assessment outcomes**

**Mark books** - There is a College requirement that all teaching staff maintain an accurate, current record of assessment outcomes for the students in their group/s. These marks should be kept in a mark book or the TLA Teacher Planner provided at the start of the year and/or on an agreed electronic spreadsheet/mark book and must be made available for checking by the Head of Department/Course Leader/Assistant Principal at any time. The College calendar identifies monthly "mark-book" checks.

**Class Trackers** - At the start of the academic year, teachers should download a 'Class Tracker' for each of their classes. The Class Trackers aim to identify students who may be 'at risk' of underachieving or not completing their course for a variety of reasons (lower GCSE point score, re-sitting GCSE mathematics or English, coming to College from a school that is 'out of area', initial assessment information etc.) The Class Trackers should also be used in pinpointing where high grade achievement should be expected and in enabling a focus to remain on the targets agreed in the Exam Report to Principal meetings at the start of the academic year. All Class Trackers should be accessible to the Head of Department / Course Leader and reviewed during monthly mark-book checks.

**Non-examined Assessments** - Records of coursework and non-examined assessment outcomes should follow the requirements set out by the awarding body and need to be located for ease of access within each teaching department. Teachers delivering Btec courses must use a unit tracker document that is accessible to the Head of Department / Course Leader and updated regularly. All Btec trackers should be placed on the 'G' drive and be appropriate and kept up-to-date at all times. All non-examined

assessment must be completed for final submission in enough time ahead of the applicable examination board final deadline. Please see the Examination Policy.

### Monitoring

Each Head of Department/Course Leader will monitor teachers' marking and written feedback through regular monitoring procedures such as work and file scrutiny, lesson observations, internal verification records, checking of student files, feedback from whole College reviews and student focus groups. Feedback will be given to teachers and support and monitoring will ensure any issues raised are acted upon appropriately and swiftly to reduce any possible impact to the progress of students.

The College Management Team will monitor written feedback and marking through whole College review, observations, learning walks, student focus groups and work and file scrutiny. Feedback will be given to Heads of Departments/Course Leaders. During line management meetings there will be a review on the findings by Assistant Principals with the HoD/CL and discussion on how issues are being tackled.

Should a teacher's standards of assessment, marking and feedback continue to be judged as being unacceptable, further support and monitoring will be provided, by the line manager, in line with the College's Capability Procedures. If standards continue to be unacceptable after this further support and monitoring, the Principal will consider invoking Stage 2 of the College's Capability Procedures.

### Appendix B: Marking to develop literacy

In order to develop students' literacy skills, and so improve achievement, it is important that all marked work is assessed for spelling, punctuation, grammar and structure and corrections made. To make this most effective all staff should respond to the following corrections for which a possible convention in marked work is shown below:

Mark	Meaning
Sp	Spelling error – ensure that you provide the correct spelling above or in the margin. Only correct the first 10 spelling errors on each piece of work.
C	Capital letter required.
//	New paragraph required here.
?	This sentence/section is confusing and needs explanation or revising.
Ø	Missing full-stop. Adapt for missing commas, apostrophes etc.
T	Incorrect tense.
G	Poor use of grammar.

Where students are struggling with sentence structure it may be necessary to model example sentences for them in written feedback. These modelled sentences should then be discussed with the individual to ensure understanding.

Other marking conventions:

Mark	Meaning
v	Indicates a good point /correct answer. This should also be related to the assessment criteria (e.g. A01, A02, P1, M3, D2 etc).
√v	Indicates a very good point /correct answer.
X	Indicates an incorrect point/incorrect answer.

If a whole page/piece of work is incorrect then the teacher may decide to stop marking, see the student individually and provide verbal support and feedback to ensure that the student's difficulty with this work is overcome.