Teaching Assistant
School Policy Agreement

Date Policy due to be reviewed: September 2022

Committee Responsible for Policy: Curriculum and Standards Committee

Statement of purpose

In line with the expectations of the governing body, our students and their families, we recognise the teachers at Hillcrest School are responsible for the meeting the learning needs and the progress of all the students in their class(es). Our 'teaching assistants' (TAs) have a different, but distinct, complementary role and contribution to make in relation to helping our students become confident, competent, independent and successful learners.

It is the responsibility of the senior leadership team (SLT) to ensure that TAs support the work of our teachers and the school more broadly, and maintain the appropriate demarcation between the role and responsibilities of teachers and the role and contribution of TAs.

This policy specifies our vision for the role, purpose and contribution of TAs at Hillcrest School. It sets out expectations in relation to TAs' work and conduct, and also the expectations TAs can have of teachers and the SLT in terms of how they will support TAs to ensure they are equipped to make a meaningful contribution to teaching and learning.

This policy has been developed following extensive strategic work undertaken by our school on maximising the impact of our TA staff. This policy has been informed by, and carefully designed to reflect, the latest research evidence on the most effective use and impact of TAs.

Expectations

TAs can expect the senior leadership team to:

- Ensure each TA is deployed in a role that reflects their skills and aptitudes.
- Define, clearly and properly, the tasks and duties each TA can expect to be asked to perform in their role, and specify their contribution to teaching and learning at Hillcrest School.
- Provide timely and appropriate training and preparation to ensure TAs are confident and ready to undertake the tasks they are given.
- Avoid deploying TAs in roles for which they are not specifically trained or that are more appropriately undertaken by a qualified teacher. (Some very exceptional circumstances may apply).
- Recognise and celebrate TAs' contribution to teaching and learning, and treat them as professionals in their own right.
- Provide induction and professional development opportunities, supervision and performance reviews commensurate with maintaining their professional identity.
- Ensure teaching staff are aware of their role and responsibility for ensuring TAs are deployed appropriately and are properly prepared for the tasks they give them.
- Train and support teachers to ensure they have the skills and knowledge to deploy TAs appropriately and consistently.

TAs can expect teachers to:

- Be aware of the school's expectations of how to deploy and prepare TAs, and ensure their contribution to teaching and learning is consistent with our whole school aims.
- Know the respective roles and skills of the TAs they work with most frequently and deploy them appropriately as outlined explicitly in lesson plans and schemes of work
- Communicate adequate information and instructions about lessons ahead of time, and clearly specify TAs' role in, and contribution, to each lesson.
- Provide opportunities for TAs to feed back after lessons and provide clear guidance on what information should be fed back.
- Respond in a positive and timely fashion to requests from TAs for information about lessons, students, curriculum content, instructional techniques, or any other information essential to ensuring their effective deployment in lessons and contribution to learning.
- Discharge responsibilities to TAs that, as the lead professional in the classroom, belong to them.

- Recognise and reinforce TAs' professional identity and their status within the school.
- Contribute to induction and training, supervision and performance reviews for TAs.
- Request training and guidance in order to ensure they have the skills and knowledge to meet their professional duties and responsibilities as a teacher, in relation to deploying TAs appropriately.

The senior leadership team and teachers expect TAs to:

- Act in a manner that upholds the professional identity of TAs at Hillcrest School.
- Demonstrate adequate literacy and numeracy skills
- Have good timekeeping and attendance
- Establish good relationships with students, acting as a role model and being aware of and responding appropriately to individual needs
- Participate in the school's induction programme and performance review process.
- Make the most of training and professional development opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills and keep up to date with national and school-based initiatives
- Adhere to the agreed Teaching Assistant standards (see appendix)
- Implementing and following whole school policies, e.g. safeguarding, health and safety, GIR
- Prompt teachers for pre-lesson information and to ask for clarification where required.
- Perform and interact with students in ways that are consistent with what the school expects from TAs in terms of their contribution to teaching and learning.
- Contribute to lesson planning and feedback at teachers' request.
- Support the students in achieving the objectives of the lesson as outlined by the classroom teacher
- Make resources for students as appropriate under the guidance of the classroom teacher
- Record student achievements under teacher's direction
- Plan and deliver interventions to students
- Develop 1:1 mentoring arrangements with students
- Assist with the development and implementation of Individual Education/Behaviour Profiles and Personal Care programmes and attend meetings with parents and external agencies as necessary
- Provide objective and accurate feedback and reports as required on student achievement, progress and other matters, ensuring the availability of appropriate evidence

Key principles for the effective use of TAs in lessons

- TAs should **not** be used as an informal teaching resource for low-attaining pupils
- TAs should **add value** to what teachers do, **not replace them**
- TAs should be **fully prepared** for their role in the classroom prior to the lesson through effective communication with classroom teachers
- TAs should have the opportunity to **feedback** regularly to classroom teachers on the progress made by targeted students and the appropriateness of teaching and learning strategies employed.
- The roles and duties TAs are *not* **expected** to fall within the remit of teachers' responsibilities

Main forms of TA deployment

We will employ different levels of teaching assistant. Teaching assistants will work under the direct instruction of the teaching staff both in the classroom and outside of it. This may involve planning, preparing and delivering learning activities for individuals and groups. Higher-Level teaching assistants (HLTAs) will complement the work of teachers by taking responsibility for specific learning activities and/or areas of the curriculum. On a short-term basis only, an HLTA may be asked to take responsibility for a whole class in a classroom.

Deployment in the classroom
- The learning needs of all students should be met, first and foremost, through high quality teaching by the teacher.
- TAs work with a range of students within and outside of the class and should supplement and extend teachers' work, rather than replace them.
- Support for specific individuals or groups should be structured so it helps them access general classroom teaching.
- Teachers and TAs should work effectively as a team, with a shared understanding of their respective roles in achieving lesson objectives.
- Teachers' moment-by-moment decisions regarding TA deployment should be driven by pupils' needs.

TA interactions with pupils
- TAs should provide the right amount of support at the right time, and consistently give the least amount of help first.
- TAs should ensure students retain ownership over their learning and responsibility for their work.
- TAs should actively look for opportunities to allow pupils to attempt parts of tasks independently and to experience a healthy mix of success and challenge.
- TAs should be confident in their role and have good subject knowledge.
- Good questioning skills inform their interactions. TAs should allow sufficient 'wait time' for pupils to think and respond (e.g. 4-5 seconds).

TAs delivering targeted and structured interventions
- TAs should plan and deliver evidence-based and structured interventions, chosen to deliberately complement and extend class-based teaching and learning.
- Intervention sessions should be brief, regular and sustained, with clear objectives and expectations.
- Sessions should be well-paced, well-resourced and carefully timetabled to minimise time spent away from general class teaching.
- Sessions should have clear learning outcomes and measurable success criteria to allow TAs to assess the extent of student progress in the session and by the end of specific modules.
- TAs should be supported and guided by appropriate staff to deliver interventions and review impact.
- There should be regular opportunities for CLMs and TAs to plan and review learning taking place in interventions, with regular assessments in place to guide this process.
- Teachers and TAs should work collaboratively to help pupils make connections between the learning in interventions and the wider curriculum.

Key roles of the TAs in lessons

Recognising the significant contribution that support staff can make in raising standards and increasing efficiency, we allocate the following principal functions to our teaching assistants:

- Encourage students to interact with others and engage in activities led by the teacher.
- Encourage students to act independently as appropriate..
- Set challenging and demanding expectations that promote self-esteem and independence.
- Provide feedback to students in relation to progress and achievement under guidance of the teacher.
- Support students consistently whilst recognising and responding to their individual needs.
- Promote independence and employ strategies to recognise and reward achievement of self-reliance.
- Assess the needs of students and use detailed knowledge and specialist skills to support learning.

- Assist in ensuring that the length of time spent on tasks and activities is consistent with the individual students' needs.
- Be aware of student problems/progress/achievements and report to the teacher as agreed.
- Provide detailed and regular feedback to teachers on student's achievement, progress, problems etc.
- Monitor and evaluate student's responses to learning activities through observation and recording of achievement against pre-determined learning objectives.
- Help students follow the school rules and also work towards specific goals and expectations as prescribed by the class teacher including individual, group or class targets.

What should TAs not be used for in lessons?

- TAs should not be used by teachers to control the behaviour of individual students in the room
- TAs should not be sent to complete administrative tasks (ie- photocopying) during lessons
- TAs should not be asked to prepare whole class resources that detract from their role of supporting students in the lesson (ie-cutting up resources)

TA training and professional development opportunities

Hillcrest School recognises the value of professional development for teaching assistants. Children learn most effectively when we invest properly in the professional development of all our staff, and we recognise that our teaching assistants will bring to the job a variety of skills and areas of expertise. Teaching assistants are entitled to professional development, and will receive specific training, as well as the general training provided by the school. Access to this training will be considered in relation to priorities in the School Improvement Plan (SIP). TAs are required to complete the appropriate request of training pro-forma and pass to Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) with a clear summary of the nature and expected outcomes of the training. After undertaking the training TAs are expected to evaluate the impact on their day to day practice.

Line management and performance review

The line manager for teaching assistants in our school is the SENCO / Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral). Regular meetings for TAs will be convened by the SENCO / Deputy Headteacher. TAs will be involved with all members of the Senior Leadership Team in the development of their role and their deployment.

The annual performance management of teaching assistants will be carried out by the SENCO / Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral). As part of this process performance management targets will be formally negotiated and reviewed annually. An interim performance management review meeting will take place during the year to review the progress made against the negotiated targets and ascertain the nature of additional support the TS may require to allow them to successfully meet the agreed targets. Access to appropriate CPD is an important part of this process.

As part of the performance management cycle TAs are expected to collect evidence to show their performance against nationally recognised standards for the performance of TAs in schools. Progress
made against these standards will be used as a basis to negotiate targets in annual performance management meetings.

Monitoring of policy

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the SENCO / Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) in conjunction with TAs, teaching staff, students and parents.

National standards - Knowledge and Understanding: Teaching assistants are expected to:	
Acquire the appropriate skills, qualifications, and/or experience required for the teaching assistant role.	
Demonstrate expertise and skills in understanding the needs of all pupils (including specialist expertise as appropriate) and know how to adapt and deliver support to meet individual needs.	
Share responsibility for ensuring that their own knowledge and understanding is relevant and up to date by reflecting on their own practice, liaising with school leaders and accessing relevant professional development to improve personal effectiveness.	
Demonstrate a level of subject and curriculum knowledge relevant to their role and apply this effectively in supporting teachers and pupils.	
Understand their roles and responsibilities within the classroom and whole school context recognising that these may extend beyond a direct support role.	

National Standards - Teaching and learning: Teaching Assistants are expected to:	
Demonstrate an informed and efficient approach to teaching and learning by adopting relevant strategies to support the work of the teacher and increase achievement of pupils	
Communicate effectively and sensitively with pupils to adapt to their needs and support their learning.	
Contribute to effective assessment and planning by supporting the monitoring, recording and reporting of pupil progress as appropriate to the level of the role.	
Promote, support and facilitate inclusion by encouraging participation of all pupils in learning activities.	
Maintain a stimulating and safe learning environment by organising and managing physical teaching space and resources.	
Prepare for learning and deployment in lessons by reading and discussing planning ahead of time.	
Use effective behaviour management strategies consistently in line with the school's policy and procedures.	

National standards - Personal and professional conduct: Teaching assistants should uphold public trust in the education profession by:	
Having proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they work as professional members of staff.	
Demonstrating positive attitudes, values and behaviours to develop and sustain effective relationships with the school community.	
Having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being by following relevant statutory guidance along with school policies and practice.	
Upholding values consistent with those required from teachers by respecting individual differences and cultural diversity.	
Committing to improve their own practice through self-evaluation and awareness.	