

Penistone Grammar School is built on strong relationships. A happy school, we are at the heart of our community and provide an excellent educational experience for students from years 7 through to 13. Everything we do is driven by our core values (Aim High; Be Determined; Be Brave; Be Supportive; Be Proud) and is underpinned by honesty, integrity and respect. We believe the potential our students hold in terms of their personal achievement is limitless. We will empower them to go forward, prepared for whatever challenges they face with absolute confidence, aware that they have the knowledge, skills and qualities needed to succeed.

AIM HIGH

Through delivery of a curriculum that is appropriate and meaningful, during their seven-year journey we will prepare our students for life in modern Britain. They will become aspirational, expert learners who, over time develop a firm foundation for the next step of their education journey. For most this will include progression to first class universities and high-quality training and apprenticeship placements.

We will foster a deep appreciation that reading is the key to learning and will develop an inherent love of this. To complement reading we will increase our students' capacity to understand and use academic vocabulary (including through oracy), assured that the more extensive a reader's vocabulary, the more equipped they will be to understand and learn new information.

BE DETERMINED

Resolute in our efforts to reduce economic and social inequality, our curriculum will not only inspire our young people, but it will create opportunities for all. We will not label our students, nor will we allow assumptions to be made that relevance or life-chance is dependent upon academic ability. We will not limit our efforts to help all students to excel, regardless of their context or starting point.

We will ensure every lesson and every encounter counts. Our teachers, and all team members, will be experts who continuously strive for improvement in their own practice and in that of their students. Through evidence-based research and best practice they will employ methods to maximise both learning, and the retention of knowledge and skills. They will achieve this by developing a thorough understanding of the fundamental principles that underpin learning.

BE BRAVE

We will confidently recognise that we are best placed to understand the needs of our students and will create a bold curriculum that is inspiring, rich with high-quality information and relevant, fit for its intended purpose. We will teach our students how to embrace failure, and to see this as a prerequisite for great success. We will equip our students with the power of choice, enabling them to take well-calculated, measured risks in their decision-making and in their learning.

Our assessment strategy will be underpinned by the four pillars of assessment, well-designed and purposeful, bridging the gap between teaching and learning. Protecting the wellbeing and workload of every member of our learning community (students, teachers and leaders) will be at the heart of every decision we make.

BE SUPPORTIVE

High aspiration will not be at the expense of the wellbeing of our students and staff. We will empower every member of our learning community to equip themselves with the knowledge to understand what positive mental health looks like and will provide them with the tools to achieve this. This will include an ongoing commitment to protect the work/life balance of our staff as we continue to do everything within our power to ensure our students believe that they can achieve anything they set their minds to.

Working together in a climate of high challenge, support and respect, collectively we will expect every student to show exemplary conduct and make excellent progress. We will not achieve this in isolation; we will recognise everyone's role in supporting the students within our community to achieve their aspirations. Specifically, we will value the part parents and carers play in their children's education and will capitalise upon every opportunity to ensure this positively impacts upon their journey.

BE PROUD

Our students will be unwavering in their endeavours to continuously improve their learning to achieve their hopes and dreams but will understand that their success will be determined by far more than examination outcomes.

We will encourage them to develop an inner resilience, strength of character, and essential leadership qualities that will result in them confidently and consistently presenting the best version of themselves in all they do.

Through a culture of high aspiration, our students will believe that consistent hard work, well-focussed effort, strong attendance and a positive attitude will be rewarded. Because of this, students recognise and are proud to share their accomplishments, no matter how small, and we actively seek every opportunity as a community to celebrate each of these achievements with them.

CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

Our curriculum framework places high value on excellent school practice and research evidence to inform the overarching curriculum principles outlined below. These principles emphasise the importance of effective curriculum design, intelligent sequencing of knowledge and meaningful assessment that informs learning. Our expert teachers implement evidence informed methods to maximise learning and retention of knowledge and skills, meaning the level of challenge in the curriculum informs the level of challenge in our classrooms.

KNOWLEDGE (CONTENT)

- Curriculum content is knowledge-rich, tackles misconceptions and builds on prior learning
- Knowledge and skills are introduced in a well-sequenced coherent curriculum providing clear progression for all students
- Progress is students knowing more, remembering more and applying learning to different contexts (skills)
- Home Learning is used to practise and embed knowledge and skills effectively

TEACHING & LEARNING

- Teachers are experts in their subject
- Teachers understand that learning is the long-term retention of knowledge and the ability to transfer it to different contexts (skills)
- Teachers employ evidence informed teaching methods to improve learning and knowledge retention
- Cognitive Science informs teaching to ensure retrieval practice, spacing of knowledge and low stakes testing are used effectively
- Teachers actively seek opportunities to improve their teaching (Teacher Development Programme, T&L group, Subject Progress and Planning meetings, CPD programme, T&L library)
- Teachers are responsive in their teaching and continually tailor support for those students at risk of underachievement regardless of starting point or background (Closing the Gaps)

ASSESSMENT & FEEDBACK

- Assessment is underpinned by the four pillars of assessment: purpose, validity, reliability and value
- The purpose of assessment is to always improve students' learning and inform teachers' teaching
- Formative assessment takes precedence over summative assessment
- Summative assessment includes cumulative knowledge (and skills)
- Assessment Review Points (ARPs) are meaningful, informative and considerate of teacher workload
- Feedback is an essential part of teaching and takes many forms; teacher marking is only one form and therefore is not relied upon solely to improve learning

WELLBEING

- Staff and student wellbeing are central to the school's values
- Students are encouraged to recognise the importance of learning beyond that which is examinable
- The school calendar is strategically planned and implemented to be considerate of staff workload whilst not compromising student learning
- The curriculum identifies and capitalises upon opportunities to support the Social Emotional Mental Health development of our students

READING & ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

- We develop a culture of reading at every opportunity within the school day
- Reading is wide, varied and challenging at an age appropriate level
- Students are expected to read fluently and in depth for pleasure and knowledge
- Every opportunity is taken to develop the use of academic and subject-specific vocabulary
- We value the importance of oracy and students being able to speak with fluency and confidence

LEADERSHIP

- The 'Framework for Learning' evaluation tool is a dynamic document, which is continually used to review and prioritise curriculum improvement
- Curriculum Maps are planned, developed and evaluated regularly to focus on well-sequenced learning, challenge and progression
- Department leaders have autonomy to design an 'assessment matrix' and feedback guidance policy to meet the needs of students and teachers within their curriculum area