

## Learning Observations Policy

*Vision: Grow - Flourish - Succeed*

*Mission: Together we inspire creative, mindful learners who value diversity, support one another and strive for success.*

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 At GFS we strive for a culture of lifelong learning for all. A place where all staff members feel they can Grow Flourish and Succeed in their own ambitions.
- 1.2 We recognise that, as professionals, all staff will seek to constantly improve and develop the quality of their teaching and learning for the benefit of the learners in their care.
- 1.3 We aim to promote a culture of support and development for teachers that is built on trust and positive relationships.

At GFS we know that high quality teaching and learning is key to pupil progress. Learning observations provide a chance to:

- celebrate pupil achievement
- develop teachers' pedagogy
- recognise and share good practice
- identify areas for improvement that can inform professional development
- foster a climate of professional reflection and dialogue
- provide regular ongoing feedback to teachers and leaders
- identify trends in teaching and learning approaches across the school.
- allow leaders and the Local Advisory Board to know their school and the quality of teaching within it

### 2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 It is the role of those who hold a leadership position in the school to collectively support in the actioning of this policy, namely; Middle Leaders, Extended Leaders, Associate and Senior Leaders.

2.2 Deputy Headteachers in each area of the school are responsible for quality assurance of the process and utilising the information that the learning observation process generate.

2.3 Heads of Department (Secondary), Curriculum Leaders (Primary), Assistant Head Teachers (whole school) and Heads of Year (Primary) are responsible for planning and actioning subject specific learning walks in response to trends in:

- Developmental drop ins
- Student academic data
- Wellbeing data

2.2 Leaders will have a given number of teachers to work with on 'Developmental Drop Ins' across the period of no less than one term. The number of teachers assigned to a leader will be relative to their capacity and duties held. There will be equity across the leadership bands.



2.3 Information gathered in learning observations and reflective conversations should be treated with sensitivity and confidentiality. If best practice is to be shared this should be done with the permission of the teachers.

2.4 SLT and named members of ASLT are responsible for providing adequate training for MLT/ELT and ASLT to fulfil their duties. This training will be ongoing and based around the following themes:

- Vision and values of the learning observation process
- Developmental questioning
- The domains of foci
- Conducting learning walks

2.5 Teachers should feel involved and supported throughout the observation process.

### **3. Categories of Observation**

3.1 At GFS, we use four types of observations. This document sets out the purpose and actions regarding each;

- Developmental Drop Ins – referred to in section 4
- Subject specific learning walks – referred to in section 5
- Early Career Teacher Observations – referred to in section 6
- Peer drop ins – referred to in section 7

### **4. Developmental Drop Ins**

#### **4.1 Frequency and Duration**

4.1.1 The expectation is that teachers will have minimum 2 x 15-20 minute unannounced drop ins each half term. These should be focused and developmental. The focus of an observation will be based on outcomes and next steps from the previous visit. This aims to provide a perpetual cycle of continuous professional development.

4.1.2 These observations are to be focused on developing the practice happening in the classroom and provide the basis for a reflective conversation of practice.

4.1.3 When a teacher is new to GFS, the first observation will be focused on Relationship and Welfare and Learning Culture.

#### **4.2 Recording and Feedback**

4.2.1 Commentary and reflective questions by the observer will be collated in a shared document which will be available in an MS Teams channels. Wherever possible this should be done within the observation time frame or immediately after. This will act as immediate written feedback and provide a space for immediate reflection.

4.2.2 At a mutually convenient time, as close to the observation as possible, verbal feedback should be provided face to face

4.2.3 This should be a constructive and supportive conversation that promotes self-reflections and encourages teachers to identify next steps in their own learning journey.

#### **4.3 Learning Observation Foci**



4.3.1 Areas of focus will be identified from the below categories. These categories form the 'GFS Teaching Toolbox for Effective Practice'.

- Relationships and Welfare
- Learning Culture
- Active Learning
- Questioning
- Assessment for Learning
- Provision for all Learners
- Feedback and Reflection of learning
- Subject knowledge
- Planning

1.3.2 During the reflective conversation celebrations and next steps will be jointly identified and agreed actions recorded. These next steps will form the key foci for the following drop in, which should inform teachers self-driven CPD, which may include reading material, webinars or peer drop ins (see section 7)

## **5. Subject Specific Learning Walks**

5.1 In response to key trends or student data analysis, leaders may identify a thread of interest that requires further inquiry.

5.2 These learning walks will provide a snapshot of an element of teaching across a department or whole school.

5.3 Individual Teachers will not be named in any reports produced as part of a learning walk.

5.4 If as part of a learning walk a safeguarding or teaching and learning concern is identified, this will be communicated with the teacher observed, their line manager or DSL, where appropriate.

5.5 Leaders will be expected to share a summary of findings and next steps at leadership meetings.

## **6. Lesson Observations for Early Career Teachers**

6.1 This is applicable only to those who are Early Career Teachers (with QTS) completing their Department for Education mandatory induction.

6.2 Early Career Teachers will have 6 x full lesson observations across an academic year through the duration of their induction period. These will be prearranged, in line with Department for Education (England) requirements.

6.2 These will be carried out by assigned induction tutors or other appropriate leader and linked to the Department for Education (DfE) teacher standards.

6.3 Commentary should be both developmental and evaluative to inform and assist ECTs in identify their strengths and areas to develop in their early practice

## **7. Peer Drop Ins**


7.1 At GFS we have an open-door policy where teachers are encouraged to observe one another to gather and share best practice




7.2 Peer Drops ins should be part of the cycle of professional development and an action from reflective conversations. When it is decided during a reflective conversation that a drop in to another teacher is a suitable next step it should be recorded as such and the impact followed up in the next reflective conversation or drop in.

7.3 These should be regular and last no longer than 20 minutes.

7.3 Peer drop ins must pre-arranged at least 24 hours ahead of time between teachers at a mutually convenient time and the focus must be agreed upon by both parties.

Signed   
**Deputy Head Teacher (Primary)**

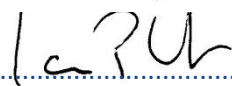
Date .....13 October 2023.....

Signed   
**Deputy Head Teacher (Secondary)**

Date .....13 October 2023.....

Signed   
**Whole School Vice Principal**

Date .....13 October 2023.....

Signed   
**Associate Principal**

Date .....13 October 2023.....

Signed   
**Executive Principal/CEO/Senior Vice President of Education**

Date .....16 October 2023.....

**Next policy review date:**

02 February 2024

28 June 2024