Learning and Teaching policy

Rationale

At Portadown College we believe learning to be a lifelong and natural activity. Our core purpose at the College is thus to provide a stimulating and challenging learning environment, characterised by a sense of enjoyment, purpose and achievement, in which each student is encouraged to fulfil his/her social, moral and academic potential.

College Values

Teaching can provide the stimulus to learn by inculcating positive study habits, encouraging curiosity and developing independence of thought. These learning and teaching aims are realised through the four key objectives underpinning the College ethos:

- ***To nurture the individual*** by:
  - enhancing students' skills, knowledge and the capacity for self-evaluation as well as encouraging all students, including the gifted and talented, to realise their potential.
- ***To serve the local and global community*** by:
  - equipping students with confidence to apply their skills and knowledge in the world beyond College through development of teamwork, leadership and the application of informed decision-making.
- ***To encourage lifelong learning*** by:
  - nurturing a desire to learn and study habits that will extend beyond the classroom.
- ***To respect ourselves and others*** by:
  - encouraging students to take pride in their own work and achievements, as well as celebrating those of others.

Curriculum

As a Grammar school, the College will continue to deliver a curriculum suited to the needs of the students and in line with our aims and values.

Emphasis is placed on pathways for students through secondary level education and in preparation for post school life including tertiary level education and employment. Students have access to a range of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths) related subjects. Years 13 and 14 have timetabled CEIAG (Careers education, information, advice and guidance) classes whilst Years 11 and 12 have provision made for them through the Careers Service NI and the College CEIAG Department, and an input, via a careers module, in the Personal Development programme.

An Enrichment Programme affords Year 13 students opportunities to extend their learning beyond examination subjects.

Strategies

Stimulating a desire to learn is key to successful progression in subjects. To facilitate this, a range of strategies is promoted including the use of techniques targeting the differing learning intelligences and active learning strategies in order to complement personalised learning preferences. These are included in departmental schemes of work.

Links with other schools and external bodies will be used, where considered appropriate, to enrich the learning experiences of our students. Visual and distance learning provision will also be explored and encouraged, to develop the skills and habits of independent learning of particular importance in Years 13 and 14.

Staff Development

Training and professional courses should be relevant to and enhance the delivery or facilitation of learning. Staff will be encouraged in professional development and to act as models of lifelong learning.

All College stakeholders have a role to play in stimulating and encouraging learning.

School Development Planning (SDP)

Each school development plan cycle has as a priority the constant enhancement of Learning and Teaching. Departmental reviews, self-evaluation, MER (monitor, evaluate and review) and INSET are all used to review progress and deliver training. Departmental Development Plans mirror the SDP and give opportunities, ideas and strategies as areas for improvement.

Pastoral / SENCO

At times it may be necessary for individuals to receive support strategies to enhance learning. This may be through Individual Education Plans (IEP) or the College's Review and Support programme. These strategies are co-ordinated primarily by the Pastoral Year Heads and the SENCO and take account of students' personal circumstances.

Extra Curricular Life

The rich and varied extra-curricular life in the College is recognised as an area where learning outside the classroom occurs. The College is therefore committed to continuing provision for all students through its extensive extra-curricular programme designed to offer activities across a broad spectrum of interests and pursuits which in turn promote important life skills.

Feedback on student progress

Regular reporting, parent / teacher interviews and departmental support mechanisms keep parents informed of student progress.