

Diss High School: Teaching and Learning Policy 2026–27

Motto: Work hard, be kind

Purpose: To establish a clear, consistent and inclusive approach to teaching and learning across Diss High School that ensures all students learn effectively over time.

1. Vision and Principles

At Diss High School, we are committed to delivering consistently high-quality teaching that enables all students to succeed. Our approach is underpinned by:

- High expectations for all students
- Consistent classroom routines
- Inclusive teaching that meets the needs of all learners, including those with SEND and those who are disadvantaged
- A focus on long-term learning, not just task completion
- Evidence-informed pedagogy (retrieval, spacing, modelling, feedback)

Teaching is designed so that students **learn more, remember more, and are able to do more over time.**

2. The DHS Lesson: Consistent Classroom Practice

All lessons follow a consistent structure to ensure clarity, pace and strong learning habits:

- **Seating plans on Bromcom** – Seating plans used effectively
- **Start (Meet, Greet, Seat, Start)** – Calm entry and immediate focus
- **Teach** – Explicit instruction and modelling
- **Work** – Minimum **10 minutes independent practice, in silence**, every lesson
- **Exit – Final Five** – Reflection, praise (Golden Tickets, house points) and calm transition

Clear routines reduce cognitive load and allow students to focus fully on learning.

Core Expectations

- One voice at a time
- Clear routines reduce disruption and maximise learning time
- Active circulation during independent work

See Appendix 1 for a visual summary of a DHS lesson.

3. Retrieval Practice

Retrieval strengthens long-term memory, reduces cognitive overload, improves confidence and engagement, and requires students to recall knowledge and identify gaps.

Daily Expectation

All lessons begin with a retrieval starter (5–8 minutes).

Similarly, a more formalised approach to lesson structure and the use of starters may be adopted to support Key Stage 5 subjects where appropriate.

The DHS 3+1+1 Model

Each starter must include:

- **3 spaced retrieval questions** (last lesson, last week, last half term/year)
- **1 SPaG/literacy focus**
- **1 challenge/stretch task**

Feedback Cycle

- Students complete independently (in silence)
- Answers reviewed quickly
- Students respond in **green pen**
- Teachers use cold-calling or white boards to gather responses

4. Teaching and Modelling

Learning is more effective when delivered in small steps with clear modelling and guided practice.

Teachers will, at all key stages:

- Deliver **explicit instruction**
- Model thinking and processes clearly
- Check for understanding regularly
- Use adaptive teaching to support all learners

Focus areas (linked to 3-year plan):

- Literacy (explicit teaching of vocabulary and supporting of reading)

- Modelling and scaffolding
- Inclusive classroom strategies

Teachers regularly check understanding using strategies such as:

- Active circulation
- Cold calling
- No opt out
- Mini whiteboards
- Say it again better

These approaches ensure all students participate, and misconceptions are identified quickly. *We encourage KS5 teachers to also use such strategies appropriately and purposefully.*

5. Independent Practice, Active Circulation and Live Marking

Practice combined with immediate feedback helps secure learning and address errors quickly.

All lessons are to include a period of independent practice (at least 10 minutes).

During the independent work phase, teachers must:

- **actively circulate** and provide **live marking at point of error**
- Identify misconceptions quickly
- Target key groups (SEND, disadvantaged) and support those students with reading needs
- If a misconception is common (3+ students), teachers should pause and reteach.

If several students share a misconception, teachers will pause and reteach.

Where appropriate, these techniques are encouraged during Key Stage 5 teaching.

6. Feedback and Marking

Feedback is most effective when it is timely, specific and acted upon.

Feedback is used to improve learning and should be:

- Timely

- Specific
- Actionable
- Consistent

Whole-School Approach at all Key Stages

- **Active circulation and formative assessment strategies**
- **Live marking** (green highlighter or purple pen comments)
- **Green pen student response** is mandatory
- Feedback must lead to improvement in work

Literacy Codes

Literacy is the responsibility of all teachers. Literacy codes are as follows:

Code	Meaning	Student Action (Green Pen)
CL	Capital letter error	Rewrite the word or sentence with correct capitalisation.
Sp	Spelling error	Correct the spelling of the word in the margin or above the error.
P	Punctuation error	Correct the missing or incorrect punctuation directly in the text.
//	Missing paragraph	Add in paragraphs to your writing. Re-write a section using paragraphs.
Gr	Grammar issue	Rewrite the sentence correcting the grammar issue, for example, incorrect tenses, 'we was' etc.

See Appendix 2 for Marking and Feedback advice.

7. Book Expectations: Learning Over Time

Learning is demonstrated through progress over time, not just task completion.

A strong book will show:

- A clear sequence of learning across lessons
- Development in understanding over time
- Evidence of students responding to feedback
- Misconceptions being corrected
- Increasing independence and accuracy
- High standards of presentation and pride in work (title, date, ruler, no graffiti)

Books should show that learning is **building over time**, rather than consisting of isolated activities.

At KS5, exercise books are encouraged but not obligatory. Regular folder and book checks should take place to support student organisation. Student self-evaluations / tracking sheets are to be placed at the front of books and folders and regularly updated and used when completing a new assignment.

8. Literacy Across the Curriculum

Strong literacy supports access to all areas of the curriculum.

All staff are responsible for literacy development:

- Embedding SPaG in all subjects
- Supporting a half-termly literacy focus
- Modelling high-quality written and spoken language
- Supporting reading of all students in the classroom based on 'Unlocking Reading' strategies

Students are expected to:

- Use correct capital letters and punctuation
- Write in clear sentences and paragraphs
- Edit their work for accuracy

Half term	Focus	Students should be able to do
Autumn 1	Sentence starts and ends	Begin every sentence with a capital letter and end it with correct punctuation.
Autumn 2	Proper nouns and capitals	Use capitals for names, places, days, months, and titles.
Spring 1	Paragraphing	Organise extended writing into well-structured paragraphs.
Spring 2	Apostrophes for contractions	Use apostrophes to show omission in common contractions
Summer 1	Apostrophes for possession	Use apostrophes to show possession accurately

Summer 2	Independence and transfer	Apply capitals, punctuation, paragraphs, and apostrophes consistently in all subjects
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9. Homework and Independent Study

Homework is designed to support retrieval and revision; build independent study habits; improve long-term retention

Frequency

KS3:

- Core subjects: weekly (30 mins)
- EBacc subjects: fortnightly (30 mins)
- Creative subjects: half-termly (30 mins)

KS4:

- All subjects set 30 minutes, weekly.
- Duration and complexity may increase by year 11 to tie in with essential revision and exam practice papers.

KS5:

- Students are expected to do a minimum of 5 hours of independent study for each KS5 subject per week.
- It is vital that subject teachers guide students in their independent work and set regular assessed tasks.

Format

- Online retrieval and literacy- based tasks (Bedrock, EEDI, Tassomai)
- Revision strategies (DHS Five) linked to knowledge organisers
- Creative / research projects for creative subjects (e.g. Art, Drama, DT and Computing)
- Completed in homework revision exercise books

The 'Loop Back' Model

All homework feeds into:

- Fortnightly extended retrieval starter, marked in green pen (self / peer marked)
- Evidence in homework/revision books

The DHS Five Revision Strategies

- Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check
- Flashcards
- Revision clocks
- Mind maps
- Sketchnotes

See Appendix 3 for consequences of non-completion of homework.

10. Assessment

On-going assessment allows teaching to be adapted to meet student needs.

Assessment is used to support learning and inform teaching through:

- Ongoing formative assessment that takes place in every lesson
- ‘Check-ins’ that identify gaps in knowledge
- ‘End-point assessments’ measure overall understanding

Structure and expectations:

- ‘Check ins’ happen **at least twice a year** and allow students and teachers to continually review their next steps for success. These are marked in green pen (self assessed) at point of completion.
- ‘End point assessments’ happen **twice a year** where students are given a mark and targets for improvement by their teacher.
- End point assessments are followed by a **DHS Exam Wrapper** where students reflect upon how they prepared for the assessment and record their targets for improvement.
- All ‘Check ins’ and ‘End point assessments’ targets are recorded on a **target sheet** in the front of the student’s assessment folder / book in each subject.

Students are expected to **respond to feedback** and improve their work in **green pen**.

At KS5, four sets of exams are scheduled throughout the two years. Students should regularly complete summative style tasks with feedback between these sessions, followed by self-evaluation documentation. These can be in the style of the DHS Wrapper or an alternative faculty template, to reflect upon progress. This should happen at the very least, once a half term or after each taught module / topic / component.

11. Behaviour for Learning

Consistent behaviour expectations create a calm environment where learning can take place.

Strong behaviour supports strong learning through:

- One voice in the classroom
- Calm routines for entry and exit
- High expectations for effort, participation and presentation

Consistency across classrooms ensures a focused learning environment.

See Behaviour Policy for more information.

12. Equipment and Readiness for Learning

Being prepared for learning reduces disruption, maximises time on task, and supports high expectations for all students.

Students in Key Stages 3 and 4 are expected to arrive at school on time and to be fully equipped to learn.

This includes:

- A school bag
- A pencil case that includes a black pen, green pen, pencil, ruler, scientific calculator
- Homework/revision book
- Planner
- Mobile phone pouch

Equipment will be checked daily. Clear and consistent expectations ensure that lessons begin promptly and learning time is not lost.

Missing equipment

Where students do not have the required equipment:

- This will be recorded in line with school systems
- Equipment will be loaned in line with school procedures
- Repeated issues will be addressed through the behaviour and pastoral systems

See Appendix 4 to see an overview of this procedure.

Staff will:

- Reinforce expectations consistently
- Address issues promptly and calmly
- Ensure that lack of equipment does not prevent participation in learning

13. Quality Assurance

Monitoring ensures consistency and supports continuous improvement.

Leaders monitor teaching and learning through:

- Learning walks
- Book scrutiny
- Student voice
- Data and assessment reviews

The focus is on whether students are learning effectively over time, particularly those who are disadvantaged or have SEND.

Quality Assurance will happen three times a year (once a term). This ensures consistency and continuous improvement across the school.

14. Roles and Responsibilities

Teachers

- Deliver consistent lessons, following whole school routines and expectations
- Use retrieval, modelling and feedback effectively
- Adapt teaching to meet student needs

Middle Leaders

- Monitor consistency within departments
- Support improvements in teaching

Senior Leaders

- Provide strategic oversight
- Ensure the policy is implemented consistently

15. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it continues to reflect best practice and supports strong outcomes for all students.

16. Appendices

Appendix 1: The DHS Lesson

The DHS Lesson

Work hard, be kind

At DHS, every lesson **MUST involve:**



Needs-Based Seating Plan

Every lesson requires a seating plan maintained on Bromcom tailored to student needs.



Entry Routine: Meet, Greet, Seat, Start

Immediately launch an extended retrieval starter to settle students and activate prior knowledge.



Explicit Instruction & Independent Work

Teacher-led expert guidance followed by at least 10 minutes of silent independent work.



Exit Routine: The Final Five

A consistent five-minute wrap-up to solidify learning and ensure an orderly transition.

Fundamental Principles



Chunking Knowledge and Skills

Presenting new information in small, manageable segments to prevent student cognitive overload.



Active Checks for Understanding

Using mini-whiteboards, cold calling (no opt-out), and "say it again, better."



Adaptive Teaching

Adjusting instruction in real-time to provide support and challenge for all starting points.

Evidence-Informed Strategies



Live Modelling and Guided Practice

Demonstrating the "expert" process followed by the "I do, we do, you do" framework.



Silent Work and Frequent Retrieval

Regular periods of quiet concentration and revisiting prior learning to strengthen long-term memory.



Feedback: Reflect and Improve

Providing specific time for students to act on feedback to refine their work.

NotebookLM

The DHS Marking & Feedback Guide

Work hard, be kind

ACTIVE CIRCULATION (Teacher Focus)



Live Marking During Independent Work

- During the 10-minute independent phase, provide immediate feedback using a purple pen or green highlighter.



Strategic Sample Marking

- Focus on one row of books per lesson using marking prompts or whole-class feedback notes.

THE GREEN PEN (Student Response)



Retrieval & Correction

- Students must use green pens to correct errors and fill knowledge gaps during retrieval starters.



Evidence of Refinement

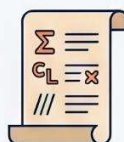
- All student work should show visible improvement and refinement based on specific teacher prompts.



Ownership & Memory

- Student response "closes the loop," ensuring classroom feedback is successfully transferred to long-term memory.

LITERACY MARKING CODES



Standardised School Codes

- Use these universal symbols to identify literacy errors across all subject areas.

Code	Meaning
sp 	Spelling error
CL 	Capital letter error
p ;?	Punctuation error
// 	New paragraph needed
gr 	Grammar issue in sentence

Homework Sanction Flowchart: A Guide to Success

A progressive system of intervention for missed homework to ensure student accountability.

Level C0 (The First Slip)



The first missed homework in a subject per term serves as an initial warning.

Level C1 (Second Offence)



Triggers a Bromcom record, 15-minute lunchtime faculty detention, and teacher-led parent email contact.

Level C2 (Persistent Offence)



Third missed homework triggers mandatory homework club and contact from the Head of Faculty.

Final Stage (Non-compliance)



A parent meeting is held to review patterns and address specific barriers to completion.



The Termly Reset

The homework tally for every student resets at the start of every term.

NB: Teacher letters automatically generated on Bromcom when C1 homework entered.

Appendix 4: Student Equipment Policy Guide (Key stages 3 and 4)



Conclusion

This policy provides a clear and consistent approach to teaching and learning at Diss High School. By focusing on what students know, remember and can do over time, we ensure that teaching leads to meaningful and sustained learning.