MEPA ACADEMY

DATA & ASSESSMENT POLICY

Policy owner	Principal
Approved by	Senior Leadership Team
Adopted	July 2026
Review date	July 2027, or sooner if guidance changes
Applies to	All pupils aged 11-16, parents/carers, staff and visitors undertaking attendance duties
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1. Purpose and scope

This policy sets out how MEPA Academy uses assessment and data to improve teaching, strengthen curriculum implementation and support every pupil to achieve ambitious academic, vocational and personal outcomes. It aligns with the Academy Teaching & Learning Policy, Curriculum Policy and SEND Policy (2026).

It applies to all pupils in Years 7–11, all academic and vocational subjects, and all staff involved in teaching, assessment, intervention, reporting, leadership or governance. It covers classroom and studio learning, rehearsals, performances, examinations and any off-site or alternative provision commissioned by the academy.

Policy aims

- make assessment an integral, purposeful part of curriculum and teaching;
- identify what pupils know, can do and need to learn next, early and accurately;
- enable responsive teaching, appropriate support and sustained improvement;
- maintain the same high ambition for pupils with SEND and other vulnerable groups;
- provide reliable information to pupils, parents, leaders and the governing body;
- ensure assessment is valid, fair, accessible, proportionate and manageable; and
- use quantitative and qualitative evidence intelligently, without allowing a single score or label to define a pupil.

2. Principles

Principle	MEPA standard
Curriculum first	Assessment checks the taught and intended curriculum. It must not narrow the curriculum or drive disconnected test preparation.
Purpose and validity	Every assessment has a clear purpose and assesses the knowledge, skill or competence it claims to assess.
Responsive teaching	Evidence is used promptly to reteach, clarify, adapt, scaffold, extend or schedule further practice.
High expectations and inclusion	Barriers are identified and reasonable adjustments made without lowering curriculum or artistic ambition.
Triangulation	No important decision rests on one test, percentage or data point. Leaders consider work, performance, discussion, observation and contextual evidence.
Improvement, not performance alone	Pupils receive meaningful opportunities to act on feedback and demonstrate improvement.
Proportionality	Data is collected only where it supports learning, safeguarding, reporting, statutory duties or robust evaluation.

NON-NEGOTIABLE Assessment evidence must change what happens next. Collection without a clear educational or accountability purpose is avoided.

3. Roles and accountability

Role	Core responsibilities
Governing body / proprietor	Approves the policy; assures statutory and regulatory compliance; challenges leaders on standards, inclusion, workload, data protection and the impact of provision.
Principal and senior leaders	Set the strategy and calendar; ensure accurate, moderated information; resource assessment and inclusion; analyse patterns; act on significant weakness or inequity.
Curriculum / assessment lead	Coordinates assessment design, data drops and reporting; supports validity and moderation; provides proportionate analysis and implementation assurance.
Subject leaders	Translate curriculum intent into appropriate assessment; agree standards; quality-assure tasks and judgements; moderate work; identify curriculum or teaching responses.
SENCo / inclusion lead	Ensures assessment is accessible; advises on barriers, reasonable adjustments and normal way of working; triangulates evidence within Assess–Plan–Do–Review.
Teachers and vocational tutors	Assess continually; provide feedback; adapt teaching; implement adjustments; keep appropriate records; submit accurate, moderated information on time.
Support staff	Support access and independence; implement agreed strategies; observe learning and provide evidence to the teacher without replacing teacher responsibility.
Pupils	Engage with assessment and feedback; reflect on learning; use agreed supports; communicate barriers and contribute to target-setting and reviews.
Parents and carers	Receive clear information, share relevant context and contribute to support and review where appropriate.

4. Assessment framework

MEPA uses a coherent set of assessment approaches. The frequency and format reflect the purpose, subject and stage of learning.

Purpose	Examples	Required response
In-lesson diagnosis	Questioning, discussion, observation, mini-whiteboards, rehearsal and live practice.	Reteach, clarify, adapt, scaffold or extend immediately.
Curriculum checks	Low-stakes quizzes, short tasks, reading checks and practical demonstrations.	Identify gaps and misconceptions; schedule teaching, retrieval or practice.

Purpose	Examples	Required response
Cumulative evaluation	Common assessments, extended work, performances, products, portfolios and examinations.	Evaluate security across current and previously taught content; refine teaching and curriculum sequence.
Transition and destination	Baseline information, qualification outcomes, destination and progression information.	Evaluate readiness, plan transition and improve pathways.

Assessment design

- Tasks are closely related to what has been taught and sample the intended knowledge, concepts and disciplinary or vocational practice.
- Success criteria and standards are clear, age-appropriate and consistent with relevant qualification or awarding-body requirements.
- The method does not introduce avoidable barriers unrelated to the construct being assessed.
- Practical and performing-arts assessment uses products, processes and performances as appropriate, with transparent criteria.
- Assessments are of manageable length and frequency. Repeated collection of similar information is avoided.
- Baseline information is used diagnostically and never treated as a fixed ceiling.

5. Responsive assessment in lessons

Teaching, learning and assessment are inseparable. Within MEPA's TEEP-informed cycle, teachers prepare from prior evidence, agree clear outcomes, present and model new information, check pupils' construction of meaning, assess application and review learning. Checks gather evidence from all pupils, not only volunteers, and influence the teaching that follows.

Expected practice

- Activate and check relevant prior knowledge before introducing new content.
- Use a planned range of questions, observation, discussion and short tasks to expose understanding and misconception.
- Provide processing time, accessible instructions and different response modes where these preserve validity.
- Adjust pace, explanation, modelling, grouping, scaffolding and practice in response to evidence.
- Recheck after adaptation or feedback so that improvement is demonstrated rather than assumed.
- Retain only significant findings that inform future teaching, support or reporting.

6. Feedback, review and improvement

Feedback may be verbal, live, whole-class, peer, self or written. It is specific, timely and proportionate to its purpose. It helps pupils understand what is secure, what needs improvement and the next action. Written marking is not required where another method is more effective.

Books, folders and DIRT

- Assessment papers and significant in-class assessments are stored in the pupil assessment folder or approved digital location.
- For subjects using books or folders, teachers review them at least twice per half-term and use one MEPA marking sticker per half-term.
- Teacher marking is in purple, in line with the Teaching & Learning Policy.
- A dedicated DIRT lesson follows the main half-term review so pupils can respond, improve and practise.

- Teachers conduct a fresh check after DIRT and adapt subsequent teaching where learning remains insecure.

Stage	Minimum action
Plan	Identify the essential knowledge or performance to check and any necessary adjustment.
Midpoint review	Review learning and work; provide proportionate feedback and the half-term marking sticker where applicable.
DIRT	Teach pupils how to respond; provide time to correct, redraft, rehearse or practise.
Recheck	Use a fresh task, question or performance to establish whether learning is now secure.
End-of-half-term response	Share significant patterns or support needs and plan reteaching, adaptation or extension.

7. Cumulative assessment and moderation

Each term, subjects use a cumulative assessment that samples current and previously taught content. In vocational and performing-arts subjects, the assessed evidence may include products, portfolios, processes or performances. Assessments are planned within the academy calendar and avoid unnecessary clashes or overload.

Minimum standards

- Assessment materials and mark schemes or criteria are quality-assured before use.
- Teachers state what went well, the most important area for improvement and any relevant access arrangements, using purple where written on the assessment.
- Pupils receive structured opportunity to improve, followed where appropriate by a recheck.
- Year 11 mock examinations take place in accordance with the published academy calendar.
- Common tasks, exemplification, standardisation and moderation are used where they improve comparability.
- Internal judgements are interpreted alongside class evidence, work over time and professional judgement. A percentage alone is not treated as progress.

Moderation

Subject leaders establish shared expectations and retain sufficient exemplification. Moderation is proportionate to risk and includes borderline, unusually high or low, and adjusted work where appropriate. Disagreement is resolved through reference to the curriculum standard, assessment criteria and available evidence; records are corrected before reporting.

8. Data collection, reporting and use

Cohort	Collection point	Required information
Years 7–11	End of Terms 1b, 2b and 3b	Current grade; assessment percentage; effort grade; comment.
Year 11	End of Terms 1a and 2a	Current grade; effort grade.

The assessment lead publishes deadlines and definitions. Teachers submit information that is current, evidence-based and moderated where required. Corrections are made promptly and transparently.

Interpretation and action

- Analyse patterns in curriculum security, teaching, attendance, participation and support—not isolated rank order.
- Consider SEND, disadvantage, sex and prior attainment where cohort size makes analysis meaningful and confidentiality can be protected.
- Recognise the volatility of small cohorts and use qualitative and longitudinal evidence alongside numerical summaries.
- Investigate anomalies before acting; distinguish between pupil need, curriculum design, implementation, attendance and assessment validity.
- Record named actions, responsibility and a review point where a significant pattern is identified.
- Use reports to communicate strengths, priorities and next steps clearly to pupils and parents; avoid unexplained technical language.

IMPORTANT Grades, percentages, SEND status and baseline indicators describe evidence at a point in time. They do not set a ceiling, replace professional judgement or justify reduced ambition.

9. Inclusion, SEND and reasonable adjustments

All teachers are responsible for the progress, participation and development of pupils with SEND. Assessment begins with accurate knowledge of the pupil's strengths, needs, prior attainment, language, attendance, wellbeing, Passport, Individual Support Plan (ISP), EHC plan and normal way of working, as relevant.

Inclusive assessment standard

- Make anticipatory reasonable adjustments to teaching, assessment, communication and the environment while preserving the competence being assessed.
- Use accessible language, clear modelling, manageable steps, processing time, visual or written reinforcement and appropriate response modes.
- Gather evidence from different modes where valid, including oral, written, practical and performance evidence.
- Plan and record examination access arrangements in accordance with current awarding-body rules, based on evidence of need and normal way of working—not diagnosis alone.
- Apply the provision specified in an EHC plan and the strategies recorded in the Passport or ISP.
- Avoid treating slow progress, English as an additional language, disadvantage, attendance difficulty, safeguarding concern or behaviour as SEN without careful assessment of the underlying barrier.
- Monitor access, participation, belonging, independence, progress and achievement, including in rehearsals, performances and off-site provision.

Performing-arts contexts

Assessment criteria are transparent. Adjustments may include accessible scripts or notation, cueing, chunked choreography, alternative evidence formats, sensory or acoustic adjustments, rest breaks, accessible equipment and rehearsal of transitions. Adjustments must not invalidate the knowledge, skill or competence being assessed.

10. Intervention and the graduated response

Where assessment identifies a barrier, the first response is expertly adapted teaching. Additional intervention complements rather than replaces the full ambitious curriculum, expert subject teaching, performance opportunities and belonging.

Stage	Required assessment practice
Assess	Establish a precise baseline by triangulating attainment, work, observation, attendance, behaviour, wellbeing, pupil/parent views, prior records and specialist evidence. Identify the barrier, not only its symptom.
Plan	Agree specific, measurable and meaningful outcomes; provision; frequency; responsible adult; success evidence; and review date.
Do	Implement consistently. The teacher remains responsible, gathers evidence and supports increasing independence.
Review	Evaluate change from baseline using quantitative and qualitative evidence. Continue, refine, fade, intensify or seek specialist/statutory action according to impact.

Targeted and personalised ISPs are normally reviewed within six weeks, or sooner where risk or rapid change requires. Baseline and exit measures are proportionate and meaningful. Leaders check that gains transfer into everyday learning and end or change support that is not sufficiently effective.

11. Quality assurance and evaluation

Quality assurance is developmental, proportionate and rooted in curriculum intent. Leaders do not infer quality from a single lesson, grade, test or spreadsheet.

- Triangulate curriculum plans, lesson and studio evidence, work and performance over time, assessment outcomes, moderation, attendance and pupil/parent/staff voice.
- Check whether tasks are valid, appropriately demanding, accessible and aligned with taught content.
- Check consistency of standards and whether feedback, DIRT and reteaching lead to improved learning.
- Evaluate whether pupils with SEND and other groups access the full curriculum and achieve from their starting points.
- Review implementation, not just outcomes: agreed adjustments, curriculum sequence, teaching response and intervention fidelity.
- Use monitoring findings to identify support, coaching, curriculum refinement and measurable improvement actions.

Evidence of impact

Impact may include stronger curriculum knowledge, improved quality of work or performance, greater fluency and independence, reduced barriers, improved attendance and participation, secure qualifications and successful destinations. Trends are interpreted over time; universal numerical targets are not imposed where they distort sound subject or pupil-level evaluation.

12. Data protection, records and workload

- Assessment and SEND records are accurate, factual, proportionate and stored in approved systems or locations.
- Personal data, including special-category data, is accessed and shared only by those who need it for an authorised purpose.
- Reports, exports and working documents are handled securely and disposed of in line with the academy retention schedule and data-protection policies.
- Pupil and parent views are recorded respectfully; safeguarding or medical information is cross-referenced securely rather than duplicated unnecessarily.
- Data collection is streamlined. Staff are not required to enter the same information in multiple systems or create analysis that has no clear use.
- Leaders consider the workload effect when designing assessments, marking expectations, moderation and reporting cycles.

13. Monitoring and review

Frequency	Assurance activity
Ongoing / in lessons	Teachers check learning, adapt teaching and record only significant findings.
Half-termly	Subject and senior leaders review implementation, curriculum security, workload and pupils needing escalation; SENCo reviews relevant provision and outcomes.
Termly	Data collections, cumulative assessment, moderation and proportionate cohort analysis; governing body/proprietor receives appropriate assurance.
Annually	Evaluate policy impact, assessment validity, reporting, group patterns, destinations, accessibility, staff development and workload; set priorities.
Immediately	Escalate safeguarding risk, statutory non-compliance, failure to deliver required provision, serious data breach, significant inequity or invalid assessment practice.

This policy is reviewed annually and sooner if legislation, statutory guidance, awarding-body requirements, inspection arrangements, academy context or evaluation evidence changes materially. Material amendments are approved by the Senior Leadership Team and, where required, the proprietor/governing body.

Related academy policies

Academy Curriculum Policy; Academy Teaching & Learning Policy; Academy SEND Policy; Examinations Policy; Equality and Accessibility policies; Data Protection and Records Management policies; Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy; Complaints Policy.

Appendix A — Academy assessment cycle

Point in cycle	Pupil-facing practice	Staff / leadership response
Daily / lesson sequence	Retrieval, questioning, observation, rehearsal, short tasks and review.	Immediate adaptation; note only significant patterns.
Mid-half-term	Work/folder review and feedback; marking sticker where applicable.	Identify secure/insecure learning and plan DIRT.
DIRT and recheck	Correct, redraft, rehearse or practise; complete a fresh check.	Confirm impact and adjust teaching/support.
End half-term	Receive clear next steps where appropriate.	Share significant patterns/support needs; Year 11 data at Terms 1a and 2a.
End term	Complete cumulative assessment; act on feedback.	Moderate; Years 7–11 data at Terms 1b, 2b and 3b; analyse and report.
Transition / Year 11	Baseline, mocks, qualifications and destination planning.	Evaluate readiness, access arrangements, progression and pathway quality.