

St. Lawrence College Senior School Teaching & Learning Policy



Our school is one community, united in our respect for each other, tolerant of differences and proud of our diversity, honest and positive about our learning and behaviour every day.

Issued: 2016

Most recent review: 2021

PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

The purpose of this policy is twofold:

- To inform all who read it of the methodology employed by the teaching staff of St. Lawrence College. The policy details the methods, standards and expectations related to teaching and learning in the senior school of St. Lawrence College *and*
- To set out for all teaching staff a minimum standard to be attained at all times by teachers and departments of the senior school.

WHAT THIS POLICY IS NOT

This policy does not aim to describe the specific curriculum of the senior school nor the specifics of ongoing internal and public assessment of the pupils. These details can be found in the Senior School Curriculum Policy and the Senior School Assessment Policy.

MANY TEACHERS, ONE POLICY

St. Lawrence College recognises that every senior school teacher is an individual educator bringing their own unique set of skills and their own personality into the classroom. Furthermore, our school believes that it is beneficial for senior school children to experience a variety of teachers; not merely to gain access to different areas of expertise but also to be exposed to differences between the professionals that they encounter in their school experience. This is part of preparation for adulthood where, as citizens, our graduates will meet and interact with adults of different character and different attitudes.

While these differences are celebrated, it is proper for the senior school to have a single senior school teaching and learning policy in order to define our aims and set out our expectations, our methods and our standards in the most fundamental area of our school. At St. Lawrence College, all senior school teaching aspires to the methods and standards as set out in this policy and pupil learning is identified and realised, fostered and encouraged, whatever the child's skill set and potential, by the teaching delivered according to the parameters described in this policy.

AIMS

Through teaching, the senior school of St. Lawrence College seeks to fulfil not just academic, but also broader aims. These include:

- enabling pupils to acquire and sustain knowledge
- ensuring pupils learn how to apply knowledge to the real and ever-changing world
- enabling children to become confident, resourceful, enquiring and independent learners, developing skills of independent learning
- enabling children to develop an understanding of why they learn, to appreciate learning, to desire to learn

- fostering children’s self-esteem and helping them build positive relationships with other people
- developing children’s self-respect and encouraging children to respect the ideas, attitudes, values and feelings of others, even when they differ from their own
- showing respect for all cultures and, in so doing, promoting positive attitudes towards other people
- enabling children to understand their community and help them feel valued as part of this community
- helping children grow into reliable, independent and positive citizens

OUR EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

- Teachers are actively aware at all times that the principle determinant of a child’s learning is the professionalism of that child’s teacher as they deliver their teaching to the child.
- Teachers prepare and structure their teaching based upon the attitude “I teach children” rather than “I teach my subject”.
- Teachers, the subject departments, and the school as a whole recognise and regularly reflect upon the fact that different children learn in different ways. For this reason, teachers employ a variety of teaching practices and strategies to give the best chance for all children to learn effectively.
- Whenever possible, pupils are encouraged to take on degrees of responsibility for their own learning and are helped to develop skills to be able to review and reflect upon their own learning. That is, teachers help pupils to assess their own progress in their learning.

THE IMPORTANCE OF VARIETY

St. Lawrence College teachers recognise that more effective learning will take place if there is a variety of activities to aid stimulation and engage all types of learners. Therefore, opportunities for children to learn in different ways are offered as a matter of course both in the lesson and outside of the classroom. Common types of tasks include:

- investigation and problem solving
- research and finding out
- group work
- use of the computer and other technology
- visits to places of educational interest
- responding to visual, musical or recorded material
- debates, role-plays and oral presentations
- designing and making objects
- participation in athletic or physical activity

EXPECTATIONS OF TEACHERS

Although each one is different, all teachers are expected to deliver their subject lessons:

- using detailed departmental schemes of work that are undergoing constant review and development.
- by planning lessons well-ahead of time, employing differentiation strategies to enable pupils of different abilities and with different educational needs within the class to be challenged, to learn, and to know that they have learnt.
- where clear learning objectives for lessons are displayed and where every pupil is made aware of the purpose and the aim of the lesson and by what criteria a pupil can assess whether they have learnt.
- where clear homework tasks are set, along with the parameters within which the homework should be completed, and where pupils see relevance of homework as it fits into the progression of their learning and complements the learning objectives of the class lessons.
- by regular, clear and consistent positive assessment of pupils' classwork and homework in line with departmental and school assessment policy and always with a view to enlightening pupils to where they have done well and how they could further develop the standard of their learning.
- by regular assessment of the pupils' learning through carefully constructed tests, set so that all children are given the opportunity to demonstrate the learning they have mastered, whatever that level is, and where all marking of tests can be justified with a view to improvement.
- using a wide range of appropriate resources, including regular access to IT.
- in a stimulating working environment, by ensuring rooms and walls outside classrooms include relevant displays of pupils' work.
- by adopting a variety of teaching styles and methods.
- by constantly exercising self-reflection and self-assessment of teaching strategies with a view to extending successful strategies and modifying less successful methods.
- by seeking the constructive analysis of departmental colleagues and senior teachers through discussion of lesson planning, homework setting and lesson observation with feedback.
- through commitment to their own professional development, by embracing opportunities for relevant training in school, out of school and online.

CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE

Teachers recognise that effective teaching and learning can only be achieved in a class atmosphere that is ordered and disciplined enough to permit learning. Success for both pupil and teacher demands a respectful relationship between teacher and pupil and among the pupil body of the class. The teacher has the duty to treat children fairly, equally and by giving equal attention to the pupils in their classes. Pupils are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner in their dress, speech, and respect for fellow pupils, respect for school property and in all requirements of the school rules.

TEACHING CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

All teachers are expected to adhere to the school's commitment to children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) be they learning difficulties, behavioural issues or physical disabilities. All teachers recognise that every child enrolled in our school has the right to be included in a curriculum of learning that is correct for them. All teachers will work with the SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) of the school to ensure that the individual needs of a pupil can be met, wherever possible, in the environment of a class being taught, through varied strategies and differentiated work. All teachers discuss on a departmental level Individual Educational Plans and liaise with the SENCO on how learning can take place in their subject area. This commitment to the teaching of and learning of children with SEN extends equally to gifted and talented pupils with high ability.

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Teachers recognise that the involvement of parents/guardians is vital for learning to take place and for effective teaching to result in lasting, effective learning. Teachers keep parents/guardians of pupils fully informed as to the pace of learning of their children and alert parents/guardians promptly when their specific support is needed. When required parents/guardians may be contacted by the Head of Department, the Deputy Head (Academic) or the Headmaster.

RESOURCES

St. Lawrence College recognises the essential role resources play in teaching and learning. Resources can be electronic, textbook, equipment, and can be subject specific such as art materials and scientific apparatus. Resources incorporate improvements in the school infrastructure, developments in human capital of teaching staff and more. Consequently:

- Appropriate resources are researched, tested and employed in teaching in so far as they assist in the learning of pupils.
- The school gives due attention to the acquisition of such educational resources.
- Teachers recognise their responsibility to acquaint themselves with everyday use of information technology, such as the Microsoft Teams platform, so that they can best use electronic resources and software that enhances their teaching and the learning of their pupils both in class and, when necessary, online.
- Departments throughout the senior school continuously develop online resources such as educational videos, blogs, websites and cloud-based stores of information that can be used to enhance their teaching and the learning of their pupils.