



Bowden House School

Teaching and Learning Policy

Contents:

Statement of intent

1. Our Trauma Informed Approach to Teaching and Learning
2. High Quality Teaching at Bowden House
3. Reading Everywhere
4. The Learning Environment and Trauma Informed Classrooms
5. Planning for Learning
6. Learning Routines and Lesson Structure
7. Adaptive Teaching and Inclusion
8. Homework and Learning Beyond the Classroom
9. Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (SMSC)
10. Roles and Responsibilities in Teaching and Learning
11. Monitoring Support and Professional Development
12. Links to Other Policies
13. Review

Agreed by the schools governing body and minuted at their meeting.

Agreed: Spring Term 2026

Review date: Autumn Term 2027

Statement of intent

At Bowden House School, teaching and learning is underpinned by a trauma-informed, relationship-led and inclusive approach. As a specialist provision, all pupils have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and present with diverse and complex needs, predominantly within the areas of Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH), communication and interaction, and cognition and learning.

This policy sets out how high-quality teaching and learning is designed, delivered and experienced across the school. It reflects our commitment to ensuring that every pupil is supported to feel safe, regulated, valued and successful, enabling them to engage meaningfully with learning and make sustained progress from their individual starting points.

This policy operates alongside and in alignment with the Behaviour and Relationships Policy and the Assessment and Feedback Policy. Together, these policies provide a coherent framework for creating, emotionally safe learning environments, delivering ambitious and adaptive teaching, and securing meaningful progress for all pupils.

1. Our Trauma Informed Approach to Teaching and Learning

Bowden House School recognises that many pupils have experienced adversity, disrupted attachment and trauma. These experiences can significantly affect emotional regulation, concentration, motivation, memory and engagement with learning.

We understand that learning cannot take place when pupils are dysregulated or feel unsafe. Teaching at Bowden House prioritises:

- emotional and physical safety as a prerequisite for learning.
- predictable routines, clear expectations and consistent adult responses.
- strong, trusting relationships between pupils and staff.
- curiosity about behaviour as communication rather than compliance-driven responses.
- repair, reflection and reconnection within learning time.

Staff are expected to respond flexibly and compassionately to pupils who are struggling to engage, recognising that avoidance, shutdown or challenging behaviour may indicate unmet needs rather than a lack of willingness to learn. High expectations are held alongside high levels of support, ensuring pupils are not excluded from learning due to their emotional state.

2. High Quality Teaching at Bowden House

High-quality teaching at Bowden House School is defined by teaching that is purposeful, adaptive and responsive to pupils' individual needs. Effective teaching:

- is clearly linked to EHCP outcomes and Success Indicators.
- builds knowledge and skills cumulatively over time.
- uses explicit instruction, modelling and guided practice.
- reduces cognitive overload through chunking, scaffolding and clear explanations.
- provides frequent opportunities for rehearsal, retrieval and overlearning.
- adapts pace, structure and support in response to pupil need.
- values progress, effort and engagement as well as outcomes.

Teaching staff use professional judgement to balance structure and flexibility, recognising when pupils need challenge, reassurance, repetition or regulation in order to learn successfully.

3. "Reading Everywhere"

Reading is a foundational skill that underpins access to learning, independence and confidence across the curriculum. At Bowden House School, reading is everyone's responsibility and is embedded through our "Reading Everywhere" approach.

"Reading Everywhere" means that:

- pupils are supported to read, understand and engage with texts in all subjects.
- reading strategies are used consistently across the curriculum to support comprehension, fluency and vocabulary development.
- staff explicitly teach subject-specific language and model how to access and interpret texts.
- reading is used as a tool for learning, regulation and confidence-building.

Strategies may include chunking and annotating text, targeted questioning, My Turn Your Turn (MTYT), explicit vocabulary teaching and regular checks for understanding. These

approaches support pupils to access learning content, reduce anxiety and develop independence over time.

4. The Learning Environment and Trauma Informed Classrooms

The learning environment at Bowden House School encompasses both the physical classroom and the emotional climate created by adults. Classrooms are calm, comfortable, purposeful and predictable, supporting pupils to feel safe and ready to learn.

Trauma-informed classroom design:

- promote emotional regulation through clear routines and consistent expectations.
- minimise sensory overload where appropriate.
- use visuals and displays to support learning without overwhelming pupils.
- provide access to safe spaces for regulation without stigma.
- reflect respect, warmth and high expectations from all adults.

Staff model calm, regulated behaviour and use relational approaches to support pupils to re-engage with learning following dysregulation.

5. Planning for Learning

Planning at Bowden House School is rooted in a stage-not-age curriculum model and is informed by assessment, professional judgement and knowledge of pupils' needs.

Teaching staff plan:

- long-term curriculum structure to ensure breadth, balance and progression.
- medium-term sequences that build knowledge, skills and vocabulary over time.
- responsive lessons that anticipate barriers to learning and emotional regulation.

Planning begins with pupils' EHCP outcomes, Individual Learning Plans and Success Indicators. Flexibility is expected, and staff are trusted to adapt lessons in response to pupils' emotional state, engagement and progress. Planning reflects the expectation that learning experiences will be appropriately pitched, motivating and meaningful. Staff plan to develop literacy and oracy across the curriculum, ensuring that opportunities to read, write, speak and reason are embedded naturally within subject teaching.

Teaching assistants and support staff are deployed strategically to maximise learning, promote independence and support regulation, rather than creating reliance. Teachers are not expected to produce individual lesson plans for every lesson but should be able to demonstrate evidence of thoughtful planning over time, using curriculum maps and learning journeys.

6. Learning Routines and Lesson Structure

Consistent learning routines support emotional safety, predictability and readiness to learn, which is essential for some and beneficial for all. While recognising the need for flexibility, lessons at Bowden House School typically include:

- a calm meet and greet to support transition into learning;
- clear reference to learning objectives and Success Indicators;
- an effective starter or settling activity;
- structured opportunities for modelling, guided practice and independent application;
- opportunities for reflection and consolidation of learning;
- a calm and orderly transition at the end of the lesson.

These routines help pupils understand expectations, reduce anxiety and support engagement.

7. Adaptive Teaching and Inclusion

All pupils at Bowden House School have SEND; therefore, adaptive teaching is the norm rather than the exception.

Teaching is personalised through thoughtful adaptation, with additional differentiation used where appropriate to meet individual needs. This includes opportunities for pupils to consolidate and embed key learning, as well as to extend and deepen understanding where appropriate.

Adaptive teaching may include:

- scaffolding and modelling.
- use of visuals, manipulatives and alternative recording methods.
- breaking learning into small, manageable steps.

- additional processing time.
- targeted adult support.
- flexible grouping and pacing.

Staff work closely as a team to ensure teaching approaches align with pupils' identified needs and support progress towards EHCP outcomes.

8. Learning Beyond the Classroom

Bowden House School recognises that many pupils require significant support to engage successfully in learning during the school day. As a result, additional learning beyond the classroom is not routinely expected for all pupils, and any extension of learning is approached flexibly and sensitively, with a focus on consolidation, reinforcement and, where appropriate, extension of learning.

Where additional learning opportunities are provided, they:

- form a meaningful extension of the curriculum;
- support the consolidation and embedding of key knowledge and skills, or provide appropriate challenge for those ready to extend their learning;
- have clear learning purposes that are understood by pupils;
- are appropriate to pupils' emotional wellbeing and capacity;
- can be completed within supported environments, such as during care time or structured sessions, where appropriate.

Any work completed beyond the classroom is acknowledged and responded to in line with the Assessment and Feedback Policy, with a focus on encouragement, reinforcement and confidence-building.

9. Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (SMSC)

Teaching and learning at Bowden House School support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, recognising that education extends beyond academic outcomes.

Central to this is the school's "*We Not Me*" philosophy, which promotes a sense of community, shared responsibility and an understanding that individual actions impact others. Pupils are encouraged to consider both their own needs and the

needs of those around them, developing empathy, cooperation and mutual respect.

Through lessons, assemblies, mentor time, RSHE, enrichment activities and wider experiences, pupils are supported to:

- develop self-esteem, confidence and a sense of purpose;
- reflect on their learning and experiences;
- understand right and wrong and the importance of boundaries;
- take responsibility for themselves and others;
- develop positive relationships and respect for diversity;
- appreciate different cultures, beliefs and social contexts.

SMSC development is embedded across the curriculum and reinforced through daily interactions, relational practice and the consistent promotion of the “*We Not Me*” approach and is closely aligned with the school’s RSHE policy and provision.

10. Roles and Responsibilities in Teaching and Learning

Teaching and learning at Bowden House School are a shared responsibility.

Teachers are responsible for planning and delivering high-quality, trauma-informed teaching, monitoring progress, adapting learning in response to need and fostering positive learning relationships.

Support staff play a vital role in supporting engagement, regulation and access to learning, working flexibly and collaboratively with teachers and feeding back observations to inform planning.

Mentors support pupils’ academic and emotional development by monitoring progress, providing guidance and contributing to reviews and planning.

Leaders are responsible for setting clear expectations, supporting staff development and ensuring consistency and quality across the school.

Pupils are encouraged and supported to take increasing responsibility for their learning, engagement and effort, in line with their individual needs and developmental stage.

11. Monitoring, Support and Professional Development

Monitoring of teaching and learning is developmental, supportive and proportionate. It includes learning walks, lesson observations, book looks, data reviews and professional dialogue, with a focus on consistency, inclusion and trauma-informed practice.

Monitoring activities are not graded and are used to:

- evaluate the impact of teaching on pupil learning and wellbeing;
- identify strengths and areas for development;
- inform professional development and support;
- ensure consistency with agreed whole-school expectations.

Ongoing professional development ensures staff are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to support pupils effectively. This includes training in trauma-informed practice, SEMH, SEND, curriculum development and pedagogy. Staff are encouraged to reflect on their practice and engage in continuous professional learning.

12. Links to Other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Behaviour and Relationships Policy
- Assessment and Feedback Policy
- SEND Policy and SEND Information Report
- Curriculum Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- RSHE Policy

13. Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it reflects current practice, statutory guidance and the evolving needs of the school community.