Assessment Feedback and Marking Policy

St Piers School is a non-maintained residential special school, offering both residential and day provision for students aged 5-19 with severe and moderate learning difficulties. Many of our students have additional needs, requiring complex physical and medical support. This is provided by a highly specialist transdisciplinary team, across St Piers, including consultant doctors, nurses, educational psychologists, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, physiotherapists, teachers, and support staff.

Staff at St Piers School place our students at the centre of all we do, and champion-our school values; Be kind, Be empowered, Be inspired. Our key focus is to promote independence and communication skills to prepare our students for their futures as they move through their lives.

As such St Piers places students at the heart of education, using a transdisciplinary approach working from that young person's individual needs at a moment in time rather than fitting their education into a predetermined approach.

INTENT

Aims and Objectives of the Policy

- To ensure the educational provision for our students as laid down in the Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) needs are met
- To ensure our students learn to their full potential
- To identify and respond to the changing needs of our students in a transdisciplinary manner
- To ensure that academic progress is supported through feedback and marking
- To ensure students understand what their next step in learning is
- Listening and responding to our students to help them understand and move forward in their learning
- To give students the confidence in seeking assistance and making progress towards their next steps
- To ensure students reach their potential
- To define what we mean by feedback and marking and how it helps our students learn
- To describe how we feedback to our students and mark their work
- To provide consistency in feedback and marking
- Involving parents, carers and residential staff in the student's education and ensuring we listen to them

What do we mean by feedback and marking?

When we use the term Marking at St Piers it is a generic term for giving feedback to students and staff in a variety of ways, enabling them to use this information to reflect and then make the next step forward with support.

In line with our school values St Piers School believes that students respond best to praise and positive reinforcement of what they have done well whist staff demonstrate, model and guide students in how they can improve on their attempts and mistakes. By using positive supporting approaches our students' confidence can grow and with that confidence, their ambition, independence, inspiration, and success thus empowering and inspiring our students to achieve their goals.

Feedback and marking can take many different forms/methods of interaction such as body language, the spoken or signed (Makaton) word, symbolic representation, or written annotation. More likely it will be a combination of these.

Support staff and teachers may at times be required to feedback verbally or to mark work in written format with students' participation so that the student can understand their learning and be involved in decisions about their next step or target. This is supported by our bespoke assessment tool, Earwig Academic, which enables us to record, evidence and annotate learning whilst linking to our specific and bespoke frameworks so that progress and attainment can be used to inform the students next steps/future targets. This approach is often more prevalent when the student has more complex or profound learning needs. Additionally, we use a transdisciplinary approach to target setting where staff from therapy, residential and education are all involved in ensuring that targets are appropriate.

At St Piers we ensure that feedback and marking is inclusive and is not solely a staff led activity but involves our students at every opportunity in leading their learning and understanding their next steps and targets.

Feedback and marking at St Piers is a process where we celebrate and acknowledge the achievements and progress of our students. It is therefore probable that feedback and marking may take place in the corridor, at lunchtime, on trips into the community or assemblies as well as in the classroom environment. Feedback and marking happens anytime that students are learning about something and need feedback. Our assessment for learning is based on the engagement model (DfE July 2020) principles where feedback and marking is an integral part of our students personalised educational progress.
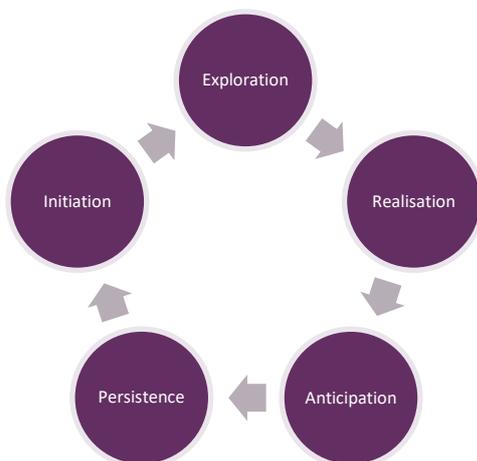
5 Areas of Engagement   **Personalised approach**

Feedback and marking at St Piers is a motivator for our students, to celebrate their achievements and to move their learning forward.
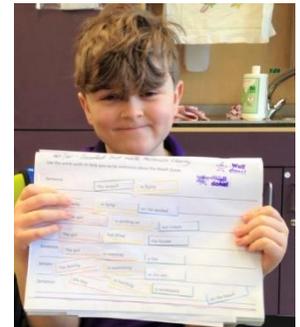

| Trying something from previous knowledge | Reflecting & learning through feedback & marking | Trying out what you've learnt | Success! |

IMPLEMENTATION

How do we mark?

The key message is that we do not mark in one single way; we mark according to the student, the way they learn best and the learning situation. The format of marking will be down to professional judgement; marking is not just about keeping records it is about learning. For many students a combination of marking strategies will be needed and used for each learning experience.

✳ Body language

For many students in all three of our Learner Journeys body language can be seen as the building block of feedback and marking as it forms a foundation for communication; the positive body language used by our staff directly links to our students' receptive skills and links directly to our school values by helping to improve their confidence, self-esteem and wish to succeed.

Depending on the student, the learning environment and the situation, body language should reflect the learner's needs. For some students this will mean exuberant and exaggerated body movements to give positive feedback, for others who may be more anxious it will mean a slow - subtle shifting of position or a spreading grin. Much will depend on the individuals' relationship with others, their emotional state, level of cognition and ability to process information.

This guidance is purposefully broad to allow our staff the flexibility to make professional judgements about what body language to use and what approaches to consider as appropriate feedback on an individual basis. This coupled with our positive behaviour support approach enables our staff to reflect on their practice in line with students individual learning needs to help our students achieve their full potential.

✳ Touch

For some students, tactile feedback is an essential part of feedback and marking, it gives them an understanding of what they need to do as they are guided in new experiences through mechanical manipulation and modelling. This is particularly important for students with poor praxis or coordination difficulties where they do not yet have the necessary motor control to provide their own reliable feedback loops reflected in the five areas of engagement.

For some students touch provides emotional reassurance as they encounter new or challenging experiences; this should be noted as our students are often not just learning about the *academic* task in front of them but also about the world around them, including social and environmental interaction. For students at a low developmental level or for those that have sensory processing difficulties (students with ASC for example) tactile feedback (or marking) will be required additionally so they can access their education.

Touch, especially gross muscle pressure can provide an important part of positive reinforcement during marking, especially for students with ASC where other forms of praise are not yet able to be understood. As students develop it may be necessary to teach them alternatives to touch as a way of marking, so they can engage in age and socially appropriate ways of learning.

✳ The spoken word

The spoken word in feedback and marking is hugely important for our students. The spoken word includes the

words themselves, but also the tone, pitch and volume – it is these which many students will pick up - prior to understanding the content of the words themselves. Our staff consider these variables in their tone, pitch and volume so that they provide positive reinforcement.

At St Piers we use strategies such as Intensive Interaction with students who have more complex communication needs. This involves the professional repeating and adding verbal (also physical) cues to those given by the student to reinforce and support pre-verbal communication.

Where a student understands language 5 key principles should be used when giving feedback and marking verbally.
1) Use simple, clear language the student can understand
2) Use the student's name
3) Make the verbal feedback and marking positive
4) Tell the student what they've done correctly – praising the process not just the outcome
5) Tell them or ask them a question so they can make the next step

✳ Symbolic Marking

At St Piers School we use a variety of Alternative/Augmentation Communication (AAC) approaches supported by our Speech and Language Therapists to ensure that students communication needs are met individually. By ensuring that our students can communicate effectively we are able to involve the students in celebrating their achievement in a way that is meaningful to them.

In some classes we utilise a self-assessment traffic light system during plenaries in our class-based lessons through a scaffolded process of 3 key symbols. Students are then motivated using stamps and we as professionals have an easily identifiable visual showing how a student has achieved against their targets.
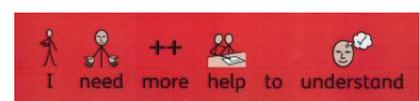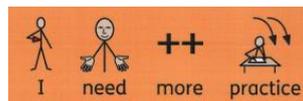
We use symbolic representations in different situations as motivators and to facilitate reflection, they give both students and staff a quick visual guide to task achievement. In some classes staff or students, them-selves stamp the physical work, both students and staff can refer to these in their workbooks/folders daily. For students that have capacity to understand and process the symbols and stamps will link to written objectives, where students are involved in their target setting and next steps. For students with more complex communication needs these targets should still be shared in a similar fashion but supported with a total communication approach via additional visual and auditory cues to assist with information processing. Examples are the use of widget symbols and songs of reference and key words.

This kind of form may be integrated into workbooks, folders or tabletop displays so that students and staff can refer to their targets to make feedback and marking more meaningful and relevant to their individualised and differentiated learning

Specialist Skills			
What do I need to learn		How have I done this week	
Count on in 10's from 0 – 100			
Count back in 10's from 100 - 0			
Write down 10 times table			

Learning For Life		St Piers
What do I need to learn 🙂💭	**How have I done this week** ✓!	
Begin to explore items with interest			
Show a preference by making a choice between two **2**			
Engage in a turn taking activity with an adult			

This kind of form is important to refer to at the start of a lesson or at the plenary point, so students can see their own progress over time, be involved in the setting of their next steps and to assist staff in focusing the feedback and annotations that they are making on the students work and verbally to the students.

Annotations on work referring to the targets are a key part of the feedback and marking because they provide a context to the learning and the next step, for example.

> *"Sebastian could not count on in tens without verbal support, however there was building work outside and he was distracted. If this continues next lesson, we can use the library where it will be quieter".*

IMPACT

✳ Written Marking

This section covers written marking specifically on students work (teacher records follow this section).

All students work is dated to enable staff and students to see a chronological order or progression. Like verbal feedback, staff annotation provides the student with concrete knowledge of their progress and attainment; it also enables the student to make the next step in learning either through modelling or by inference from comments. Annotations to student's physical work are made in **purple** pen so that it can be clearly identified. Students may use stamps or may also write annotations where appropriate so that they are involved in this process during plenaries.

Objective	Comment	Support needed
Form letter 'l' independently	Able copy 'l' from top to bottom after modelling, but could not differentiate her own letter use a different colored pens for student and teacher	Modelled 1 letter at a time, then Sally copied letter

✳ Formative & Summative Marking

Teacher records are in place to allow the teacher to judge progress and alter tasks so that a student can gain the best possible outcome. At St Piers the summative marking process is important as the information entered on our bespoke assessment frameworks informs the contextual and reflective element to the

assessment for learning process of planning and generating next steps. Summative marking allows us to evaluate learning strategies and to provide a `picture` of the student to others, i.e. for accreditation, Local Authority monitoring and parent/carer reports etc...

At St Piers we use an assessment platform called earwig academic to evidence and track students' progress. This platform allows us to use bespoke assessment frameworks for both formative and summative attainment monitoring. We can therefore link students learning to key criteria that is relevant to our students.

Teachers and Learning Support Assistants (LSA'S) upload supporting evidence of learning in the form of photo's, video's and scanned work to earwig linking these to the frameworks which provides a quick reference to their attainment levels. These are also linked to `subject tags` so that we can produce a timeline report of specific areas where required.

Example of earwig academic's data analysis page

Example

Teachers can mark attainment at any time during the year, but we carry out a statistical analysis at the end of every term to evaluate attainment at this time. This then gives us an indication of how well the student is progressing against their expected targets. From this analysis our teaching staff can identify and implement any intervention strategies required to raise attainment.

Our therapists work closely with education staff in a transdisciplinary manner to ensure that we are providing appropriate challenge and support our students to reach their full potential and to achieve the best outcomes possible through their learning journey. Our school linked Speech and Language Therapist carries out annual reading tests where appropriate using the GL Assessment's YARK reading tests. This data is broken down into several areas to provide an average reading age. Enabling us to track progress over time and allowing us to identify areas where further support may be required.

For some of our students it is appropriate for our teaching staff to use a variety of teaching and learning platforms. These also assist with our assessment for learning process as they provide us with useful diagnostic tools and analytic data that we can use to identify areas that require additional support/interventions whilst providing education activities/tasks that are individualised and pitched at an appropriate level. These online platforms are; Lexia, Mathletics and BKSB.

Example diagnostic assessments with linked education resources

Lexia

BKSB

Mathletics

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