MEPA ACADEMY

TEACHING, LEARNING & ASSESSMENT POLICY

Policy information	Detail
Policy owner	Principal / Head of Academy
Applies to	All academic and vocational teaching, Years 7 to 11
Source of practice	MEPA Academy Teaching and Learning Handbook 2025/26
Updated	July 2026
Review date	July 2027

Policy purpose This policy defines the academy-wide entitlement and non-negotiable expectations. The handbook provides the practical examples, templates and quick-reference guidance used to enact it. Where wording in an older handbook resource conflicts with this policy, this policy takes precedence until the handbook is corrected.

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1. VISION AND PRINCIPLES

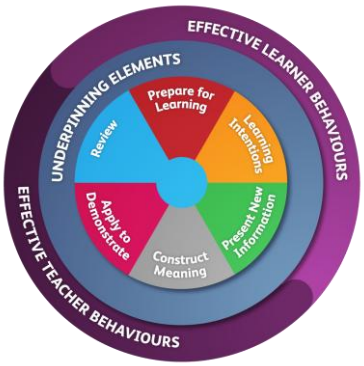
At MEPA Academy, strong teaching, learning and assessment are inseparable. Academic and vocational learning have equal status. Our approach fuses education with the arts and enables pupils to DREAM, BELIEVE and ACHIEVE through ambitious knowledge, disciplined practice, creativity, confidence and care.

Every pupil is entitled to teaching that is safe, inclusive, appropriately challenging and responsive. Teachers will retain professional judgement about the form a lesson takes while applying the shared principles in this policy. Consistency means a common entitlement and language, not identical lessons or unnecessary workload.

- High expectations and a positive climate for every pupil.
- Clear curriculum outcomes and expert explanation of essential knowledge, vocabulary, concepts and techniques.
- Active thinking, purposeful practice and increasing independence.
- Frequent checks for understanding followed by responsive teaching.
- Feedback and assessment that improve learning and curriculum decisions.
- Early identification and removal of barriers, without lowering ambition.
- Professional learning, collaboration and quality assurance focused on pupils' learning.

2. THE TEEP LEARNING CYCLE

Teachers use the six phases of the TEEP learning cycle. They may recur, overlap or span several lessons, and their expression will differ between classrooms, studios, rehearsals and performance settings.



Phase	Teacher purpose	What pupils should experience
1. Prepare for learning	Establish a safe, positive climate; secure routines; connect to relevant prior learning and hook interest.	Prompt start, readiness, retrieval and curiosity.
2. Agree learning outcomes	Make the important intended learning and standards of success clear.	Understand what they are learning, why it matters and what quality looks like.
3. Present new information	Teach core knowledge, vocabulary, concepts, methods or techniques explicitly and in manageable steps.	Attend, question, connect and encounter accurate models and examples.
4. Construct meaning	Enable pupils to process, discuss, explore, compare and explain.	Make connections, test ideas and articulate understanding.
5. Apply to demonstrate understanding	Provide guided then independent application in a fresh question, context, product or performance.	Practise deliberately, transfer learning and work with increasing independence.
6. Review	Check what and how pupils learned; identify what is secure and what needs reteaching or further practice.	Retrieve, reflect, correct and know the next step.

3. FIVE UNDERPINNING ELEMENTS

Thinking for learning: Plan questions and tasks that build cognitive skill, challenge, reasoning, creativity and metacognition.

Assessment for learning: Use checks and feedback to diagnose understanding and guide immediate and subsequent teaching.

Accelerated learning: Select varied sensory, active and practical approaches when they improve access, attention, meaning or retention; novelty is not an end in itself.

Collaborative learning: Teach and structure purposeful peer and group work so every pupil thinks, contributes and remains accountable.

Effective use of ICT: Use digital tools where they improve explanation, practice, access, creation, feedback or independent study, within safeguarding expectations.

4. TEACHER AND LEARNER BEHAVIOURS

Effective teacher behaviours	Effective learner behaviours
Maintain high expectations and a safe, positive climate.	Arrive ready, follow routines and sustain attention.
Explain and model expertly; use subject-specific language precisely.	Ask and answer questions; use the expected vocabulary.
Use interactive teaching and manage behaviour calmly and consistently.	Participate, collaborate responsibly and make decisions.
Check every pupil's understanding and respond to evidence.	Monitor personal progress, act on feedback and seek help when needed.
Adapt teaching and supports while building independence.	Practise, correct, reflect and persevere with challenge.

5. EXPERT EXPLANATION, MODELLING AND PRACTICE

New material will be presented in manageable steps that reflect pupils' prior knowledge and cognitive demand. Teachers will use clear instructions, worked examples, examples and non-examples, visual or physical demonstration, think-alouds and precise subject vocabulary. They will pause to check understanding and reteach differently where necessary.

5.1 I DO - WE DO - YOU DO

I do: modelling. The teacher makes expert thinking, decisions, processes or techniques visible. Models include quality criteria and may show how errors are detected and corrected.

We do: guided practice. Pupils practise with prompting, questioning, scaffolds, feedback and structured discussion. Support is matched to need.

You do: independent, deliberate practice. Pupils apply learning without the original scaffold. Teachers provide sufficient time and use the result to check secure learning and transfer.

> **Scaffolding** Scaffolds are purposeful and temporary. They are reduced or removed as expertise grows, except where a continuing reasonable adjustment is required.

6. RESPONSIVE TEACHING AND IN-LESSON ASSESSMENT

Teachers gather evidence from all pupils, not only volunteers or the most confident. A check is useful only when its result affects teaching, practice or support.

Technique	Purpose and expected response
Mini-whiteboard check	All pupils answer the same carefully chosen question. Scan patterns and immediately clarify or reteach.
Hinge question	Use distractors linked to likely misconceptions to decide whether to move on or revisit learning.
Retrieval task	Recall current and previously taught content without notes; address forgotten prerequisite knowledge.
Error analysis	Explain and correct an inaccurate answer, interpretation, method, movement or performance.
Cold call with probing	Provide thinking time, select pupils rather than relying on volunteers and probe reasoning with follow-up questions.
Independent application	Apply learning to a fresh task without the original scaffold to test transfer.
Compare and improve	Use clear criteria to compare examples and improve the weaker response.
Complete the worked example	Continue a partially modelled process and explain reasoning; diagnose the point of breakdown.
One-minute explanation	Explain the main concept, method or technique using required subject vocabulary.
Correct and recheck	Correct, redraft, rehearse or re-perform after responsive teaching, then complete a fresh check independently.

7. BOOKS, FOLDERS AND PRESENTATION

Where a subject uses exercise books, they should provide a coherent record of curriculum and learning. Vocational and practical subjects may use appropriate portfolios, digital evidence, rehearsal records or assessment folders instead.

- Books are neat and presentable; normal classwork is completed in blue or black pen.
- Each lesson begins with the date and title, underlined with a ruler; pupils miss a line and start in the agreed place.
- Worksheets are trimmed and securely glued in.
- A subject-specific cover includes useful information and the curriculum roadmap.
- Curriculum end points are displayed inside the front cover and knowledge organisers are added at the start of each topic.
- Assessment papers and significant in-class assessments are stored in the pupil assessment folder.
- Teachers address missing or incomplete work and provide time for completion.

8. FEEDBACK, MARKING AND DIRT

Feedback may be verbal, live, whole-class, peer, self or written. Its form and frequency should be proportionate to curriculum time and should lead to improvement. Teachers are not expected to write extensive comments on every piece of work.

- Teachers review and mark books regularly, with a minimum of twice each half term for subjects using books, proportionate to curriculum time.

- At least one review each half term uses the MEPA marking sticker to summarise the most important strength, misconception or next step.
- Teacher marking is in purple and uses the agreed code, including ✓, S, G and VF where relevant.
- Feedback is legible, accessible, curriculum-specific and linked to what has been taught; it recognises success and identifies the most useful next action.
- A DIRT lesson follows the main half-term review: teachers model, reteach, support self-assessment, set improvement or challenge and then recheck independently.
- Teachers retain only significant findings needed for responsive planning or coordinated support.

Definitive pen-colour code Blue or black: normal classwork. Purple: teacher marking and marking stickers. Green: peer/self-assessment and routine immediate corrections. Red: DIRT, incomplete or additional work, extra-time completion, and improvement tasks set through the marking sticker. This resolves inconsistent colour references in earlier handbook pages.

9. HALF-TERM ASSESSMENT PROCESS

When	Teachers	Pupils
Start of half term	Identify essential learning, likely misconceptions, planned checks and agreed adaptations.	Retrieve prior learning and understand the important learning for the half term.
During the half term	Teach; check understanding routinely; respond in lessons; retain only significant findings.	Answer, explain, practise, perform and act on immediate feedback.
Midpoint book/portfolio review	Review work proportionately; use the code and marking sticker to identify the most important strength, misconception or next step.	Read and understand feedback.
DIRT week	Model or reteach; set correction, improvement and challenge; support self-assessment.	Respond in red, address misconceptions and improve or extend learning.
After DIRT	Use a fresh prompt, question, product or performance to recheck; plan further teaching where learning remains insecure.	Apply the learning independently and understand the next step.
End of half term	Share significant patterns, curriculum changes and pupils requiring coordinated support.	Reflect on progress and readiness for future learning.

10. TERMLY CUMULATIVE ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING

Cumulative knowledge assessments take place each term and sample important current and previously taught curriculum content. Assessment design and timing must be appropriate to the subject; practical and vocational assessment may involve products or performances as well as written evidence.

- Assessment materials are quality assured before use and include the academy assessment cover.
- Teachers record What Went Well, Even Better If and access arrangements on the cover in purple.
- Pupils complete planned improvement and recheck activity following assessment.
- Agreed access arrangements and reasonable adjustments are applied; evidence is gathered in line with current examination-board requirements.
- Year 11 formal mock examinations take place in accordance with the published assessment calendar.
- Samples are moderated before grades are submitted, where moderation is required.
- Assessment evidence is interpreted alongside classroom evidence, pupil work and professional judgement; percentages alone do not define progress.

10.1 DATA DROPS

Cohort and point	Information recorded
Years 7-11: end of Term 1b, Term 2b and Term 3b	Current grade; assessment percentage; effort grade; comment.
Year 11: end of Term 1a and Term 2a	Current grade; effort grade.

Data submissions are accurate, moderated where required and completed by published deadlines. Leaders provide proportionate analysis of relevant patterns, including SEND, disadvantage, sex and prior attainment where cohort size permits meaningful interpretation. Teachers use analysis to adapt teaching and curriculum; no group label is used to lower expectations.

11. INCLUSION AND SEND PROVISION

Quality-first teaching is the foundation of inclusion. Teachers use pupil passports, current assessment and professional dialogue to identify likely barriers and misconceptions, plan adaptations and preserve access to ambitious curriculum outcomes.

Level	Expectation
Universal / Tier 1	All pupils receive expert teaching and a Universal Passport on entry, reviewed annually. Teachers use appropriate direct instruction, seating, additional time, movement or brain breaks, memory-recall tasks and individual check-ins where these reduce barriers.
Concern	Staff promptly raise an emerging concern with the SENCo and continue appropriate classroom support and evidence gathering.
Targeted / Tier 2	SENCo, parents/carers, pupil and staff agree strategies, timescale and outcomes in an Individual Support Plan. Support may include early help, diagnostic assessment or other targeted provision. Review after six weeks unless need requires sooner.
Personalised / Tiers 3-4	Where targeted practice is insufficient and SEND is identified, the SENCo works with family and external professionals to plan personalised support. Review after six weeks unless otherwise specified.

The graduated assess-plan-do-review cycle is recorded and repeated as needed. Teachers implement agreed strategies and remain responsible for teaching the pupil. Additional adults promote access to the teacher and pupil independence. EHC plans, safeguarding information and approved access arrangements are implemented consistently.

12. BEHAVIOUR, CLIMATE AND SAFEGUARDING

Learning depends on a calm, predictable and positive climate. Teachers establish the academy's routines, reinforce the Basic 5, use praise and merits, and respond to conduct consistently through the current behaviour policy. Classroom redirection, warning and consequences are applied calmly and fairly. Serious incidents, bullying, safety concerns and persistent non-compliance are escalated through the appropriate policy. Mobile phones, uniform, jewellery, equipment and vocational safety requirements follow the current behaviour and safeguarding guidance.

13. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Responsibilities
Governing body	Approve and review the policy; assure ambition, inclusion, staff development, resources and the impact of teaching and assessment.
Principal and senior leaders	Set culture and priorities; ensure the handbook and policy align; secure professional development; evaluate typical practice and address variation.
Subject leaders	Translate curriculum into coherent teaching and assessment; quality assure materials and moderation; develop subject expertise and respond to evidence.
SENCo and inclusion leaders	Lead identification and graduated support; maintain useful passports and plans; develop staff expertise; evaluate whether adaptations reduce barriers.
Teachers	Know the curriculum and pupils; plan, teach, check, adapt, assess and report in line with this policy; maintain accurate, proportionate records.
Support staff	Understand intended learning and agreed adaptations; support access to teacher instruction, participation and independence; share useful evidence.
Pupils	Engage with routines, explanation and practice; ask and answer questions; complete work; act on feedback; reflect and seek help.
Parents/carers	Support attendance, readiness and routines; engage with reports and consultations; share relevant information and raise questions promptly.

14. MONITORING, COACHING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Quality assurance establishes what pupils typically experience and learn; it is not a search for a preferred lesson style. Leaders triangulate evidence from curriculum plans, visits to lessons and studios, work or portfolio review, assessment, pupil discussion, outcomes and staff dialogue. Findings inform support, curriculum action and professional learning.

- Learning walks have a clear, communicated focus and generate proportionate feedback.
- Work, book and portfolio reviews consider curriculum sequence, learning, response and inclusion rather than presentation alone.
- Formal observations follow a developmental coaching model and are not used to grade individual lessons.
- Teachers receive timely feedback, an agreed action and appropriate modelling, rehearsal, collaboration or follow-up.
- Professional development is research-informed, subject-sensitive, aligned to the Teachers' Standards and evaluated for changes in practice and pupil learning.
- Leaders monitor collective patterns and impact; formal capability or conduct concerns are addressed only through the relevant separate procedure.

Continuous improvement Every teacher improves through deliberate professional learning. The academy will provide time for collaborative, subject-specific implementation and will review whether CPD has become embedded and benefited pupils.

15. WORKLOAD, RECORDS AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Planning, assessment and feedback should be useful and proportionate. Teachers are not required to produce lesson plans or duplicate information solely for monitoring. Subject information may be digital or hard copy and should include only what supports safe, informed teaching: curriculum maps and end points, schemes or sequences, relevant pupil information, seating or grouping plans, assessment records and agreed checklists. Personal and special-category data must be accurate,

access-controlled and handled in line with the academy's data-protection requirements; class photographs and sensitive pupil details must not be stored in unsecured folders.

16. REVIEW AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

This policy is reviewed annually, or sooner when the academy handbook, statutory guidance, examination requirements or academy practice changes. Leaders will update the handbook promptly where a conflict is identified.

- MEPA Academy Teaching and Learning Handbook 2025/26
- Curriculum Policy
- SEND Policy and SEN Information Report
- Assessment and Examinations procedures
- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Staff Capability, Appraisal and Professional Development procedures

APPENDIX A: CONCISE PRACTICE CHECKLIST

1. Positive climate and routines established; pupils ready to learn.
2. Important outcomes, vocabulary and standards of quality made clear.
3. Prior knowledge activated and new content explained or modelled expertly.
4. Pupils actively construct meaning and practise with appropriate guidance.
5. Every pupil's understanding checked; misconceptions acted upon.
6. Pupils apply learning independently and support is reduced appropriately.
7. Learning reviewed, corrected and rechecked.
8. Feedback and recording proportionate, accurate and consequential.
9. Passports, plans, access arrangements and reasonable adjustments implemented.
10. Behaviour, safety and vocational routines followed consistently.