Teaching & Learning Policy

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Introduction

At Abertillery Learning Community, we endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where all learners are given the opportunity to succeed. High quality learning and teaching is at the heart of all that we do and we continuously reflect on standards in order to achieve this aim.

This policy supports the learning community to achieve excellence by:

- Challenging all learners to exceed expectations;
- Engaging learners in creative and innovative learning experiences;
- Encouraging learners to take responsibility for their own learning;
- Creating an ethos of continuous professional development for all staff.

Abertillery Learning Community has adopted the DRICE ethos in its drive to achieve excellence. This ethos permeates all areas of the learning community and is consistent and progressive throughout the learning phases. We call this approach "Making Connections in Learning".

All learning that takes place:

- Develops learners' thinking skills (D);
- Provides opportunities for positive role-modelling of expectations (R);
- Ensures maximum impact on the progress learners make (I);
- Challenges expectations (C);
- Engages learners actively in the learning process (E).

Minimum Expectations

Detailed below is what is expected of all members of the learning community at all times in order to ensure an excellent learning experience for every one of our learners.

Positive Relationships

- Learners are warmly welcomed into every lesson;
- Staff show care, concern for and interest in every learner;
- Staff display enthusiasm for learning;
- Staff role model appropriate language and behaviour at all times.

Learning Environment

- Displays are used as a means of celebrating children's work and are updated regularly to reflect current learning;

- All displays support and encourage learning;
- All classrooms are well-organised to facilitate learning and the development of independence;

- All learners have access to a well-organised, comfortable and attractive reading environment;
- All Foundation Phase classrooms have access to areas for imaginative play, which give opportunities for a range of play and role-play;
- In the Primary Phase, the outdoor learning environment is planned for use as an extension of the learning environment;
- Inspirational/ aspirational quotations are evident in every classroom and shared area;
- All campuses have a 'Making Connections in Learning' (DRICE) display in at least one shared area incorporating the ALC logo and 'Making Connections in Learning' jigsaw pieces (Appendix 1);
- All classrooms have a 'Making Connections in Learning' (DRICE) display incorporating the 'Making Connections in Learning' jigsaw pieces (Appendix 2). These displays are used as a reference point throughout teaching and learning;
- 'Making the Connections in Learning' principles and jigsaw pieces are incorporated into classroom displays wherever relevant (Appendix 1);
- All classroom and office doors display what staff members are currently reading.(Appendix 3 is an example of how this may look);
- All classrooms contain WAGOLL (What A Good One Looks Like) displays that are regularly updated to meet the learning needs of the learners within the class;
- All classrooms contain a 'Growth Mindset' display incorporating the phrase "Change your words, Change your mindset". At Foundation Phase this is a sunflower, at Key Stage 2 this is a plant and at Secondary Phase this is a mountain (Examples of Growth Mindset displays - Appendix 4).

Planning

- The planning aide memoire is used to plan for opportunities to develop DRICE principles in lessons. Although every lesson will incorporate some aspects of DRICE, there is no expectation that all principles will be included in or relevant to every lesson (Appendix 5);
- HOT (Hooked On Thinking) tasks serve to develop thinking skills and may or may not link to the content of the lesson (logo - Appendix 6);
- All lessons contain a starter that relates to the main body of the lesson (this is separate to HOT tasks);
- Incidental Welsh and bilingualism is an expectation in all lessons (Appendix 7 & 8);

- All lessons are built around clearly defined skills-based "Learning Objectives" (LO), which are made explicit to learners;

- Learners understand how they can achieve the "Learning Objective" through clear "Success Criteria";
- Learners are challenged to exceed expectations through effective differentiation and appropriate support;
- Formative assessment is at the core of all learning and all learners are aware of their next steps in learning. Self and peer assessment is regularly planned for;
- Learning is reviewed throughout the lesson and learners are regularly referred back to the "Success Criteria" through the use of mini plenaries ("Pit Stops"). Plenaries encourage learners to reflect on what they have learnt and what strategies have helped them to learn.

Organisation

- Classes on the Secondary Campus have seating plans for every lesson;
- Y2+ Classrooms contain a "Learning Table" which learners can independently access and the table holds resources to support learning;
- "Lead Learners" are in place in every classroom, acting as role models for learning;
- Learners are allocated "Learning Partners" who support each other with their learning;
- HOT (Hooked On Thinking) tasks take place every time learners enter the classroom before a lesson begins in Secondary. In Foundation Phase and Key Stage Two, learners are engaged in learning following all transition points. HOT tasks (thinking tasks) take place regularly and when appropriate.

Language of Learning

- All staff are role models for standard English;
- All staff use Growth Mindset language with learners (examples in Appendix 4);
- All classrooms actively use the agreed common language of learning with learners (glossary - Appendix 9);
- Incidental Welsh and bilingualism is an expectation in all lessons (Appendix 7 & 8).

Appendices

1) Making Connections in Learning (DRICE) jigsaw pieces
2) Making Connections in Learning (DRICE) classroom poster
3) What staff are currently reading sign (Suggested template)
4) Growth Mindset display examples and suggested vocabulary
5) Aide-memoire for lesson planning
6) HOT (Hooked On Thinking) tasks logo
7) a. Foundation Phase Glossary of Welsh incidental language
   b. Key Stage Two and Secondary Glossary of Welsh incidental language
8) Bank of phrases for Welsh across the curriculum
9) Glossary Common language of learning