



Dacorum Education
Support Centre

Feedback & Assessment Policy

DESC values the mental health and wellbeing of every member of its community.

Our policies reflect the core values of respect and support for each other in every aspect of life. Our aim is that all in our community, through working together, to feel safe and secure in an environment, which enables and equips every individual to thrive and be respectful of each other's strengths and differences.

March 2023

Introduction

(This Assessment and Feedback Policy is to be read in conjunction with the: Teaching and Learning at DESC Policy & Practice).

At DESC we place the learner and their family at the heart of what we do.

Our learners arrive at Centre with significant barriers to learning. This can present as:

- Low self-esteem
- Significant gaps in learning
- Poor/Non-attendance
- Low literacy levels
- Challenging behaviour
- Significant Mental Health issues
- A history of changes in schools
- Safeguarding concerns
- Disaffection with the school system

Our priority therefore is to re-engage learners through our twin-track approach of addressing their needs through a therapeutic and personalised learning programme to break the cycle of disaffection with education.

Many of our learners have struggled in the past with purposeful, trusting relationships, so staff invest heavily in building a positive and meaningful rapport with our learners. This is key to our success and in ensuring positive behaviour management strategies deployed in and around Centre.

Our curriculum provision is centred on the needs, interests and aspirations of each individual learner. Each learner has a bespoke package of learning and support to ensure maximum progress in Key Stages 1 through to 4. Teaching and learning are central to our work as educators and helps to secure positive outcomes and futures for our learners.

At DESC all staff, together with the Management Committee, are committed to this approach. We believe that learning in its holistic meaning is when we gradually acquire and assimilate knowledge, concepts, skills, and attitudes that enable them to make greater sense of the world.

Context

The foundation of this policy is informed by educational research to develop our practice throughout the whole Centre. This policy sets out the whole Centre core principles of effective feedback. The work to establish these principles, was initially informed by:

- The EEF (Education Endowment Foundation) Teaching and Learning Toolkit
- The DfE (Department for Education) Education Workload Challenge (November 2014)
- The Independent Teacher Review Group Report: (March 2016)
- The EEF Report – A Marked Improvement: (April 2016)
- Ofsted – Annual Updates
- The Teacher Standards – With specific reference to standard 6: make accurate and productive use of assessment
- The Anna Freud Staff Wellbeing Measurement for DESC (June 2022)

This policy is reviewed yearly to ensure our practice remains congruent with evolving research and practice. Most recently this policy has been aligned to ensure consistency with:

- The EEF Guidance Report Teacher Feedback to Improve Learning: (June 2021)
- The DfE Staff Wellbeing charter: (May 2021)
- The DfE Workload Reduction Toolkit for Feedback and Marking: (October 2019)
- The Ofsted Education Inspection Framework: (September 2021)

Annually, this policy is reviewed by intervention/subject staff. This is because key staff have been afforded a level of autonomy to use feedback approaches that are most effective for their area.

At DESC we value a consistent and purposeful feedback approach to the way a learner's progress is assessed. We are mindful that learners must feel valued and have a clear understanding of how well they are doing and specifically how to make clear and demonstrable progress.

What is Feedback?

Feedback is information given to the learner about their performance, relative to learning and behaviour goals or outcomes. It should result in an improvement in learners' learning, conduct and self-regulation.

Feedback redirects or refocuses the learner's actions to achieve a goal, by aligning effort and activity with an outcome. It can be about the output or outcome of the task, the process of the task, the learner's management of their learning or self-regulation, or about them as individuals.

Feedback can be verbal or written or can be given through tests or via digital technology. It can come from a teacher/deliverer, or indeed from their peers or their own reflections.

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Feedback (Intent)

We have based our approach to feedback on the guidance and strategy outlined by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF). We understand that:

- Feedback is well-evidenced and has a high impact on learning outcomes. Effective feedback tends to focus on the task, subject and self-regulation strategies: it provides specific information on how to improve
- Feedback can be effective during, immediately after and some time after learning
- Feedback can come from a variety of sources -- studies have shown positive effects of feedback from teachers and peers. Feedback delivered by digital technology also has positive effects (albeit slightly lower than the overall average)
- Different methods of feedback delivery can be effective, and feedback should not be limited exclusively to written marking. Studies of verbal feedback show slightly higher impacts overall. (Evidence states in excess of +7 months)
- It is important to give feedback when things are correct -- not just when they are incorrect. High-quality feedback may focus on a task, subject, and self-regulation strategies

Feedback (Implementation)

All methods of feedback are used at the discretion of the teacher/deliverer to meet the needs of the individual learner. Feedback comes from a foundation of relational practice and evidence-informed practice.

We understand that the most effective feedback is focused on the learners' task, their processing of it and their self-regulation. It follows the premise of being:

- Clear
- Specific

- Purposeful
- Meaningful

Teachers/deliverers have the autonomy to deliver feedback in the way they feel is the most effective for that learner. It may be provided in a variety of forms, including:

- Written marking
- Self-assessment
- Peer-assessment
- Learner/teacher dialogue and questioning
- Guidance during class time re: teaching concepts
- Any other strategies that ensure learner progress

Feedback (Impact)

Clear, meaningful and effective feedback should ensure the following:

- A positive effect on learning/outcomes for our learners
- A positive effect on learning across all age groups and key stages
- Positive effects from a wide range of feedback approaches in lessons – including when feedback is delivered by teachers/deliverers, technology or peers

Feedback Policy (Impact)

The impact of implementing feedback consistently (supported by policy) and effectively will:

- Maximise the progress of all learners of all ages and abilities
- Value feedback on their learning
- Provide learners with the right help and support ***‘to be the best you can be’***
- Provide strategies for learners to know how to regulate their behaviour and improve in all subjects and programmes
- Give learners dedicated time to improve their learning
- Create a continual and meaningful dialogue between the learner and the teacher
- Promote the whole Centre focus on reading and developing literacy skills
- Effectively address teacher workload issues; so that teachers can ‘do less, better’
- Empower teachers to have the scope to create the most effective methods of feedback in their subject areas
- Eradicate the myth that the only type of feedback is that which can be ‘seen’ because it is written
- Always promote the highest quality and consistent feedback practice in all lessons
- Build positive, trustful and meaningful relationships

Initial assessment of need

Upon arrival at DESC all learners undertake both academic and social and emotional assessments.

Academic Assessment:

- All learners have the WRAT 5 administered at induction. This gives an overview of the learners' literacy and numeracy skills. (This is measured upon entry in autumn and in the spring and summer terms also).
- Some learners may also be assessed using the following tools: Neale's analysis, dyslexia/dyscalculia screening et al (following staff observation)
- Subject specific assessments to identify gaps in learning
- Pupil Passports. This helps SENDCO's to share key information about learners' needs and strategies to help support them
- Previous school attendance figures to assess how much education they have missed
- Referring schools provide relevant academic information through the DIG (DESC Information Gathering form)
- Academic data may be used to create literacy and numeracy targets which feed into their individualised programme of study for targeted interventions

Social and Emotional Assessment:

- The DESC Behaviour Questionnaire (DBQ) is used to assess: Social and Emotional Development
- The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) is used to assess: A learner's mental health
- The *Therapeutic Thinking Tree* is used to understand learners' behaviour and how best to support them
- Information from the Outreach Team is shared with all colleagues at induction

These tools and resources are used to inform starting points for all learners and thus helps to formulate individualised education programmes for them.

- Social and Emotional baselines are used to devise behaviour targets that learners work on
- Learners receive ongoing, live feedback from staff regarding their progress towards these targets
- Assessment tools are revisited regularly to allow tracking of individual progress and to identify areas for further development

Use of Summative Assessment

In addition, incorporating summative assessment explicitly (particularly at Key Stage 4) can be a key component of laying the foundations for effective feedback. At DESC these are embedded within our half-termly assessment and monitoring calendar and focuses on driving teaching and learning pedagogy to quality assure the educational diet our learners receive. Our monitoring schedule includes:

- Learning walks
- Lesson 'drop ins'
- Book looks and work scrutiny
- Learner voice
- Staff voice
- Data tracking
- Mock examinations
- Question analysis

Processes for evaluating the impact of the policy

We must be clear on purpose. Effective feedback should be focused on enhancing the learning of learners, and not about a teachers' performance or to match parents' expectations. We may use the following to evaluate the impact of the policy:

- Teaching and Learning (T&L) Focus Group observations and coaching
- Subject observations and coaching
- Oracy strategy and developments
- Analysis of the data through thematic learning walks
- Learner voice
- Cost
- Teacher autonomy
- Staff well-being
- Learner progress

It is important to be aware of and not under-estimate the value of trust, as this plays a vital role in effective feedback - both in ensuring learners will use it, and in providing teachers/deliverers with the space and autonomy to effectively deliver it.

Appendix 1

The EEF 2021 Report ‘Teacher Feedback to improve Pupil Learning’ provided 6 Recommendations: of how to embed feedback effectively.

These recommendations are broken into three clear succinct parts

1. Principles (3 Parts)
2. Methods (2 Parts)
3. Implementation (1 Part)



Principle 1: Lay the foundations for effective feedback

At DESC our feedback practice is to:

- Empower the T&L Focus Group to develop and embed bite sizes on feedback and metacognition, literacy and oracy, modelling, questioning and retrieval practice
- Ensure appropriate targeted and meaningful CPDL (Continuing Professional Development and learning) to support teachers to plan and structure lessons and promote deeper and more effective learning
- Focus on academic and subject specific words

- Secure department time to review curriculum planning to develop subject specific expertise, with a feedback focus
- Bi-weekly analysis of CPOMS through safeguarding and behaviour to ensure a purposeful climate for learning
- Effective use of Pupil Passports, *Therapeutic Thinking Tree*, DBQ, WRAT 5 data and other key information to ensure the needs of the learners are met effectively
- Utilise learner voice
- Monitor T&L to ensure staff are supported to deliver feedback effectively

Principle 2: Deliver appropriately timed feedback that focuses on moving learning forward

Taking reference to Dylan Wiliam (2011) *'Feedback is only effective if learners' learning improves – and this depends on their capacity to understand it and inclination to accept and act on it'*.

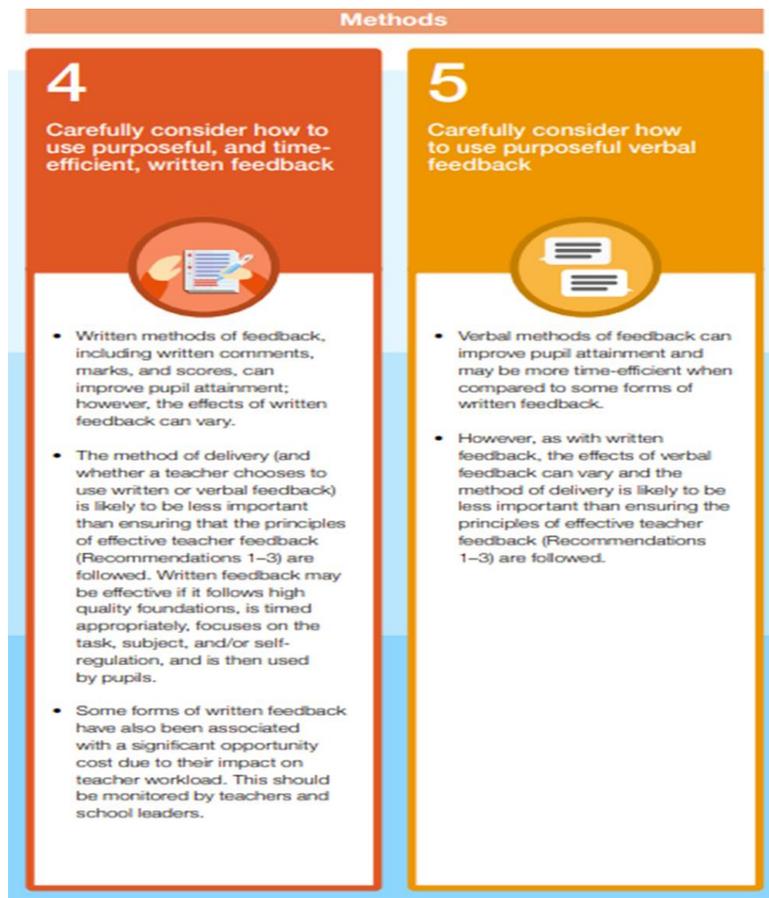
At DESC our feedback practice is:

- Immediate, verbal, self and peer feedback are all placed above time consuming written feedback strategies.
- Teachers can select what type of feedback to use and when it is deployed. This will sometime be marked assessments and mock examinations and at other times core tasks for quality written feedback.
- Summative Assessments are scheduled within the academic calendar

Principle 3: Plan for how learners will receive feedback

At DESC our feedback practice is:

- Learner voice activities can and should ask questions about learner perception of feedback
- A well-planned curriculum supports learners understanding of the role of feedback



Method 4: Carefully consider how to use purposeful, and time efficient written feedback

At DESC our feedback practice is:

- T&L Focus Group conducting independent research-based projects as part of their ‘Professional Growth’ and shared with colleagues to close the cycle
- T&L Focus Group developing written feedback strategies
- Developing excellence through quality assurance subject reviews to measure the impact of feedback strategies used

Method 5: Carefully consider how to use purposeful verbal feedback

‘Verbal feedback is considered by schools ‘across the board’...to be a constant and a vital part of teaching and learning’. Elliott V, Randhawa A, Ingram J, Nelson-Addy L, Griffin C, Baird J (2020)

At DESC our feedback practice is to:

- Discuss the purpose of feedback with learners and parents about practices related to feedback
- Model the use of feedback
- Provide clear, concise and focused feedback
- Assessments that are scheduled/planned must be purposeful and meaningful to ensure the progress of learners is at the forefront of practice

- Ensure learners understand the feedback given and provide opportunities for them to act on it immediately after it has been given
- Evaluate how effective the feedback has been, has learner progress been made (EEF 2021)

Implementation

6

Design a school feedback policy that prioritises and exemplifies the principles of effective feedback



- Enacting these recommendations will require careful consideration and this implementation should be a staged process, not an event. This will include ongoing effective professional development.
- Schools should design feedback policies which promote and exemplify the principles of effective feedback (Recommendations 1–3). Policies should not over-specify features such as the frequency or method of feedback.

Implementation 6: Design a school feedback policy that prioritises and exemplifies the principles of effective feedback

The following are the key principles identified for providing ‘Effective Feedback’ at DESC:

- Policy reviewed annually, research informed, including EEF
- Subject/programme autonomy allows for most effective practices

Appendix 2

References

Teacher feedback to improve Pupil Learning: Guidance Report (2021) (EEF)
<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/feedback>

Teacher Feedback to improve Pupil Learning: Summary of recommendations poster (2021) (EEF)
https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/eef-guidance-reports/feedback/EEF_Feedback_Recommendations_Poster.pdf?v=1671187309

Elliott V, Randhawa A, Ingram J, Nelson-Addy L, Griffin C, Baird J (2020) *Feedback in action: A review of practice in English schools* (EEF)

Wiliam D (2011) *Embedded Formative Assessment: Strategies for Classroom Assessment That Drives Student Engagement and Learning* (New Art and Science of Teaching)