

London Steiner School

Pedagogical Meeting Policy

This policy outlines the purpose of The Pedagogical Meeting, a unique feature in Steiner/Waldorf pedagogy (sometimes known as the faculty meeting) and its vital role both within the context of planning and assessment and also, teacher development and appraisal.

1. Context

Good practice occurs when self-reflective teachers assess their own teaching in terms of its effect on student learning and development and then share their evaluation with colleagues on a regular basis. In this way individual insights are tested collegially and flow back into the classroom. Good assessment can lead to transformation in both teaching and learning. When teachers use assessment intelligently to support learning and share it with their colleagues, one can speak of the school as a learning organization. If this is done effectively and transparently, the school can be considered accountable. Martyn Rawson (1)

The pedagogical meeting is the heart of the school. It is a forum in which pedagogical research and practice is shared. It is a place of continual professional development and continual personal development both of which are an important aspect of teacher development. It is a place for updates, reviews and information sharing. The outcomes of study, research, updates and reviews weave into all planning, assessment and curriculum decisions.

The work of the pedagogical meeting is monitored by The Curriculum Coordinator. Records are kept in the minutes of meetings or, if confidential, in the appropriate secure file.

2. Legislation

This policy, along with The LSS Marking and Feedback Policy and The LSS Assessment Policy aims to fulfil the below requirement in [The Independent School Standards](#)

3. (g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress

3. Components of The Pedagogical Meeting

A. Teacher Development

The central business of a Waldorf school faculty meeting is the self-development and continued training of the entire body of teachers. Martyn Rawson(1)

Teacher development runs as a thread throughout every aspect of the meeting. It is founded on three pedagogical principals given by Rudolf Steiner: (2) (3)

Enliven Imagination:

This principal behoves teachers to become thoroughly absorbed and interested by the subjects they teach. *We must develop in ourselves capacities that allow us to become as absorbed by the subject we teach as the child is by the lesson. Rudolf Steiner(4)*

Stand for Truth

This principal calls for the courage of our convictions. It calls upon teachers to deepen their understanding of the nature of the developing child through study and shared practice.

Feel Responsibility

This principal has a twofold aspect.

- i. The teacher is accountable to students for what is taught and how.
- ii. The teacher must acquire critical self-observation and be committed to self-development in order to offer pupils moral guidance through example(1). In Steiner's words, *we will not be good teachers if we focus only on what we do and not upon what we are* (5).

The above practices are woven into all following aspects of the pedagogical meeting.

B. Child Study

While Steiner/Waldorf pedagogy refrains from measuring learning achievement solely in terms of academic success or failure it nevertheless monitors children closely.

Weekly Overview

On a weekly basis, teachers will consider each class in the school in turn, and identify children thriving or struggling. This considered practice brings to the attention of colleagues, concerns, enabling early intervention where necessary. It also highlights improvements and achievements.

Child Study Proper

Every child, at some stage, will need further support whether it be physical, emotional, creative or academic and these needs change over time. If a child is particularly struggling with their learning this can often be due to physical, social or emotional factors. An in-depth **child study** in a pedagogical meeting can help identify strategies to support the child's learning and development.

Child Study is an art that ultimately informs every aspect of Steiner/Waldorf teaching. It begins with close observation of all aspects of the child; their physical features, their natural talents, their struggles, their relationship to their class, to their teachers, to their families, known accidents and medical diagnoses. A complete a picture as possible is made of how the child relates to its environment, of what it can do well and where it might need support. Christof Wiechert (6)

Following a shared in-depth observation of a child (diagnostic assessment) the next step, the following week, is to discuss strategies to help the child. These will take different forms depending on the result of the assessment:

- Academic work frequently suffers if a child is struggling physically/ socially or emotionally. If this is the case the strategy will focus on the underlying issue and may include referral to the school doctor.
- Academic difficulties may need further diagnostic tests and will be referred to the SENCO.
- Sometimes a mixed picture is presented, in which case multiple strategies are implemented.
- Occasionally the Child Protection Officer or out-side agencies need to be informed.

The child will be monitored for progress in both the underlying issue (if this is the assessment result) and the academic work. A review will be carried out after a further half term (4-6 weeks) to assess the strategies and see if further action is required. (Occasionally a child will need constant reviews and action)

In summary, a child study follows the following steps:

- Shared observation
- Identification of strategies to help the child, including referrals where necessary
- Consultation with parents to share outcomes
- Monitoring and 4-6-week review
- Possible further action as required

Child studies are interwoven with teacher development and teachers will also ask themselves: How does the assessment change my practice?

A further consideration in child study is:

What happens to the child if I observe them and then document their behaviour? Does my observation affect the child? (Steiner and contemporary social researchers, though for different reasons, insist that it does.) Martyn Rawson (1)

Child study notes are filed securely in the child's file.

C. Reports from Other Organisations

Teachers will share relevant doctor's reports, dyslexia reports, etc. with colleagues.

D. New Pupils

The body of teachers will review and discuss interviews carried out with prospective new children. (Please see Assessment Policy)

E. Class Studies/Book-Looks

The weekly overview and child study are complemented by half termly class studies and book-looks. The book-looks enable senior colleagues to monitor the work of pupils in all classes. The book-looks are aimed at:

- monitoring pupil's progress and development
- reviewing and sharing teacher practice

As mentioned above, Steiner /Waldorf pedagogy does not measure pupils purely on academic success or failure.

- The class teacher will reflect and write notes on the class before the meeting.
- Teachers will briefly review the impact of the previous meeting
- The class teacher will give a picture of the class to the meeting - mentioning each child and how they are progressing physically, emotionally and academically.
- Colleagues will look at the books of the pupils in the class together with the Intent and Impact assessment forms.

Monitoring of Pupil Progress and Development

Colleagues will look at the work of the class with the following questions in mind:

- Are all the children (including those with SEND) making progress? (**Ipsative assessment**) If not, what can be done?
- Are there areas of concern? (**Diagnostic assessment**) Are there any immediate interventions that could resolve the issues? Is a child study needed?
- Is there evidence the children are appropriately challenged and engaged and is the work of a standard expected of that age group? (**Summative assessment**) Pilot assessment sheets are looked at together with schemes of work (curriculum policy part 3)

Reviewing and Sharing Teacher Practice

The book-looks are also an opportunity to share and review what is working well and what did not work so well and why. It is an opportunity for self-reflection, for questions to be asked and insights to be shared.

F. Teacher research, Curriculum review and development, and Planning

Educational practice is based on; inquiry by the practitioners; open discourse among practitioners and between institutions; and collegial accountability in any given school.
Martin Rawson (10)

Continual professional development is an important aspect of teaching. As well as outside training courses, the weekly pedagogical meeting and extended pedagogical meetings on INSET days provide a forum for discussing shared experience and the curriculum particularly when new developments need to be taken into account.

Teachers might spend time discussing, for example:

- A subject curriculum throughout the school e.g. maths, handwork etc
- The most appropriate way to address the RSE curriculum taking into account different classes.
- An update and discussion related to online safety

Following research and discussion, curriculum framework documents are amended accordingly.

- Teachers will also study, discuss and plan festivals and whole school events in the pedagogical meeting.

G. Updates and Information-sharing

- September - teachers will inform colleagues of the main lesson blocks they intend to teach in the upcoming academic year
- Teachers will keep colleagues informed about which main lesson block they are teaching
- Teachers share and review all planning and assessment documents termly.
- Teachers will inform colleagues of trips planned.
- Teachers will inform colleagues of relevant personal circumstances where they may require cover e.g. a family bereavement.
- Teachers will review and update policies
- Teachers will receive necessary Child Protection updates
- Teachers will receive regular Health and Safety updates
- Teachers will receive Government Policy updates

H. Review of school events

The pedagogical meeting will review all events that have taken place within the school over the previous week and are:

- to share practice and
- to feed into future planning of events.

Among the reviews are:

- Festival reviews - Right time? Right info to parents? Review risk assessment.
- Reviews of parent evenings and individual meetings – any difficulties?
- Review of trips - how did the children engage?
- Review of visiting teachers - what have we learned?
- Review of assemblies - How did the children respond? Are any follow ups needed?

References

1. Rawson M. (2015) - Assessment A Waldorf Perspective
http://learningcommunitypartners.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Rawson_Assessment_Research_Journal.pdf
2. https://www.goetheanum-paedagogik.ch/fileadmin/paedagogik/Artikel/Seiten_aus_Paed_RB65_AC_EN.pdf
3. Steiner R. - The Foundations of Human Experience, Lecture 14
4. Steiner R. - Practical Advice to Teachers, Lecture 8
5. Steiner R. - The Foundations of Human Experience, Lecture 1
6. Wiechert C. (2014) Solving The Riddle of The Child, The Art of Child Study
7. Rilke R. M. (Taken From 'Solving The Riddle of The Child -The Art of The Child Study' Christof Wiechert p21)

Further Reading

Finsen T. <https://leadtogether.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Art-of-Administration-Ch-1-Faculty-Meeting-D-Mitchell.pdf>

Related Policies

LSS Curriculum Policies (Parts 1,2,3)

LSS Pupil Assessment Policy

LSS Marking and Feedback Policy

LSS Inclusion and Equality Policy

LSS SEND Policy

LSS Staff Appraisal policy

| | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Reviewed by/date | Helen Kinsey July 2021 |
| Approved by/date | College of Teachers 08/21 |

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Approved by/date | Trustees 08/21 |
| Next review | July 2022 |