



Teaching and Learning Policy, and Homework Policy

Drafted By

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Context

At The Kidsgrove Secondary School, the classroom is at the heart of everything we do. We are committed to ensuring that every student receives consistently high-quality teaching that enables them to make strong progress, achieve their full potential and develop the knowledge, skills and character required for the next stage of their education and beyond.

High-quality teaching is the single most important factor in improving student outcomes. Our approach is rooted in understanding each learner, setting high expectations and ensuring that teaching is responsive to students' needs. Effective teaching begins with three key questions:

- What do students already know?
- What do students need to know?
- How will they get there?

These questions underpin all curriculum planning, lesson delivery, assessment and professional development across the school.

Aim of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to establish a consistent approach to teaching and learning across The Kidsgrove Secondary School. It sets out the expectations and principles that underpin effective classroom practice while allowing teachers the professional autonomy to deliver engaging, challenging and inspiring lessons.

This policy provides a shared framework for planning, teaching, assessment and reflection, ensuring that all students experience consistently high-quality learning regardless of subject or teacher.

All teachers are expected to:

- Know their students well and understand their starting points.
- Maintain consistently high expectations for every learner.
- Demonstrate a growth mindset towards student achievement and professional development.
- Plan learning that builds knowledge, develops skills and addresses misconceptions.
- Use assessment to inform future teaching and respond to students' learning needs.

Planning should always be viewed as a continuous cycle. Teachers plan sequences of learning, deliver high-quality lessons, assess understanding, reflect on outcomes and adapt future teaching accordingly. This cycle ensures that learning is responsive, knowledge is secure and students continue to make sustained progress.

The approaches outlined within this policy have been developed to promote consistency, collaboration and excellence across the curriculum. Every member of staff has a collective responsibility to embed these approaches so that every classroom provides a positive, ambitious and inclusive learning environment.



Our Teaching and Learning Framework

Teaching and learning at The Kidsgrove Secondary School is built around a shared framework which provides consistency whilst allowing teachers the flexibility to respond to the needs of their students.

The framework combines evidence-informed teaching strategies with professional judgement to ensure that lessons are carefully planned, engaging and responsive to assessment. It is centred around three complementary elements:

- The Five Learning Steps, which provide the structure for lesson planning and delivery.
- WalkThrus, which support evidence-informed classroom practice through effective teaching techniques.
- STEPLAB, which underpins our instructional coaching model and continuous professional development.

Together, these approaches provide a common language for teaching and learning across the school and support continual improvement in classroom practice.

The Five Learning Steps

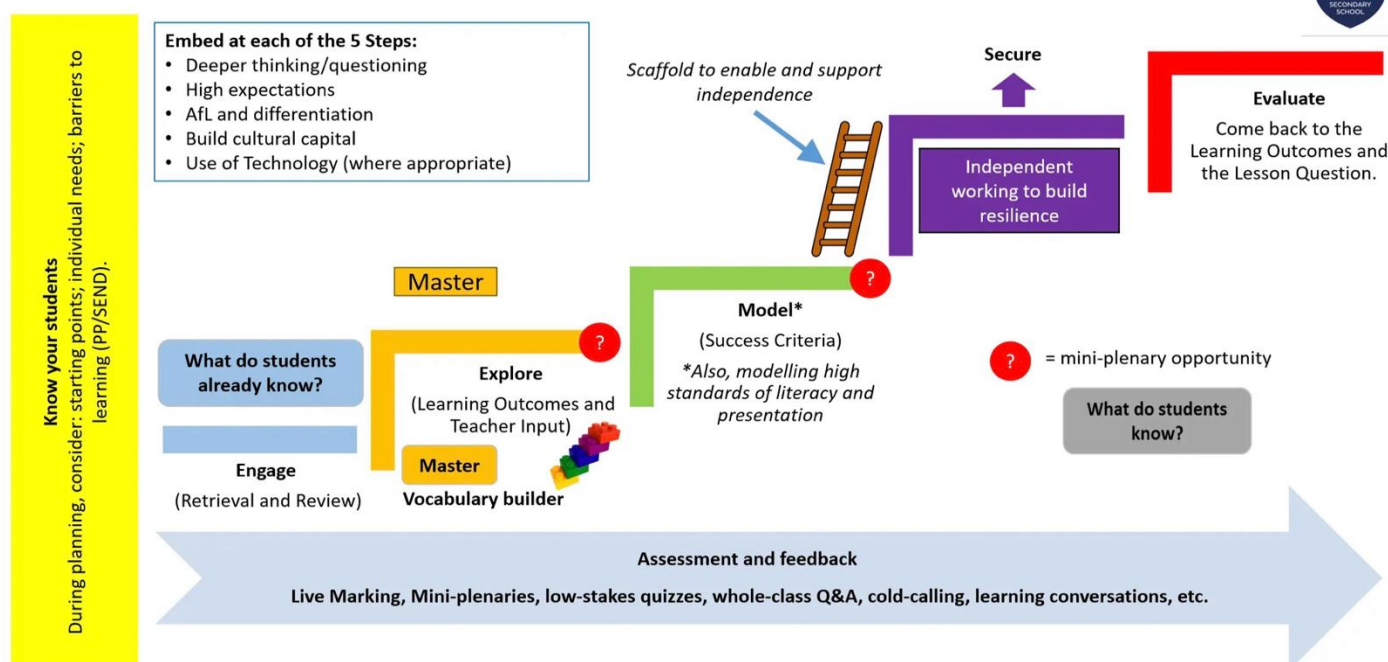
The Five Learning Steps should inform all curriculum planning, whether for an individual lesson, a sequence of lessons or an entire scheme of learning.

When planning learning, teachers should anticipate:

- Common misconceptions.
- Potential barriers to learning and strategies to overcome them.
- Opportunities for challenge and deeper thinking.
- Regular opportunities to assess understanding and provide meaningful feedback.

The framework is designed to be flexible. Whilst the five steps provide a clear learning journey, teachers may adapt the sequence where appropriate to best meet the needs of their learners.

The Kidsgrove Secondary School - 5 Learning Steps



The Five Learning Steps are:

Engage

This is the hook for learning and should begin as soon as students enter the classroom. Teachers use retrieval and review activities to activate prior knowledge, strengthen long-term memory and make explicit links to new learning.

Explore

Each lesson is driven by a carefully planned lesson question which encourages deeper thinking and purposeful learning.

Teachers introduce new concepts and vocabulary, explicitly teach key knowledge and explain how new learning connects to previous learning and the wider curriculum. Learning objectives are made clear, and ongoing Assessment for Learning ensures misconceptions are identified and addressed throughout the lesson.

Model

High-quality modelling enables students to understand both what success looks like and how to achieve it. Teachers explicitly model thinking processes using approaches such as "I do, We do, You do", making use of live modelling and metacognitive strategies to demonstrate successful approaches to learning.

Success criteria should be shared and referred to throughout the lesson to ensure students understand expectations.

At Key Stage 4, modelling should, where appropriate, reflect examination expectations and assessment criteria.

Appropriate scaffolding, support and challenge should enable every student to achieve ambitious outcomes whilst developing increasing independence.

Secure

This stage provides students with the opportunity to apply their learning independently and demonstrate their understanding.

Teachers should provide opportunities for students to practise, consolidate and deepen their learning through appropriately challenging independent tasks. At appropriate points within this stage, students should complete sustained periods of silent independent work to demonstrate resilience, confidence and secure understanding.

Collaborative learning may also be used where it enhances understanding; however, teachers should ensure that independent learning remains a significant feature of lessons to accurately assess individual understanding.

Evaluate

The final stage of learning enables both teachers and students to evaluate progress against the lesson question and intended learning outcomes.

Students should demonstrate what they have learnt through questioning, discussion, written responses or examination-style tasks where appropriate.

Evaluation informs future planning by identifying strengths, misconceptions and next steps for learning.

WalkThrus

WalkThrus provide staff with evidence-informed teaching techniques that support the consistent delivery of high-quality classroom practice. They complement our Five Learning Steps by providing practical, research-informed approaches to modelling, questioning, retrieval practice, adaptive teaching, feedback and classroom routines. Staff are expected to embed relevant WalkThrus into their daily practice to improve pupil learning and ensure consistency across the school.

Our WalkThru Journey

At The Kidsgrove Secondary School, our WalkThru programme has been carefully sequenced to ensure that staff develop and refine the teaching strategies that have the greatest impact on pupil learning. Rather than introducing multiple initiatives at once, we focus on a small number of key strategies each year, allowing time for deliberate practice, coaching and consistent implementation across all classrooms.

During the 2025–2026 academic year, our professional development has focused on the following core WalkThrus:

- **Deliberate Vocabulary Development** – explicitly teaching and revisiting subject-specific vocabulary to improve pupils' understanding, communication and literacy across the curriculum.
- **Developing Reading Fluency** – supporting pupils to read accurately, fluently and with greater confidence, enabling them to access increasingly complex texts.

- **Live Modelling** – making expert thinking visible through teacher modelling, worked examples and the gradual release of responsibility, enabling pupils to understand what success looks like before applying their learning independently.
- **Scaffolding** – providing appropriate support to enable all pupils to access ambitious learning while gradually building confidence and independence.
- **Checking for Understanding** – using purposeful questioning, responsive teaching and frequent assessment to identify misconceptions and adapt teaching in real time.
- **Quizzing** – further embedding retrieval practice through carefully planned quizzes that strengthen memory, improve recall and support long-term learning.

Alongside these priorities, staff have continued to embed effective retrieval practice through regular low-stakes recall activities and the use of Showbie assessments. These approaches strengthen long-term memory, identify gaps in learning and ensure pupils retain and build upon prior knowledge.

Looking Ahead: Our 2026–2027 Priorities

As we continue to refine teaching and learning, our WalkThru programme will build on these foundations with a further series of evidence-informed strategies.

These will include:

- **Say It Again Better** – helping pupils refine and improve their verbal responses through structured classroom talk, developing confidence, precision and academic language.
- **Checking for Understanding Through Formative Action Loops** – using ongoing formative assessment to identify misconceptions, provide immediate feedback and adapt teaching to maximise pupil progress.
- **Effective Cold Calling** – Purposefully selecting pupils to answer questions to ensure all learners remain engaged, think carefully and are accountable for their learning, rather than relying on volunteers.
- **Show Me Boards** – Using mini whiteboards for all pupils to respond simultaneously, allowing teachers to quickly assess understanding, identify misconceptions and adapt teaching in real time.
- **Think–Pair–Share** – A structured discussion strategy where pupils first think independently, then discuss their ideas with a partner before sharing with the wider class, promoting deeper thinking, confidence and high-quality classroom dialogue.

These strategies will continue to strengthen classroom participation, increase pupil thinking, improve engagement and ensure that every pupil is actively involved in the learning process.



STEPLAB

Professional development is fundamental to improving outcomes for students. At The Kidsgrove Secondary School, we use STEPLAB as our instructional coaching platform to support continual professional growth and the consistent implementation of high-quality teaching.

STEPLAB enables teachers to receive regular, focused coaching based on evidence-informed teaching strategies. Coaching is deliberately incremental, allowing staff to practise, refine and embed specific teaching techniques over time before introducing new areas for development.

The platform supports a shared language for teaching and learning across the school, aligning professional development with our Five Learning Steps, WalkThrus and wider Teaching and Learning Framework. This ensures that coaching, lesson visits and professional dialogue remain focused on improving classroom practice and student outcomes.

By using STEPLAB, we foster a culture of reflective practice, collaboration and continuous improvement, ensuring that every member of staff is supported to develop their expertise and deliver consistently excellent teaching.

Knowing Our Students

Effective planning begins with knowing our students. Teachers are expected to use their knowledge of individual learners to ensure that every student is appropriately supported, challenged and able to achieve their full potential.

When planning learning, teachers should consider:

- Students' starting points, including KS2 data, CAT4 data, previous assessment outcomes, reading ages, prior knowledge and performance in previous lessons.
- Individual learning needs, including SEND, EAL and other identified needs.
- Potential barriers to learning, including disadvantage and Pupil Premium.

- Opportunities for challenge, support and deeper learning.

Staff have access to contextual information through Arbor and SISRA, enabling informed planning and adaptive teaching.

At The Kildgrove Secondary School we expect teachers to use this information routinely by:

- Referring to SEND Road Maps, EHCPs, Pupil Passports and Class on a Page documentation to inform lesson planning and classroom practice.
- Using Attainment, Curriculum and Teaching Review (ACT) processes to identify gaps in knowledge, misconceptions and next steps for learning.
- Anticipating potential barriers for disadvantaged students and adapting learning accordingly.
- Providing appropriate challenge for higher attaining students through ambitious teaching, effective scaffolding and high expectations.

Teaching should always be informed by what students already know and what they need to learn next.

Adaptive Teaching

At The Kildgrove Secondary School, adaptive teaching is an integral part of effective classroom practice. Lessons should be planned with learners at the centre, using assessment and knowledge of students to adapt teaching throughout the learning process.

We believe that every student should be supported to master the lesson question and achieve success within every lesson.

Teachers use a range of adaptive strategies to remove barriers to learning while maintaining ambitious expectations for all students. These may include:

- Visual checklists and scaffolds.
- Flexible grouping.
- Carefully planned seating arrangements informed by student data.
- Targeted questioning.
- Appropriate teacher intervention.
- Challenge tasks to deepen learning.
- Personalised support where required.

These approaches enable all students to access the curriculum, develop independence and make sustained progress.

Literacy and Presentation

High standards of literacy and presentation underpin learning across the curriculum.

Although exemplary presentation is explicitly modelled during the Model stage of the Five Learning Steps, expectations for literacy and presentation should permeate every lesson and every subject.

Teachers should actively develop students' literacy by planning for the language demands of each lesson. This may include:

- Explicit teaching of subject-specific vocabulary.
- Providing glossaries of key terminology.

- Modelling the presentation of written work, tables, graphs and diagrams.
- Supporting students through paired discussion and peer checking where appropriate.
- Planning carefully for potential literacy barriers before learning takes place.

Students should be taught the importance of planning, drafting and presenting their work with care. High expectations for presentation encourage pride in learning and demonstrate respect for both the subject and the learning process.

Further guidance regarding presentation expectations can be found within the Marking and Feedback Policy.

Assessment, Feedback and ACT

Assessment is fundamental to effective teaching and learning. Throughout every lesson, teachers should continuously assess students' understanding through questioning, observation, discussion, live marking and review of students' work.

Assessment enables teachers to:

- Check whether students are making expected progress.
- Identify misconceptions quickly.
- Provide timely feedback.
- Adapt teaching within lessons.
- Inform future planning.

Our Attainment, Curriculum and Teaching Review (ACT) processes ensure that assessment remains a continuous cycle of review, reflection and improvement throughout a student's learning journey.

Professional development has focused on high-quality questioning strategies, including:

- Cold Calling.
- No Hands Up.
- No Opt Out.
- Socratic Questioning.

These approaches form part of our school's teaching and learning culture and support effective Assessment for Learning in every classroom.

Staff also make effective use of whole-class assessment strategies to provide immediate feedback, maximise participation and maintain high levels of engagement.

Assessment falls into two broad categories.

Continuous Reflection (Formative Assessment)

Continuous Reflection takes place during everyday classroom practice. It enables teachers to identify what students know, uncover misconceptions and respond immediately through adaptive teaching and targeted feedback.

This ongoing assessment informs daily lesson delivery and future curriculum planning.

Performance Assessment (Summative Assessment)

Performance Assessment takes place twice each academic year during calendared assessment windows.

These assessments primarily evaluate learning from the current curriculum while also revisiting previously taught knowledge to strengthen long-term retention and identify areas requiring further teaching.

Further guidance on assessment and feedback can be found within the school's Marking and Feedback Policy.

Homework at The Kidsgrove Secondary School

Rationale

At The Kidsgrove Secondary School, we expect students to work hard. We also expect them to work efficiently, in school and at home too. We want students to do useful things with their time. In writing this policy, we have used The Education Endowment Foundation Toolkit, a major source of research-based evidence on all aspects of school life.

This Independent Study policy is designed to help students learn by using the most effective strategies. In schools where learning to complete at home is set, students tend to perform better. The EEF has found that, on average, homework at secondary school makes the same difference as an extra five months of classroom teaching per year. We expect students and families to understand the benefits of this. Imagine two students at the same ability in year 7. One of them does their Independent Study and the other does not. By the end of year 11, the difference between them is two years' worth of learning.

Students who do not get in the habit of completing tasks gradually fall behind until they are too far behind to catch up. If left unchecked, not even the best intervention can close this gap. The most important things that families can do at home to support their children's education is to ensure that they are safe, well cared for, and that they complete their Independent Study.

The Independent Study policy is both simple and flexible:

Record of homework

Homework is referenced on Arbor. Deadline dates will be found here with a brief reference to the homework. Student homework is completed through Showbie.

Regularity

Subjects will generally set homework once per fortnight, as well as tasks to be done over the holidays. Subjects which are taught most frequently, such as English, maths and science may require tasks more frequently. Sometimes, students working on an extended project have a longer deadline, but they might have to show their progress each week.

Deadlines of tasks

Most subjects will allow a minimum of four days for tasks to be completed so that students can organise their workload. Homework will not be set with a 'next day' deadline.

Format of Homework

The EEF toolkit identifies that "homework is most effective when used as a short and focused intervention", and that "in the most effective examples homework was an integral part of learning, rather than an add-on". Also, "a variety of tasks with different levels of challenge is likely to be beneficial". The format and level of challenge of homework will vary between subjects. For example, some lessons will require skills practice; others might require students to read around the subject.

At The Kidsgrove Secondary School, the minimum expectation is that homework is set as a low-stakes retrieval task where students are given questions that they will be asked the following/a future lesson and are expected to revisit content and learn the responses to those questions.

Homework Support

Homework tasks, if judged correctly, should have a range of levels of challenge. Sometimes students become stuck, but this is not a bad thing. Being stuck provides a chance to overcome a barrier, but there is also help available.

A staffed Homework Club is available for students every day at dinner time and at advertised times after school to support them with the completion of their homework. Students may opt to attend Homework Club or may be referred by staff to attend should homework be incomplete or below the expected standard.

Students can also email their teachers if they are stuck. This allows the teacher to get feedback on how hard their class felt the task was. They may provide a hint or even re-teach some of the work in class. Students must let their teacher know if there is a problem with meeting a deadline as soon as possible, with a good reason. Teachers will be sympathetic and may extend a deadline if a student asks in good time.

KS4 Examination Readiness Homework Strategy

The aim of this KS4 homework is to improve examination readiness, strengthen independent learning habits and develop students' ability to produce high-quality extended responses while maintaining a manageable workload for staff.

Homework Expectations

Each subject will set a minimum requirement of one substantial examination-focused homework task per half term.

Tasks may include:

- Extended writing.
- Examination questions.
- Structured responses.
- Coursework development.
- Subject-specific projects.
- Retrieval and revision activities.

Departments may continue existing homework systems where appropriate.

Submission

Homework will be submitted through Showbie.

Where authenticity is important:

- Students complete work by hand in a dedicated homework book.
- Photographs or scans uploaded to Showbie.

This supports monitoring while reducing concerns around AI-generated work. It also supports extended writing as required by many subjects during the examinations.

Feedback Model

The following approaches will be used:

- Whole-class feedback.
- Self-assessment.
- Peer assessment.
- Live modelling.
- Teacher assessment of selected pieces.
- Completion checks.

Detailed written marking of every homework task is not expected.

Alignment with Existing Systems

Homework should complement, not duplicate:

- Secure Tasks.
- Sparx Reader.
- Sparx Science.
- Existing coursework requirements.
- Departmental revision programmes.

Heads of Department will determine the most appropriate task design for their subject.

Revision and PPE Periods

During formal revision and PPE windows:

- Structured revision may replace standard homework.
- Departments may suspend extended homework tasks where appropriate.
- Revision programmes will be recognised as valid homework activity.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Success will be evaluated through:

Student Measures

- Homework completion rates.
- Student voice.
- Quality of extended responses.
- Examination confidence.

Outcome Measures

- PPE performance.
- Examination outcomes.
- Improvements in extended writing quality.

Monitoring and evaluation of Teaching and Learning.

We are committed to developing an “open door” culture, where monitoring is purposeful, provides useful feedback and impacts positively upon student outcomes and staff development. We believe that transparency is key; staff need to fully understand what we are doing, why and how. Our monitoring and evaluation allow us to meet our obligations for formal reporting on the quality of teaching and learning whilst also informing action plans and CPD.

Our Learning Environments

We take great pride in our School and learning environments. We ensure that our teaching areas are organised and tidy to support an effective learning culture and that displays are engaging and meaningful whilst also reflecting a range of pupils' achievements.

Quality Assurance of Teaching and Learning

Monitoring teaching and learning is essential to ensure high-quality education and continuous improvement in student outcomes.

- Ensures Effective Teaching – Regular monitoring helps identify strengths and areas for improvement in teaching strategies, ensuring that lessons are engaging and effective.
- Improves Student Progress – By tracking learning outcomes, teachers can adjust their methods to better support students, addressing gaps in understanding and enhancing overall achievement.
- Supports Professional Development – Observations and feedback provide valuable insights for teachers, helping them refine their skills and adopt best practices.
- Maintains Consistency & Standards – Monitoring ensures that educational standards are met across classrooms, creating a fair and consistent learning experience for all students.
- Encourages Reflection & Growth – Both teachers and students benefit from self-reflection and feedback, fostering a culture of continuous learning and development.
- Informs Decision-Making – Data from monitoring helps school leaders make informed decisions about curriculum improvements, resource allocation, and staff training.

By regularly evaluating teaching and learning, schools create an environment that promotes excellence, supports both students and teachers, and drives overall educational success. We carry this out using a variety of methods:

- Work scrutinies – These take place throughout the year and have a specific focus. Following work being submitted, staff will collectively monitor, assess and then feedback on the work scrutiny. These will be both exercise book and digital work book looks
- Learning walks – These are drop-ins and will have different foci depending on current needs and CPD topics.

- Observations – These are calendared at the beginning of the academic year. Communication will occur prior to the observation, evidence will be observed to support evaluative comments and then reflection will occur following the observation.
- Environment checks – These are calendared and check the quality of our environment and to ensure it is conducive of a positive learning and teaching environment.
- Student Voice – These are carried out by both Subject Leads and through the Teaching and Learning lead to gauge student's perceptions of teaching and learning and the lesson areas they are engaging in.

Appendix of key terms used throughout the policy

AfL: Assessment for Learning. This is similar to diagnosis in that teachers use a range of tasks, questions, feedback to determine how much students have learnt and what they need to move on to. However, where diagnosis simply determines where gaps in learning are, AfL will inform changes within the lesson, changes to future lessons to address weaknesses, and changes to entire schemes of work. AfL should permeate every lesson and be used constantly to direct support and challenge where it is needed.

Lesson Question: a question which addresses what students need to know from a topic or unit of work. This should address key knowledge, skills, and contextual information needed by the student. The ability of the students to be able to answer this question is the core aim of the scheme of work/series of lessons and as such all lessons should build to support students in understanding the issues and processes surrounding this question.

Adaptive Teaching: provision of different versions of a task or resource to support students with different needs or at different points of the 5 learning steps. This may be provision of a harder, challenge task for students finding the work too easy, or extra teacher support for a student struggling to understand the lesson. This will be identified by continuous reflection and performance reflection.

Homework: The Kidsgrove Secondary School terminology for work completed by students at home to supplement the learning taking place in the classroom.

Scaffolding: support put in place to help students to achieve the requirements of a task. Examples include sentence starters, prompts, pre-populated tables, etc. This should give students a framework to support their learning and assist them in achieving at the same level of their peers, albeit with a little more support. The aim should be that scaffolding is a temporary measure to be gradually withdrawn as students progress.

Success Criteria: a list of requirements for students to be able to succeed in a given task. It may be that students need to consider key vocabulary in their response, or set it out in a particular way, but success criteria should provide guidance and a useful 'tick list' for students to check that they have met all the necessary points to succeed.

Fix It: Lessons resulting from an assessment or period of diagnosis where students are provided with opportunities to make corrections to previous work, address weaknesses in learning, and aim to improve

on prior attainment. This may be one lesson where you want to address some misconceptions from last lesson or could be several lessons following an assessment where you want to cover areas where several students made mistakes or lost marks.

It is important that teachers begin by establishing what students already know, or can do, using assessment data or through questioning in a previous lesson. This will ensure there is sufficient challenge, and students are continuing to improve.