Feedback and Assessment Policy

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1. Purpose and context

- To support progress through accessible, regular feedback.
- To build self-esteem and motivation by celebrating success and effort.
- To ensure students feel **safe** when receiving feedback, never shamed or overwhelmed.
- To show **love** by making every interaction respectful, caring, and encouraging.
- To promote **learning** by helping students understand what they have achieved and what they can improve.

2. What is feedback?

Feedback is information given to students (or received from them) about their performance, understanding, or behaviour. It aims to help learners recognise what they are doing well, identify areas for improvement, and understand how to make further progress. At Aspire, feedback is more than a response — it is a relationship-based process that builds trust, confidence, and motivation.

Effective feedback can be verbal, written, visual, or behavioural. It includes praise, corrections, questioning, modelling, and re-teaching. Whether it's a smile, a spoken comment, or a structured conversation, all feedback contributes to a bespoke learning journey for every individual student.

At Aspire, feedback is broader than classroom teaching. From the moment students arrive with us in the morning, to the moment they leave, we are teaching. Whether that be at nurture breakfast, social time, in lessons or when there is a need to reframe behaviour. Feedback plays a vital role in this every day and staff are trained to give feedback within the remit of this policy, whilst considering the changing needs of our students.

2.1 Our guiding principles

At Aspire, feedback is a key part of the learning process. High-quality teaching is inseparable from effective feedback, as it helps students recognise their achievements, understand their learning gaps, and take action to improve. Feedback fosters a learning dialogue between staff and students, which is especially vital in an Alternative Provision (AP)/Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) setting where relationships and trust underpin engagement.

Good feedback informs planning, strengthens student-teacher relationships, and supports emotional as well as academic development. It helps learners feel seen and valued, and when delivered skilfully, can de-escalate frustration and build resilience. Effective feedback is not just a tool for correction — it is a driver of progress, confidence, and connection. In line with our principles — **Safe, Love, Learn** — we believe feedback should build confidence, celebrate progress, and guide students to take their next steps.

We prioritise verbal feedback to ensure communication is clear, timely, and meaningful to our learners, many of whom benefit from real-time interaction over written comments.

2.2 Principles of feedback

Feedback at Aspire should be:

- **Verbal first**: Spoken feedback is the main method used, both during and after learning activities. This is often the most impactful.

- **Timely**: Given during the learning process whenever possible to enable immediate improvement. Live mark.
- **Clear and concise**: Avoiding overload; focused on one or two key points.
- **Positive and constructive**: Framed to encourage and guide, not criticise.
- **Specific**: Praise highlights what was done well, helping students understand and repeat success.
    - *E.g., "I really like this piece of work — you've included some brilliant similes. Be sure to do that next time too!"*
- **Individualised**: Tailored to the needs and emotional state of each student.
- **Consistent**: Given frequently so students understand their progress and areas for growth.

2.3 Types of feedback used

Feedback is adapted to meet the emotional and learning needs of each student. The following strategies are used flexibly across the school. Each strategy is embedded within a relational approach and aims to be supportive, motivational, and accessible for our learners.

- In-the-moment verbal feedback
- Reflective conversations
- Visual prompts & gestures
- Positive recognition boards
- Feedback through modelling
- Scaffolded re-dos
- Peer feedback (carefully structured)
- Feedback journals / check-ins
- Movement-based or sensory feedback
- Positive phone calls / notes home

3. Written marking and acknowledgement marking

- Written marking is used selectively to support verbal feedback and provide clarity when appropriate.
- Comments are positive, specific, and accessible to the student.
- Acknowledgement marking (e.g., ticks, stickers, stamps) reinforces effort and supports student motivation.
- Written comments may highlight SPAG focus areas or success criteria met.
- To ensure written marking is purposeful, students are given time and guidance to respond to it, reinforcing the feedback and supporting progress.
- The frequency of written feedback is to be decided by individual sites and subjects. **As a minimum students should receive acknowledgement marking and live marking weekly.**

4. Live marking

Live marking is an immediate, in-lesson feedback strategy where teachers provide verbal or written guidance while students are working. This enables misconceptions to be identified and addressed in real time, supporting immediate progress and fostering active engagement with learning. For example, during a science lesson, a teacher may review a student's explanation of an experiment and write a comment such as, *"Great start—can you add more detail about the variables?"* directly in

their book. The student can then act on the feedback straight away, improving their work while the learning is still fresh.

5. Student involvement

Students are encouraged to:

- Recognise and talk about their own achievements.
- Identify what helped them succeed.
- Set small, manageable goals based on feedback.
- Celebrate others' efforts in structured ways (e.g., circle time praise).

6. The role of feedback in supporting positive behaviour

At Aspire, we teach desired behaviour and make it explicit the behaviours we want to see. Feedback plays a crucial role in supporting positive student behaviour, particularly within a PRU/SEMH context where relational practice is key. Consistent, calm, and affirming feedback helps reinforce desired behaviours by making students feel seen, valued, and understood; whilst challenging them to make better choices or reframe the behaviour with the support of an adult.

When staff recognise and praise positive actions — such as effort, kindness, or regulation — they help students internalise expectations and build a sense of pride in their choices.

Feedback should focus on reinforcing emotional growth as well as academic achievement, using specific praise (e.g., "I noticed how you took a break when you felt upset — that was a really mature choice") and correction to guide behaviour without shame.

This relational approach to feedback fosters trust, reduces escalation, and creates a safe environment where students feel supported to make positive changes. For more explicit ways in which we do this refer to our Behaviour Regulation and Relationships Policy.

7. Questioning and the role of dialogue in feedback

Purpose: Questioning is a powerful feedback tool. It encourages reflection, checks understanding, and guides students towards deeper learning and self-awareness. At Aspire, effective questioning must be supportive, accessible, and adapted to each student's emotional and cognitive needs.

Types of questions used:

- **Clarifying questions**: "Can you show me where you got that idea from?"
- **Reflective questions**: "What part of this are you most proud of?"
- **Guided prompts**: "What might happen if we tried it this way?"
- **Choice questions**: "Do you want to start with the title or the first sentence?"
- **Confidence-boosting questions**: "What do you already know about this?"

Questioning should build trust and empower students to take an active role in their learning. It also provides valuable insight into what students understand and where support is needed.

8. Staff expectations

All staff will:

- Use a positive tone and body language when giving feedback.
- Prioritise emotional safety in all feedback interactions.
- Be aware of each student's emotional regulation needs.
- Record key feedback outcomes for assessment where needed.
- Share effective feedback strategies with colleagues.
- Use live marking regularly, students should receive live written marking at least weekly.

9. Addressing SPAG (spelling, punctuation and grammar)

All staff are responsible for supporting SPAG across the curriculum. This is done in a way that maintains student confidence and encourages growth, whilst also being considerate of the students' individual needs.

Key approaches:

- **Verbal correction**: Gently address SPAG issues with phrases like, "Let's look at how we spell that," or "Can we hear where the full stop should go?"
- **Modelling**: Staff model accurate SPAG in speaking, writing, and shared activities.
- **Praising attempts**: Corrections are framed positively, e.g. "You're so close — just one letter to change."
- **Visual aids**: Use of word mats, sentence starters, and dictionaries.
- **Individualised focus**: Feedback may focus on one aspect at a time (e.g., capital letters).
- **Opportunities for re-drafting**: Students improve work with support, reinforcing the value of mistakes in learning.

10. Using technology to support feedback

As part of our commitment to effective, data-informed feedback, we use **Century Tech** software to baseline and track student progress in **English, Maths, and Science**. This platform provides personalised diagnostics, identifies learning gaps, and offers real-time feedback to staff and students. It supports the feedback process by:

- Enabling teachers to tailor teaching based on individual needs.
- Helping students take ownership of their progress through self-paced learning.
- Providing clear, accessible data to support meaningful discussions around next steps.

10.1 Guidance for staff

- Students should complete their baseline assessments on Century Tech no later than 2 weeks of starting at Aspire to establish a clear starting point.
- Staff are expected to review Century Tech dashboards regularly (at least fortnightly) to monitor student progress and identify learning gaps.
- Teachers should use insights from Century Tech to:
    - Plan group and 1:1 intervention based on current needs.
    - Identify misconceptions and re-teach or reinforce accordingly.
    - Set meaningful, personalised targets.
    - Adapt future lesson planning to address trends or gaps.
    - Celebrate areas of progress with verbal and written praise.

- Century Tech tasks and diagnostics should be referred to when giving feedback, allowing students to make connections between independent digital learning and classroom work.
- Encourage students to reflect on their Century Tech progress during feedback conversations or through self-assessment.
- Staff should triangulate Century Tech data with classroom assessments and observations to ensure a holistic understanding of each student's needs.

Century Tech results are used alongside classroom observations, written work, and teacher feedback to create a holistic view of each learner's journey. It is important to note that Century Tech is a supportive tool — it does not replace our rich curriculum, skilled teaching, or well delivered feedback, but enhances them by providing additional insight and reinforcing learning pathways. These insights help shape tailored learning plans and ensure all students are supported to make progress from their individual starting points.

11. Understanding and demonstrating progress

11.1 What is progress?

Progress refers to the improvement a student makes in their knowledge, skills, understanding, or behaviour over time. At Aspire, progress is personal and non-linear — small steps count and should be recognised and celebrated. Progress might look like improved focus, using subject vocabulary accurately, increased independence, or greater emotional regulation during tasks. We recognise this is personal and individual to the student and their needs.

11.2 How can we show progress?

Progress should be visible in students' work, verbal responses, participation, and confidence. Staff are expected to plan for, and evidence progress in simple, meaningful ways, such as:

- **Before-and-after tasks**: Compare an initial and redrafted piece of work.
- **Mini quizzes / recall tasks**: Use short, low-stakes quizzes to check understanding over time.
- **Mind maps**: Students create mind maps at the start and end of a topic to show what they've learned.
- **Checks for understanding**: Quick responses at the start, throughout and at the end of a lesson to demonstrate what has been retained or understood.
- **Verbal reflections**: Use questioning to help students articulate what they've learned and how they improved.
- **Work samples**: Photographs or copies of work from different points in a topic to track development.
- **Live marking**: Students review and respond to feedback to show reflection and improvement.
- **Bullet journaling**: Students show progress in their thinking about themselves through bullet journaling, over time.

Students making progress should not be complicated. In its simplest form, Aspire views this as: What do they know or can do now that they couldn't before?

In English, Maths and Science progress is seen with Century Tech and their diagnostic assessments. Century Tech will be used to identify gaps before and after teaching, demonstrating progress over time. Aspire will evidence academic progress in reports to mainstream schools and parents.

For other subjects such as PSHE and vocational, progress is demonstrated in simple, meaningful ways as listed above.

Progress should always be shared and celebrated, even in small steps. Staff should guide students to see their own progress and take pride in it. Then to support them in making further progress.

12. How do we know we are being successful (impact)?

Our curriculum and assessment processes are designed to support students to achieve measurable outcomes that will impact their long-term success and positive life outcomes.

12.1 How do we know our curriculum is well designed?

Curriculum Questions

At Aspire, we work hard to create meaningful and lasting impact. We do this through carefully curated curriculum questions to support high quality curriculum discussion.

With these questions in mind, we believe that we can create the right conditions for outcomes 1, 2 and 3 to take place:

- Finding the Beauty
  - What is unique about your subject?
  - What is magical about it?
  - What sparks joy and wonder?
  - What can students do now?

- What are the human benefits?
  - What do students learn about themselves through the subject?
  - What impact does the subject have on the world and society?

- Knowledge is power
  - What is the powerful knowledge within the subject?
  - What do students know now?

- Telling the story
  - What story does the subject tell?
  - How does the subject help the student tell their story?
  - What story would the students tell after studying the subject?

12.2 Attendance, behaviour and destinations

Outcomes 1

- Attendance – target of 95% for all students. Improvement from baseline will also be captured.
- Suspensions – target of reducing suspensions for all students.
- Positive destination for all students.
  - If returning to mainstream or a specialist placement, are they still attending and successful 6 months later?

- If post year 11, are they enrolled in post 16 provision that is suitable for their needs and enables success? Do they leave us with the qualifications to access their chosen course / education provider?

Outcomes 2 - SEMH

- Boxall / SDQs
  - Progress in personal development is measured through Boxall/SDQ profiling and an AMP specific scale.
  - Boxall profiles are completed within half a term of the student starting at Aspire.
  - We allow a longer time frame for this as Boxall requires a good understanding of the young person.
- Engagement with external services (if applicable)
  - Doyles Reintegration Scales (PRU sites only)

Outcomes 3 - Academic

Our curriculum explicitly outlines what students should know and be able to do, therefore, students make progress through the curriculum.

- GCSE, BTEC and other qualifications
- NGRT progress (Reading)

Progress in reading is assessed using GL assessment. When student joins Aspire, their reading age is tested within the first 2 weeks.

13. Data drops and recording data in Arbor

Aspire has three formal data drops a year, at the end of each full term. This is to monitor progress and intervene where necessary with interventions to support students to make further progress.

13.1 Responsibilities of Arbor Records

The **Head of School** is responsible for:

- Ensuring data is inputted into Arbor to meet aspires deadline for the students on their site.
- Measure the accuracy of this data by holding regular student progress meeting – see information around this below.
- Reporting on this data to the Executive Leadership Team during side-by-side curriculum reviews.

Middle Leaders are responsible for:

- The enactment of this policy within their subject teams.
- Reporting on the data to the Head of School.
- Ensuring timely and accurate data recording within their department teams.
- Using the data to inform future developments within the curriculum, across Aspire.

Teachers are responsible for:

- Inputting data into Arbor within the Aspire deadline, for all subjects that they teach.
- Using data to inform their planning of learning across the curriculum.
- Reporting on and giving a 'story' behind the data to middle leaders and to SLT.

The **Data and Exams Lead** is responsible for:

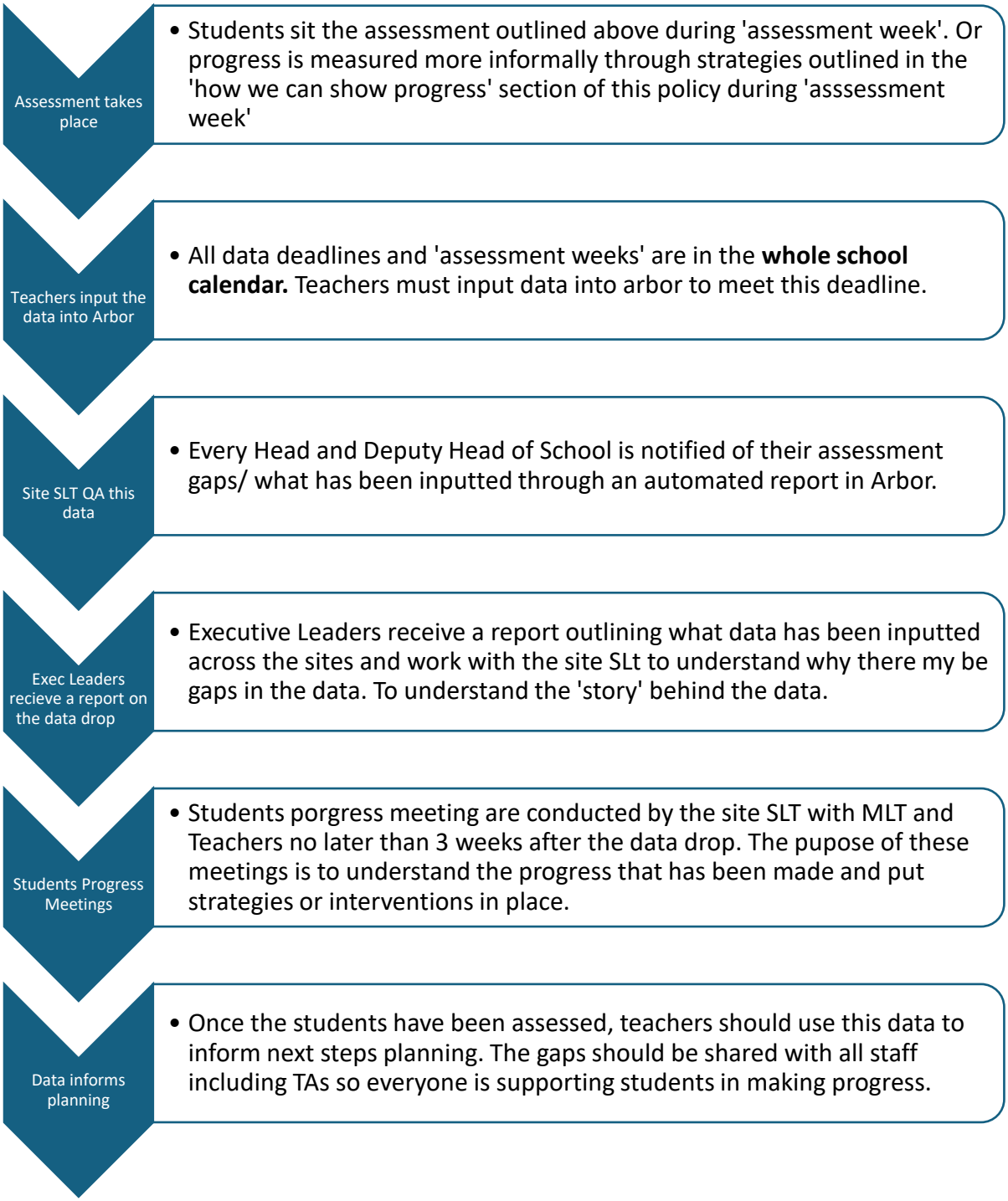
- Creating an assessment framework in Arbor that allows for efficient entry of assessment marks by Head of Department.
- Working with Heads of School and the Executive Team to create assessment reports that provide raw data and identifies gaps or issues.
- Providing analysis of assessment data based on requirements by individual sites or school groups.
- Creating and maintaining documented guidance and working instructions on how to complete assessments.
- Providing group and/or one to one training for staff.

13.2 Types of records

What and Purpose	Who	When is the assessment taken/ monitored?	How is this recorded?
NGRT *Provides Teachers and staff with a baseline of reading age and measures progress in reading over time. Informs academic reading targets for every student*	**All students**	Baseline (no later than 2 weeks starting with Aspire). Repeated termly to measure progress.	In our summative tracking assessment sheets in Arbor. Input the current reading age in numbers.
Boxall *Provides Teachers and staff with a baseline of personal development and growth (Including behaviour) and measures progress in these areas over time. Informs IEP targets for every student.*	**All students**	Baseline (no later than 2 weeks starting with Aspire). Repeated termly to measure progress.	In our summative tracking assessment sheets in Arbor. Developmental and diagnostic are inputted separately
Doyles *Provides staff and mainstream colleagues with a measure of readiness to return to mainstream. Informs Aspire when the student is ready for return. Aspire can use this data to take to FAB (Fair Access Board) meetings and reintegration meetings with mainstream schools.*	**PRU students, PEX and Dual Reg**	Baseline (no later than 2 weeks starting with Aspire). Repeated termly to measure progress and readiness to return	Recorded progress in Arbor in our summative assessment sheets.
Century Tech *Academic assessment in English, Maths and Science. Informs teachers and staff of gaps in knowledge and application of skills. Helps us to know if students know,*	**All students**	Diagnostics in core subjects to be baselined no more the 2 weeks of the student starting. Ongoing teacher monitoring at least every 2 weeks. **Analysis of gaps is**	The information from Century Tech is not recorded in Arbor. However, it is recorded and discussed in Student Progress meetings.

remember and can do more of the curriculum.		**what matters with this assessment.** Progress from individual baseline.	
Working at Grades – All subjects *Working at grades are used to inform teachers of where the students are currently working so they are able to use data in their lesson planning.*	**KS4 Students only**	Formal working at grades should be inputted into Arbor at every data drop.	In the summative tracking sheets in Arbor. These should be current GCSE grades, functionals skills or entry level grades or Btec levels.
Subjects (non- core) Assessment at KS3 *Subject specific data drawn upon through the activities in the demonstrating progress part of this policy. This date is collected and used to inform future curriculum and teaching developments.*	**KS3 Students**	Progress across the curriculum should be measured through activities outlined in the 'how we can show progress' section of this policy	The information from vocational baseline and progress assessments is not recorded in Arbor. However, it is recorded and discussed in Student Progress meetings

13.3 Process of recording data and what we do with it



14. Student's progress meetings

Individual sites are responsible for conducting student progress meetings no later than 3 weeks after a data drop. Aspire offers guidance and proformas on how this could look – See document for guidance.

Students progress meeting should draw on a range of data and contextual factors including:

1. Academic data (reading, Century Tech and subject specific data including working at grades)
2. SEMH data (Boxall, Behaviour and suspension data, Doyles data)
3. Attendance data
4. Safeguarding and contextual information

15. Linked policies

- Behaviour Regulation and Relationships Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Curriculum Statement, Offers and Overviews
- SEND Policy
- NGRT, Boxall system guidance document
- Students progress meeting proforma