

TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

POLICY FOR	TEACHING AND LEARNING
PERSON RESPONSIBLE	Heads of Teaching, Learning and Assessment
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APPROVED BY	ELT
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RELATED POLICIES	Assessment Policy, Academic Honesty Policy, Inclusion Policy, Gifted & Talented Policy,

Executive Principal / CEO and Brand




Ambassador for GEMS Westminster Schools

1. Rationale

The Teaching Learning Policy articulates our commitment to consistently strong learning outcomes for all students. Recognising that inconsistency in classroom practice leads to uneven experiences and outcomes, the policy establishes a shared instructional approach that promotes equity, coherence, and excellence across all subjects and phases.

Within this context, Teach Like a GEM provides the instructional backbone for the Teaching and Learning Policy. It codifies evidence-informed teaching practices into a clear, shared framework that supports effective instructional design and delivery. By reducing unnecessary variation while maintaining professional autonomy, TLAG ensures consistency where it matters most, optimising cognitive load for both teachers and students.

The policy recognises that effective teaching is not mechanical. Teachers are expected to enact Teach Like a GEM with *adaptive expertise*, using checks for understanding to adjust pacing, scaffolding, and challenge to meet the needs of all students, including multilingual learners, students of determination, and high prior attainers. This approach supports learning that is secure, transferable, and sustained over time and aligns with the principles and practices that underpin the *GEMS Genius*, *GEMS of the World*, and *Sparkling GEMS*.

By aligning instructional practice, professional development, and curriculum implementation, this policy supports sustained improvement in teaching quality and ensures coherence between classroom practice, professional learning, and internal and external quality assurance systems including inspection expectations.

2. National Standards

This policy is based on the following DSIB Inspection Framework Performance Standards Indicators:

- 1.3 Learning Skills
- 3.1 Teaching for effective learning.

3. Vision for Teaching and Learning

TWS, a GEMS school, will promote world-class instructional practice by:

- Creating a robust infrastructure that enables the implementation of the Teach Like a GEM (TLAG) Playbook with fidelity
- Providing high-quality, ongoing professional development that supports teachers on their pathway to worldclass practice
- Establishing a strong culture of instructional support, using regular drop-ins, Practice Clinics, and instructional coaching to continuously improve teaching quality through universal, targeted, and bespoke professional development
- Embedding pedagogical principles grounded in evidence-based research, particularly cognitive science, to strengthen how teaching and learning occur
- Establishing a consistent, school-wide approach to instructional design and delivery
- Systematically improving the quality of education through clear structures for medium- and long-term curriculum planning
- Supporting teachers' understanding of governing body expectations, standards, and practices alongside Teach Like a GEM
- Inspiring consistent and effective curriculum implementation, ensuring appropriate adaptations for all learners, including multilingual learners, gifted and talented students, and Students of Determination

TWS Teachers will promote world-class instructional practice by:

- Securing strong progress for all groups of students through purposeful lesson design aligned to the TLAG structure and responsive teaching
- Building deep, durable substantive and procedural knowledge, alongside conceptual understanding and transferable skills, through effective sequencing, modelling, and retrieval
- Promoting active student engagement, responsibility, and agency by making learning outcomes explicit
- Ensuring equitable access to high-quality instruction through the consistent and adaptive use of TLAG techniques
- Preparing students to apply learning meaningfully within personal, local, and global contexts
- Plan lessons with clear learning outcomes and knowledge components, aligned to high curriculum standards
- Model new learning explicitly, making thinking visible and reducing cognitive load for all learners
- Use ongoing checks for understanding to adapt pace, scaffolding, and challenge in real time
- Provide purposeful guided and independent practice, supported by timely, actionable feedback
- Create calm, orderly, and respectful classroom environments that maximise learning time and support positive learning behaviours
- Use questioning and structured dialogue to deepen understanding and promote thoughtful collaboration
- Adapt teaching to meet the needs of all learners, including multilingual learners, gifted and talented students, and Students of Determination
- Use assessment information effectively to inform planning, teaching, and next steps in learning
- Promote independent learning skills, including reflection, self-assessment, and purposeful response to feedback

4. Teach Like a GEM: Playbook

The Teach Like a GEM Playbook sets out the agreed instructional framework to support consistent, quality-first classroom practice. It provides practical guidance for lesson design, delivery, and professional learning, ensuring a shared language and approach to teaching while allowing teachers to respond adaptively to students' needs.

All lessons are carefully planned to incorporate the science of learning to ensure all students make progress from their initial starting point aligned with GEMS curriculum standards, and that all GEMS Shine.

The TLAG Playbook is applied across all subjects, and year groups. It supports teachers in translating curriculum intent into high-impact instructional practice, regardless of phase or discipline.

The Playbook provides clear, actionable instructional techniques that reflect our commitment to worldclass education. These techniques are grounded in rigorously tested, evidence-based research, including principles from cognitive science, and are designed to establish a coherent and consistent approach to teaching and learning across subjects and grade levels.

The TLAG Playbook is organised into three interrelated sections:

- GEMS Essentials: Structuring Learning for Impact
- GEMS Talk: Fostering a Culture of Discourse
- GEMS Culture: Optimising Learning Opportunities



5. Teach Like a GEM: In Action

In practice, the Teach Like a GEM Playbook is enacted consistently across classrooms to ensure coherence, clarity, and equity in teaching and learning.

All staff use the shared TLAG language, icons, and terminology when planning lessons, delivering instruction, and engaging in professional dialogue.

All teachers use the school-branded Learn Like a GEM PowerPoint template to support consistency in lesson structure and communication of learning to students.

The six GEMS Essentials (Do Now, Learning Outcomes, To Know, I Do – We Do – You Do, Affirmative Checking, and Exit Ticket) are embedded in *every* lesson and used in the *intended* instructional sequence to secure clarity, engagement, and strong learning outcomes.

GEMS Talk and GEMS Culture techniques are intentionally fused with the GEMS Essentials in every lesson, ensuring that high-quality discourse, positive routines, and a successful classroom culture are integral to daily practice rather than treated as add-ons.

Teachers enact the Playbook with *adaptive expertise*. While the core TLAG structures and techniques are used consistently, teachers make informed, professional decisions in response to checks for understanding, adjusting pacing, scaffolding, modelling, and levels of challenge to meet the needs of different learners. Teachers and students can clearly articulate what the Global Goal for the Week is, why it matters, and what success looks like, supporting coherence across lessons and sustained focus on the most important learning.

a. GEMS Essentials: Structuring Learning for Impact

The six GEMS Essentials are embedded in every lesson and used in the intended instructional sequence to secure clarity, engagement, and strong learning outcomes. Together, they provide a consistent structure that supports effective instruction while enabling teachers to respond adaptively to students' needs.

GEMS Essentials Techniques:

- **Do Now:** A short, purposeful starter that settles students quickly, activates prior knowledge, and prepares them cognitively for new learning
- **Learning Outcomes:** Clear statements that define what students are expected to be able to do (procedural knowledge) by the end of the lesson, providing focus and direction for teaching and learning; Teachers must include the sentence stem "By the end of this lesson, you will be able to + (verb)..."
- **To Know:** The specific knowledge components (substantive and declarative knowledge) students need to learn in order to achieve the learning outcome, supporting clarity and reducing cognitive overload
- **I Do, We Do, You Do:** An instructional *continuum* in which teachers model new learning, guide practice, and then provide opportunities for independent application, used adaptively in response to checks for understanding
- **Affirmative Checking:** Ongoing monitoring and checking for understanding throughout the lesson to identify misconceptions, adjust instruction, and ensure learning is secure before moving on
- **Exit Ticket:** A short end-of-lesson check that assesses whether students have met the learning outcome and understand the 'To Know' statements to inform planning for subsequent lessons

GEMS Essentials are used to secure clarity of learning, ensuring that students understand what they are learning and why it matters. Lesson design follows a clear instructional sequence, supporting coherence, focus, and effective use

of learning time. Explicit modelling and guided practice are used to reduce cognitive load and make new learning accessible to all students. Independent practice (I Do) is structured to check understanding, strengthen learning, and secure fluency, rather than assume mastery. Ongoing checks for understanding ensure that teaching is responsive, with pacing, scaffolding, and challenge adjusted as needed. End-of-lesson Exit Tickets are used to confirm learning against the Learning Outcome and To Know statement and inform next steps, supporting strong progress over time.

b. GEMS Talk: Fostering a Culture of Discourse

GEMS Talk techniques are used in all lessons to foster a culture of purposeful academic discourse, ensuring that all students are actively thinking, articulating ideas, and engaging with content in every lesson. These techniques promote participation, accuracy, and depth of understanding while supporting equitable access to classroom talk. GEMS Talk is intentionally fused with the GEMS Essentials, ensuring that structured talk, questioning, and dialogue are embedded within lesson design rather than treated as separate activities.

GEMS Talk Techniques:

- **Turn and Talk:** A structured partner discussion that gives all students time to think, rehearse ideas, and verbalise understanding before sharing more widely
- **Show Call:** The strategic sharing of student work to model quality, address misconceptions, and collectively refine understanding
- **Show Me:** A whole-class response technique that requires all students to demonstrate understanding simultaneously, allowing for rapid checks and responsive teaching
- **Everybody Writes:** A technique that ensures all students write before discussion, supporting retrieval, clarity of thinking, and inclusive participation
- **Cold Call:** The intentional selection of students to contribute, ensuring sustained attention, broad participation, and high expectations for all learners
- **Right is Right:** A commitment to accuracy and completeness, where students are supported to refine responses until they fully meet the expected standard
- **Stretch It:** Follow-up questioning that deepens thinking, extends understanding, and encourages students to apply knowledge in more complex or unfamiliar contexts
- **Habits of Discussion:** Explicit structures and routines that teach students how to listen, build on others' ideas, challenge respectfully, and engage in productive academic dialogue

GEMS Talk is used to increase thinking and participation ratio, ensuring that all students are actively engaged in thinking and contributing during lessons.

Classroom discourse is structured to promote active learning, with students regularly explaining, justifying, and refining their thinking through talk and writing.

Purposeful collaboration is established so that students listen attentively, build on one another's ideas, and work productively together. Inclusive dialogue ensures that all students, including multilingual learners and Students of Determination, are supported to contribute confidently. High expectations for accuracy, clarity, and subject-specific language are maintained across all classroom interactions. Students' communication and reasoning skills are deliberately developed, enabling them to engage thoughtfully with complex ideas and unfamiliar contexts.

c. GEMS Culture: Optimising Learning Opportunities

GEMS Culture techniques establish the conditions for successful learning by creating calm, orderly, and respectful classrooms where learning time is maximised and all students are able to engage fully.

GEMS Culture techniques:

- **What To Do (Directions and Corrections):** Clear, specific, and observable instructions and corrections that tell students exactly what to do, reducing ambiguity and maintaining lesson flow

- **Whole Class Reset:** A structured approach to refocus the class when attention, behaviour, or routines drift, restoring expectations quickly and calmly
- **Teacher Radar:** Continuous scanning and monitoring of the classroom to identify disengagement, confusion, or misconceptions early and respond proactively
- **Secure Student Attention:** Intentional strategies used to gain and maintain students' full attention before giving instructions, explanations, or key information. Classroom routines and expectations are applied consistently across the school so that learning time is protected and transitions are efficient.

Behaviour expectations are reinforced in ways that preserve lesson flow and minimise disruption to learning. Teacher actions are aligned with the Be a GEM Playbook, ensuring consistent expectations for behaviour, respect, and responsibility across the school. Adult responses to behaviour are calm, proportionate, and predictable, supporting focus and psychological safety. Classroom culture is actively maintained to support attention, engagement, and readiness to learn throughout the lesson.

6. Students' Understanding of Teach Like a GEM: Learn Like a GEM

Students are supported to develop a clear understanding of Teach Like a GEM and how it supports their learning. Through consistent use of shared language, routines, and visual prompts, students understand the purpose of key instructional techniques and how these help them learn effectively.

The *Learn Like a GEM posters* make the TLAG techniques visible and accessible to all students. They clarify what each technique looks like from the student's perspective and support them to understand how learning happens, what is expected of them, and how they can take responsibility for their learning.

Students are able to articulate, in age-appropriate ways, how Teach Like a GEM techniques support their understanding, memory, and progress. This shared understanding strengthens engagement, supports positive learning behaviours, and enables students to participate actively and purposefully in lessons.

By embedding TLAG explicitly for students, the school ensures that teaching and learning are transparent, consistent, and aligned, supporting learners to become reflective, confident, and increasingly independent.

7. Distance Learning Provision

During periods of distance learning, continuity of learning for students at home is ensured in alignment with the TLAG Distance Learning Guidelines. The school's online portal, *The Phoenix Classroom*, along with a range of digital tools, is effectively utilised to support uninterrupted learning. This is achieved by ensuring that:

- A balanced range of learning approaches is implemented, suited to online delivery and responsive to students' individual needs.
- Resources required for completing learning activities at home are reasonable, accessible, and user-friendly.
- Teachers collaborate effectively to ensure student workloads are manageable and well coordinated across subjects.
- Students are provided with flexibility in time management and assignment deadlines to accommodate varying home circumstances.
- Essential curriculum content is thoroughly addressed in identified key subjects.
- Students engage in a balanced programme of academic and non-academic learning opportunities.

8. Professional Development

Professional development is systematic, responsive, and closely connected to classroom practice, prioritising deliberate rehearsal, feedback, and refinement of practice rather than one-off training events.

At the heart of professional learning and development is for all teachers to get better faster. This is to ensure the greatest possible experience for all students. Professional development with deliberate rehearsal and instructional coaching is an integral part of GEMS' model of creating a workforce that epitomises world class standards.

Professional development is delivered through the following core approaches:

- **Practice Clinics:** provide short, focused professional learning sessions where teachers rehearse and refine agreed instructional practices
- **Drop-ins** provide ongoing, low-stakes feedback that supports reflection, consistency, and continuous improvement.
- **One-to-one instructional coaching:** provides targeted and bespoke professional development, aligned to individual needs and stages of development

Together, these approaches ensure that professional development is systematic, responsive, and closely connected to classroom practice and prioritises deliberate rehearsal, feedback, and refinement of practice rather than one-off training events.

Professional development is structured within a clearly defined three-tiered model:

- Universal offer: regular drop-ins and Practice Clinics for all staff focusing on a global goal
- Targeted offer: regular drop-ins and Practice Clinics for specific groups focusing on a targeted goal
- Bespoke offer: one-to-one coaching to address individual development needs and targeted group sessions aligned with **SIP priorities**.

9. Monitoring and Review

We believe that teaching should be conducted in an atmosphere of trust, respect and honesty.

The appraisal process is aligned with the DSIB criteria and the school's Teaching and Learning Policy to ensure clear, consistent, and high-quality expectations of practice across the school. This alignment is further strengthened through weekly drop-in feedback recorded on Steplab. The continuous feedback loop provides teachers with clear and consistent guidance to refine their practice. The Teacher Pathway to World-Class rubrics further support this by offering a shared and structured framework for evaluating and developing teaching practice.

The appraisal process is underpinned by a strong focus on curriculum intent, implementation, and impact, ensuring that teaching decisions are purposeful and lead to measurable student outcomes. It also incorporates stakeholder engagement, alignment with whole-school priorities, and targeted professional development, enabling teachers to reflect on practice, identify next steps, and continuously improve in line with the school's strategic vision.

When evaluating teaching and learning across the school, we use a range of evidence-based strategies, including:

- Classroom observations
- Analysis of assessment data
- Review and analysis of students' work

- Scrutiny of lesson planning
- Moderation and professional dialogue with colleagues on the quality of students' work
- Drop ins
- Announced lesson observations
- Feedback from parents and wider stakeholder surveys
- Student voice and feedback
- Internal reviews

All teachers are expected to reflect on their strengths and areas for development and actively contribute to shaping their own Professional Development. Alongside school evaluation and the appraisal process, this informs a targeted programme of Professional Learning and Development (PLD) that responds to staff needs, drawing on both in-house expertise and external providers.

Members of the Senior and Middle Leadership Teams conduct regular lesson observations, with a focus on DSIB recommendations and the school's strategic priorities. Constructive feedback is provided, identifying strengths and outlining clear areas for development to support continued improvement. This structured support is designed to strengthen teachers' knowledge and expertise, enabling continuous refinement of practice and meaningful contributions to improving the school's provision and the shared vision, in alignment with the National Agenda.

6. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually or earlier if needed.