The Catholic High School Chester

Teaching and Learning

Approved By	Full Governing Board
Category	Curriculum
Policy Owner	T. Wilson
Date Approved	14/7/26
Next Review Date	July 2028

1. Vision

1.1 We strive to be an exceptional school that is inclusive and progressive, where everyone matters and everyone achieves. We recognise that our students are made in the image and likeness of God and are therefore unique and valued. Guided by the principles of Catholic social teaching, we recognise the inherent dignity and worth of every individual and value the unique contribution they make to our community.

1.2 We firmly believe that education is transformational and understand our responsibility to support all students to succeed. We are committed to identifying and removing barriers to learning and providing the support students need to make progress, achieve success and reach their full potential. Inspired by the principles of solidarity and the common good, we are relentless in our ambition to ensure that no student is left behind.

1.3 Positive relationships between staff and students are central to achieving our aims. We seek to create a culture of respect, empathy and compassion in which students experience a strong sense of belonging and are empowered to thrive academically and personally.

1.4 Rooted in the Catholic belief in the transformative power of education, we aim to inspire confident, curious and open-minded learners through exceptional teaching in a caring and supportive environment. We want students to develop a thirst for knowledge, a love of learning and the ability to reflect on and take increasing responsibility for their own learning.

1.5 By nurturing resilience, ambition and a positive approach to challenge, we aim to equip our students to achieve their potential and make meaningful contributions to the world around them.

2. Aims

2.1 Students at The Catholic High School are entitled to:

- Enjoy their education and develop a love of learning, experiencing joy, fulfilment and a sense of purpose in their learning.
- Access an ambitious, broad and inclusive curriculum that recognises their individual needs, abilities and starting points and enables them to achieve and exceed their potential.
- Experience exceptional teaching that develops secure knowledge, understanding and skills and enables them to make strong progress over time.
- Receive appropriate support and challenge, ensuring that barriers to learning are identified and addressed and that no student is left behind.
- Develop as confident, curious and reflective learners who understand how they learn, respond positively to challenge and take increasing responsibility for their own progress.
- Feel safe, secure and confident in their learning environment, where positive relationships, high expectations and mutual respect enable all students to flourish.

- Develop as responsible citizens, demonstrating respect for others, taking responsibility for their actions and showing care for the world around them.

2.2 These aims are rooted in the principles of human dignity, solidarity, stewardship, the common good and the preferential option for the poor, reflecting the Catholic mission and ethos of the school.

3. Teaching Principles

3.1 At The Catholic High School, we believe that exceptional teaching is the most important school-based factor in enabling students to achieve and flourish. Our approach to teaching and learning is rooted in high expectations, positive relationships and a shared belief that all students can make progress.

3.2 Effective teaching focuses on learning rather than tasks. Teachers plan with a clear understanding of what students should know, understand or be able to do and consider how learning will be demonstrated before selecting activities. Teaching builds on prior knowledge and is adapted in response to students' needs and understanding.

3.3 Our approach seeks to ensure that students are required to think hard and engage in productive struggle. Students should have sufficient time to think, practise and apply their learning independently, while receiving appropriate modelling, scaffolding and support.

3.4 Effective teaching and learning is underpinned by the following principles:

- Plan for learning – teachers identify the intended learning and evidence of success, anticipate misconceptions and use available information, including Provision Mapper, to plan appropriate adaptive teaching and support.
- Build on prior learning – retrieval practice and regular revisiting of important knowledge are used to strengthen memory, identify gaps and connect new learning to what students already know.
- Model clearly and release responsibility gradually – teachers use approaches such as I Do, We Do, You Do, where appropriate, to provide clear modelling, guided practice and increasing opportunities for independent application.
- Make students think hard – students are given purposeful challenge, sufficient thinking time and opportunities for productive struggle. Teachers avoid intervening too quickly and gradually remove scaffolding as students develop confidence and expertise.
- Check for understanding and adapt – teachers routinely check what students know and understand through effective questioning and formative assessment. Misconceptions are identified and addressed, and teaching is adjusted in response.
- Use questioning purposefully – strategies such as cold calling, probing, asking students to explain or defend their thinking, agree or disagree and justify responses are used to involve all students and deepen thinking.
- Develop independence and metacognition – students are supported to plan, monitor and evaluate their learning, reflect on the strategies they use and take increasing responsibility for improvement.

- Create the conditions for learning – consistent routines, high expectations and positive relationships establish calm, purposeful classrooms where students feel safe to contribute, make mistakes and learn.
- Provide purposeful feedback – feedback identifies misconceptions and next steps and enables students to improve their knowledge, understanding and work.

A Consistent Approach to Lessons

3.5 There should be a familiar and consistent approach to lessons across the school. Teachers use their professional expertise and subject knowledge to apply the school's teaching and learning expectations appropriately within their curriculum area.

Lessons should include:

- a strong start, with a positive meet and greet, calm entry and a purposeful 'Do Now' activity to engage students in learning;
- clear teaching focused on what students will know, understand or be able to do;
- 'I Do, We Do, You Do', as appropriate, moving from clear modelling and guided practice towards independent application;
- regular checking for understanding, with misconceptions identified and teaching adapted in response;
- opportunities for students to think hard, engage in productive struggle and work independently;
- active teacher presence through navigating the classroom, purposeful questioning and live feedback;
- adaptive teaching and effective deployment of additional adult support to meet students' learning needs;
- a calm and purposeful End and Send routine which concludes the lesson positively and reinforces expectations.

This consistent approach establishes clear routines and expectations for students and supports high-quality teaching and learning across the school.

4. Feedback

4.1 Effective feedback is an essential part of teaching and learning. Feedback should identify misconceptions, support improvement and enable students to act on guidance provided.

4.2 There must be evidence in students' books of teacher input every four to five lessons taught with a class. This input should be recorded in a different colour to that used by students, as directed by Curriculum Learning Leaders to ensure consistency within curriculum areas.

4.3 Evidence of teacher input may include:

- marked work;

- mid or end of unit assessments;
- live marking;
- whole-class feedback; or
- COPS corrections.

4.4 Teachers should use live marking and COPS as part of their routine classroom practice. Students should use red pen to demonstrate corrections and improvements made in response to feedback.

4.5 Where feedback or marking takes place outside the lesson, students must be given time to respond to the feedback provided. This may, where appropriate, form part of the Do Now activity.

4.6 When whole-class feedback is used following assessments, tests or examinations, appropriate extension or development tasks must be provided for students who have answered correctly, ensuring that all students are able to continue to develop their learning.

4.7 Feedback should be focused on improvement and there should be clear evidence in students' work that they have been given opportunities to act upon the feedback provided.

5. Assessment

5.1 Assessment is the process of determining what a student knows, understands and can do. Assessment is used to identify strengths, misconceptions and next steps and to inform teaching, curriculum planning, intervention and support.

5.2 Assessment takes two main forms: formative assessment and summative assessment.

Formative Assessment

5.3 Formative assessment takes place continuously as part of teaching and learning. Teachers routinely check students' understanding and use the information gathered to adapt teaching and respond to students' needs.

5.4 Formative assessment may take a variety of forms and should enable teachers to identify gaps in knowledge, misconceptions and areas requiring further teaching or support.

Formal Assessment

5.5 To ensure consistency across the curriculum, all departments are expected to complete three formal assessments per academic year for each year group, aligned with tracking dates. Departments may complete additional assessments at the discretion of the Curriculum Leader of Learning.

5.6 Formal assessments should support the school's Learn–Check–Apply approach, enabling students to revisit key knowledge, check their understanding and practise applying their learning.

Assessment Preparation

5.7 Students must be provided with preparation materials at least two weeks before a formal assessment.

5.8 Preparation materials must be set as a task on Firefly and clearly state:

- the date of the assessment;
- what will be assessed;
- how students will be assessed;
- what students should revise, learn or practise; and
- the resources available to support their preparation.

5.9 Preparation materials should support the Learn–Check–Apply approach, enabling students to revisit key knowledge, check their understanding and practise applying their learning.

Assessment Conditions

5.10 Formal assessments should be completed under exam conditions and should not be open book.

5.11 Appropriate scaffolds or support may be provided where required, such as sentence starters, key words or other prompts. These should support students to access the assessment without providing the knowledge or answers being assessed.

5.12 Departments may use open-book tasks as part of their curriculum, but these should not replace formal assessments.

Assessment Design

5.13 Formal assessments should:

- align with curriculum objectives;
- reflect the knowledge and skills students have been taught;
- provide an accurate reflection of what students know, understand and can do independently;
- be consistent across the department, with students studying the same course completing the same assessment, except where adaptations are required to meet specific student needs.

Moderation and Standardisation

5.14 Departments must have a clear process for standardising and moderating formal assessments.

5.15 Assessment outcomes should be moderated to ensure consistency and accuracy of marking across classes and teachers. Samples of student work should be reviewed collaboratively to agree standards and identify any adjustments required.

5.16 Departments should retain moderation records to support quality assurance processes.

Feedback and Improvement

5.17 Marks from formal assessments must be uploaded to Firefly so that students and parents can access them.

5.18 Assessment outcomes should be used to identify strengths, misconceptions and next steps.

5.19 Students must receive clear improvement guidance following each formal assessment. Time must be provided in lessons for students to act on the feedback, with a clear task visible in their work and improvements completed using red pen.

5.20 Departments should use assessment information to inform curriculum planning, intervention and support.

Additional Assessments

5.21 Departments may choose to complete additional end-of-unit or end-of-topic assessments to assess students' ongoing learning between the three formal assessments each year.

5.22 These assessments should be marked by the member of staff to inform future planning and curriculum design and may contribute to the expected evidence of teacher input in students' work.

5.23 Students should complete a feedback task following an end-of-unit or end-of-topic assessment.

6. School Examinations

6.1 The dates of internal school examinations will be published on Firefly or communicated home via School Post. Revision and preparation materials will be published on Firefly and set as a task at least six weeks before mock and end-of-year examinations. These materials will clearly identify the content to be assessed and the resources available to support students' preparation.

6.2 Formal school examinations take place as follows:

- students in Years 7–9 sit formal examinations once each academic year;
- students in Year 10 sit formal examinations towards the end of the academic year;
- students in Year 11 complete a period of mock examinations;
- students in Year 12 sit formal examinations towards the end of the academic year; and
- students in Year 13 complete a period of mock examinations.

6.3 School examinations should provide students with experience of formal assessment conditions and provide teachers with information about students' knowledge, understanding and ability to apply their learning independently.

7. Tracking

7.1 Students' progress is formally tracked three times each academic year. Tracking information is shared with parents and carers through Firefly.

7.2 At two tracking points during the academic year, students will also be provided with targets for improvement. These targets will identify specific areas for development and support students in understanding the steps they can take to make further progress.

7.3 All students are set ambitious targets based on prior attainment. Tracking information is used to monitor students' progress, identify underachievement and inform appropriate intervention and support.

7.4 Each year group will also have an opportunity for parents and carers to meet with curriculum staff to discuss their child's progress and attainment.

Years 7, 8 and 9

7.5 Students in Years 7–9 are allocated a target band in each subject. Target bands are informed by prior attainment and indicate the broad GCSE outcome that a student is working towards.

Target Band	Indicative GCSE Outcome
1	Likely to achieve Grade 7 or above
2	Likely to achieve Grades 5–6
3	Likely to achieve Grades 3–4
4	Likely to achieve Grades 1–2
S	Requires additional support to achieve a Grade 1

7.6 Target bands provide a broad indication of expected future attainment and are used to support appropriate challenge, curriculum planning and the monitoring of progress.

7.7 Students' current attainment is reviewed against their target band through the school's tracking process. Target bands are reviewed at appropriate points to ensure that they remain suitable and ambitious.

Years 10 and 11

7.8 Students in Year 10 receive a GCSE Minimum Target Grade (MTG), which they carry into Year 11.

7.9 GCSE qualifications are graded from 9 to 1, with Grade 9 being the highest grade.

7.10 Students' current attainment is tracked against their Minimum Target Grade to identify progress, underachievement and any need for additional intervention or support.

Sixth Form

7.11 Students in Year 12 receive an A Level target grade, which they carry into Year 13.

7.12 A Level qualifications are graded from A* to E.

7.13 Students' current attainment is tracked against their target grade to identify progress, underachievement and any need for additional intervention or support.

8. Setting

8.1 Setting may be used in some curriculum areas to support teaching and learning and to enable students to receive appropriate challenge and support.

8.2 Where setting is used, decisions will be based on available assessment and tracking information. Student progress will be reviewed regularly and changes to sets may be made where appropriate.

8.3 Students and parents or carers will be informed where a change of set is made.

9. Homework

9.1 The aim of homework is to support students to develop their learning outside the classroom, strengthen key knowledge and skills and develop positive habits of independent study.

Key Stage 3

9.2 Students in Years 7, 8 and 9 will complete weekly homework in English and Mathematics through Sparx Reader and Sparx Maths.

9.3 Students are expected to complete:

- one hour of Sparx Maths each week; and
- one hour of Sparx Reader each week.

9.4 Sparx homework will be set and due on the same designated day each week, providing students and parents or carers with a clear and consistent homework routine.

9.5 In other curriculum areas, homework may be set to support recall, retrieval or revision. These tasks should normally take no longer than 30 minutes to complete and students will be given at least one week to complete the task.

9.6 Revision materials will be provided at least four weeks before relevant assessments, enabling students to prepare effectively and use appropriate revision strategies.

Key Stages 4 and 5

9.7 At Key Stages 4 and 5, homework will be set as appropriate to the subject, course and stage of learning. Homework may include retrieval and revision activities, independent study, preparation for assessment, completion or development of classwork and examination practice.

9.8 Homework should be purposeful and support students to consolidate knowledge, practise skills and prepare for future learning or assessment.

Setting and Monitoring Homework

9.9 Homework will be set as a task on Firefly so that students and parents or carers are aware of the work to be completed and the relevant deadline. Students will be informed where and how homework should be submitted.

9.10 Parents and carers can access homework information through Parents Firefly and are encouraged to support students in establishing positive homework and independent study routines.

9.11 Students are expected to complete homework by the deadline set. Non-completion of homework will be followed up in accordance with the school's homework procedures.

10. Absent Students

10.1 We have high expectations for attendance and expect students to be in school. However, we recognise that there may be genuine reasons why students are absent.

10.2 It is important that students do not fall behind or develop gaps in their learning as a result of absence. Summaries of missed learning will therefore be provided to enable students to recap the work missed and ensure that there are no gaps in their books.

10.3 The summary will be provided by the classroom teacher and will:

- have the heading ‘Absent Student – Topic Title’;
- consist of no more than five bullet points; and
- be provided to the student to stick into their book.

10.4 Students who are absent can also access Firefly to support them in catching up on missed learning.

11. Monitoring and Evaluation

11.1 Teaching and learning will be monitored and evaluated across the school to ensure that all students make the best possible progress from their starting points.

11.2 The aims of monitoring and evaluation are:

- to make secure judgements about the quality of teaching and learning across the school;
- to monitor and evaluate the progress of students;
- to evaluate the impact of teaching on students' learning and ensure that high standards of professional practice are established and maintained; and
- to identify training and development needs across teaching and support staff and inform the school's CPD programme.

11.3 Curriculum Leaders of Learning (CLLs) and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will monitor and evaluate the impact of teaching on students' learning through:

- learning walks;
- work samples;
- monitoring visits;
- analysis of tracking and assessment outcomes; and
- student voice and teacher questionnaires.

11.4 Monitoring and evaluation will be used to identify strengths, areas for development and appropriate support or professional development.

New Members of Staff

11.5 All new teaching staff will have a formal lesson observation conducted during their first term by a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

12. Book Expectations

12.1 Students' books and folders provide a record of their learning and achievement and should support them in understanding and revisiting their learning journey.

12.2 To ensure that students understand the learning journey within each subject, unit signposts will be provided and evident in students' books or folders.

12.3 A copy of the school's Expectations of Students' Work should be present in every student book or folder and students are expected to follow these expectations.

12.4 Books and folders should be kept neat and well-presented and should demonstrate students' pride in their work and learning.

12.5 Books and folders are also an important resource for recap and revision. As such, students should normally keep their books and folders at home and bring them to lessons as required, rather than leaving them in school.

13. The Roles of Individuals

13.1 Students at The Catholic High School are expected to take an active role in their learning and demonstrate an excellent Attitude to Learning.

13.2 Students should:

- arrive at lessons on time and ready to learn;
- enter classrooms calmly, sit in their assigned seat and begin the Do Now activity as directed;

- bring the correct books, equipment and resources to every lesson;
- engage positively in lessons and contribute to their learning;
- listen carefully to teachers and other students;
- follow instructions and classroom routines;
- complete classwork and homework to the best of their ability;
- take pride in the presentation and quality of their work;
- use red pen to make corrections and improvements in response to feedback;
- respond to feedback and use improvement time effectively;
- engage in independent practice and think hard about their learning;
- ask for help and support when required;
- catch up on learning missed through absence using the summaries and resources provided;
- respect the right of others to learn;
- take responsibility for their actions and learning.

13.3 Parents and carers play an important role in supporting their child's learning and progress.

13.4 Parents and carers are encouraged to:

- ensure that their child attends school regularly and arrives on time;
- support their child in arriving at school ready to learn and with the correct equipment and resources;
- take an active interest in their child's learning and encourage positive attitudes towards school;
- support their child in completing homework and independent study, including Sparx Maths and Sparx Reader, where applicable;
- use Parents Firefly to access information about homework, assessment and their child's progress;
- encourage their child to respond positively to feedback and targets for improvement;
- support their child in preparing for formal assessments and examinations;
- attend parents' evenings and engage with information provided by the school regarding their child's progress;
- contact the school where they have concerns about their child's learning or progress.

13.5 The school will work in partnership with parents and carers and will provide information to support them in understanding their child's attainment, progress and next steps.

13.6 Teachers at The Catholic High School are expected to establish high expectations, positive relationships and consistent routines which enable all students to learn and make progress.

13.7 Teachers will:

- plan lessons with a clear understanding of what students should know, understand or be able to do;
- focus planning on learning rather than tasks, considering the evidence of learning before selecting activities;
- use available information, including Provision Mapper, to plan adaptive teaching and support for students' learning needs;
- anticipate misconceptions and plan appropriate explanations, modelling and resources;
- be ready for lessons on time and establish a strong start through positive meet and greet, calm entry, seating plans and a purposeful Do Now activity;
- complete the register within the first five minutes of the lesson;
- make learning objectives and success criteria explicit;
- use I Do, We Do, You Do, as appropriate, to move from clear modelling and guided practice towards independent application;
- use retrieval practice and opportunities to revisit prior learning;
- ensure students have opportunities to think hard, engage in productive struggle and work independently;
- allow students appropriate thinking time before intervening with additional support or prompts;
- check for understanding throughout lessons and adapt teaching in response to students' understanding and misconceptions;
- use purposeful questioning, including cold calling, probing and asking students to explain, justify or defend their thinking;
- navigate the classroom and maintain an active teacher presence;
- use live marking and COPS to identify and address errors and misconceptions;
- provide purposeful feedback in accordance with the expectations set out in this policy and give students time to respond using red pen;
- deploy Teaching Assistants effectively and consider what is different from and additional to high-quality classroom teaching for students with SEND;

- maintain high expectations for students' conduct, focus, engagement and quality of work;
- follow the school's End and Send routine, ensuring lessons conclude calmly, positively and with appropriate recognition;
- set and monitor homework in accordance with the school's homework expectations, including Sparx arrangements where applicable;
- provide students who have been absent with a summary of missed learning in accordance with this policy;
- complete formal assessments in accordance with the school's assessment expectations, including preparation, assessment conditions, moderation and feedback;
- publish revision materials on Firefly and set these as a task at least six weeks in advance of mock and end-of-year examinations;
- use assessment and tracking information to identify underachievement and inform curriculum planning, intervention and support;
- provide students with subject-specific targets for improvement at the identified tracking points;
- maintain accurate records and complete tracking information within published deadlines.

13.8 Teaching Assistants play an important role in supporting teaching and learning and enabling students to access learning, develop independence and make progress.

13.9 Teaching Assistants will:

- arrive at lessons on time and be prepared to support learning;
- understand the intended learning and expectations of the lesson;
- use available information, including Provision Mapper, to understand students' learning needs and the support identified;
- work in partnership with the classroom teacher to support adaptive teaching and meet students' individual learning needs;
- support students to engage in learning and maintain high expectations for conduct, focus and quality of work;
- check students' understanding and identify misconceptions or areas of difficulty;
- provide appropriate prompts, questioning and scaffolding to support students' learning;
- allow students sufficient time to think and engage in productive struggle before intervening;
- gradually reduce support where appropriate to develop students' confidence and independence;

- provide live feedback and support students to make corrections and improvements, in line with curriculum area expectations;
- support the effective use of COPS and red-pen corrections where appropriate;
- communicate relevant information about students' learning, progress and areas of difficulty to the classroom teacher;
- support the classroom teacher in ensuring that students receive provision that is different from or additional to high-quality classroom teaching, where identified;
- promote students' independence and avoid creating unnecessary reliance on adult support.

13.10 Curriculum Leaders of Learning are responsible for ensuring high-quality teaching and learning within their curriculum area and for establishing consistent approaches in line with whole-school expectations.

13.11 Curriculum Leaders of Learning will:

- ensure that the curriculum is ambitious, appropriately sequenced and supports students to build knowledge, understanding and skills over time;
- ensure that whole-school teaching and learning expectations are understood and consistently implemented within their curriculum area;
- support teachers in planning for learning, adaptive teaching and the effective use of Provision Mapper;
- establish consistent curriculum-area expectations for teacher and Teaching Assistant input in students' work, including the colour used to distinguish adult input from student work;
- monitor the quality of students' work and the implementation of feedback expectations;
- ensure that three formal common assessments are completed each academic year for each year group, aligned with tracking dates;
- ensure that students studying the same course complete the same formal assessment, except where adaptations are required to meet specific student needs;
- ensure that assessment preparation materials are published on Firefly at least two weeks before formal assessments and meet the school's assessment expectations;
- establish clear processes for the standardisation and moderation of formal assessments and ensure moderation records are retained;
- ensure assessment outcomes are used to identify strengths, misconceptions and next steps and inform curriculum planning, intervention and support;
- ensure students receive clear improvement guidance and appropriate time to act on assessment feedback;
- ensure assessment marks are uploaded to Firefly;

- ensure revision materials for mock and end-of-year examinations are published on Firefly and set as a task at least six weeks in advance;
- use tracking and assessment information to identify underachievement and ensure appropriate intervention and support are implemented;
- monitor the progress of students and groups of students within the curriculum area;
- provide appropriate support, guidance and professional development for staff;
- contribute to the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning through learning walks, work samples and other quality assurance activities;
- identify strengths and areas for development within the curriculum area and take appropriate action to secure improvement.

13.12 Senior Leaders at The Catholic High School will:

- lead, support and advise Curriculum Leaders of Learning through regular link meetings;
- evaluate and monitor the impact of teaching and learning alongside Curriculum Leaders of Learning;
- celebrate excellence and address underperformance;
- plan and evaluate strategies to secure high-quality teaching and learning across the school;
- monitor the quality of teaching and learning through the school's monitoring and evaluation processes;
- consider and act on information gathered through student voice;
- ensure resources are used effectively to support high-quality teaching and learning;
- monitor the impact of continuing professional development on staff practice and subject knowledge; and
- identify underachievement and ensure appropriate intervention and support are implemented promptly.

13.13 Governors and Trustees at The Catholic High School will:

- monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning through reports and information provided by Senior Leaders;
- monitor student progress and outcomes, including the progress of key groups of students;
- hold school leaders to account for the quality of teaching and learning and the progress students make;
- ensure that appropriate resources are available to support high-quality teaching and learning;
- support and challenge school leaders in securing continuous improvement; and

- ensure that the school's approach to teaching and learning reflects its Catholic mission, vision and values.

14. Monitoring and Review

14.1 The implementation and effectiveness of this policy will be monitored by the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team as part of the school's ongoing monitoring and evaluation processes.

14.2 The policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure that it remains effective, reflects current school practice and is consistent with relevant legislation and guidance.

14.3 The policy may be reviewed earlier where there are significant changes to legislation, statutory guidance, school procedures or practice.

14.4 The next scheduled review date is shown on the front page of this policy.