

Marking and Feedback Policy



Document History

Version	Comments/Amendments	Name	Date
1	First Issue	Chris Kelly	23/04/2025

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1. Introduction

At Oaktree Education, we recognise that effective feedback is one of the most powerful tools for promoting student progress. For learners with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs, our approach to marking and feedback is rooted in a trauma-informed, relationship-centred framework that promotes psychological safety and academic growth.

Our policy aligns with evidence from the **Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)** which highlights that **feedback can have a high impact on learning outcomes**, especially when it is **specific, actionable and timely**. We also recognise that marking should be **manageable for staff** and **meaningful for learners**.

2. Core Principles

- **Feedback must support emotional regulation and engagement:** All feedback should promote a sense of safety and trust, avoiding public comparisons or language that could trigger shame or disengagement.
- **Feedback is most effective when it is immediate and verbal:** Following EEF guidance, verbal feedback – especially in-the-moment – is prioritised over written comments, particularly for learners with lower literacy levels or negative associations with written criticism.
- **Relationships are the foundation:** Feedback should be delivered in the context of strong, supportive adult-student relationships, reinforcing the trauma-informed principles of predictability, empowerment and connection.
- **Focus on effort, strategies and progress:** Students benefit from feedback that celebrates effort and growth rather than only correctness or end results.

3. Feedback Practices

3.1 Verbal Feedback

- Delivered during or immediately after learning tasks
- Focused on what was done well and what could be improved using clear, encouraging language
- Students are prompted to reflect or act on feedback during lessons with adult support

3.2 Visual or Symbol Feedback

- Use of agreed symbols (e.g. ticks, stars or smiley faces) can reinforce feedback non-verbally. See Appendix 1.1
- Where written comments are used, these are brief, clear and followed up in conversation

3.3 Whole-Class and Group Feedback

- Common misconceptions are addressed in a non-threatening way through group feedback
- Feedback sessions may include modelling, peer discussion or worked examples

3.4 Written Feedback (when used)

- Targeted and concise, written feedback will focus on one or two key areas of improvement
- Marking should be formative, with no requirement for detailed annotations unless they are meaningful for the individual student
- No expectation for students to respond in writing unless this supports their progress or is requested by them
- Use of green pens to visually show the positives and a pink pen to help aid with next steps. Green is great. Pink think.

4. Frequency and Workload

- Staff are **not expected to provide written feedback on all pieces of work**
- Feedback is ongoing and recorded in **daily teaching notes or student profiles**
- Sampling of student work for moderation or progress tracking will occur in line with internal assessment cycles

5. Student Involvement

- Learners are encouraged to participate in feedback conversations and to co-create targets
- Staff may use **“what went well”** and **“even better if”** language to frame discussions

- Success criteria are shared in advance, enabling self-assessment and peer review where appropriate

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

- The impact of feedback will be reviewed through:
 - Student progress over time
 - Engagement with learning tasks
 - Quality of relationships and classroom climate
- Feedback practices are reviewed termly through peer support, learning walks and coaching sessions

7. Training and Support

- All staff will receive training in trauma-informed feedback practices and cognitive science-informed strategies (e.g. retrieval practice, spaced repetition)
- CPD will include input from the **Education Endowment Foundation, Trauma-Informed Schools UK** and internal safeguarding leads

8. Policy Review

- This policy will be reviewed **annually** (or sooner, if required by legislative changes or significant developments in best practice).
- The review process will involve **teaching staff, support staff, senior leaders, and governors**, alongside student representatives (where appropriate).

Approval and Signature

- **Principle of Head of College:**
Chris Kelly, 22/04/2025
- **Chair of Governors/Trust Board:**
Name, Signature, Date

Supporting Research

- **EEF (2021):** “Teacher Feedback to Improve Pupil Learning” – feedback should be specific, clear and focused on improvement
- **EEF (2019):** “Improving Behaviour in Schools” – highlights the importance of consistent, relational approaches in settings with high SEMH needs
- **Rose, J. et al. (2022):** Research into trauma-informed pedagogy stresses emotional safety as key to learning readiness
- **Cognitive Science and Metacognition research:** Encourages reflection and scaffolding of learning through structured feedback