



HAWICK HIGH SCHOOL

Learning and Teaching Policy

**A shared framework for excellent learning for
every learner, every day**



Hawick High School
Scottish Borders Council

Purpose and scope

This policy establishes Hawick High School's shared expectations for learning, teaching and assessment. Its purpose is to improve the day-to-day experience and progress of every learner by making effective practice clear, consistent and adaptable across subjects, stages and pathways.

The policy applies to all staff who plan, deliver, support or evaluate learning. It is not a script for identical lessons. It sets a common entitlement for learners while preserving teachers' professional judgement about subject pedagogy, sequence, pace and approach.

Our commitment

At Hawick High School, we aim to provide excellent learning for every learner, every day. Learning, teaching and assessment are interdependent and are strengthened by positive relationships, high expectations, appropriate support and challenge, and systematic use of evidence. Our HEARD values shape how adults and young people learn and work together.

- Every learner is known, included, challenged and supported to make progress.
- Learning has a clear purpose and learners understand what success looks like.
- Teaching responds to evidence of understanding and need, during lessons and over time.
- Feedback results in action, reflection and improvement.
- Knowledge and skills are applied through meaningful contexts, including project-based learning where it adds value.
- Professional learning and quality assurance focus on improving learners' experiences and outcomes.

The SHARED framework

SHARED translates Hawick High School's priorities into six connected features of effective classroom practice. The features may appear in different forms and at different points in a learning sequence; their impact matters more than a fixed lesson format.

	SHARED feature	Learner entitlement
S	Success through clear learning intentions	Learners understand what they are learning, why it matters and how quality will be recognised.
H	High-impact teaching strategies	Teachers select explicit, evidence-informed strategies that build secure knowledge, understanding and skills.
A	Adaptive and targeted teaching	Planning and in-the-moment decisions provide appropriate access, support and challenge. Data is used to inform these decisions.
R	Respectful relationships	Calm, consistent and inclusive classrooms help learners feel safe, seen and ready to learn.
E	Effective feedback	Feedback is timely, precise and used by learners to improve their work and next steps.
D	Deep learning through projects	Project-based learning connects disciplines, communities and authentic problems while retaining subject rigour.

Core expectations in every learning environment

These expectations establish consistency without requiring every lesson to follow the same sequence.

Ready to learn

A calm welcome; an orderly start; equipment and digital devices ready; established routines and expectations applied consistently.

Purpose

The learning intention and success criteria are communicated in an accessible form and checked for understanding, not simply displayed.

Participation

Tasks, questioning and accessible resources expect all learners to think, respond and contribute. Barriers to participation are noticed and addressed; no learner is routinely allowed to remain passive.

Checking understanding

Teachers use questioning, observation and formative assessment to identify prior knowledge, progress and misconceptions.

Responsive action

Explanations, scaffolds, pace, grouping, practice or challenge are adjusted when evidence shows this is needed.

Review and next steps

Learning is revisited at appropriate points. Learners can identify progress, act on feedback and understand what comes next.

S — Success through clear learning intentions

Clear learning intentions direct attention to the knowledge, understanding and skills being developed. Success criteria make quality visible and support assessment, feedback and learner independence.

Teachers will

- Connect new learning to prior learning, progression pathways and the wider purpose of the course or curriculum.
- Share or develop learning intentions and success criteria in language learners can understand.
- Unpack success criteria through explanation, modelling, worked examples, exemplars and non-examples.
- Return to the learning intention and success criteria during the learning sequence and use them to frame feedback.
- Check that learners can explain what they are learning, why they are learning it and what successful work involves.

H — High-impact teaching strategies

High-impact strategies are selected because they help learners think, remember, understand and apply learning. Strategy choice must be responsive to subject content, learner need and the stage of learning.

Teachers will

- Activate and assess relevant prior knowledge through purposeful retrieval and review.
- Present new material in manageable steps with clear explanation and appropriate pace.
- Model expert thinking using worked examples, think-alouds, demonstrations and gradual release such as I do, we do, you do.
- Use questioning that includes recall, analysis, justification, evaluation and creation, with sufficient thinking time.
- Use whole-class response approaches, hinge questions and diagnostic questions so that every learner thinks and the teacher can respond.
- Provide guided and independent practice, with purposeful opportunities to revisit, interleave and apply learning.
- Develop literacy, numeracy, digital capability, metacognition and transferable skills through subject learning.

A — Adaptive and targeted teaching

Adaptive teaching begins with ambitious goals for all and removes unnecessary barriers without lowering expectations. It uses knowledge of learners and ongoing assessment to vary support, representation, grouping, pace, task and challenge.

Teachers will

- Use learner information, assessment evidence and professional observation to anticipate barriers and plan appropriate support and stretch.
- Provide universal supports and accessible explanations, vocabulary, visuals, resources and digital tools.
- Use temporary, targeted scaffolds and reduce them as learners become more secure and independent.
- Adapt questioning and practice to probe understanding and provide appropriate cognitive challenge.
- Use flexible grouping where it improves access, participation, explanation or challenge.
- Respond promptly to misconceptions and adjust teaching in real time.
- Work with support staff and partners so that roles, interventions and intended learning are clear.

R — Respectful relationships

Relationships are the foundation of readiness, participation and belonging. Adults combine warmth with high expectations and apply the school's positive relationships approaches consistently and fairly.

Teachers will

- Welcome learners and establish calm, predictable starts and transitions.
- Teach, model, practise and reinforce routines rather than assuming they are understood.
- Use respectful, inclusive and restorative language, recognising individual context while maintaining clear boundaries.
- Communicate belief in every learner's capacity to improve and celebrate effort, progress and success.
- Create conditions in which learners feel safe to ask questions, make mistakes and contribute ideas.
- Use learner voice to reflect on classroom climate, participation and barriers to learning.
- Apply agreed expectations for attendance, punctuality, equipment, mobile phones and responsible digital use.

E — Effective feedback

Feedback is effective when it helps learners improve. It may be verbal, written, digital, individual, peer or self-generated. Quantity and format are secondary to clarity, timing and learner action.

Teachers will

- Base feedback on the learning goal, success criteria and evidence of current understanding.
- Identify what is secure and give a manageable, actionable next step.
- Give feedback while it remains useful, including live feedback and responsive re-teaching.
- Plan supported time for learners to respond, redraft, practise or correct misconceptions.
- Teach learners how to use exemplars, self-assessment and peer assessment accurately and respectfully.
- Check the impact of feedback through subsequent work, discussion or assessment.
- Use digital and AI-supported tools only when they improve quality, accessibility or timeliness and comply with school and authority guidance.

D — Deep learning through projects

Project-based learning gives learners sustained opportunities to apply disciplinary knowledge and skills to a meaningful question, problem or product. It is used purposefully, not as an activity detached from planned progression.

Teachers will

- Begin with clear curriculum outcomes, essential knowledge and an authentic driving question or challenge.
- Plan explicit teaching, modelling and checkpoints within the project so learners have the knowledge needed to succeed.
- Create purposeful opportunities for enquiry, collaboration, creativity, communication and critical thinking.
- Connect learning to Hawick, the wider Borders, the world of work and relevant community partners where appropriate.
- Make interdisciplinary links coherent and ensure each subject contribution is explicit and assessable.
- Include learner choice and agency within well-defined boundaries.
- Use critique, feedback, revision and a meaningful final product, performance or audience.
- Evaluate both curriculum learning and the transferable skills developed.

Planning learning over time

Departments and teachers plan from curriculum rationale, progression pathways and learner evidence. Plans identify the knowledge, understanding and skills learners will develop, how learning will be sequenced, where assessment will inform decisions, and how barriers will be anticipated. Plans remain adaptable and are refined in response to evidence.

- Build coherent progression across lessons, units, stages and pathways.
- Balance acquisition, practice, application, retrieval and reflection.
- Plan assessment as part of learning rather than as a separate event.
- Identify opportunities for literacy, numeracy, digital learning, skills and Learning for Sustainability.
- Use project-based and interdisciplinary learning where it strengthens curriculum purpose and coherence.
- Take account of transitions, learner profiles, additional support needs and prior attainment.

Assessment and moderation

Assessment gathers dependable evidence to inform teaching, learner action, professional judgement and reporting. A balanced range of approaches should be proportionate to purpose and avoid unnecessary workload.

- Formative assessment is embedded through questioning, observation, dialogue, tasks, quizzes, exit checks and review of learner work.
- Summative assessment is planned at appropriate points and aligned with taught curriculum and expected standards.
- Assessment evidence is analysed to identify progress, misconceptions, gaps, equity issues and next steps for individuals and groups.
- Moderation supports shared understanding of standards through planning, reviewing evidence and professional dialogue.
- Tracking information is current, understood and used to target support, challenge and intervention.
- Learners and families receive clear information about progress, strengths and next steps.

Digital learning

Digital learning is an integral part of high-quality learning, teaching and assessment. In line with Inspire Learning, technology is used purposefully to enrich learning, widen access and help learners become confident, creative and responsible digital citizens. The learning intention and sound pedagogy determine whether a digital, non-digital or blended approach is most appropriate.

- Plan digital experiences that improve explanation, practice, feedback, creativity, collaboration or learner independence.
- Use the Inspire Learning environment and agreed platforms consistently so learners can access appropriate resources, learning and feedback in school and beyond.
- Teach learners to find, evaluate, create and communicate digital information safely, critically and ethically, including appropriate use of artificial intelligence.
- Use accessibility features and alternative formats to reduce barriers, while ensuring that lack of connectivity, confidence or a suitable device does not disadvantage a learner.
- Develop learners' digital skills progressively across subjects and give them opportunities to apply those skills in meaningful curriculum contexts.
- Protect privacy, wellbeing, security and academic integrity, and follow school, local authority and national guidance when selecting platforms and handling information.
- Evaluate digital approaches through evidence of participation, progress and quality of learning rather than frequency of device use.

Equity and inclusion

Inclusion and equity mean taking positive action so that every learner is present, participating, achieving and supported. Provision is needs-led and does not depend on a formal label. Staff identify and reduce barriers while maintaining ambitious expectations, recognising learners' rights and ensuring that their views are heard.

Universal support begins with high-quality learning and teaching, positive relationships and a nurturing environment. The CIRCLE framework helps staff consider how the physical and social environment, structures and routines, motivation, and skills interact to affect participation. Targeted or specialist support is added through staged intervention when universal approaches are not sufficient.

- Plan accessible learning, resources and assessment with appropriate support and challenge, using reasonable adjustments and digital tools where they improve participation and independence.
- Create a safe, welcoming and respectful environment in which every learner experiences belonging, equality and positive relationships, and diversity is understood and celebrated.
- Establish predictable routines and transitions, and respond to behaviour as communication by considering unmet needs, wellbeing and barriers to learning.
- Use learner voice and knowledge of strengths, interests and aspirations to involve young people meaningfully in decisions about their learning and support.
- Monitor who is present, participating, achieving and supported. Use attendance, engagement, progress and attainment evidence to identify inequity, including barriers linked to poverty or vulnerability, and adapt provision.
- Provide timely and proportionate targeted support through staged intervention, with clear outcomes and regular review of impact, independence and re-engagement.
- Work collaboratively with families, support staff and partner services so that information, roles, strategies and review points are clear and support is coordinated around the learner.

Roles and responsibilities

Group	Responsibility
Senior leadership team	Keep learning, teaching and assessment a strategic priority; align policy, improvement planning and resources; provide professional learning; evaluate impact through triangulated evidence; report progress and remove systemic barriers.
Principal teachers and faculty leaders	Translate the policy into subject practice; lead curriculum planning, moderation and professional dialogue; support and challenge staff; share effective practice; use evidence to plan faculty improvement.
Teachers	Plan and teach in line with SHARED; know learners and maintain high expectations; use assessment responsively; participate in moderation, professional learning and self-evaluation; work with families and partners.
Support staff	Understand the learning intention and intended support; promote independence and participation; share relevant observations; contribute to planning and review for learners they support.
Learners	Arrive ready to learn; participate and ask for help; use goals, criteria and feedback; reflect on progress; contribute respectfully; take increasing responsibility for learning.
Parents and carers	Support attendance, readiness and routines; discuss learning and feedback; share relevant information; engage with reporting and school communication; encourage ambition and perseverance.
Partners	Co-design purposeful learning where appropriate; make authentic contexts and pathways visible; support evaluation of learner outcomes and experience.

Professional learning and collaborative improvement

Professional learning will be sustained, evidence-informed and connected to agreed improvement priorities. Staff will have opportunities to examine learner work, plan together, observe practice, test strategies, engage with research and evaluate impact. Professional Learning Communities will focus on a precise learner need and make the resulting change in practice and outcome visible.

Quality assurance and self-evaluation

Quality assurance will evaluate the consistency and impact of the learner entitlement, not compliance with a single lesson style. Evidence will be proportionate, developmental and triangulated across direct observation, learner work, assessment information and the views of learners, staff and families.

Evidence source	Evaluation question
Classroom visits and learning walks	What are learners thinking, saying, doing and producing? Which SHARED features are visible and what difference are they making?
Learner conversations	Can learners explain their learning, success, feedback and next steps? Do they feel respected, included and appropriately challenged?
Work and assessment review	Does work show progression, challenge, responsive feedback and learner action? Are standards understood and moderated?
Data and equity review	Who is participating, progressing and achieving? Which groups require a change in provision or targeted action?
Staff self evaluation	Which approaches are secure, where is practice variable, and what professional learning or collaborative enquiry is needed?
Family feedback	Do families understand progress and next steps, and is communication timely, clear and useful?

Implementation and review

Implementation will be phased so that shared language is matched by practical support and evaluation. The policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner when school, authority or national guidance changes.

Phase	Action
Establish	Consult on the policy and poster; agree precise whole-school expectations; introduce SHARED to staff, learners and families.
Develop	Prioritise professional learning in adaptive teaching, higher-order questioning, explicit modelling, feedback response and project-based learning.
Embed	Use faculty planning, moderation, coaching and professional learning communities to strengthen consistent practice.
Evaluate	Triangulate classroom evidence, learner work, attainment, engagement and stakeholder views; identify impact and unintended consequences.
Refine	Update guidance, professional learning and improvement actions in response to evidence.

Indicators of impact

Learners can explain what they are learning, why it matters, what success looks like and what they need to do next.

Classrooms are calm, respectful and inclusive, with consistent routines and high participation.

Teaching shows appropriate challenge, responsive scaffolding and timely action on misconceptions.

Questioning increasingly requires analysis, justification and evaluation as well as recall.

Feedback leads to visible improvement in subsequent learner work and understanding.

Project-based learning demonstrates secure curriculum learning, meaningful application and learner agency.

Attainment, progress, engagement and attendance improve, with gaps for identified groups reducing.

Staff report greater confidence and consistency in the priority areas identified through self-evaluation.

Policy alignment and source documents

This policy should be read alongside Hawick High School's curriculum rationale, positive relationships, inclusion, digital learning and quality assurance guidance. It has been developed with reference to:

- Hawick High School Learning and Teaching Self Reflection Analysis, informing session 2026 to 2027.
- Hawick High School Learning and Teaching Inset materials and Lesson Evaluation Framework evidence.
- Scottish Borders Council Learning Teaching and Assessment Framework.
- Scottish Borders Council Learning Teaching and Assessment Advice Note, May 2023.
- Scottish Borders Council Learning Teaching and Assessment Expectations, 2025.
- Scottish Borders Council Learns Learning Teaching and Assessment Framework.
- Scottish Borders Council SBC Includes Inclusion Framework.
- Education Scotland How Good Is Our School fourth edition, particularly Quality Indicator 2.3.
- Education Scotland Inclusive Learning and Collaborative Working Ideas in Practice Secondary School Resource, including the CIRCLE framework.
- Scottish Borders Council Inspire Learning Learning and Teaching guidance.