

## **Bishop Walsh Catholic School**

### **Assessment and Feedback Policy**

**Ratified: June 2023**

This policy is designed to ensure a **consistent** and **effective** approach to Assessment and Feedback at Bishop Walsh and should be read in conjunction with our **Teaching & Learning Policy**.

The fundamental aim of this policy is to ensure that every member of the community achieves their **full potential**, and to assist parents in their God-given role as educators: *'Preach the Word; be ready in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage - with great patience and careful teaching.'* 2 Timothy 4:2

The responsibility of assessment and feedback lies with all members of staff and pupils in order to support our Catholic ethos in recognising the **unique dignity** of each individual and their needs. Pupils and parents also have a responsibility in ensuring that feedback is acted upon. At Bishop Walsh, we recognise that feedback is an essential aspect in **raising the attainment** of all students (Hattie in Ainsworth & Viegut 2006) and believe that all students have the right to receive regular feedback.

Our key principle regarding assessment and feedback is that our policy is **evidence-led** and rooted in research and best practice. We are particularly aware of the **'opportunity cost'** associated with feedback and assessment and have designed this policy to protect teacher wellbeing whilst maximising pupil outcomes.

#### **Policy Sections**

- A. What is teacher feedback?
- B. Key Principles for effective feedback
- C. Methods
- D. Assessment
- E. Expectations for Policy Implementation
- F. Professional Learning and Development

#### **A. What is teacher feedback?**

Feedback is 'information given by a teacher to pupil(s) about their performance that aims to improve learning.' (*Higgins S, et al*)

Feedback can:

- focus on different **content**;
- be delivered in different **methods**;
- be directed to different **people**; and
- be delivered at different **times**.

#### **Content**

The content of feedback may focus on:

- the particular task that a pupil has undertaken
- the underlying processes related to a specific subject: or

- a pupil's self-regulation.

## Methods

Feedback may be delivered via different methods:

- Verbally – this could be detailed conversation or quick verbal comment; or
- Written – this may be written comments, written marks, scores, or a combination

## People

Feedback may be directed towards different people, be that:

- to the whole class;
- to specific groups; or
- just to individuals

## Times

Feedback may be delivered at different times, be that:

- during a lesson
- immediately after a lesson; or
- sometime after a lesson

## **B. Key Principles for Effective Feedback**

'Rather than thinking about feedback as an isolated event, feedback is likely to be more effective if it is approached systematically.' (Dylan Wiliam)

Recent research (EEF June 2021:

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/feedback>) indicates three key principles to ensure consistent and effective feedback:

### **1. Lay the foundations for effective feedback**

The first task of the teacher, before feedback is delivered, is to provide effective **instruction**. In delivering effective teaching, teachers at Bishop Walsh:

- build on pupils' prior knowledge and experience;
- avoid overloading pupils' working memory by breaking down complex material into smaller steps;
- encourage the retention of learning by using repetition, practice, and retrieval of critical knowledge and skills;
- deliver a carefully sequenced curriculum which teaches essential concepts, knowledge, skills and principles;
- use powerful analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations, comparisons and demonstrations;
- are aware of common misconceptions and prepare strategies to counter them;
- plan effective lessons, making good use of modelling, explanations and scaffolds to support learning;
- adapt teaching in a responsive way to support struggling and excelling learners while maintaining high expectations for all; and

- provide pupils with tools and strategies to plan, monitor and evaluate their learning.

Another key component of effective instruction is embedding **formative assessment**. This means providing teaching that is **adaptive** to pupils' needs and using evidence about learning to **adjust instruction** to ensure that learning moves forwards.

This may be summarised in the five key strategies of formative assessment (Wiliam 2018):

1. Clarifying, sharing and understanding learning intentions and success criteria, e.g. showing models of high quality work
2. Eliciting evidence of learning, e.g. effective questioning and taking a no 'opt-out' approach
3. Providing feedback that moves learning forward
4. Activating learners as instructional resources for one another
5. Activating learners as owners of their own learning

Formative assessment is promoted at Bishop Walsh as it fosters a '**high challenge, low stakes environment**', and therefore allows all learners to develop their **self-efficacy**, a critical feature for an effective learner.

## 2. Deliver appropriately timed feedback that focuses on moving learning forward

The evidence regarding the timing and frequency of effective feedback is inconclusive. It is our firm belief that feedback is likely to be more productive to leave decisions on the timing of feedback to classroom teachers, recognising the crucial role that teacher judgement plays in delivering feedback at the appropriate moment.

To guide this judgement, teachers should consider three things: the **task**, the **pupil** and the **class**.

In comparison to the timing, feedback should focus on moving learning forward by targeting the specific learning gap and ensuring that a pupil improves. Specifically, high quality feedback can focus on the **task**, the **subject** and **self-regulation** strategies, but never the **person**.

High levels of effort will be recognised by teachers and rewarded with praise.

## 3. Plan for how pupils will receive and use feedback

For feedback to be effective, we need to create classrooms where students welcome and use feedback. A variety of factors may influence whether pupils seek and welcome feedback, including pupil motivation, self-confidence and self-concept, trust in the teacher and working memory.

Teachers at Bishop Walsh are aware of these influences and use strategies to prepare pupils for receiving feedback, including:

- Discussing the purpose of feedback
- Modelling the use of feedback
- Providing clear, concise and focused feedback
- Ensuring pupils understand the feedback given

We will prioritise planning time and opportunities to use feedback in order to impact the future work that a pupil will undertake and therefore close the learning gap. Effective post-feedback activities will be a key part of professional development and training.

### C. Methods

At Bishop Walsh, feedback does not mean marking. We recognise that written feedback can come with significant opportunity costs and that teacher's time can be better invested in preparing and planning high quality learning experiences. **Written feedback** is only one form of feedback and should only be used when it fulfils all the principles laid out above.

'Marking should serve a single purpose – to advance pupil progress and outcomes. Teachers should be clear about what they are trying to achieve and the best way of achieving it. Crucially, the most important person in deciding what is appropriate is the teacher.' (Report of the Independent Teacher Workload, 2016)

In KS3, parents can expect one marked 'red pen piece' per half term (or equivalent) that has been clearly identified in each subject's curriculum plan.

In KS4, we expect teachers to be engaged with exercise books at least once every half term. Key pieces will be identified in advance by the head of department.

In KS5, we expect teachers to be engaged with exercise books at least once every half term. Key pieces will be identified in advance by the head of department. Regular feedback will be provided in **vocational courses** to align with our BTEC Policy and the expectations and standards of the awarding organisation. Feedback will be designed to aid the submission and re-submission of work. Deadlines will be given to reflect the course assessment plan.

Teachers will also seek out a range of other **feedback strategies** which might include:

- Live marking
- Coded marking
- Whole class feedback
- 'Thinking like the teacher'
- Facilitating peer and self-marked work including quizzes and topic tests
- Learning Cycles

Additionally, **verbal feedback** is an integral part of effective instruction and will be delivered in a variety of ways in the classroom. Careful thought and consideration will be given to verbal feedback and it can be either pre-planned/highly structured or spontaneous in order to **move learning forward**.

### D. Assessment

This policy recognises that the time and effort spent on assessment must be valuable. Assessment data informs decisions about teaching and learning. Lessons and interventions are planned pro-actively in response to purposeful assessments.

As such, assessments (which follow '**learning cycles**') must be viewed by all stakeholders as powerful learning events. They should enable dependable claims to be made about pupils' learning, particularly when communicating with parents. However, assessment at

Bishop Walsh focuses on supporting children's' progress towards learning of knowledge, concepts and skills. Therefore, the main beneficiary of assessment is the pupil and teacher.

Pupils and parents will receive a report after each learning cycle assessment which will highlight individual attainment, attainment in relation to peers, and learning behaviours.

Year group	Feedback opportunities
7-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Two learning cycle assessments per academic year</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> One 'red pen piece' per half term</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> One 50 question quiz per half term</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A daily range of formative assessment</li> </ul>
10-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Three learning cycle assessments in Year 10</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Two learning cycle assessments in Year 11</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Exercise books marked at least once every half term</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A daily range of formative assessment</li> </ul>
12-13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Three learning cycle assessments in Year 12</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Two learning cycle assessments in Year 13</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Exercise books marked at least once every half term</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A daily range of formative assessment</li> </ul>

## **E. Expectations for Policy Implementation**

### **1. Heads of Department and Other Subject TLRs**

Heads of department will review this policy and adapt it to their individual subject. Heads of department are expected to hold their team to account for the quality of exercise books and the implementation of this policy. Heads of department should adopt a programme of regular monitoring of pupil work.

### **2. Teaching Staff**

Regular whole staff training will be provided on ways to produce excellent feedback to pupils that are effective and efficient for staff to use. Teachers are expected to engage with Continued Professional Development and keep up-to-date with evidence-based research around teaching, learning and feedback methods in their subject areas. Heads of department are expected to monitor this through book monitoring and department training.

### **3. Parents**

Parents are expected to engage with their child's learning and discuss feedback with them. It is vital that all parents support the school in implementing school policy, especially in areas such as home learning. Parents must understand that pupils will be appropriately sanctioned should their work fall below the required high standards.

### **4. Pupils**

Pupils are expected to complete all work set and respond positively to all feedback by acting on it as directed by teachers. This will include completing work outside of the classroom. For Sixth Form students, non-contact times must be fully utilised for this purpose. We will

provide a 'Home Learning Club' after school for one hour each day which is open to all pupils.

### **5. Leadership Team**

As part of the ongoing school monitoring and evaluation, the leadership team will regularly quality assure pupils' books independent to and alongside heads of department.

### **F. Professional Learning & Development**

Feedback is part of the complex fabric of high quality teaching that teachers work hard to implement successfully in their classrooms. Successful implementation of this policy is necessarily a carefully staged process and not an event.

The best available evidence on effective implementation indicates that the development of new and existing feedback and assessment strategies requires effective professional development.

Bishop Walsh is committed to continued professional development which will be implemented through our staff training sessions and promotion of best practice and research. This policy will be aligned with effective professional development in order to deliver and sustain valuable feedback and assessment.