

Rugby Free Secondary School - Teaching and Learning Policy September 2025

Vision:

We intend to provide a broad, inclusive and ambitious curriculum that empowers our students to make both academic and personal progress. As a school with a diverse demographic, our aim is to ensure that all students achieve an excellent standard of education that not only prepares them for GCSE and A-Level examinations, but ensures they are 'set for life' beyond the gates of Rugby Free Secondary School. As a consequence, all of our work is underpinned by our core values of: Kindness, Respect, Curiosity, Resilience, Collaboration and Endeavour.

Rationale:

This policy is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for Teaching and Learning within Rugby Free Secondary School. It is how T&L supports the broad and balanced curriculum (via intent and implementation) we offer which enables students to know more, remember more, and do more. We believe that the curriculum and its implementation, is the responsibility of all the members of the school community and the aim of this document is to help the teachers in the school become the most effective pedagogical practitioners they can be. It uses principles established from research, cognitive science and experience. The direct impact of quality Teaching and Learning is the progress students make, and the outcomes they achieve, from their relative starting points. The keys points to our T&L philosophy are:

Overview of curriculum aims:

- Fully support our students to be happy, healthy and safe in the modern world
- Empower our students to know more, remember more, and do more
- Inspire our students to strive for excellence throughout their lives
- Promote inclusion of all students no matter their background, prior attainment or barrier to learning, to ensure access to the same ambitious curriculum content
- Provide the widest possible options available at GCSE and A Level in order to suit the needs of our students, and the local and national requirements
- Ensure the implementation of consistent planning & logical sequencing of content that leads to long term knowledge retention and learning
- Deliver a quality-first wave approach to teaching & learning, that promotes high expectation and inclusive classroom practice
- Support the personal & character development of our students, enabling students to be 'set for life', and therefore having a positive impact on the community and the world around them
- Enable opportunities for students to develop socially and creatively
- Ensure that all students are numerate and literate, and develop a confidence for reading.
- Ensure students develop deep understanding, by helping students connect new knowledge with existing knowledge so they are fluent and competent at applying their knowledge
- Ensure students embed learning into long-term memory
- Equip students with the cultural capital they require to be global citizens
- Enable students to confidently articulate what they have learned, ask questions and respond to others' ideas
- Enable our students to become confident and interested learners, who actively engaged in their own learning and the learning of others
- Develop the core values of our students

Planning learning overview:

When **planning** a lesson at RFSS consider:

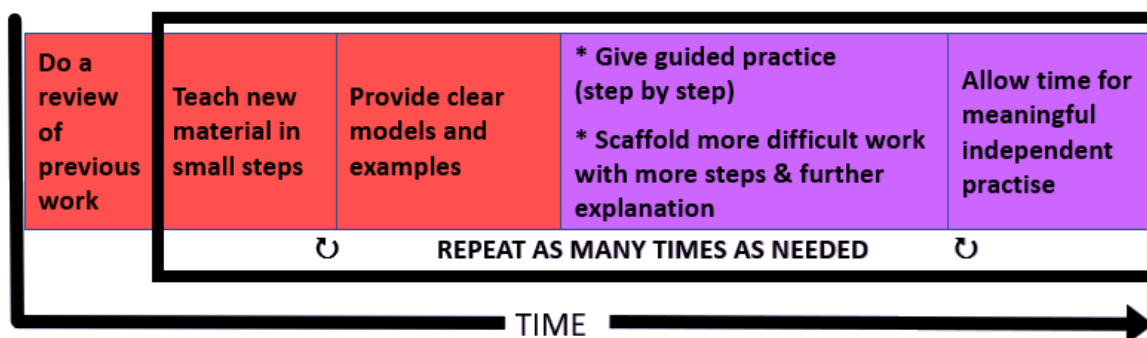
What is the reason for this lesson?	
What does this class need at this point in time?	How can you make the lesson bespoke?
How does this build on previous learning?	How will you share the lesson's purpose?
Why is it important for your subject?	How does it fit in with a wider picture?
How will you use knowledge of the students to tailor the way you teach this lesson?	Do seating plans promote productive learning behaviour?

When **starting** an RFSS lesson ensure you:

Start with high standards and do not accept mediocrity	
Greet students at the door. Politely challenge shirts, blazers, coats, footwear, earphones	Have a SET recall task ready and prepared for students to start in silence
Share the reason for the lesson – why you have planned what you have planned?	Check the learning environment supports learning (Is it tidy? Does it feel pleasant?)

Structuring learning overview:

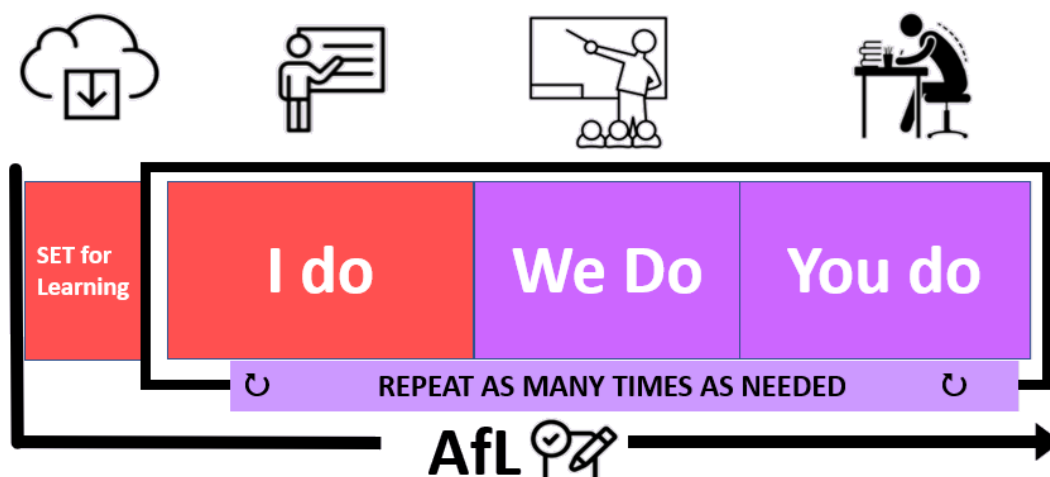
During an RFSS lesson use this lesson structure:



During an RFSS lesson repeatedly:

Nurture relationships for learning and create supportive learning environments	Develop self-regulating learners
Develop reading, literacy, oracy and numeracy	Obtain a high success rate (and pause lessons to re-teach if success rate is low)
Use assessment for learning (AfL) to check for understanding (especially questioning)	Provide appropriate feedback

Therefore, learning should be structured:



Teaching and learning detail:

All lessons at RFSS begin with a review of previous work: the SET (Silence Equipment Task) for learning. This “SET” recall task draws on research from Ebbinghaus’s forgetting curve and Sweller’s Cognitive Load Theory. The teaching of new material process follows the guidance of Rosenshine’s Principles of Instruction, the Great Teacher Toolkit and Lemov’s Teach Like a Champion.

- New material is taught in small steps using clear models and examples (“I do”).
- Guided practise occurs (“We do”).
- Time is allowed for meaningful scaffolded independent practise (“You do”).

Albert Bandura’s Social Cognitive Learning Theory and the EEF’s Metacognition / Self-Regulated Learning guide provide a research grounding for RFSS’s belief that lessons should nurture relationships for learning, create supportive learning environments, develop self-regulating learners, develop literacy, obtain a high success rate, pause lessons where appropriate to re-teach, use Afl to check for understanding, and provide appropriate feedback

a) SET Tasks

Beginning lessons with a short review of previous learning (the SET task) is an opportunity for retrieval and recall activities based on previous learning. Effective teaching recalls knowledge from previous lessons to establish a baseline starting point. SET tasks are bespoke and relevant to a particular class at a particular point in their learning.



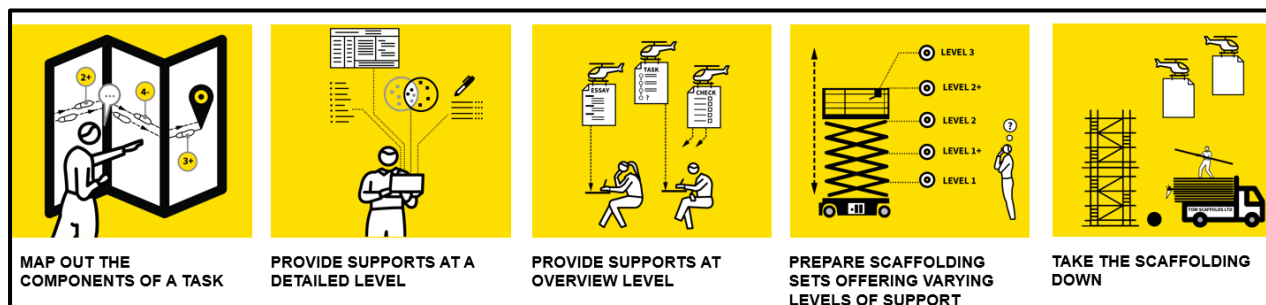
b) Teach new material in small steps & Provide models and examples (I do)

Providing students with models and worked examples helps them learn to solve problems faster. For students to know what success looks like, teachers show worked examples and ensure students have a good understanding of *why* this is a good example. Teachers then use a range of modelling strategies and metacognitive strategies (showing thoughts) to demonstrate the steps needed to achieve the intended learning. This may take the form of demonstrating how to solve a problem; how to construct a sentence or paragraph or unpick key ideas from a text.



c) Guided practise (We Do)

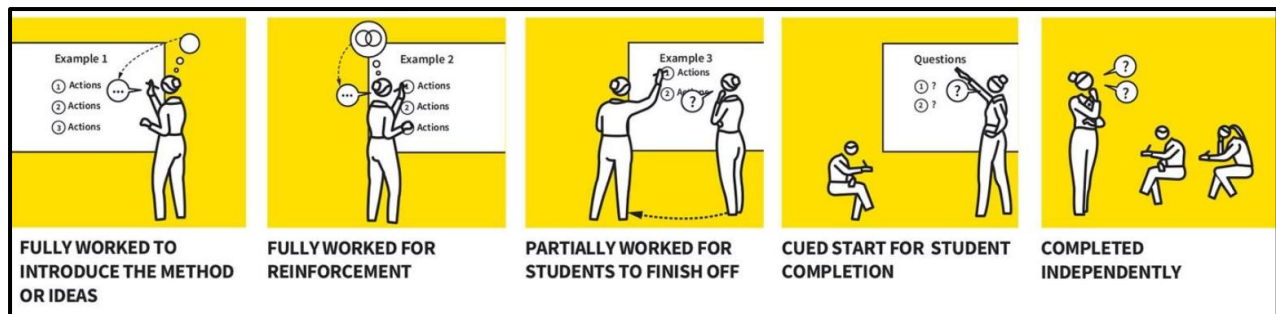
For students to build confidence with new learning guidance and models provide clear learning steps to success. Teachers support this process verbally modelling their thinking, asking questions to clarify student's thinking, and using opportunities that arise to address any misconceptions. Guided practise can be in the form of worked examples, partner work or additional teacher guidance with the aim of preparing them for independent learning. Teachers' assessment for learning will decide whether students subsequently need additional scaffolds or further teacher support.



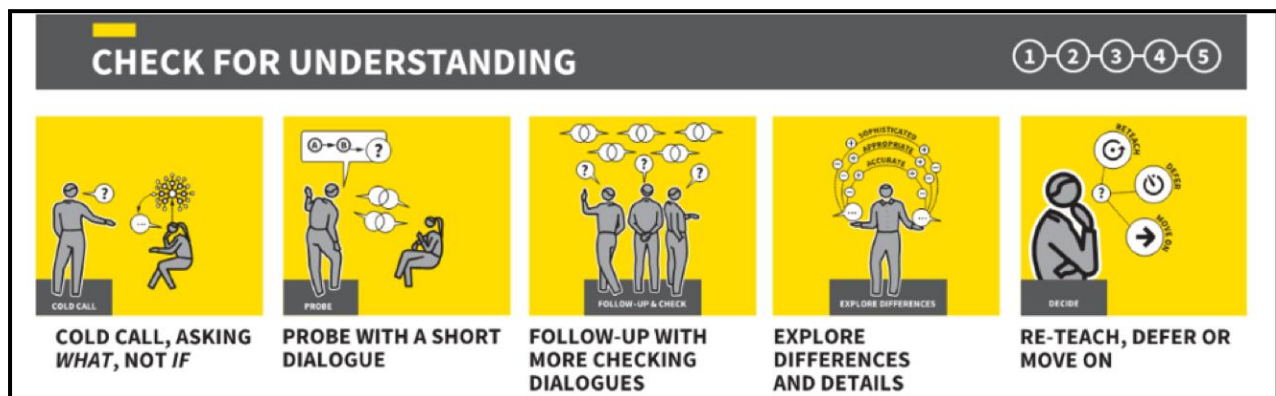
d) Independent practise with scaffolding (You Do)

Practise is needed in order to become fluent and automatic in the recall of knowledge/skill. Independent practise involves the same material as the guided practise so students secure and embed learning. To ensure students are successful, teachers use a range of scaffolds to support individual learners, and give criteria on time and expectations. This regular practise develops schema in long-term memory. When knowledge on a particular topic is well-connected, it is in turn easier to learn new information with prior knowledge more readily available for use.





e) Checking for Understanding

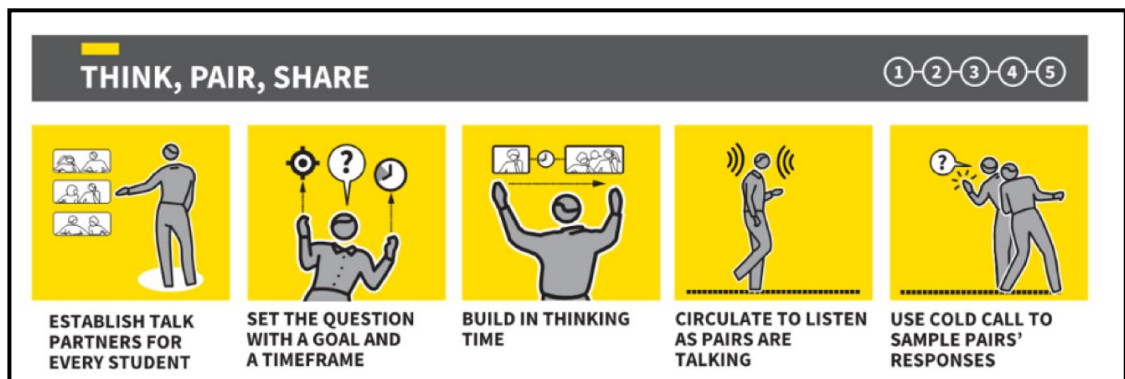


- **Active Observation** involves teachers to circulating around the classroom, looking at students as they work and not waiting by work-stations or boards at the front of the classroom for long periods. They may also adopt a Pastore's Perch position once students have set to work on a task, i.e., a position in from where all students are in the field of view.
- **Questioning** allows teachers to know whether learning has been secured and whether students are ready to move on. Questions also uncover misconceptions allowing teachers to re-teach material or give further examples. Teachers ask key questions at every stage of the lesson and provide appropriate wait time (around 8 seconds). Effective questions ask students to 1) Summarise their learning, 2) explain the procedure or process of learning, 3) justify their thoughts, 4) link their responses to something else or someone else's response. By checking for understanding at each stage of the learning, teachers ensure that learning is successful. Research (Rosenshine, 2012) suggests that an optimal success rate is about 80% - as judged by oral responses during guided practise and individual work. It shows that pupils are learning new material but that they are being challenged.

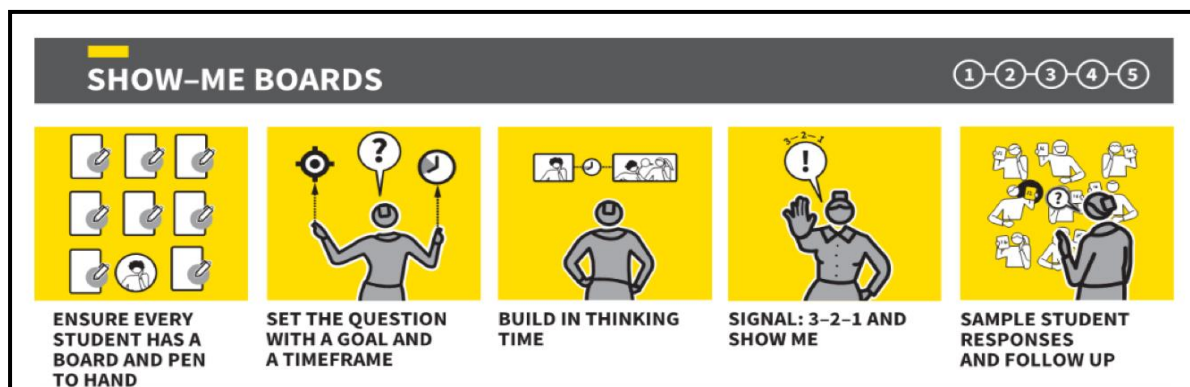
- **Cold Calling** helps address the two main purposes of questioning: making all students think and providing feedback to the teacher about how things are going. Cold calling allows teachers to choose who answers, keeping the whole class involved and giving teachers better information to plan next steps.



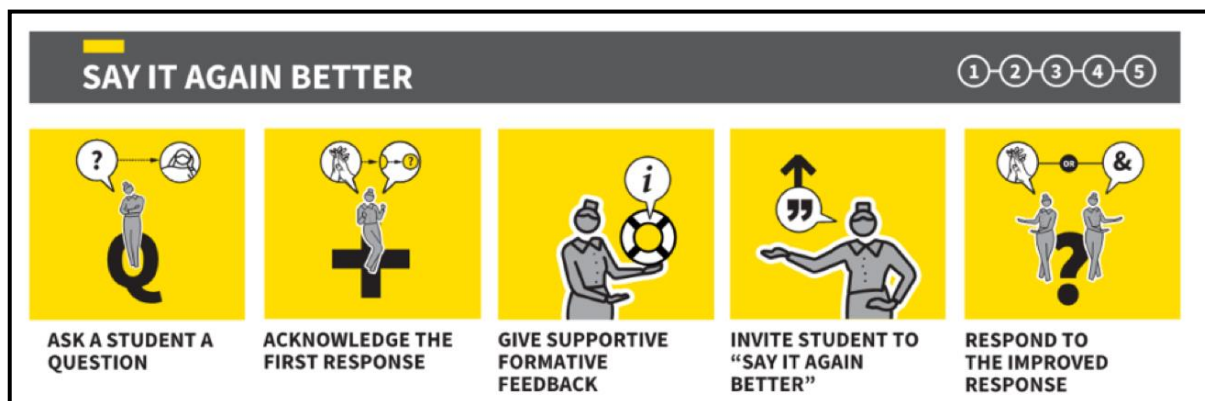
- **Think Pair Share**: There are many times when it is beneficial for students to engage in a structured discussion. Pairs are a powerful way to involve all students in rehearsing and sharing ideas.



- **Mini – White Boards (Show Me Boards)**: Sample responses from a whole class using mini-whiteboards is powerful. Students write on boards in response to questions and simultaneously show their responses. This gives feedback to teachers about the range of student responses. Mini-whiteboards also help students generate ideas or practise sentences or calculation methods.



- **Say It Again Better:** This supports students to produce high quality verbal responses. If teachers accept shallow responses without further development, students will half-form answers are the norm. With Say It Again, Better, teachers accept initial responses but develop them each time.



Supporting subgroups:

The following strategies and structures support different subgroups at RFSS:

Supporting sub-groups		What do I remember?	Question & Answer	Discussion	Modelling	We Do	You Do	AIL	Making Links	Teaching & Learning
General Classroom Strategies for Disadvantaged Students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All aware of high expectations of classwork and homework. • All students to be offered differentiated tasks wherever appropriate. • The books of PP students to be marked first (or early on) to ensure that good quality feedback is provided. • High expectations of homework for all students. • Phone calls to be made home for those students who fail to complete work to the required standard (PP students first). • Praise used as often as possible to encourage these students to actively participate in lessons. • Small group allows lots of individual support opportunities for all students. • Ensure explanations are clear and precise for all. • Targeted questioning. • Grouped with non-PP students. • Positive phone calls home. 		Classroom strategies for SEND Students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Powerpoints should have a pastel coloured background. • Minimum font size of 20 on PowerPoint slides. • PowerPoints to be dual coded where possible / appropriate. • Ensure there is clear and obvious challenge and support. • Allow students to submit work in a variety of formats where appropriate • Every classroom has a set of overlays, fidget toys and a set of differentiation mats. • Use 'First, Next, Then' to support memory and build independence. • Model what a good response looks like. • Use whiteboards so that students can share ideas • Chunk the task into smaller parts • Provide scaffolding such as writing frames. 		Classroom strategies for HPA Students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give a choice of work from differentiated tasks. • Push problem solving activities where students apply knowledge from a range of topics, challenging their thinking. • Offer depth tasks. • Challenge with questions. • Use peer leaders to give explanations to other students. • Share Grade 7, 8 and 9 responses and ask students to compare these against criteria. • Give students the opportunity to 'teach' a section of the lesson or to verbalise their ideas. • Provide regular targeted questions to HPA students. This may be in front of the rest of the class or when you are circulating while the rest of the class is working. • "Springboard" questions around the room. Start with less able students and allow more able students to add to, amend or make further connections to the initial responses. 						

Adaptive Teaching and Learning:

With everything we teach at RFSS, we aim to support our students in gaining a deeper understanding of learning, supporting them to move from being a novice to an expert. In every class, however, there will be students at different stages of their learning journey, with varying starting points, contextual knowledge, vocabulary and expertise. Adaptive teaching supports and challenges all students to build expertise and become more proficient, but especially those students with Special Educational Needs (SEND). Adaptive teaching may involve:

- a) Temporary supports or scaffolds, which include: word banks, writing frames, sentence stems, concrete or pictorial resources, checklists, worked examples
- b) Additional modelling of smaller steps
- c) Additional adult support
- d) Pre-teaching of vocabulary or methods
- e) Smaller group teaching
- f) Targeted support
- g) Targeted questioning
- h) Additional time
- i) Personalised feedback

In addition to this, there are a number of SEND Teaching and Learning principles in classrooms, such as dual coding, pastel-based backgrounds, and overlays.

To support learning further, Learning Support Assistants are informed of the specific needs of students in order to understand the role they are to carry out. They are given clear and explicit instructions as to the concepts, facts and information being taught and the intended learning outcomes. They adopt a 'velcro' or 'helicopter' approach where necessary.

Assessment:

Effective assessment and evaluation improves the quality of teaching and learning and as such is integral to the T&L process. In conjunction with this policy, also read the Feedback and Marking Policy and the Assessment Policy. The school particularly values assessment as an on-going process. Staff are encouraged to let students self-assess and peer assess their work against the success criteria, especially with home learning.

The Learning Environment:

In classrooms, the learning environment should be conducive to effective teaching and learning. Displays should reflect content currently taught with key vocabulary and school values displayed. Teachers should use display and resources to positively impact on learning; through consolidation/reminder of previous learning and introducing new information and knowledge. Pupils should know how to easily access resources in the classroom to support learning, where applicable. All displays should reflect the school's high expectations and ambition for all.

Review:

This policy was reviewed by staff and governors in September 2025 and will be reviewed yearly.