

## Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy

Adopted: June 2017  
 Next Review: May 2019  
 Committee: Teaching & Learning

JCoSS is a learning institution above all else: all its work, policies and practice contributes to that central aim. The purpose of this policy is to set out:

1. our learning ethos
2. how learning is planned and organised
3. how learning is assessed and feedback given to students
4. how the work of teachers is evaluated

This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies which include:

- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Literacy and Numeracy Policies
- Curriculum Policy
- Subject Review Policy
- Able and Ambitious Policy
- Equal Opportunities and Anti-Racism Policy
- Performance Appraisal Policy Teacher & Support
- Code of conduct Policy

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## Rationale

1. JCoSS is a Jewish school. Jewish history, values, beliefs and practices are reflected across the curriculum.
2. The pluralist Jewish ethos is enriched by our Science specialism, our commitment to inclusion, and our 'Etz Limmud' pedagogical approach, working in harmony.
3. Ofsted<sup>1</sup> defines outstanding *teaching, learning and assessment*; JCoSS's 'Etz Limmud' ethos recognises the importance of outstanding *learning*. Thus outstanding *learning and teaching* means:
  - students make exceptional progress both in curricular subjects and as learners
  - students are inspired and challenged
  - teachers have excellent knowledge of their subject, of pedagogical strategies, and of their students' potential and prior learning
  - teachers frequently check understanding and intervene as necessary
  - resources (including technology) and other adults contribute effectively to the learning process
  - assessment and dialogue is of a very high standard, ensuring that students know how to improve.
4. Learning involves praise, awe and wonder. Teacher and student creativity and risk-taking is encouraged in this policy, with the recognition that risk-taking is both valuable and does not always achieve the desired outcome.
5. Learning is a spiritual and emotional process as well as a cognitive one: the climate of relationships and values in the classroom has a key influence on learning.
6. 'The mind is a muscle, not a bucket'<sup>2</sup>: the curriculum at JCoSS seeks to take account of the evolving insights of neurological research into learning, so as to equip students to become better learners.
7. Lessons at JCoSS are all unique, but share common characteristics which will be shared in this policy: structure and planning in the long, medium and short term ensures consistency and coherence.
8. Home Learning extends progress and achievement and is a compulsory and necessary part of the JCoSS curriculum, fully integrated into Assessment for Learning.
9. Numeracy, Literacy, pluralist Judaism, SMSC, Science (in light of our specialism) and ICT are cross-curricular themes as well as discrete learning areas.

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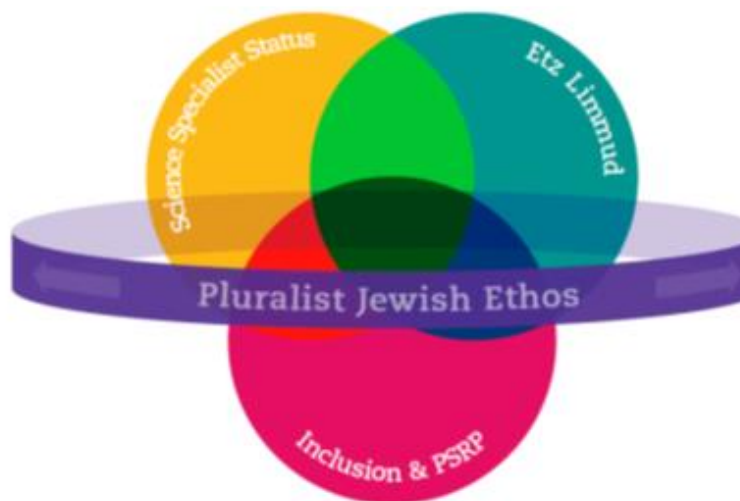
<sup>1</sup> Inspection schedule, August 2016

<sup>2</sup> Carol Dweck, "Mindset"

## 1. The JCoSS Pedagogical Philosophy

The JCoSS Learning Ethos has four inter-connecting elements:

- We are a pluralist Jewish school
- We embrace our approach to learning with the “Etz Limmud” and “engagement” strategies
- We are a Specialist Status College
- We are an inclusive school with an integrated provision for students on the autistic spectrum



All these elements combine and fertilise each other to form a kind of ‘learning ecosystem’.

### Our approach to learning:

- 💡 is evidence-based, open-minded, open-ended and committed to truth – features it has in common with *scientific method and processes*.
- 💡 treats teachers and learners as companions on a journey, each with a unique character and all with potential for growth – features that lend themselves to our *inclusive ethos*.
- 💡 encourages qualities of character and commitment to debate, deep thought and awareness of others – all of which have infused and supported *Jewish life* and scholarship down the ages.

### We are a pluralist Jewish School

- ✧ The pluralist Jewish foundation and character of the school permeates all that we do and all our learning. It does not intrude artificially but where reference can be made to the culture, history, diversity, beliefs or geopolitical context of the Jewish people, that is to be welcomed.
- ✧ Departments have autonomy to create their own curricula, but are encouraged to maintain dialogue with the Jewish Education department to identify and explore possible areas for cross-fertilisation.
- ✧ As a Jewish school we seek to deepen and enrich students’ Jewish understanding and identity; as a pluralist Jewish school we seek to have as broad a definition as possible of what that identity is, and to encourage diversity of opinion and debate. We embrace and value difference.

## Etz Limmud

- ✓ We see our purpose as being to build better learners, by inculcating and nurturing learning habits rather than simply conveying knowledge.
- ✓ In a world where increasingly rapid change is the only certainty, our responsibility as teachers is to equip students to cope with whatever change comes along and to flourish within it.
- ✓ This approach embraces and supports our ethos.
- ✓ The diagram highlights the key skills we wish to develop with our students and colleagues. They are reflected in all schemes of learning.
- ✓ Lessons are planned “split screen”: the learning objectives and outcomes include both *what* will be learned and *how* that learning will take place – which aspects of Etz Limmud will be developed. The two are equally important and both need articulating and emphasising.
- ✓ We use the terminology of “learning” rather than “work” to remind all parties of this focus.
- ✓ JCoSS is a learning institution, where each and every member is regarded as a learner and where all activities are evaluated in terms of the contribution they make to the learning of us all.
- ✓ “Those who make no mistakes rarely make anything of value”: we recognise failure as a necessary and useful part of learning and teaching; rough drafts, work-in-progress and risk-taking are all expected and valued within a thoughtful and responsible structure of experimentation and review. This applies to teachers as much as to students.
- ✓ We disapprove of correcting fluid, both at a literal and a metaphorical level.



## We are a Specialist Science College

- ✓ Our chosen specialism also permeates many aspects of life at JCoSS and enjoys a high profile across the school and in our outreach beyond its walls.
- ✓ Science does not intrude artificially, but where other subjects can use examples and case studies from science and scientists, or encourage students to engage with issues of scientific importance and/or in a scientific way, that is to be welcomed.
- ✓ Use of enquiry and investigative styles of learning are encouraged to support and increase students’ progress with their independent learning skills

## We are an inclusive school with an integrated provision for students on the autistic spectrum

- ✓ The Pears Special Resource Provision is integral to the JCoSS ethos and our physical, organisational and pedagogical structures reflect this relationship.
- ✓ Teachers plan for the learning of all students according to their needs and capabilities – intellectual, physical and moral; lessons, like everything else, are designed to include not to exclude.
- ✓ Lesson plans are explicitly to be read in conjunction with seating plans, which will identify all students with special educational needs including PSRP, A&A, EAL and statements.

## 2. Planning & Organisation of Learning

Learning happens best when there is Quality First Teaching (QFT appendix 1) in conjunction with careful planning in the short, medium and long term.

- Good teaching may mean altering a plan in response to learners, but there needs to be a plan to alter.
- Every teacher and each subject has a different style, but common formats help to ensure consistency.
- Formulaic teaching will not promote good learning, but all lessons need a shape and structure
- The Lesson Plan template is recommended as a format for recording lesson planning, and could be used for all formally observed lessons.
- “Schemes of Learning” provide a clear summary of a unit of work especially for newcomers and those outside the department (e.g. staff with cross-curricular or leadership responsibilities, etc).
- Each department will provide a brief summary of planned learning which will be accessible to parents and governors on Moodle.

### **Use of Technology & ICTAC: *Information & Communications Technology across the Curriculum***

The JCoSS learning environment is designed with ICT at its heart.

- All classrooms are equipped with interactive projectors, a teacher desktop computer and student computers.
- In addition, provision of ICT pods around the school ensures students have ready access to ICT facilities.
- Moodle is an integral part of our Learning and Teaching Resources
- From the outset parents, students and teachers have the expectation of frequent, innovative and judicious use of ICT to enhance learning.

Teachers are encouraged to exploit these facilities to the full wherever it will enhance learning. ICT is a good servant but a bad master; it should not become gimmicky or be used for its own sake. Subject content and learning habits are key, but it is likely that these can be enhanced by skilful choice of strategies and applications. Support is given in all aspects of this provision. Teachers of all subjects need to be mindful of students who are able and ambitious in ICT. An ICT skills audit is undertaken of all new staff, and the outcomes used to plan CPD.

Teachers should be mindful of the ICT Acceptable Use Policy, and the agreement that all members of the school have signed. They should also be alert to any students who may not have access to ICT facilities at home and ensure that allowance is made for them in home learning tasks set.

Since September 2016 ICT/Computer Science has been introduced as a discrete subject in Y7 (Y7 & 8 from Sept 2018). It includes increasing students’ skills in ICT (“doing things right” with a view to increasing technical know-how), students’ capabilities in ICT (“doing the right things” with a view to fitness for purpose) and learning to code.

### **Differentiation**

JCoSS is committed to personalising learning so as to meet the needs of all students. In all lessons, whether setted or not, teachers will plan differentiated activities to ensure that all students are challenged and supported. Even in a group with a narrow range of ability, a range of learning and teaching styles are to be expected over the course of a series of lessons, as well as within an individual lesson

The following should be noted:

- Differentiation is not restricted to providing tasks of varying difficulty: it includes awareness of learning styles, attention spans, SEAL and the full range of Individual Needs and Disabilities
- Differentiation is not restricted to catering for less high-achieving students: it includes provision for the able and ambitious.
- Differentiation is not restricted to the quantity of work expected: the less able need help accessing concepts and problems, not just fewer of them; the more able need broader and deeper learning tasks, not just more of the same ones. Further guidance is given in the Gifted & Talented Policy.

The pedagogical approach of Etz Limmud transcends considerations of 'learning styles', but does not replace them: teachers do need to be aware of individual learning preferences, but they should beware of pandering to students wanting things presented exactly as they prefer. Our role is to build independence in students so that they can learn effectively in any situation: for example, visual learners need to be equipped to cope in situations where there are no visual stimuli.

### **Use of other Adults in the Classroom**

Human resources are the most expensive and valuable at the school's disposal, and careful thought and planning needs to be devoted to the best use of other adults in the classroom, whether they be Learning Support Assistants, or other teachers. The management of those other adults is a key responsibility of a class teacher, and adequate time should be planned and set aside to ensure all are clear as to the objectives of the lesson and their role in supporting students' learning.

The deployment of Learning Support Assistants is the responsibility of the SENCo, and guidance on the most fruitful partnership between teachers and LSAs is contained in the Special Educational Needs Policy.

### **Home Learning**

Home learning, as its name suggests, continues the learning done in class at home and beyond. It should be planned as an integral part of lessons, with the same eye for variety of task, promoting independent learning power, instilling good learning habits and dispositions, and stimulating students to be engaged, curious, resourceful and thoughtful learners.

Departments have freedom to devise the range of tasks that will best support and extend students' learning in their subject area. They should be mindful of teachers' workload: some of the best Home Learning tasks involve more thinking than writing. The following should be noted:

- There is a place for routine tasks, especially for consolidating new learning, but something is wrong if all home learning is of that kind.
- There is a place for extended tasks, especially to allow scope for the more able, but the longer the task the more clarity is needed with instructions, expectations, scheme of assessment etc.
- Home learning is an excellent opportunity to engage parents with what students are doing at school: we expect lively interest and can count on significant support from parents in this respect. Teachers can capitalise on this best by setting clear tasks, including clear deadlines and ensuring students make careful note of the instructions.
- Asking students to involve parents and other family members (e.g. in surveying opinion or bouncing ideas) is a good strategy, but the assessment must be of the student's own learning.
- Teachers should exploit the Link Book not only as a place for students to record their Home Learning tasks, and for recording sanctions, etc, but also as a means of communicating with parents.
- All Home learning is to be recorded on 'Insight'.
- Home learning is set according to the following principles:

|   | <b>Core (En, Ma, Sc, JE)</b>         | <b>Foundation subjects</b>                        |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| KS3<br>20-30 mins per subject in Y7<br>increasing to 30-40 mins by Y9 | 2 pieces of HL per week              | 1 piece of HL per week                            |
| KS4   | On average 2 hrs of core HL per week | On average 1 hr of option choice GCSE HL per week |
| KS5   | 5hrs HL per week per subject         |   |

As a general rule HL is set with at least 48 hours for students to complete it.

Subject specific HL information is contained in the Y7-11 curriculum booklets issued to parents at the start of each academic year.

### **Cross-curricular Learning**

At JCoSS we recognise the importance and value of cross-curricular learning. Our ethos commitment to pluralism, inclusion and science specialism encourages all members of the community to seek creative and unforced links between subjects that enhance learning.

The Lesson Plan template includes “tick-boxes” to indicate where some of these links have been possible, but the approach is not “tick-box” in the negative sense: it should never lead to distortion of learning in other subjects.

In addition to the policy regarding ICTAC above, the following cross-curricular aspects of learning are particularly encouraged:

- Policies on Numeracy and Literacy across the Curriculum set out expectations and guidance on how all departments can support these two functional skills by common language, common assessment practices and reinforcement of common standards.
- Our Science Specialism includes a commitment to use scientific processes and thinking in all subjects where appropriate (hypothesis testing, evidence gathering and logical reasoning are three examples)
- Our pluralist Jewish ethos implies a commitment to use in all subjects, where appropriate, examples or case studies taken from Jewish practice, learning or belief, or from the land of Israel.
- We seek to develop students information literacy and independent learning skills

### **Learning and teaching and PSRP Students**

Students are admitted to the PSRP on the basis that they can access some aspects of the national Curriculum and that they will experience significant difficulty in doing so. Their needs, like those of every other JCoSS student, need to be planned for and catered for by all staff.

The following are of particular relevance:

- ASC students cover a wide range of academic ability and the condition is not synonymous with low attainment; PSRP students may be gifted in one or more areas and/or face challenges in others.
- PSRP students who move to being taught in the main school may need support in the transition process, as well as adaptation in teaching style.
- PSRP students being taught in the main school will usually (but not always) have LSA support
- PSRP students taught in the main school will be identified as participating for either ‘academic’ or ‘socialisation’ outcomes.
- Teachers should be fully familiar with the learning and behavioural profile and needs of PSRP students in their classes, as for all students.
- PSRP staff will be able to advise on strategies to support the learning of these students: visual learning materials and clearly-structured lessons are likely to be particularly useful.
- Regular conversations between SRP staff and main school staff are essential for ensuring smooth transition.

### 3. Assessment and Feedback for Learning

The primary purpose of all assessment is to enable students to make progress. They need:

- To know what standard they have attained
- To feel supported and affirmed for what they have achieved, and challenged to go further
- To understand what they can do to move forwards

These messages need to be given in a way that is clear for students, consistent between teachers and – crucially – intelligible to parents so that they can be effective partners in their child's learning.

#### **“No surprises”**

JCoSS is committed to openness, inclusion and excellence. In the context of assessment this means:

- we aim to be open with our assessment data, not guarding it as a professional secret.
- our presentation of assessment judgments and targets is tailored to the audience, not shrouded in jargon and not assuming prior knowledge.
- we are guided at all times by the need for students to make progress towards excellence.

Written reports to parents should not contain surprises, especially unpleasant ones.

- ✓ Significant concerns about a student's learning or behaviour must be raised early so that the right intervention and support can be put in place: the report must never be the first a parent (or student, or form tutor) knows about it.
- ✓ The grades and levels given on reports should be in line with what students have been given in work over the period.
- ✓ It is part of every teacher's role to ensure all students know how they will be assessed, what the grading/levelling system means and what is required to move up to the next level. Questions about this will be put to students in SLT faculty and area reviews.
- ✓ It is part of the school's role to ensure parents understand the meaning, status and source of assessment judgments made on their children. Parents' meetings, written information and Moodle will all be used to explain this issue.
- ✓ It is part of a Curriculum Leader's role to ensure that all members of the team understand the proper place of data, its sources and its uses. CPD time at whole-school, faculty and department level is set aside for this purpose.

For that reason, what follows will start with the processes which occur on a daily, weekly, termly and yearly basis finishing with what is formally sent to parents.

#### **Regular marking and feedback**

In between these key assessment tasks, teachers regularly monitor and provide feedback on students' work in a variety of ways to suit their subject area. The following principles apply

- Teachers will enable regular recorded structured feedback. At KS3 once every six lessons or 3 times a half term, whichever is fewer and at KS4 fortnightly (or as differentiated in subject policies), more often at KS5. This will be monitored against the faculty feedback policy which in other than stated cases will include the use of green sheets and purple pens. (Summary appendix 2).
- The marking schedule should be meaningful, manageable and motivating (DfE March 2016)
- Feedback comments must include targets to make the marking as specific and actionable as possible.
- The 'Reflect & Perfect' strategy should be implemented as appropriate to encourage students to take ownership of their progress. DIRT (Directed independent reflection time) should be used for this.
- Not all work requires a grade, or will be acknowledged.
- Where monitoring has been done by oral feedback, students should take ownership of recording the feedback
- Peer assessment is a valuable learning experience
- Spelling, punctuation and grammar errors should be noted in accordance with agreed guidance, as set out below.



## Prompts for Spelling, Punctuation & Grammar

Following the Policy for Literacy across the Curriculum, agreed standards of presentation should be followed in all subjects. A JCoSS presentation, literacy and Etz Limmud front page will be stuck into all exercise books / folders, in all subjects and Key stages (appendix 3).

In turn, teachers should use the following common prompts when giving written feedback:

|      |  |    |   |
|------|--|----|---|
| +    | A good piece of work, well done!               | ?  | Clarify your point.                           |
| =    | This piece of work meets your usual standard.  | E  | Use evidence to back up your points/arguments |
| -    | Below your usual standards.                    | T  | Target – what to work on in your next piece   |
| Ex   | Use an example to illustrate your point.       |    | A particularly outstanding paragraph          |
| LINK | Link back to the question you have been asked. | Sp | Spelling mistake                              |
|      | Missing word                                   |    |   |

A circle indicates incorrect or missing punctuation

## JCoSS APS (KS3: Y7&8) Levelled (KS3: Y9) / Numbered & Graded (KS4/5) Assessments

To inform the levels / grades given to students and parents, departments carry out regular summative assessment tasks against explicit assessment criteria; the frequency of these tasks depends on the subject. For these tasks (though not exclusively for them):

- the assessments are moderated within departments to ensure consistency, and parity with national standards.
- students are informed that this is a levelled / graded assessment and given clear assessment criteria, instructions and deadlines.
- departments ensure as far as possible the same conditions and preparation across a cohort.
- students receive detailed written feedback of their level / grade and what they can do to move forwards.
- students record their progress on a subject tracker (found on the back page of all exercise books).

## Reporting to parents

Parents are sent four reports an academic year. Grades are provided under the following headings:

### Predicted End of Year JCoSS APS / Level / Number / Grade

- The 'Predicted JCoSS APS / Level / Number / Grade' is how a student will perform at the end of the year if they continue to learn as they are presently. This is based on a combination of test results, regular class work and home learning.

### Target for End of Year / Course (KS4 & 5)

- The Target for the End of Year is the JCoSS APS / Level / Number / Grade that a student should be capable of achieving by the end of Year / Course.
- These targets are based on the student's Key Stage 2 Scaled Scores (if taken), the CAT tests taken before they joined JCoSS, and teacher assessment and observation over the past term.
- If a student is already meeting or exceeding their targets, subject teachers may agree new individual targets so that they are always challenged to aim higher. However, the school targets stay as they are for the year so that we can track progress consistently.

## Other Headings

These grades are based on teacher observations, from lessons, home learning and assessments.

- **Engagement** – Please see the attached document entitled 'Engagement Criteria'.  
For SA2 (Y11 & 13) and SA3 (Y7-10 and Y12)
- **What is going well** – Positive comments from the subject teacher regarding student progress
- **What needs improvement** – An area identified by the class teacher for further development
- **Form Tutor comment** – Summary comments.

**Attendance:** The statistics given are current at the date of printing.

## 4. Monitoring and Evaluation of Learning and Teaching

Classroom practice is at the heart of the success of JCoSS: the teaching and support staff are our most precious resource. A variety of ways are used to support the learning and teaching that goes on in the School, to ensure consistency, share good practice and identify opportunities to make things better. Ongoing CPD and Professional Learning programs are designed to match colleague's needs and aspirations.

Our aim is that a culture of openness and support permeates the work of subject teams. Curriculum leaders need to keep a finger on the pulse, but the emphasis should be on using informal methods to do this, whilst ensuring rigour and professionalism are maintained.

- Departments are encouraged to have an 'open-door' ethos so that teachers and students are unfazed by visits from other adults (though it should be noted that the design of the building makes it easy to know how the team is operating without the need to go into classrooms)
- The relationship between teacher and students is crucial to learning, however, and there must be space and time for it to grow and flourish in peace.
- We put a high value on risk-taking, and recognise failure as a necessary and useful part of learning and teaching. The pattern of monitoring must not by its frequency or style stifle the innovation and professional daring that marks out outstanding teachers.

A range of strategies help meet the need for monitoring. Heads of Department and Faculty monitor the work of their teams, and the impact of cross-curricular strands, by means of:

- Lesson observations (see below)
- Learning walks with a particular focus
- Work sampling (approx half-termly) in department/faculty meetings
- Informal 'student snapshots' including work sampling and interviews
- Professional Development conversations, including analysis of data (Student Achievement weeks (SA))
- Regular faculty and departmental meetings

### Lesson observations

Teachers (once fully qualified) will usually be formally observed no more than 3 times per year:

- Once a term (20 minutes) as part of the pattern of Professional Development (called a Poppin)
- Once as part of the Subject or Area Review process
- Once by the Line Manager as part of the appraisal process

Notice (48 hours) will always be given for these formal observations. The JCoSS lesson observation form on 'Bluesky' is used to record the observation, although in line with external assessment, we are looking for a planned lesson rather than a lesson plan. Time will be set aside for feedback dialogue as soon after the lesson as possible and a written record will be given to the teacher within 48 hours.

Informal observations are of great value, whether within or across departments. Teachers with different styles, subject or pedagogical expertise, length of service, age or personality can give different perspectives that greatly enrich professional learning.

### SLT Faculty Review

In addition to the informal and formal departmental/faculty monitoring described above, each faculty is reviewed at least once every three years by the Senior Leadership Team following the published policy and timetable. This will include lesson observations, student interviews and work sampling.