



Mildenhall College
A C A D E M Y

COMMUNICATION, READING AND WRITING **(LITERACY) POLICY**

Adoption Date: July 2013

Last Reviewed: June 2017

Next Review: July 2020

This policy is reviewed every three years. It can be reviewed sooner if amendments to legislation or educational practice necessitate a change.

Links to other policies:

- **Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy**
- **Checking & Marking Policy**
- **Curriculum Policy**
- **Monitoring & Evaluation Policy**
- **Teaching and Learning Policy**

MILDENHALL COLLEGE ACADEMY

COMMUNICATION, READING AND WRITING (LITERACY) POLICY

Setting the Context:

- Many of our students have limitations in their literacy skills which becomes a major barrier to learning and thus it is a high priority for the academy to address this issue through a proactive and comprehensive cross curricular strategy.
- Students need to be competent communicators, readers and writers in order to reach their academic potential.
- Improved literacy standards will lead to higher attainment in all subjects.
- Students who enter the academy below age expected standards in English will be targeted for extra literacy support in the form of intervention classes and in class support. Some students will be offered places on the 1 to 4 tuition programmes in order to address identified weaknesses.
- All teachers have to see themselves as teachers of communication, reading and writing with this built into schemes of work and also reflected in the academy's marking and checking policy.
- Our policy seeks to be based on our liaison initiatives with feeder primary schools.
- It also seeks to iron out the "dip" experienced by students as they transfer from KS2 to KS3
- It seeks to address the imbalance between girls' and boys' achievement.
- The SEND Faculty will continue to work with those students facing severe literacy issues

The Academy Aims to:

- Establish innovative integrated curriculum provision in Years 7 & 8 to improve consistency in, and transference of, essential literacy skills, therefore leading to an acceleration of achievement in all curriculum areas.
- Improve rates of progression at Key Stage 3 through effective AfL.
- Establish robust systems for target setting, tracking and monitoring student progress and utilise these systems to plan and implement regular, targeted and personalised interventions to ensure students maintain expected rates of progress.
- Raise standards of written English using a range of strategies.
- Use only excellent resources to enhance learning.
- Aim for all students to attain expected progress targets in GCSE English.
- Develop engaging and innovative programmes of study in KS4, making full use of a range of Teaching & Learning strategies, modern technologies and links with other curriculum areas and external partnerships.

- Implement an on-going programme of staff development supporting all teachers to become excellent 'teachers of literacy'.
- Provide a vibrant, enticing and well-stocked library as the hub for developing the reading abilities of its students.
- Ensure, through partnerships with the SEND and Pastoral Teams, that the literacy needs of students arriving after Year 7 are adequately assessed on arrival in order to plan an appropriate route into mainstream curriculum provision (including EAL students).
- Endeavour to engage parents in their child's learning by offering regular workshops/publications demonstrating what is required of students at different levels and how to support literacy development at home.
- Build on positive relationships with feeder primaries to create a network of colleagues committed to sharing excellent practice to combat underachievement at KS2.
- Provide a range of diverse and exciting enrichment activities allowing all students to enjoy and achieve in English outside of the classroom environment.
- Develop a central bank of literacy resources/activities for Form Tutors to access in order to support the development of communication, reading and writing skills in academy tutor groups.
- Celebrate national and world events which promote literacy such as World Book Day.

WRITING:

1. All students are expected to set out written work according to the academy policy for the presentation of written work.

When setting out written work students must:

- Write the date in full e.g. Wednesday 14th March 2018
 - Title every piece using appropriate initial capital letters e.g. The Owl and the Pussycat
 - Underline the title and date using a ruler
 - Label each piece of work as either classwork (C/W) or homework (H/W)
 - Use a pencil and ruler to draw diagrams, graphs, maps etc.
 - Cross out mistakes using a single line
 - Not use Tippex or other forms of liquid correction.
2. During Key Stage 3, students will be taught to recognise the main features of the following text types and adopt appropriate styles in their own writing:
 - instruct
 - recount
 - explain
 - inform
 - persuade
 - discuss
 - analyse

- evaluate

All teachers are expected to actively teach/revise the text types most commonly used in their subjects.

3. When introducing new forms of writing, teachers should make use of the National Literacy Strategy model for teaching texts:
 - Provide good written examples
 - Explore word/sentence/text level features of the text
 - Define conventions
 - Demonstrate composition (modelling and shared writing)
 - Scaffold early attempts (e.g. sentence starters, writing frames)
 - Encourage independent writing practice
 - Review and draw out key learning
4. Every teacher should expect students' work to be written accurately following the basic rules of grammar and punctuation. It is also every teacher's responsibility to help students identify errors and make corrections.
5. Students may word-process their writing on occasion. Teachers may choose to allow students to use the spelling and grammar checking tools to assist them in their writing if this does not contravene any assessment criteria.
6. A number of small groups of students will be identified and targeted for handwriting improvement. This may be supported by a Hand-writing Pack for parents to use at home with their children.

READING:

- All students should be given access to a wide range of texts to reflect the demands of each curriculum subject and those needed when they become adults in the wider community.
- Students should be encouraged to read for pleasure with Form Tutors setting aside regular reading time during registrations. The vertical tutoring system adopted by the academy will encourage the older students within tutor group to assist younger ones with their literacy skills. Older students will be trained to support younger students in paired reading activities. It is anticipated that tutorial time will be made available on a regular basis to allow students to engage in silent private reading and other literacy activities.
- Students will keep a log of their reading in their planners and will work towards achieving bronze, silver and gold rewards.
- All students are encouraged to have a reading book at all times as part of the academy's 'book-in-the-bag' policy.
- All students in Years 7 & 8 should read for the first 10 minutes of every lesson P5 (except in practical subjects).
- A small number of students will be targeted for intervention via the use of the literacy reading

stars programme.

- Every teacher should ensure that reading skills and strategies are reinforced through teacher modelling and by providing regular practice during lessons.

Reading skills include:

- basic decoding
 - skimming
 - scanning
 - inference
 - deduction
 - reading for note-taking
 - identifying bias/opinion/fact
- Students should be encouraged to read aloud, fluently and with expression.

SPEAKING AND LISTENING:

- Staff should recognise the link between thinking, speaking and writing and the important part speaking and listening plays in learning.
- Students need to be given opportunities to practice and develop skills to:
 - speak clearly, audibly and confidently
 - express and justify with reasons/evidence, opinions and feelings
 - present ideas, information, arguments clearly and cogently
 - develop their ability to use and discriminate between fact, opinion and bias
 - adapt language to a widening variety of demands which will include using the grammar and vocabulary of standard English
 - answer questions in class using full sentences

LITERACY DISPLAYS:

- All teachers should ensure that key vocabulary is displayed during the lesson/unit of work and that students will be expected to use such vocabulary accurately.
- There should be a discreet area in each classroom for displaying literacy related materials such as posters, glossaries, connective banks, topic sentences etc.

MARKING FOR LITERACY:

Key Principles

- Make marking criteria explicit by focusing on the objectives taught.
- Provide immediate feedback
- Develop a consistent approach both across pieces of work and across staff / year groups
- Ensure that the marking policy is recognised by students, staff and parents alike.
- Expect active involvement from students.
- Indicate what has been done well and what could be done better and how it could be done better.
- Give feedback to students that will help them to improve their uses of literacy in all subjects.
- Motivate students to communicate their subject knowledge and understanding effectively.

The following correction code should be used when marking students' work for literacy:

The following correction code should be used when marking students' work for literacy:

1. Spelling mistakes should be underlined and 'SP' written in the margin. Unfamiliar and difficult words may be spelt out for students.
2. Punctuation mistakes should be circled and the student asked to identify what is wrong.
3. Inappropriate abbreviations should be circled and the student asked to identify what is wrong.
4. The symbol // should be used to indicate where a new paragraph is required.
5. A line through should be used to show there is repetition or a word not needed.
6. The symbol ^ should be used where a word is missed, ^^ where more than a word is missed.
7. ~~~~~ (a wavy line) should be used where there is a grammatical error and a question mark placed in the margin.

Other Key Elements

- Limit spelling corrections to subject specific vocabulary or those words which the child should know. (Maybe limited to 5 or 6 words per piece; less for some students).
- Use the 'look, cover, write, check' method for spelling corrections.
- Any written comments on work must be legible to the student and be written in such a way as to be understood by the student.

Appendix 1

Literacy Across the Curriculum: Spelling and Vocabulary

It is a key element of the academy's policy that we promote a set of strategies to help students to learn and retain spellings.

The following pages provide good, practical suggestions for ways in which departments can help support their students in using subject-specific vocabulary.

- To recognise specialist words in context
- To read specialist words independently
- To understand specialist words in familiar and unfamiliar contexts
- To spell specialist words accurately
- To use specialist words both orally and in writing
- To define specialist words and provide own exemplification
- Teach strategies which will help students to learn subject spelling lists.
- Prioritise the marking of high-frequency and key subject words, and highlight rules where the error would relate to other words.
- Use key words, glossaries, word banks and other strategies to provide support for subject-specific vocabulary.

Ten strategies for use with keywords:

1. Have subject-specific dictionaries in your subject rooms

Students can locate words more quickly within these than in a large, general dictionary. The definitions also give the technical definition first rather than students having to seek it out amongst several everyday meanings. When a new keyword arises students look it up and read out the definition. Discuss and clarify the meanings and get students to define the word in their own words. Encourage the use of these dictionaries on a regular basis.

2. Create word banks

After brainstorming/concept mapping, keywords from this activity are identified and written on strips of card by students. These are sorted and displayed alphabetically around the room. Add new vocabulary to these lists during every lesson. Draw attention to the lists whenever students are undertaking written work.

3. Make word and definition cards

Support staff prepare boxes of cards for specific units of work. One set of cards contains the words, another definitions. These can be used for a variety of games and matching activities. If the separate words and definitions are stored on computer, students can cut and paste their own prompt sheets.

4. Create interactive glossaries

Make a booklet containing an alphabetical list of keywords from a unit of work. Leave a blank line alongside each word. Produce a separate sheet of definitions but these should be jumbled up and should not match the order of the words in the booklet. Students paste the booklet into

the front of their workbooks. In each lesson, stress two or three keywords and use in context. In the last five minutes of the lesson students find those keywords in their glossary booklet. They then find the appropriate definition from the definitions sheet and use this to complete their own glossary by writing in the definitions next to the word.

5. Keyword crosswords/word-searches

Students complete crosswords based on keywords and their definitions. Once created such crossword can be stored on computer and become a permanent resource for the department. The crosswords can be of the convenient type with the keyword definitions given as clues and the keywords being filled in on the crossword grid. Alternatively students can be given a completed crossword grid and are asked to create the clues for each word. Each activity helps reinforce meaning as well as spelling.

6. Create word cluster posters

Draw students' attention to the patterns to be found in words (e.g. *equal, equalise, equate, equilateral, equality, equation, equidistant, equilibrium*, and so on) pointing out their common root (*equa/equi*, from the Latin word meaning to make even) and how that helps with both spelling and meaning. Students create word cluster posters and display them in subject rooms.

7. Create mnemonics

Mnemonics are sentences created to help us remember how to spell words or a sequence of facts. The first letter of each word in the sentence is significant. The well-known examples are ones such as *Richard of York gave battle in vain* (r, o, y, g, b, i, v – the colours of the rainbow) or *Big elephants can't always use small exits* (for the word *because*). For homework, students can create a mnemonic to remind them how to spell a keyword. The results are shared and one selected by the class to become their mnemonic of choice. This is written up, displayed and its use encouraged. Academy mnemonics used by all staff and students for commonly misspelt words can be adopted. For example: to remember how many **ss** and how many **cs** are needed in the word *necessary* the whole academy, could adopt the sentence *It is necessary for a shirt to have one collar and two sleeves.*

8. Create calligram posters

Calligrams are visual representations of a word that reflect its meaning. For example the words *test tube* might be written with an exaggerated letter **u**, which takes on the shape of a test tube, or *glacier* might be written in jagged 'ice letters'. Students create such visual representations of keywords and display them for all to share.

9. Use icons alongside words

Icons and symbols alongside keywords act as memory prompts and are particularly useful for students struggling with literacy. Standard icons can be adopted across the academy and can be used on worksheets as well as on word lists and wall displays. For example, a drawing of a pencil can always accompany the instruction 'write'; or the outline tool shapes often used as an aid to effective storage in design and technology departments can have the word written alongside them also.

10. Play word games

The final few minutes of a lesson can profitably be given over to word games that use key vocabulary. There are many such games. For example:

- ◆ Write keywords on an OHP and project onto a wall. For example, in Maths, words such as *quadrilateral, rectangle, square*, and so on. When the teacher reads out a definition, two opposing team members compete to be the first to identify and touch the correct word.
- ◆ Half a word is written on the OHP and members of opposing teams volunteer to complete the word.
- ◆ Play the traditional game of 'hangman' with keywords.

- ◆ Write everyday terms such as *times* and *share* and volunteer team members add the 'posh' versions – *multiply*, *divide* and so on.
- ◆ You provide the definitions and students write the words.

Games such as these require little in the way of preparation, can end a session on an upbeat note and help revisit and revise keywords in an active and engaging way.

Other Strategies:

1 Write key words on the board as they are used	2 Personal wordbooks in which students record words as they are introduced to them
3 Highlighted key words in worksheets, notes and text	4 'Jigsaw Cards' – students match words with definitions
5 Read through the list so that students hear the words and repeat them	6 'Lucky Dip' – student picks a word and explains what they know about it
7 Displays in rooms of key words/word banks	8 Group words/concepts – the whole group arrange words and their definitions into themes and concepts
9 Making sentences – students make sentences using the words in the box to show their meanings	10 'Just a minute' – students select a word from the box and talk for a minute about it
11 'Guess my Word' – a student picks a word and talks about it without saying the word. The rest of the group have to guess the word as quickly as possible	12 'Draw my Word' – a version of the game 'Pictionary'. Individuals pick a word out of the box and draw it for the rest of the group in 30 seconds
13 Word search – with definitions	14 'Word Bingo' where the teacher reads out the definition and the students strike out the word on their cards
15 'Blockbusters' – a version of the TV game in which students or teams of students compete against each other to cross a frame made up of initial letters, for which definitions of subject-specific vocabulary are given	16 Anagrams
17 Subject-specific dictionaries	18 Word banks of subject-specific words located on writing frames
19 Interactive glossaries – lists of subjects-specific vocabulary to which students add definitions at the end of lessons in which those words have been introduced	20 Crosswords
21 Calligram posters – visual representations of words that reflect their meaning	22 Students created mnemonics for subject-specific vocabulary

23 Icons alongside words – icons or symbols alongside subject-specific words	24 Word cluster posters
25 Cloze passages with subject-specific words omitted	

Appendix 2

Literacy across the Curriculum: Activities Which Encourage Close Reading

These activities are most effective when worked on by a pair or small group as the discussion of possibilities leads to a close look at the text.

Cloze

Filling the gap involves the reader in actively constructing meaning. Skills include:

- ◆ paying close attention to the meaning of the sentence
- ◆ choosing a word that fits grammatically
- ◆ using one's existing knowledge of the topic
- ◆ working out what is likely from the rest of the text
- ◆ working out what will fit with the style of the text – e.g. whether a word has already occurred in the sentence
- ◆ attending to the sense of the whole sentence by reading and rereading.

Sequencing

Sequencing activities involve reconstructing a text which has been cut into chunks.

Skills include:

- ◆ reading and rereading
- ◆ paying close attention to the structure of the genre
- ◆ paying close attention to link words
- ◆ hunting for the logic or organising principle of the text – e.g. chronological order
- ◆ using previous experience and earlier reading.

Text marking

Text marking includes underlining, annotating or numbering the text to show sequence.

Skills may well include:

- ◆ skimming or scanning to find specific information
- ◆ differentiating between different categories of information
- ◆ deciding what is relevant information
- ◆ finding the main idea(s)
- ◆ questioning the information presented in the text.

Text restructuring

Text restructuring involves reading and then remodelling the information in another format. For example, flow charts, diagrams, Venn diagrams, grids, lists, maps, charts, concept maps or rewriting in another genre. Depending on the format, skills used with include:

- ◆ identifying what is key and relevant in a text
- ◆ applying what they know in a new context
- ◆ remodelling the content and the format of the text
- ◆ awareness of the characteristics of different genres
- ◆ critical reading
- ◆ summary and prioritisation
- ◆ writing as well as reading skills.