



Ashfield Girls' High School



“Each different. Each talented. All valued.”

Teacher Professional Learning (TPL) Policy

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Executive Summary

The most significant resource in ensuring success for our students is the staff team. Professional development encompasses all the activities that staff undertake to raise their performance. This includes external courses, internal courses, opportunities for curriculum development and new responsibilities.

A shared understanding about professional learning, reflective practice, school development and action planning, and self-evaluation will all lead to school improvement, and this will translate into better outcomes for learners.

Ashfield Girls' High School has an obligation to secure the Professional Development of its staff and it aims to encourage career development.

Our vision is that Ashfield Girls' High School will be a learning community built by learning leaders.

Section A (Aims of the Policy)

Aim

Teachers will develop their capacity to meet the learning needs of all learners.

Objectives

The objectives of the Teacher Professional Learning (TPL) Policy: -

- build a professional learning community that is focused on teaching, learning, assessment, and leading learning
- develop collaboration and share good practice regarding teacher and pupil learning
- encourage engagement within school and across the Area Learning Community to facilitate the sharing of good practice and establish learning networks



Section B (Legislative Content, Guidance and Linked Policies)

It has long been recognised that the quality of teaching impacts directly on the quality of learning and attainment. The Teacher Professional Learning strategy outlined by the Department of Education in its publication “Learning Leaders – A Strategy for Teacher Professional Learning” highlights the need for transformation. A “one size fits all” approach is no longer meeting the needs of learning communities in today’s education sector.

To be Learning Leaders, teachers need to be given opportunities to re-ignite their passion with their own learning and be afforded autonomy to choose purposeful areas to focus their professional learning; that will both enhance pedagogy and leadership. In addition to this, teachers should have opportunities to work collegiately with other teachers in networked teams and across learning communities.

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/strategy-document-english.pdf>

Every School a Good School published by the Education Authority reinforces the importance of taking a strategic approach to career long professional learning, stating that “school leaders (should) demonstrate a commitment to providing professional development opportunities for staff, particularly teachers, and promote a readiness to share and learn from best practice”.

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/every-school-good-school-esags>

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) Inspection and Self- Evaluation Framework (ISEF) states that effective strategic leadership and management “focuses on continuous improvement with regular opportunities for all staff to review and refresh pedagogical practice and build expertise and capacity”.

<https://www.etini.gov.uk/articles/inspection-and-self-evaluation-framework-isef>

The publication also refers to effective middle leadership as having “clear evidence of a focus on continuous improvement and professional development for colleagues including the sharing of current and research-based practice”

Linked Documents

- School Development Plan



Section C (Policy and Procedures)

Teacher Professional Learning

Values regarding Teacher Professional Learning

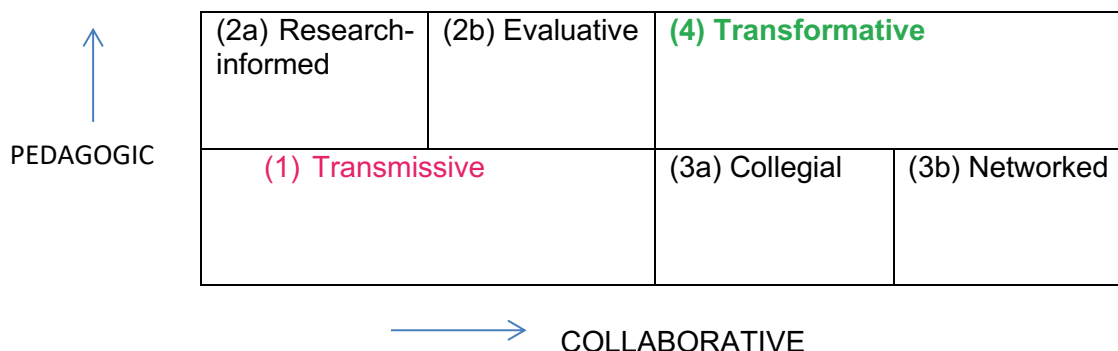
- Trust
- Professional growth
- Sharing

Ethos regarding Teacher Professional Learning

- Self-reflection
- Self-direction

Styles of Professional Learning

The diagram below illustrates the ‘quadrant model’ as identified in the ETI document “Learning Leaders – Teacher Professional Learning Next Practice Case Studies”.



The quadrant model enables all career long professional learning activities to be classified. While effective career long professional learning can fall into any of the four quadrants more effective practice can be classified as research-informed, evaluative, collegial, and networked career long professional learning. Most effective practice regarding career long professional learning can be found in the transformative quadrant. Transformation is visible when research, evaluative, collegial, and networked professional learning is underpinned by a clear vision, sound values and supportive ethos; that is outlined by policy.

Ashfield Girls’ High School will work to provide a comprehensive programme of career long professional learning opportunities to all teachers. This will be supported by the vision, values and ethos of the Teacher Professional Learning Policy.

Stages of implementation

The Department of Education have outlined 3 stages of implementation for their Teacher Professional Learning Strategy. The stages are: -

- Defining and Developing
- Expanding
- Embedding



As a self-reflective school we will use the same 3 stages to identify progress along our school Teacher Professional Learning Acton Plan. In summary, we are working to the timeline below: -

- Defining and Developing (2021-2022)
- Expanding (2022 - 2023)
- Embedding (2023-2025)

We therefore aim to be a “learning community built by learning leaders” by 2025.

The Career Long Professional Learning Journey

As a profession it is important that we indulge ourselves in effective professional learning. As Learning Leaders, we are tasked with leading learning for learners in a rapidly changing world. We value the expert subject knowledge that teachers have and will support a range of ways to enable teachers to continually develop their subject knowledge and skills. We also need to be aware of current thinking regarding pedagogy and learning research and use relevant knowledge to inform our professional practice. We also need to be forward thinking in our approach to learning in a technology rich world where our young people are digital natives. Effective leadership is essential to build effective teams of teachers who are both confident and competent in leading learning. Professional learning is career long.

The provision for professional learning at Ashfield Girls’ High School is outlined below.

The Different Stages

Initial Teacher Education (ITE)

Initial Teacher Education (ITE) can be in the form of four-year Bachelor of Education course or the 1-year Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). Ashfield Girls’ High School will facilitate student teacher placements from all universities where the Head of Department agrees that they have the capacity and resources to support the student teacher in their placement. Once on placement, the student teacher will work under the supervision of the Head of Department. The Head of Department and teachers who work with the student teacher will provide structured feedback throughout the student teachers placement. The Teacher Tutor will provide support throughout the placement. The Head of Department and Teacher Tutor will aim to complete one formal classroom observation each. The student teacher must be supervised in all lessons by the teacher with responsibility for that class. It is widely accepted that as the student teacher grows in competence and confidence the level of supervision may be reduced to the supervising teacher eventually observing from an adjoining room. However, responsibility for safety, behaviour and learning remains with the timetabled teacher. If they are concerned about practice that is observed, they must inform the Head of Department or Teacher Tutor at their earliest convenience.

Induction

As part of the Education Authority Induction programme the beginning teacher will be supported through their Education Authority Induction Programme by the Teacher Tutor and the Head of Department.

Early Professional Development (EPD) 1 and 2

As part of the Education Authority EPD programme the teacher will be supported through their Education Authority EPD Programme by the Teacher Tutor and Head of Department. The Teacher Tutor will also provide support with PRSD for the first two years.



New Staff School Induction

Induction into a new school is critical for an effective transition into Ashfield Girls' High School's vision, values and ethos. The new teacher (at any stage of their teaching career) will be able to benefit from a workshop induction programme covering all the main aspects that aim to integrate the new teacher into the Ashfield Girls' High School community. The Induction Programme will be reviewed annually and given to each new teacher along with the Teacher Professional Learning Policy. The new teacher will be allocated a mentor if requested. The mentor will likely be a colleague from the department. The mentor will likely be the Head of Department. New staff will be encouraged to meet up informally to discuss how things are going and give feedback and support to see if there are areas that could be developed. New Staff School Induction will be led by the Teacher Tutor.

Performance Review and Staff Development (PRSD)

PRSD can provide teachers with greater opportunities to self-reflect and then self-direct to areas that they would like to develop individually or in groups to improve their subject knowledge, pedagogy and practice in the classroom.

At Ashfield Girls' High School PRSD should focus on developing;

- subject specific knowledge, or
- deeper understanding on pedagogy, or
- leadership capacity to lead learning.

PRSD targets should include;

- whole school target (identified from the School Development Plan), and
- team target (identified from the Department Action Plan), and
- personal target (as identified by reviewee)

If a teacher has a level of leadership responsibility (MLT), it is appropriate for an aspect of their PRSD to be focused on an area linked to their leadership role.

If a teacher has a significant level of leadership responsibility (SLT), it is appropriate for the majority of their PRSD to be focused on areas linked to their leadership role, unless specific reasons dictate that observations should form part of the PRSD process.

*all staff in MPS and UPS (1 and 2) (irrespective of their leadership level should have observation included in their PRSD cycle).

*all staff who are new to the school (irrespective of their leadership level should have observation included in their PRSD cycle for at least their first two years).

Internal - Career Long Professional Learning Opportunities

With fewer opportunities for professional learning provided by the Education Authority it is important that schools use their internal capacity to meet their own learning needs.

Induction meetings

All new staff to Ashfield Girls' High School will have access to a programme of Induction. In addition, new staff will have support from the Teacher Tutor. The Teacher Tutor will arrange a mentor for the new member of staff if requested.



Learning workshops

Following feedback from teachers at least one or more learning workshops will be provided annually. These workshops will be focused on pedagogy and current learning theories. As we move from defining to embedding it is envisaged that there will be an increasing number of workshops available. These workshops will be 'open sourced'.

Leadership Professional Learning workshops

Following feedback from teachers at least one or more workshops will be provided annually. These workshops will be focused on leadership. As we move from defining to embedding it is envisaged that there will be an increasing number of workshops available. These workshops may be taken by internal persons or external persons, on professional leadership areas of interest.

Coaching

Coaching can take many forms.

- Professional Coaching (for performance) is when a professional coach is employed to provide one to one coaching sessions with a member of staff. This is very much a private activity with no set agenda. The aim is to develop further potential in already high performing staff. Feedback may be requested to evaluate the impact of the overall experience. Five members of staff will be offered professional coaching for performance annually. Each member of staff will receive seven hours of professional coaching over two academic years (five sessions in year 1 and two follow up session in year 2).
- Professional Coaching (for improvement) is when a professional coach is employed to provide structured one to one coaching sessions with a member of staff. This form of coaching usually has a set agenda. The aim is to identify areas for improvement and enable the member of staff to work through the improvement steps needed. Feedback may be requested to evaluate the impact of the overall experiences. This form of coaching will be available if requested.
- Group coaching offers a more general insight into the use of coaching techniques e.g. GROW model, coaching conversations. Group coaching follows the more familiar model of professional learning. Eight members of staff will be offered this form of professional learning annually. It will involve a one-day workshop off site with a professional coach.
- In line with the school well-being strategy counselling may be more appropriate in certain circumstances than coaching. If required, services from Inspire can be sought to support staff.

August INSET

August INSET will include a combination of professional learning that is an annual requirement e.g. Child Protection and Health and Safety Updates. It will also include professional learning that is linked to the School Development Plan. There will be opportunities for departments, pastoral teams, and school improvement teams to meet. In relation to planning and preparation time Ashfield Girls' High School will aim to provide at least 10% planning and preparation time in line with directed time budget guidance. When planning INSET professional learning it will be planned to take account of feedback from teachers and nonteaching staff. There will be an



emphasis on internal staff leading the learning and there will also be opportunities for sharing good practice.

External - Career Long Professional Learning Opportunities

External Agency Support

Ashfield Girls' High School has always worked collegiately with external agency providers. Their experience is often contextualised and can support both learning and young people's welfare. We will continue to make available opportunities for teachers to engage in professional learning facilitated by external agencies.

Education Authority (EA)

Ashfield Girls' High School has benefited from the wide expertise that the Education Authority (formerly CASS) have provided in the form of off-site training courses and on-site training sessions. We will continue to make use of the professional learning services offered by the Education Authority, such as the STEPS and PATHWAYS Leadership programmes. The Principal will support any member of staff through these courses.

Council for Curriculum, Education and Assessment (CCEA)

Ashfield Girls' High School has from time to time used training provided from CCEA. A strength of our relationship with CCEA is in the number of staff who moderate, examine or are Principal Moderators for CCEA. We will continue to support teachers to undertake these roles as they provide valuable expertise. We will also draw from these teachers' acquired expertise by encouraging them to support other Heads of Department with the external assessment process. As with all TPL a balance must be sought between gaining valuable experience of the external assessment process and being present in school to teach timetabled classes. Each request will be looked at individually to assess if the school's situation at that time can support the request.

External Course Providers

The postgraduate offer from universities in Northern Ireland provides excellent professional learning. The Principal will support any teacher through these courses.

- E.g. Postgraduate Diploma in Senior Leadership (University of Ulster)

Learning Leaders Publications / Forums

It is important that Learning Leaders have opportunities to share their learning and work collegiately to support others.

Expertise can be sought from the following sources: -

Sharing Good Practice opportunities (during INSET or at department meetings)

Staff development days (INSET) will provide opportunities for teachers to share good practice. Department meetings are excellent opportunities to share good practice related to learning.

Staff Information Area on MS Teams

The staff information area will be a source of information for all staff and will be updated throughout the school year. All staff will have access and can add useful information to the relevant channels. The Team will be monitored by the Teacher Tutor and includes an area



specifically for TPL providing information and a place where staff can share their most recent professional experiences.

Induction/EPD Area on MS Teams

All newly qualified staff will have access to this area and can access information or post questions to the Teacher Tutor.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Forum

Teaching, Learning and Assessment forums will be scheduled throughout the academic year during staff development days (SDD) to facilitate engagement.

School Improvement Teams

All teaching staff are members of at least one School Improvement Team and time will be allocated during staff development days (SDD) to facilitate engagement.

Annual Newsletter

The Teacher Tutor will prepare an overview each year of the range of Professional development that the staff have engaged in and encourage staff to share their experiences. All staff can access the newsletter and can contribute.

Staff Library

To provide access to high quality learning resources for staff a Staff Library (non-fiction) has been set up in the library. The library stock includes many of the most up to date educational writers of the times and many past writers who have stood the test of time. The books are available for loan to staff.



Section D (Role and Responsibilities)

It is the responsibility of all staff to plan, record and manage their own career development. However, the Teacher Tutor is responsible for all aspects of Professional Development (PD) and should ensure the following

- the organisation of all PD undertaken during Development Days
- assisting staff in identifying the most effective methods of achieving PD
- maintaining a record of PD including details of the quality of provision through the evaluations of staff who have previously attended courses
- ensuring the PD plan is fully implemented
- respond to the PD needs identified in the School Development Plan (SDP)

Staff Development Days (SDD)

The Teacher tutor will work with the SLT and consider feedback and suggestions from all staff to provide a relevant programme of Professional Development each academic year.

Induction and Early professional Development (EPD)

For Induction, Early Professional Development, and all new teachers to Ashfield Girls' High School (at any stage in their teaching career) the link teacher will be the Teacher Tutor. The Teacher Tutor will support any new teacher to Ashfield Girls' High School for the first two years in collaboration with the Head of Department. If the new teacher is Head of Department, then the Teacher Tutor will support the teacher for the first two years in collaboration with the Vice-Principal.

Performance Review and Staff Development (PRSD) - Main Pay Scale and Upper Pay Scale

As the teacher moves along the Main Pay Scale it is necessary to complete two PRSD cycles to progress to Upper Pay Scale (UPS) 1 (in addition to Induction, EPD1 and EPD2). Moving from UPS1 to UPS3 requires the teacher to complete four further PRSD cycles. Lesson Observation will remain a key component of the PRSD cycle for pay progression.

Lesson observations will be in the form of one hour of lesson observation (spaced over two lessons). The reviewee will meet with the reviewer to agree three objectives at the initial planning meeting. Then following lesson observations, the reviewer will meet with the reviewee to complete the review statement.

For staff it is likely that the reviewer will be the Head of Department or Curriculum Vice –Principal (if the reviewee is a Head of Department). The reviewee will inform the Principal of their Teacher Professional Learning targets for the academic year and all documentation will be forwarded to the Principal by the reviewee at the end of each academic year.

For the Vice-Principals, the reviewer will be the Principal.

For the Principal, the reviewers will be two designated members of the Board of Governors. The Principal's reviewers will be advised by an external advisor designated to the Board of Governors, in consultation with the employing authority.

All line managers are responsible for assisting staff in identifying their professional development needs, providing support and monitoring improvement.



Points to note

Threshold Assessment

Movement to UPS 1, 2 and 3 will be informed by the completion of successful cycles of PRSD (in addition to Induction, EPD1 and EPD2). The procedures set out in the school salary policy will apply to teachers in the leadership pay scale.

*PRSD for 2019/20 and 2020/21 have been discounted due to COVID 19 (threshold will be approved automatically for these two years in line with TNC directive).

Directed Time Budget

Ashfield Girls' High School values professional learning. Time will be identified in the Time Budget to undertake planning and review meetings between the reviewer and the reviewee.

Equality of Opportunity

The Governors are committed to implementing the Teacher Professional Learning Policy based on fairness openness and equality of opportunity. The Governors will operate the review process in accordance with Section 8 of the PRSD scheme.

Timing

Each cycle would be expected to be completed within one academic year. Time will be made available in August INSET days for PRSD planning to ensure that all staff are able to think about their Career Long Professional Learning.

Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the Principal to provide a Teacher Professional Learning programme. This will include Induction, Early Professional Development and a PRSD programme.

It is the responsibility of the Teacher Tutor to provide support as identified to Student Teachers, Induction and EPD Teachers and new Teachers (at any level on MSP or UPS).

It is the responsibility of the Reviewer (Head of Department, Teacher Tutor, or Vice-Principal to make time to engage in the planning, observation and review stage of the PRSD process).

It is the responsibility of the teacher to lead their own professional learning by availing of the opportunities provided and staff available to support the process.



Section E (Consultation, Communication, Monitoring and Evaluation of the Policy)

Consultation

The draft Teacher Professional Learning Policy was distributed to all teachers in August 2021. The initial review process was for 2 weeks. The Teacher Professional Learning Policy will be reviewed annually following consultation and feedback from teaching staff.

Communication

The Teacher Professional Learning Policy will be available on the school web site and the My School homepage under policies.

Review

The Teacher Professional Learning Policy will be reviewed annually following consultation and feedback from teaching staff.



Challenging girls today; creating women of value in the future



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