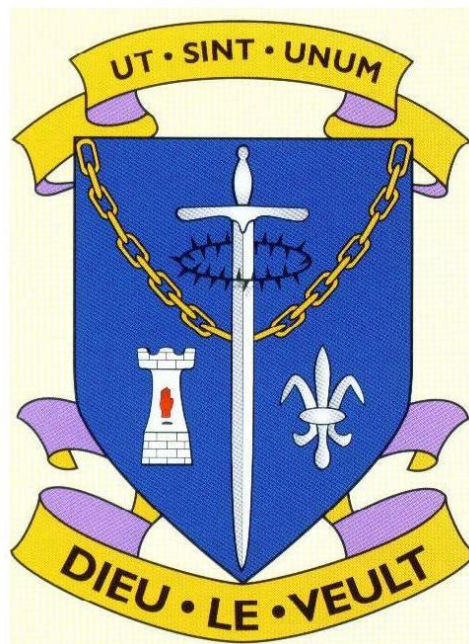


St Louis Grammar School Kilkeel



Teaching and Learning Policy

Date of Policy: September 2020

Reviewed by: Mr K. Martin

Date of Review: September 2024

St Louis Grammar School Kilkeel

Teaching and Learning Policy

This policy was developed in order that, through a shared understanding of the fundamental principles of teaching and learning, a common, high standard of education will be achieved throughout the school. The policy has been amended to reflect the fact that a much greater focus is given to self-evaluation, the outcomes achieved by the learner, and the quality of the teaching to ensure all students fulfil their potential.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the St Louis Online & Remote Learning Policy.

There are 4 key questions that must be considered within a teaching and learning policy:

1. How effective are teaching, training, learning and assessment?
2. How well do the learning experiences, programmes and activities meet the needs of the students?
3. How well are students cared for, guided and supported?
4. How well do students develop and achieve?

In order to evaluate teaching and learning quality evidence must be provided which includes first-hand observation of lessons, student evaluations and a thorough examination of the assessment data. Use of data is key to providing valuable areas for further exploration and can lead to questions that need to be asked about the outcomes achieved and how to secure more effective teaching and learning that will raise the standards achieved by students. The actions which follow such discussions are critical in raising the standards attained by the students and in enhancing their learning experiences.

School Ethos

St Louis Grammar School is a Catholic community within which both staff and students work in the pursuit of all aspects of spiritual, educational and personal excellence. Staff in St Louis Grammar School Kilkeel strive to ensure that there is a positive ethos of promoting achievement for the good of the pupils. This requires thoughtful and informed examination of the processes of learning and teaching with department colleagues, line managers and the SLT. High quality pastoral care at all levels is the foundation on which good relations are built where mutual respect between all stakeholders underpins the success of the school. For this to happen there must be rigorous and regular monitoring and evaluation of the quality of the pupils' work and progress as well as an embedded culture of identification of priorities and setting of measurable, achievable targets which reflect the context of St. Louis.

In an ever changing and complex society, through effective teaching and learning we must help pupils understand the world they live in so that they can make informed decisions about their lives and prepare them for future responsibilities as contributing members of the community, workers and parents. The implementation of this policy will make a significant contribution towards meeting the individual needs of all pupils so that they might meet their potential in terms of their academic, physical, social, spiritual, intellectual, emotional, cultural and moral development.

Pupil Responsibility

St Louis Grammar School provides an environment in which academic and personal progress is encouraged and rewarded. The school expects that all students are positive role models for others and show high standards of behaviour at all times in school. Pupils must co-operate fully to enable teaching and learning to take place. Although individual subjects and departments will have agreed class rules specific to their own discipline, the expectation is that:

- Pupils must arrive punctually for registration and for each lesson, properly prepared;
- On arrival to class, pupils must wait in single file, enter the room and immediately get ready for work;

- Pupils must not distract others from learning
- Pupils must always work hard and complete homework to the best of their ability on time
- Pupils must bring the Student Planner to each lesson
- Pupils must not leave the room without the teacher's permission
- Pupils should expect sanctions imposed if they do not meet the expectations set out by the teacher

Partnership with Parents/Guardians

The successful education of our students is built on a partnership between teachers, parents/guardians and the pupils. We appreciate that parents/guardians expect, not only to be fully informed about the progress their child is making at school, but also to be involved in their education. Parents/guardians of students at St Louis Grammar School are very supportive and there is a genuine sense of collective responsibility in securing the highest of expectations for our pupils. Parents/guardians will ensure that a suitable place to study is available whether it be the bedroom or part of another room in the home in which pupils can work productively at home is important. Effective, independent learning habits contribute to success. Establishing a routine for study that fits in with home life is also important and this is especially the case when it comes to coursework preparation and exam revision.

Consultation

Teachers, support staff, pupils, parents, governors, government policy, DENI Inspectorate and SELB Link Officer should all influence the content of this policy and will be consulted as appropriate.

St Louis Teachers aim to:

- Enable pupils to acquire new knowledge and make progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills across all areas of the curriculum;
- Provide a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum to meet the needs of the pupils and that teachers;
- Foster in pupils the application of intellectual, physical or creative effort, interest in their work, and the ability to think and learn for themselves;
- Ensure pupils are engaged in well-planned lessons, effective teaching methods, suitable activities and experience good classroom management;
- Show a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensure these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
- Demonstrate appropriate knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
- Utilise effectively classroom resources of an adequate quality, quantity and range;
- Assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly in line with school Assessment Policy and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress (differentiation); and
- Use effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to behave responsibly.

Effective Teaching and Learning

The quality of teaching and learning depends on effective teacher planning, excellent subject knowledge, good classroom management, robust assessment procedures and professional relationships within the classroom. Individual action plans must reflect the aims of the school and the priorities outlined in the School and Department Development Plans. Each department should have clear, coherent planning for all areas of the subject which guides effectively the work of individual teachers. Schemes of work which are shared with students ensure that the programme of learning is broad and balanced, and promotes continuity and progression in the pupils' learning. The short/medium-term teachers' planning must be effective to identify the intended learning, differentiation, and evaluation processes. Pupils' learning is evaluated internally by subject teachers and Heads of Departments to inform future planning. Pupil's work and learning experiences are also evaluated by the SLT through the use of questionnaires (for example Google Docs) and interviews to ensure opportunities are provided for pupils to contribute to the planning process. Such exercises are normally conducted as part of the individual or department self-evaluation processes.

As part of target setting and tracking, teachers may request students to complete a preferred learning style questionnaire. Subject teachers recognise that students learn in many different ways and the need to promote strategies that allow students to learn in ways that suit them best. To be effective learners, students should be given opportunity to develop characteristics of a learner including:

- communicating ideas and information through speaking and writing
- seeking information and taking steps towards independent learning
- posing questions and solving problems – developing an enquiring mind
- using ICT in order to solve problems
- applying what has been learnt to situations
- evaluating their work and learning
- developing an enjoyment in learning
- developing a pride in achievements and a desire to succeed
- a willingness to listen to, and value the opinions of others

Students must

- be prepared for lessons with the correct equipment
- complete homework to enhance their learning
- take pride in their work through consistent expectations across the curriculum for neat and accurate presentation of their work

The high expectations of staff contribute to students' positive attitude towards learning. Students learn best when they are:

- praised and encouraged;
- happy;
- well motivated;
- understand the task;
- feel comfortable, confident and secure;
- are given tasks to match their ability- challenging, but achievable;
- are challenged and stimulated;
- feel confident to take risks and learn from their mistakes;
- achieve success and gain approval;
- are confident, feel secure and are aware of boundaries;
- feel valued as individuals and are actively involved in the learning process.

Quality of Achievements and Standards

The quality indicators that demonstrate how well students develop and achieve are;

- Achievement
- Standards
- Progression
- Fulfilling Potential

Therefore to promote effective teaching and successful learning teachers:

- create a supportive environment which is conducive to learning;
- encourage students to ask questions and respectfully challenge subject content to deepen their learning and understanding;
- convey and set realistically high expectations which challenge and inspire the pupils;
- use and build upon the pupils' ideas, interests and prior learning;
- develop the pupils' independence, creativity and ability to manage risks in their learning;
- use an appropriate range of teaching and learning strategies which motivate the pupils and engage them purposefully in their work both collaboratively and independently;

- ensure that learning supports the development of the pupils' cross-curricular skills and their thinking skills and personal capabilities (TSCP) and
- consolidate the learning effectively.

Effective Teaching

When teaching we focus on motivating children, developing their confidence and building on their skills, knowledge and understanding of the curriculum.

Teaching is most effective when:

- a range of teaching strategies is used to match the needs of the students;
- lessons are well planned and resourced;
- learning objectives are shared with the pupils and they are engaged in their own learning;
- there are high, but attainable expectations – both in standards of work and behaviour;
- lessons must be content focussed and provide pace and challenge for all pupils;
- there is a positive attitude and relationship between teacher and pupil where all pupils feel confident to ask questions;
- teaching and its impact on learning is continually reflected upon;
- assessment is used to inform future planning and teaching;
- pupils are encouraged and praised;
- effective questioning is used to direct and challenge pupils;
- homework is planned to support the learning in the classroom.

Teaching Methods and Learning Experiences

Teachers ensure the learning programmes and activities match the needs and aspirations of all the students to enable them to fulfil their potential. High quality learning experiences that are matched to the individual needs, interests and aspirations of the students will contribute to the pupils' fulfilment, personal development and education. A variety of teaching methods should be used. These include:

- Whole class teaching
- Working in pairs or small groups
- Class discussions
- Individual work
- Investigations
- Computer work
- Practical work
- Demonstration
- Research
- Brainstorming
- Role play
- Active learning
- Problem based learning
- Note taking
- Case studies
- Guest speakers.

Assessment for Learning

This is an integral part of teaching and in the daily lessons teacher should incorporate the following:

- share learning objectives with students as part of the normal teaching strategies;
- give clear success criteria;
- agree success criteria *if appropriate*;
- encourage pupils to think about *what* they have learned;
- encourage pupils to think *how* they have learned;
- incorporate learning targets into discussions with pupils;

- help pupils to know the next steps in their learning;

Differentiation

In order to meet individual needs teachers ensure that:

- Tasks are matched to the level of a pupil's ability;
- Progression is finely graded, each step being mastered before progressing to the next;
- A variety of outcomes is planned from the same starting point;
- Tasks are challenging but take into account different methods of recording, different levels of entry, different attention spans and pupil's different levels of stamina and pace;
- Assessment of outcomes informs future planning;
- Evaluation of processes and the differences between the planned, offered and received curriculum inform future teaching;

Grouping

All groups in St Louis are mixed ability with the exception of Maths classes in Year 11 and 12 which are streamed according to results.

Assessment:

In order to ensure assessment is effective in promoting learning:

- Teachers use an appropriately wide range of assessment for learning strategies, including, self and peer-assessment, and formative use of summative assessment outcomes;
- The pupils' work is marked regularly, frequently and consistently in ways which highlight the strengths and give feedback on what the pupil needs to do in order to improve;
- Pupils identify personal learning targets;
- Appropriate and realistic targets are set, monitored and tracked for individual pupils for learning, and attainment in end of key stage assessments and public examinations; and
- Teachers communicate to parents the pupils' progress and achievement.

Homework

Homework may take different forms such as creative writing, illustration, calculation, experimentation or practice of skills introduced in classwork. Homework is intended to provide pupils with the experience of working by themselves to consolidate or to extend work covered in class. Subject departments vary the type of homework set and use tasks appropriate for assessment purposes. The duration and frequency of the homework set will vary according to the year group and frequency of class. The precise amount of time spent on homework is much less important than the quality of tasks set and the way they are planned to support learning. The amount of time students spend on homework will vary depending on the year group; typically it should range from 1½ hours in year 8 to at least 3 hours in Y14.

Marking and Reporting

Pupils' work must be marked regularly, frequently and consistently in ways which highlight the strengths and give feedback on what the pupil needs to do in order to improve. Marking will vary with year group and topic and each subject department will have their own agreed marking policy applied by all teachers in that department and communicated to pupils and parents. Departments marking guidelines should be issued to pupils at the beginning of the academic year. This should include information on marks for content and presentation. The guidelines should be inserted into each homework book. Teachers may request parents to sign homework when deemed necessary. Pupils' marks will be recorded for specific homework tasks. This record will be used for assessment purposes and available for Form Tutors and Parents at Parent-Teacher Meetings or Interviews. Marked homework should be signed (or initialled) and dated by the teacher. Positive marking strategies should be used to help raise standards. If homework is not completed to an appropriate standard, the appropriate procedures should be followed.

Please refer to Homework Policy for further information.

Tracking / Assessment and Achievement.

The school has a robust system of target setting, tracking and continuous assessment to ensure that students achieve the highest possible standards of work and learning:

- Teachers ensure students make good progress in line with their prior attainment and achieve their full potential;
- Teachers ensure students achieve in line with relevant benchmarking data;
- Teachers encourage and support students to become well-motivated, enthusiastic and set high expectations for themselves;
- Teachers ensure students attain good standards in literacy and numeracy and demonstrate good communication, ICT and numeracy skills within their own subject specialism and across the curriculum;
- Teachers encourage students to apply their learning in a range of contexts
- Assessment outcomes will be communicated to parents at appropriate times throughout the year.

In line with school policy students will be assessed continually throughout the year. There will be 4 assessment dates and teachers will be required to set, mark and record these results on SIMS for each class they teach. These results are tracked and can be used to identify underachievement and students who are gifted and talented.

Please refer to Assessment Policy for further information.

Target Setting

Targets are set for all pupils after discussion between the pupil and teacher. This is a formalised system from Yr 11 onwards. All classes in Yr 11 and 13 will have targets set by October of each academic year. Y8-Y10 are tracked against the year average and those with a residual of -10 or greater will be subject to the raising achievement strategies. Data used to inform this decision includes CAT 4 Tests, KS3 results, GCSE results, SIMS Predictions and class tests.

Additional Learning Support

Teachers provide additional learning support for those who have cognitive, physical, emotional or linguistic barriers to learning:

- The SENCO has a clearly defined role, and has received appropriate training and resources;
- Teachers engage in effective training programmes to ensure that current DE guidance is implemented;
- The special educational needs of individual pupils are identified and determined accurately in consultation, with parents, the primary or former school and maintains effective links other professionals and support agencies;
- Teachers have clear and realistic Education Plans compiled through appropriate consultation with the SENCO which are focused on addressing the identified areas for improvement and are reviewed regularly by the class teacher and SENCO;
- The learning support staff have received appropriate training and contribute effectively to the support and review of the pupils' learning programmes.

Please refer to SEN policy

Standards

In harmony with the aims of St Louis Grammar School Kilkeel, students acquire and develop the skills, dispositions and capabilities for life-long learning, and contribute to (or lay the foundations for their eventual contribution to) the community and the economy.

They will:

- work independently and with others;
- demonstrate effective personal and social skills;
- think both critically and creatively, and show resilience in their learning; and
- understand how their learning can be applied to help them participate effectively in society and as contributors to the local and global economy.

The Learning Environment

Students should be provided with high quality resources and a well-organised, maintained and safe learning environment. There should be a working atmosphere where there is a common awareness that high standards of self-discipline and order are expected. In as far as possible department rooms are arranged together to assist in the sharing of good practice and resources and to develop a sense of unity and togetherness.

Each teacher has his/her own room and is responsible for the day-to-day upkeep. Any damage to the physical environment must be reported to the School Business Manager. Damage to resources such as computers, data projectors etc must be reported to Mr S. Haughian.

An annual inventory of furniture and a planned programme of renewal and decoration will be done in consultation with staff.

There are 10 interactive white boards in the school. The ICT rooms are bookable through the website. Maths, English and Science rooms can be booked through the department.

The learning environment and arrangement of desks should allow pupils to

- work individually, in groups and as a class
- make decisions
- work co-operatively
- solve problems
- be creative
- discuss their ideas
- develop social skills
- develop independence
- use initiative
- receive support
- achieve academically
- access appropriate resources.

Classroom and corridor displays are an essential way of developing the ethos of the school, celebrating pupils' work and achievements and for providing stimulating teaching aids. Staff are expected to mount and display pupils' work appropriately within their classrooms and take responsibility for a board or two in the main corridor. Displays are relevant to current work and current students. Displays should be changed during the year.

Routines and rules in the classroom contribute to a healthy learning environment. There must be a consistency of professional practice displayed by the teacher at all times. The health and safety of pupils and staff is paramount. Students should not be left unsupervised in classrooms and appropriate risk assessments (particularly in practical subjects) must be conducted to ensure the safety of pupils and staff.

To be effective rules and procedures should be:

- agreed by the students and clearly understood
- fair and consistent
- realistic and positive
- kept to a minimum but enforced.

All rules should result in the students knowing the boundaries of behaviour and should be set within the terms of The Behaviour Policy.

Substitute Teachers

To ensure continuity, teachers should leave written guidance and suggested activities for all planned absences from the classroom. In the event of an unplanned absence the HoD or TIC should set appropriate work.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Teaching and learning will be monitored in accordance with the agreed classroom visits policy. Subject leaders will use agreed self-evaluation procedures specific to the individual department. This will normally include book scoops among other methods. Classroom visits and pupil pursuits will be conducted by SLT as part of the normal self-evaluation procedures. Additional support may be provided by SLT or Line Management if the quality of teaching and learning or the performance of a particular group of students is considered less than satisfactory.

All teachers are expected to be involved in the dissemination of good practice where teachers within a department and across departments can visit one another to observe good practice. It is customary to share good practice identified by SLT and others at Staff Inset days.

Online & Remote Learning

The school will ensure that during any disruption caused by school closures, we will promote the continuity of learning through a **blended learning approach** which can be seen in the St Louis Online and distance learning policy 2024-2025. In order to enact this vision, we will promote the following objectives:

Objectives

The school will (in the event of disruption to learning):

- Place the well-being of pupils, their parents, and school staff at the heart of all learning and teaching activities
- Recognise the wide range of issues that families are facing in supporting online and distance learning, and identify any additional help needed to allow pupils to effectively engage in a blended learning teaching approach
- Recognise the need to establish a balance between the home and work life of parents / carers and teaching staff.
- Recognise that parents / carers may be supporting learning at home and communicate what support is available from the school or other organisations in order to support the blended learning approach
- Recognise that it will not be possible to replicate school experiences in a home environment
- Encourage parents / carers to engage confidently and creatively when supporting learning at home

Moving to a blended model of learning and teaching

As a school we will adopt a blended model of learning and teaching during disruption to normal school. This model will bring together classroom-based learning and teaching with teaching in school (if the school remains open); and, remote learning activities, to reinforce concepts or develop skills.

The exact model and approach the school will adopt will necessarily have to change to match the varying requirements as dictated by local and national Government in the management of a school closure.

It is hoped school-based learning and teaching will continue uninterrupted. This will provide the opportunity for pupils to socially interact, and for the school to promote emotional health and opportunities to socialise for pupils following social distancing protocols and health advice.

At every stage the school will reflect on what has worked well, and what has worked not so well, and therefore we encourage teachers, parents, and pupils to reflect on, and evaluate, the effectiveness of online and remote learning. The school will undergo regular surveys with parents and pupils to gauge the effectiveness of online activities, and to highlight any issues parents and pupils are having.

Remote and online learning activities

In planning for on-line learning teaching always needs to be considered before technology. Online learning activities provide opportunities to consolidate and protect learning that has already taken place as well as supporting pupil to pupil collaboration and pupil centric approaches.

The school aims to move beyond using digital tools as a means of transmitting information. In some cases, a **flipped classroom** model may be appropriate, giving pupils material to review and consider before a face-to-face session in school.

The virtual classroom is an extension of the physical classroom and in just the same way there will be rules, routines and certain actions that pupils must follow in order for the blended approach to have a maximum impact. Teachers will work with pupils to share expectations and model positive online behaviour.

Well-planned blended learning and teaching can:

- provide opportunities for the development of pupils' thinking skills and personal capabilities, including critical thinking and evaluation
- increase pupil participation
- encourage independent working and independent thought
- facilitate opportunities for self and peer assessment
- promote social interaction
- provide pupils with ownership of their learning
- offer opportunity for flipped, blended and personalised learning approaches
- develop digital literacy skills, the skills which are in high demand in the world of work.

Practicalities of a blended approach to learning and teaching

The school recognises that in many homes there may be no devices, or a limited number of devices. The school recognises that more than one child may require access to a limited number of devices for learning at home, or that parents/carers/guardians may have to use the device for work purposes during the school day.

Therefore, the school will focus primarily on an **asynchronous delivery model of learning**, which allows families to engage with the work when it is most appropriate for them and their family/home circumstances. Therefore, the school will not prioritise "Live lessons".

If a teacher decides to engage in a "live lesson", such lessons will be recorded and made available for pupils to engage with the material when it is most appropriate for them after the lesson has taken place.

DE is working with schools in order that children from disadvantaged backgrounds, or those that have limited access to digital devices, will acquire the appropriate equipment for online learning. However, there remain issues in a small number of areas regarding poor or inaccessible connectivity for online learning.

Given the challenges outlined above, the school have asked staff to consider how best to organise and present the learning when in school, and when pupils are in the home learning environment. It may be appropriate to consider that the time pupils have in school with the teacher is the key part of the learning process and that this is the opportunity for teachers to build relationships with their pupils, draw out the learning, coach them to evaluate their experiences and take feedback on the learning activity. The school will also consider how relationships between pupils are sustained and developed and how online collaborative activities could be used to support these social interactions.

Working in Partnership with parents

Parents and carers play a key role in their child's education and never more so when a significant proportion of the learning is taking place at home. In the last few months parents have had an even closer view of their child's learning and as a school we are considering how to ensure that this partnership is supported and developed further by providing relevant and timely information to the parent or carer, giving and taking feedback more regularly on progress, building a culture of learning with parents as key partners.

Staying safe in the online learning environment

The school will adhere to Data Protection guidelines and will ensure that personal data is kept safe when working from home. All staff will follow the school's data protection policy around the use of email in school.

Teachers will only use the school's trusted networks or cloud services (such as C2K / MySchool, Google Classroom, G-Suite and Google Drive) and will comply with any rules and procedures about cloud or network access, login details and data sharing.

Schools and teachers will continue to be alert to the possibility that a child protection concern may arise in relation to learners they come in contact with and will follow the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures.

New pupils to the school will engage in an IT department program to educate them in the use of the school's online platforms and that encourages pupils to learn the rules regarding safety online. Staff, parents and pupils must adhere to the school's e-Safety and Acceptable Use policy. A summary of which is available through the school website, <http://www.stlouis.org.uk> . A full copy of the policy is available on request through the school office.

Well-being of Learners, Teachers and Parents

Maintaining the well-being of learners is of critical importance at this time. Many young people may have coped well with staying at home, engaging in social distancing and completing their learning activities. However, others may be missing their friends and extended family, school life, extra-curricular and social activities. As a school we have an important role in providing routine and in supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of learners. Additional support is available through [The Independent Counselling Service for Schools \(ICSS\)](#) which is managed by the Education Authority and is funded under the Department of Education (DE) 'iMatter' Programme.

The well-being of teachers is equally important as they endeavour to provide pastoral as well as academic support to children, young people and their families. It is essential that teachers protect their own well-being and engage with colleagues and school leadership to ensure collegiate support and access support as necessary. Support is available to teachers through [Inspire](#).

How teachers will plan and organise online learning

The new academic year will present many opportunities and so it will be important that staff have time to reflect, plan and work collaboratively in preparation for the new year. The following principles will be promoted with staff:

- Online teaching is an extension of the classroom and is covered by the school Acceptable Use Policy
- Teachers will consider how the blend of a face-to-face sessions can combine with remote approaches to maximise the learning experience
- Online learning instructions will be clear and specific, maintaining a similar format for all tasks so that learners are clear on teacher's expectations and know what success looks like

- Learning at a distance means that both the teacher and the learner may be missing out on the visual and auditory cues that enable instant feedback and support understanding, as a result language becomes key and establishing clarity is fundamental to effective learning
- Teachers will provide and prioritise timely and specific feedback to pupils
- The pace of learning is a key consideration for teachers as it can be much slower online. Therefore, the focus needs to be on the key concepts and skills within the curriculum
- Teachers will consider how online collaborative activities such as discussions and developing content can support the learning process
- The school recognises that some pupils will become overloaded with online work and that this can become a problem if pupils are bombarded with activities, deadlines and information. Therefore, the school will engage in regular communication and survey's with pupil's and parents to gauge the effectiveness of online learning and its impact on the pupils' well-being
- Teachers will carefully consider the balance between online and offline learning.
- Teachers will communicate clearly to the learners when they will, and will not, be available if they have queries or require feedback
- All teachers will be encouraged to ensure notifications are turned off, and email not answered, at the end of the working day to maintain a work-life balance

Please refer to classroom visits policy

<T:\1 Staff Documents\Policies\Classroom visits as part of self-evaluation pdf.pdf>

Review of policy

This policy will be reviewed in Term 1 biannually.