

The New School at West Heath

Policy on Examinations and Achievements

Introduction

The New School at West Heath is built on the twin pillars of happiness and success. We believe that when children are happy they will achieve nearer to their full potential. We believe in celebrating achievement as a means of raising self-esteem.

We believe that no-one should leave after 11 years of full time education with nothing to show for it. We also believe that everyone is capable of achievement.

Aims & Objectives

- To provide all students with an opportunity to taste success at an appropriate level which is often higher than they dare to believe when they first come to us.
- We aim to value equally all achievement, in whatever field, whether at school or in the community.
- To equip students with the necessary qualifications to go on to further education, university and the world of work.
- To re-establish self esteem through the acquisition of nationally accredited qualifications.
- To convince students of the reality of their achievements through the same qualifications framework as their mainstream peers.
- To provide them with a purpose for work. They are not being contained but are working towards an end, namely the achievement of worthwhile qualifications.
- To convince them that we think they are important enough to be entered for examinations.
- To provide them with as normal an experience of school as possible with the backing of a nurturing environment. It is our belief that our students have rejected school for many reasons, but they have not rejected the curriculum. When it is used to support them it is a very useful tool.

Strategies

We provide reluctant learners with temptations to work and achieve through the merit system that offers both short and long-term rewards.

We value and celebrate all achievement, be it a badge for swimming or a starred A at GCSE.

We encourage children to try new challenges such as riding, work experience, sport, golf and public presentations. We build on any interests they bring into the School to share with us.

All students will be entered for any GCSE for which they can expect to be successful. For children with learning difficulties we would aim to supplement GCSE with relevant examinations e.g. Entry Level Certificates, AQA unit awards, ASDAN awards

We believe in giving students experience in taking GCSE examinations a year early as a rehearsal for the real thing and to convince them that they can actually achieve. Occasionally we have students who take all their GCSEs a year early and leave for college, though this is usually at the request of the parents.

Students in Year 10 are given the opportunity to participate in a work experience placement.

We take every opportunity to enter students' work into national competitions and thus we have had a number of prize winners for published poetry and three winners of Christmas card design competitions.

We believe in the value of positive reporting. It is often fed back to us at parents' evenings that this is the first positive feedback which parents have had. This can often reverse a cycle of disaffection and despair.

We have two open days of Celebration when parents, friends and students are invited. One is at the end of June - Leavers' Day, when subject prizes, records of achievement and progress reports are presented. The second is in the autumn term to present the GCSE certificates. On both of these occasions the vouchers for earning 25 merits are presented. We try to ensure press coverage of these events and we invite a celebrity to make the presentations and give a speech. At the same event an opportunity is given for the school band to perform some contemporary songs and those who have singing or instrumental lessons to contribute a musical item. Excerpts from the School's drama performances or specially staged items are also included. Together with displays of artwork and textiles these events aim to provide a forum for celebrating the broadest possible range of achievement.

We recognise that for some students, especially the highly phobic ones, attendance at our School is in itself a considerable achievement in itself. We celebrate this by encouraging words and the merit system.

Examinations & Achievements	
This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies: Assessment Recording & Reporting, Curriculum	
Appendices:	
Monitoring of Policy Implementation is the responsibility of: The Senior Leadership Team	
Lead responsibility:	Vice Principal - Education
Relevant Legislation:	To be detailed in the next release
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