

TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

PRINCIPAL AIMS

The School's Teaching and Learning aims are underpinned by this Mission Statement:

Tonbridge School aims to provide a caring and enlightened environment in which the talents of each individual flourish. We encourage boys to be creative and tolerant and to strive for academic, sporting and cultural excellence. Respect for tradition and the openness to innovation are equally valued. A well-established House system at the heart of the School fosters a strong sense of belonging. Tonbridge seeks to celebrate its distinctive mixture of Boarders and Day boys; this helps to create a unique broadening and deepening of opportunities. We want boys to enjoy their time here, but also to be made aware of their social and moral responsibilities. Tonbridgians should enter into the adult world with the knowledge and self-belief to fulfil their own potential and, in many cases, to become leaders in their chosen field. Equally, we hope to foster a life-long empathy for the needs and views of others: in the words of the great novelist and Old Tonbridgian, E.M. Forster: 'Only connect'.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL AIM TO DO WITH AND FOR THE BOYS?

The School is committed to enabling boys to acquire new knowledge and make progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught by:

- providing opportunities for boys to achieve the best possible grades in public examinations (commensurate with their perceived ability) and thus to enable entry to the higher education courses, training and careers of their choice;
- teachers teaching and boys learning widely beyond the syllabus: in addition to lessons, this is achieved principally through wider reading, attendance at talks, lectures and other events, participation in (departmental) clubs and societies, and (in the Sixth Form) the voluntary undertaking of an Extended Project;
- giving opportunities for boys to demonstrate the importance of physical fitness and mental well-being.

Boys are encouraged and enabled to foster the application of intellectual, physical or creative effort, interest in their work, and the ability to think and learn for themselves by:

- developing effective and confident written and oral communication skills, including an ability to work collaboratively and, as appropriate, to present an argument persuasively and to write with accuracy and flair;
- developing experimental, numeracy, economic literacy and analytical skills associated with problem solving;
- becoming increasingly adept at using technology to deepen and enhance learning, communicate effectively and problem solve;
- developing study skills, including effective time management and revision strategies;
- developing self-motivation and self-discipline and an awareness of the skills needed for independent learning;
- developing intellectual curiosity and an openness to new ideas and viewpoints;
- developing enjoyment of creativity and of learning for its own sake, and the ability to 'think outside of the box' and to read, research and apply learning beyond discrete academic areas;
- becoming more aware of the importance of spirituality and reflection;
- becoming more aware of their responsibilities as well as their individual needs and wishes;

- interacting with girls, where possible, and understanding the emotional similarities and differences between boys and girls;
- understanding the need for consideration for others and developing an understanding of, respect for and empathy with the lives and experiences of people with different belief systems and social and cultural backgrounds.

HOW DOES THE SCHOOL MEET THESE AIMS?

The School:

- has put in place a curriculum, which is regularly reviewed, that offers rigour as well as a broad subject choice, which pays regard to the range of abilities and needs of boys, and which makes a careful consideration of non-examined elements.

The School is committed to teachers demonstrating appropriate knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught and of all relevant teaching methods by:

- ensuring that all prospective teachers are suitably qualified and by checking subject knowledge and understanding in a demanding way at interview prior to appointment;
- providing an induction program that is suitable for the needs of all new staff;
- supporting colleagues, as appropriate, via mentoring and lesson observation to ensure good standards of teaching which uses a variety of approaches;
- encouraging teachers to keep pace with changes and new ideas;
- ensuring that departments share good ideas and practice in the imaginative use of classroom and whole-School resources, both physical and technological;
- enabling teachers to undertake and, where appropriate, to deliver (through INSET, Tonbridge Professional Development and other organisations) individualised Continuing Professional Development to invigorate their own teaching and learning;
- adequately funding departments to maintain existing or purchase new resources so that teachers can utilise effectively classroom resources of an appropriate quality, quantity and range.

Teachers within the School strive to provide stimulating teaching involving well-planned lessons, effective teaching methods, suitable activities, and wise management of class-time by:

- seeking collectively to inspire boys with a passion for learning within and beyond subject disciplines, with teachers acting as mentors and role models;
- planning lessons, setting (home)work and providing a wide variety of valid, challenging and stimulating learning experiences;
- encouraging boys to take control of their own learning and providing opportunities for them to present their ideas, debate and give performances to others, including their peers;
- encouraging, and making feasible, collaborative endeavours, both academically and in other areas of School life (for example music, drama, the arts and sport);
- encouraging and providing a wide variety of concerts, exhibitions, plays, films, readings and other performances (to include talks by and meetings with outside speakers, university-style seminars and lectures);
- encouraging and providing a wide range of physical and sporting challenges, including opportunities for exploration and adventure;
- providing opportunities for the boys to interact with girls and boys from other backgrounds, e.g. through drama, the Ardeche trip and Socials.

Teachers are committed to showing a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the boys as individuals, and ensure these are taken into account in the planning of lessons and other activities by:

- having high expectations of the boys and in their teaching;
- being sensitive to individual needs and learning styles, providing appropriate academic challenges and support to the boys;
- seeking to ascertain and incorporate the views of boys on a broad range of aspects of School life in our planning.

The School's Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions policy encourages and enables teachers to utilise effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging boys to behave responsibly by:

- having high expectations of boys' behaviour;
- feeling supported to deal effectively with poor behaviour, including through communication with other teachers and with Pastoral Tutors and Housemasters.
- rewarding good behaviour;
- understanding the range of appropriate rewards and sanctions through part of the new staff induction programme.

The curriculum itself and the curriculum management provides a framework through which to assess boys' work regularly and thoroughly and to use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that boys can make progress, including:

- a common marking policy for the assessment of boys' work;
- a programme of testing and examination for each year group via departmental tests and whole-School examination and monitoring sessions;
- reviewing performances of boys, teachers and departments by Heads of Department, in conjunction with the Senior Management Team, both within and across departments (including through annual departmental reviews and termly scrutiny of boys' work).