



Eden Park Academy
Every Pupil Achieves

TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

Rationale

At Eden Park Academy we aim to allow each young person to achieve their academic potential, regardless of their starting point and circumstances. We aim for the maximum achievement, accreditation and recognition for all pupils on all types of placement. The approaches to teaching and learning used at Eden Park need to be creative and adaptable to allow the young people to reach their potential.

Aims

We aim to motivate young people to engage willingly in education, by first removing any negative preconceptions that the young people may have developed about “school”. We aim to start by identifying where the student is emotionally and behaviourally and identifying issues and learning difficulties etc. before employing strategies to address these. From this starting point, work based at an appropriate level and following the students’ interests, allows small successes to progressively build and increases self esteem and confidence. This change in attitude can be built upon and the student can be encouraged to increase the challenge involved and make progress towards their education targets. Qualifications such as GCSE, OCR, WJEC and ASDAN certificates are one of the many ways we measure academic success.

Core Philosophies

- We aim to enable the young people to become more emotionally and behaviourally stable, developing their self awareness and self esteem.
- The teaching at Eden Park uses constant positive reinforcement.
- As far as possible learning is agreed through consultation with each young person.
- Pupils are given the tools to learn through bespoke programmes and specialised staff.

We view education as a wide spectrum of experiences which encompasses personal and social development as well as academia. Everything to some extent is a learning experience. In this respect we are a holistic alternative to mainstream education.

We are more focussed on learning than on teaching – the teachers here are facilitators, guiding students in their educational interests.



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We offer a core curriculum with a broad base of extension subjects. We believe that students learn from many life experiences, and contextual topics of study have strong cross curricular links.

Students are encouraged to plan and evaluate their own curriculum and activities are negotiated where appropriate.

We focus on enabling the young people to learn the basic skills that they will need to function independently in society. The contexts within which these skills are taught are of secondary importance to the mastery of the skills themselves.

We work towards an ideal situation where a young person would experience a broad and balanced curriculum, would reintegrate back into main stream school, and live independently after 16 within the community.

Teaching style

Praise and positive feedback are central to our teaching style.

The school now uses group work and pupil interaction sessions in its teaching practise.

Each young person is taught by a variety of teachers, this ensures that each young person benefits from a variety of teaching styles, and from the individual strengths of each teacher.

The environment is homely, and welcoming. It both celebrates the young people's achievements, and stimulates their curiosity through display.

Where direct teaching takes place, it is non formalised, and non didactic. We depart as much as possible from the directive style of teaching and support and facilitate student learning.

Teachers are relaxed and warm with young people, and first name terms are always used.

Students are encouraged to become independent learners, and efforts are made to prevent them from becoming over dependent upon the teaching staff. Independent learning involves time alone working educationally, in the ability to concentrate, and the ability to research independently.

Building a positive relationship with the young people is crucial to successful teaching. All efforts are put into relating with the young people on their own terms, in their own style, with their own language.

A relationship of mutual trust and respect is to be cultured.



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Confrontation is avoided as much as possible and where it does occur it is resolved as calmly and quickly as possible through negotiation with the young person and staff. The degree of challenge (and therefore confrontation) that young people experience varies from pupil to pupil depending upon the behavioural criteria set.

There are firm boundaries at the education centre. These are made explicit to the young people, and they are expected to comply with them.

Where possible students agree their own set of personal rules when they commence education, and they are requested to sign a contract to say that they will comply with them. Student's incentives are also reliant upon meeting these targets.

Behavioural targets are set in IBP's, and where appropriate included into individual lesson plans.

When the young people first arrive, we accept their behaviour in an unconditional manner. Strategies are devised in small steps to move them on behaviourally, leading to them ultimately taking responsibility for their own behaviour.

The key to their behaviour is a relationship founded on trust and respect.

Negative behaviour is ignored where possible, and positives only are reinforced through attention and praise, positive behaviour charts, stickers, certificates and rewards. (see Behaviour and Discipline Policy/Care and Control Policy)

We make a concerted effort to get the young people to conceptualise that it is their behaviour and not them that is the problem, and that the two are very different.

All teaching addresses patterns of behaviour, much of this is discrete and implicit to our teaching, behaviour is also directly dealt with through personal and social development.

If behaviour escalates to the level where the young person could be a danger to themselves, others or the building, depending upon the individual circumstances they may firstly be requested to leave. We try to avoid directing them to leave, as such rejection can be damaging to the young people's self esteem. If it is either not appropriate that they should leave or that they will not leave, and become violent causing pain or injury, damage property, are in danger or commit an offence, they are then restrained following company guidelines by care staff qualified in restraint. (Care & Control Policy)



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All incidents are recorded in the incident book, kept with the accident book and sanction book in the office cabinet.

Attendance

Young people are registered in the admissions book once they start attending the school. For more details, please refer to the admissions policy. They are accordingly recorded as leaving, and the reason for their departure recorded.

Attendance is recorded daily in the attendance register. Activities off site are also recorded as having been completed or not.

Non attendance is dealt with by the Head Teacher.

Appraising work

We appraise and assess work with the students. This encompasses both written and practical, verbal, personal social and behavioural work.

It is crucial that the effort, the behaviour of the young person and the process of working and or skills used are appraised as well as, or in some instances instead of the end result.

Appraising work is seen as an opportunity to celebrate work and achievements, and to discover opportunities to develop learning in a consultative manner. Any appraisals should be focussed on support and guidance, and be positively future orientated.

Only the most crucial mistakes are highlighted. Occasionally where the young person has exceptionally low self esteem, some mistakes may be completely overlooked, if the learning outcome is for example to increase self esteem through completing work rather than to complete work accurately.

The young people are guided to a realisation that they have made a mistake and they assess whether it needs correcting or not. In this way they set their own parameters and goals. Mistakes that do need correcting are usually for an everyday context i.e. spelling in a letter of application.

We respond to the young people's work it is with non failure language. Any failure that occurs is dealt with positively and developed into an opportunity to learn.

These young people are extremely sensitive to criticism of any kind. If they feel that they have 'failed' at an activity, then they often will cease to attempt it again.



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At the beginning of an activity young people should be clear about criteria for appraisal. These criteria are matched to learning objectives. It should be clear for example if the presentation is irrelevant to the exercise, or if concentration rather than an end product is the focus of attention.

The ability to point out errors, problems, and difficulties, is therefore very delicate, with the teacher needing to praise enough to allow the young person to be encouraged to continue without them feeling that the teacher is being either too patronising or too negative.

Appraisal needs to be supportive, acknowledging the value of the work and the effort of the pupil, no matter how much also needs to be improved. It should also offer specific guidance and support to make the improvements necessary to address issues raised.

Work will be celebrated through praise by the teachers and care staff, through the AQA unit award scheme certificates and through wall display. Any work that the young person is particularly proud of can go into their record of achievement.

When young people earn certificates these can be displayed on the wall and are kept in the young person's record of achievement.

Staff are given annual training about marking and assessment.

Reporting

The care team, and referring social services departments are seen to be acting as loco parentis. In this respect all educational issues are discussed with care teams and are passed on to Social Services.

Informal discussions take place regularly with care teams. Formal discussions and exchanges of information take place around normal reporting times, and reviews, and in cases of child protection with Social Services.

Direct links with the parents of the young people are made under advice from social services in the form of written and verbal communication as appropriate. Parents are welcome to be as involved as possible, in frequent telephone communication, and visiting the centre.

Progress reports are sent to the care homes termly as well as a report every Half-term.