

Options Policy

1. Introduction

This policy describes our approach to the teaching and learning of a wide range of Options at Derrymount School. The policy provides a framework for staff to ensure the delivery of high quality teaching and maximum opportunity for our young people to develop an interest and love of a particular subject of interest. Options available vary each year with demand but include such subjects as Car Care, Bike Maintenance, Child Care, First Aid, Photography, DJ skills, Astronomy, Expressive Arts, Animal Care and Horticulture. The policy also supports our aim in “Finding pathways to learning and living” in an ever expanding multicultural world, underpinned by a belief that Determination and Motivation are the keys to Success.

The policy is not designed to be prescriptive but to reflect our ethos and long term aims. It lays down minimum expectations for teaching and learning, guidelines for teachers in delivering the curriculum and how the outcomes will be measured and evaluated as part of the whole school curriculum.

This policy will be revised in line with the whole school policy review programme after no longer than three years.

2. Aims

The Options Curriculum contributes to whole school teaching and learning aims and objectives specifically through developing each pupil’s ability to;

- learn in an atmosphere in which they can feel happy and secure and are enabled to enjoy and achieve.
- value cultural diversity and difference
- develop creativity and self-expression
- experience learning that is clear, continuous and shows logical progression
- develop self-confidence and personal interaction skills
- make good or better progress from their individual starting points

3. Objectives

Our objectives include enabling our young people to:

1. Develop their skills in using a range of tools and methods to explore and create in their field of study.
2. Communicate their ideas, observations and judgements to the best of their ability and enjoy interaction with others.
3. Learn a range of techniques and methods to express their ideas, feelings or observations
4. Develop enthusiasm and enjoyment for learning and a curiosity and fascination about the subject they are studying.
5. Develop skills in planning, evaluating and reviewing
6. Develop interest and knowledge about the diverse places, people, resources and environments involved in their option choice.
7. Develop attitudes which help personal and social development and positive attitudes to the ideas of other people, caring for the environment and sustainable lifestyles.

8. Learn skills which involve asking perceptive questions, critical thinking, weighing evidence and developing judgements.
9. Learn at their own level and experience a positive sense of achievement.

4. Provision at different Key Stages

In Key Stages 1 and 2 our young people are given a wide range of experiences within and beyond the framework of the national curriculum to help them make informed choices about the options they will make in key stages 3 and 4

In Key Stage 3 (years 7-9) our provision focusses on the development of Options through taster sessions which lay the foundation for young people who wish to choose specific options to help pursue a career path or work towards gaining a GCSE or other qualification in KS4 or 5.

In Key Stages 4 and 5 our young people can choose to continue or change their option choices. Courses build upon previous knowledge and are designed to take one or more years depending on level and previous achievement. Teachers will recommend the appropriate pathway for learning for each student and classes are designed to enable students of different abilities to be taught in the same group. Vocational qualifications and GCSEs can be taken or a subject studied for its intrinsic value.

5. Teaching

To enable all of our young people to make at least good progress teachers must:

1. Prepare schemes of work and lessons that take account of individual pupil's previous experience and achievements.
2. Use a range of strategies and resources to engage and sustain learning.
3. Plan lessons that sustain learning and engagement throughout the session.
4. Evaluate learning and plan for progression lesson to lesson and over longer periods i.e. half termly.
5. Provide opportunities for parents to engage and support their child's learning.
6. Set, share and evaluate targets with students giving clear direction on how to improve their performance.
7. Use a range of teaching methods and take into account different learning styles.
8. Mark work clearly and in ways which enable the young person to see clearly how well they have achieved and which identifies any support that they may have had.
9. Support both independent and group work
10. Provide homework that supports and reinforces learning
11. Provide clear and accurate assessment data on a termly basis and make appropriate adjustments to teaching programmes to ensure all students make at least good progress.
12. Provide an end of year report to parents identifying strengths and areas for development, attainment levels and, where appropriate, predicted examination grades.
13. Ensure that allocated school funds are used effectively to support the delivery of the Options Curriculum.
14. Ensure resources are well maintained and fit for purpose.
15. Take responsibility for their own professional development and keep abreast of national developments and requirements.

6. Learning

Our young people are expected to:

1. Work to the best of their ability
2. Engage in activities and allow others to participate fully in lessons
3. Complete activities that the teacher provides, with support where required
4. Work independently and in groups
5. Respect others and enable them to learn without interference or distraction
6. Respect resources, take care over presentation and take pride in their work
7. Engage throughout the lesson
8. Provide feedback on their enjoyment and achievement in lessons.
9. Complete homework tasks set to the best of their ability

7. Monitoring of provision

The Head Teacher is responsible for monitoring the provision of teaching and learning at Derrymount School and will use the following methods to evaluate the quality of the provision we deliver:

1. Lesson observations
2. Learning Walks
3. Pupil Engagement and behaviour management (Enjoyment and achievement)
4. Work scrutiny and work analysis
5. Target setting and pupil achievements
6. Quality control of teacher's planning and evaluations
7. Assessment data – Accuracy and progression
8. Examination results

This policy is to be reviewed no later than 30th Sept 2017