LEARNING AND TEACHING POLICY

Reviewed:	July 2026
Next Review Due:	June 2027
Applies To:	All Teaching Staff
Owner:	Deputy Head of School
Approved By:	Board of Directors

Mission, Vision and Values

Mission
To inspire our children to reach their full potential by fostering curiosity and an interest in learning, awakening their minds and illuminating their world.

Vision
To create an affordable international secondary school with a high standard of education where children learn through practical and project-based work. To develop our students' moral and intellectual capacity, and to encourage creativity and adaptability.

Aim
An education that is broad, balanced and challenging, with an emphasis on developing strong connections to our host country, Uganda.

Values
Desire for lifelong learning; an ability to adapt; be innovative and reflective thinkers; open minded, and empathetic while achieving high academic success according to individual potential.

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1. Purpose of the Policy

At 7Hills International School (7Hills), we believe that high-quality learning is the result of intentional, reflective and inclusive teaching.

This policy aims to:

- Ensure that all students experience high-quality, consistent and inclusive learning across the school.
- Establish a shared language and understanding of what effective learning and teaching looks like at 7Hills.
- Support teachers in designing learning that develops knowledge, skills, understanding and global competencies.
- Align classroom practice with:
    - The 7Hills Learning Compass
    - CIS International Accreditation Standards
    - Cambridge Teacher Standards

2. Rationale & Research

Research consistently shows that teacher quality is the single ,most significant in-school factor affecting student outcomes (EEF, William).

Effective learning at 7Hills is underpinned by:

- Clear curriculum sequencing and coherence
- Explicit teaching combined with opportunities for independence
- Metacognitive strategies that support transfer and long-term retention
- Inclusive practices that remove barriers to learning
- High expectations for all learners

Learning is understood as a long-term change in understanding and capability, not simply task completion within a lesson.

Research in adolescent development highlights that the teenage brain is characterised by significant neurological, emotional and social change. During adolescence, learners are developing greater capacity for abstract thinking, metacognition and moral reasoning, while also experiencing heightened emotional sensitivity and a strong need for belonging, purpose and identity formation.

At 7Hills, our learning and teaching approaches are intentionally designed to respond to these developmental needs. The International Middle Years Curriculum (IMYC) provides a developmentally appropriate framework that supports conceptual understanding, international-mindedness, personal goal-setting and reflective learning, all of which align closely with how adolescents learn best.

Teaching at 7Hills therefore prioritises meaningful relationships, challenge with support, learner agency, reflection and real-world relevance, enabling students to engage deeply with learning while developing the personal, social and cognitive skills required for success in school and beyond.

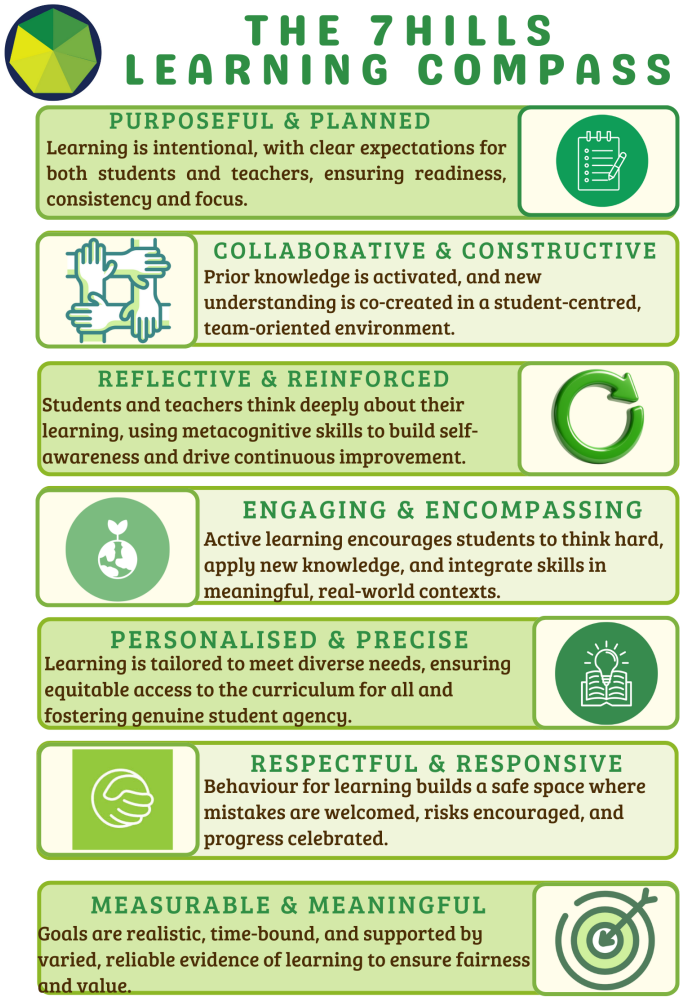
Research also highlights the importance of inclusive, neuro-affirming approaches that recognise variability in how learners attend, process and demonstrate understanding.

This approach is reflected in the 7Hills Learning Compass, which places equal value on academic learning, personal development, wellbeing and global citizenship.

3. Our Learning Philosophy at 7Hills

Learning at 7Hills is guided by our **Learning Compass**, which promotes learners who are:

- Curious and reflective
- Resilient and independent
- Ethical, inclusive and internationally minded
- Able to apply learning meaningfully beyond the classroom



Teaching at 7Hills is therefore:

- **Purposeful** – driven by clear learning intentions
- **Inclusive** – responsive to diverse learners
- **Challenging** – ambitious for every student
- **Reflective** – informed by evidence and feedback

Students learn best when the following conditions for learning are ensured:

- Safety, belonging, wellbeing
- Clarity of learning intentions and success criteria
- Relevance and real-world connection
- Scaffolded challenge and independence
- Mistakes as part of learning

4. High Expectations for Learning & Teaching

4.1 Learning environment and classroom culture

Teachers create learning environments that are:

- Calm, purposeful and respectful
- Built on positive relationships, trust and emotional safety
- Inclusive of all learners, cultures and identities

Teachers:

- Model respectful communication and professional conduct
- Promote a growth mindset, recognising that intelligence and ability are developed through effort and effective teaching
- Ensure students feel safe to take risks, make mistakes and learn from them

These expectations align with CIS Standards on wellbeing, safeguarding and student support.

Classroom environments at 7Hills are inclusive and neuro-affirming, with predictable routines, clear expectations and respectful responses to individual differences.

At 7Hills, positive behaviour is understood as a foundation for effective learning. A consistent, developmentally appropriate approach to behaviour management is used across the school through the Stoplight approach, which supports students in understanding expectations, regulating behaviour and reflecting on choices.

The Stoplight approach is underpinned by restorative practices and strong relationships, enabling teachers to respond to behaviour in a calm, fair and predictable manner. Full details of expectations, procedures and responses are outlined in the 7Hills Behaviour Policy.

4.1.1 Displays and learning resources

Displays across the school are purposeful and support learning rather than distract from it. They are used to:

- Reinforce key concepts, vocabulary and skills
- Celebrate student learning, progress and achievement
- Reflect the diversity, international-mindedness and values of the 7Hills community

Resources are accessible, age-appropriate and inclusive, enabling students to work independently and collaboratively.

4.1.2 Use of shared and outdoor spaces

Learning at 7Hills extends beyond the classroom. Shared and outdoor spaces are used intentionally to:

- Enhance inquiry, exploration and experiential learning
- Support collaboration and social interaction
- Promote wellbeing, movement and engagement with the environment
- Enrich learning through practical, creative and interdisciplinary opportunities

These spaces are managed to ensure safety, inclusion and purposeful use.

4.2 Quality first teaching

All students at 7Hills are entitled to Quality First Teaching, which includes:

- Clear explanations and explicit instruction

- Well-sequenced learning that builds on prior knowledge
- Effective use of modelling and worked examples
- Purposeful practice with increasing independence
- Planned opportunities for retrieval and reflection

Teachers demonstrate strong subject and pedagogical knowledge, aligned with the Cambridge Teacher Standards, and can articulate:

- What students are learning and why
- How learning connects across units and disciplines
- Common misconceptions and how these are addressed

4.3 Knowing our learners

Teachers are expected to know their students well and plan accordingly.

This includes:

- Understanding students' academic, linguistic, social and emotional needs
- Using learner profiles, support plans and assessment data effectively
- Adapting teaching to support:
    - Students with SEND
    - Multilingual learners
    - Students requiring extension or additional challenge

At 7Hills, we recognise neurodiversity as a natural and valued part of our learning community. Students think, process information, communicate and regulate in different ways, and inclusive teaching seeks to remove barriers to learning while valuing individual strengths.

Teachers plan learning experiences that are flexible, accessible and responsive, using a range of strategies to support attention, processing, organisation and emotional regulation. Inclusive practices benefit all learners and ensure that students with additional needs are supported to engage, achieve and thrive.

Inclusive strategies include:

- Scaffolding and gradual release of responsibility
- Explicit instruction and modelling
- Flexible grouping
- Metacognitive strategies
- Purposeful use of technology

4.4 Inclusive and adaptive teaching

At 7Hills, we believe that high-quality teaching is inclusive by design. All students are entitled to ambitious, meaningful learning experiences, regardless of starting point, background, language profile, or learning need.

Teachers plan and deliver learning using adaptive teaching approaches that respond to students' strengths and barriers while maintaining high expectations for all. This includes making reasonable adjustments for students with additional learning needs, English as an Additional Language, or other identified needs, informed by specialist guidance and student profiles.

Inclusive practice at 7Hills is characterised by thoughtful scaffolding, flexible grouping, modelling, effective questioning, and accessible learning materials, ensuring all students can engage, make progress, and experience success.

5. Effective Learning Practices at 7Hills

5.1 Engagement and thinking

Teachers actively engage all learners by:

- Using inclusive questioning strategies
- Allowing sufficient wait time for thinking
- Encouraging students to explain, justify and connect ideas
- Promoting learner voice and agency

Students are expected to be active participants in their learning, not passive recipients.

5.2 Retrieval practice, connection and understanding

Learning is strengthened when new knowledge connects to existing understanding. Teachers:

- Plan regular opportunities for retrieval practice
- Use examples and non-examples to deepen understanding
- Check understanding frequently and adapt teaching accordingly

Assessment is used formatively, to inform next steps rather than simply measure performance.

5.3 Challenge and support

At 7Hills, teachers teach at the top.

- All learners are challenged intellectually
- Scaffolding is used to support access, not limit ambition
- Support is gradually removed to promote independence

Tasks are designed to promote deep thinking, problem-solving and application, not surface-level completion.

5.4 Feedback and assessment for leaning

Effective feedback at 7Hills:

- Is timely, specific and actionable
- Helps students understand:
    - Where they are

- Where they need to go
- How to get there

Students are given structured opportunities to:

- Respond to feedback
- Reflect on their learning
- Take ownership of improvement

Assessment for learning is integral to effective teaching at 7Hills. Teachers use formative assessment strategies to check understanding, identify misconceptions, and adapt teaching responsively within and across lessons.

Effective assessment practice at 7Hills includes:

- Clearly shared learning intentions and success criteria
- Ongoing questioning, dialogue, and checks for understanding
- Timely, purposeful feedback that helps students understand how to improve
- Planned opportunities for students to reflect on feedback and act upon it

Assessment data is used collaboratively by teachers to:

- Identify trends and misconceptions
- Inform planning and intervention
- Evaluate curriculum effectiveness

Full details of expectations for assessment, marking, feedback, and data tracking and analysis are outlined in the 7Hills Assessment and Feedback Policy.

5.5 Metacognition and learner Independence

Teachers explicitly develop students' ability to:

- Plan their learning
- Monitor progress
- Evaluate outcomes

Teaching at 7Hills intentionally develops students' ability to understand how they learn. Teachers explicitly model thinking processes and support students in planning, monitoring, and evaluating their learning.

This includes:

- Modelling strategies and worked examples
- Encouraging students to articulate their reasoning
- Supporting goal-setting and self-assessment
- Teaching effective study and revision strategies appropriate to age and phase

Through this approach, students develop independence, resilience, and confidence as learners. As learners develop expertise, teachers gradually shift from directive instruction to guided and independent learning, fostering confidence and autonomy in line with the 7Hills Learning Compass.

6. Homework

At 7Hills, homework is designed to support learning, reinforce key concepts, and develop learner independence, rather than to extend the school day. Homework tasks are purposeful, manageable, and aligned with curriculum objectives.

Homework aims to:

- Consolidate learning from class
- Develop independent study skills and responsibility
- Encourage reflection, practice, and curiosity
- Support the development of organisational and time-management skills
- Foster positive learning habits appropriate to students' age and stage

6.1 Principles

Homework at 7Hills is guided by the following principles:

- Quality over quantity: Tasks are meaningful and clearly connected to learning intentions.
- Age-appropriate: Expectations increase progressively across year groups.
- Inclusive and accessible: Homework considers diverse learning needs and avoids creating unnecessary barriers.
- Balanced: Homework respects students' wellbeing, family time, and co-curricular commitments.
- Consistent: Expectations are shared clearly with students and parents.

6.2 Homework Practice

Homework may include:

- Reading
- Retrieval or practice tasks
- Reflection or metacognitive activities
- Preparation for upcoming learning
- Project or inquiry-based work

Homework is:

- Clearly explained and modelled where appropriate
- Set with reasonable deadlines
- Reviewed or acknowledged to provide feedback or closure

6.3 Roles and Responsibilities

Teachers:

- Plan homework as part of the learning sequence
- Ensure tasks are purposeful, differentiated where necessary, and manageable
- Communicate expectations clearly
- Monitor completion and provide feedback that supports learning

Students:

- Take responsibility for completing homework to the best of their ability
- Seek clarification when unsure
- Develop routines and independent study habits

Parents:

- Support the development of positive homework routines
- Encourage independence rather than completing tasks for students
- Communicate with teachers if concerns arise

6.4 Monitoring and Review

Homework expectations and practices are:

- Monitored by phase leaders and Heads of Department
- Reviewed regularly to ensure consistency, impact, and alignment with the school's vision for learning and wellbeing
- Adjusted in response to student feedback and learning needs

More information available in the Home Learning Guidelines and Procedure: (LINK)

7. Literacy, Oracy & Communication

All teachers are responsible for developing:

- Academic literacy within their subject
- Confident, structured spoken language
- Subject-specific vocabulary

Teachers:

- Model high-quality language
- Encourage students to "speak like experts"
- Support reading comprehension through explicit strategies

8. Use of Technology to Enhance Learning

Technology at 7Hills is used purposefully to:

- Enhance learning and accessibility
- Support collaboration and creativity
- Develop digital literacy and responsibility

Teachers ensure that technology use:

- Supports learning intentions
- Is inclusive and age-appropriate
- Reflects responsible digital citizenship

9. Professional Learning & Reflection

Teachers at 7Hills are reflective practitioners who:

- Engage in ongoing professional learning
- Collaborate with colleagues to improve practice
- Reflect on feedback from lesson observations and learning reviews

Professional learning is aligned with:

- School improvement priorities
- CIS accreditation expectations
- Cambridge Teacher Standards

10. The Documented Curriculum

At 7Hills, our curriculum is designed to be coherent, progressive and internationally benchmarked, enabling students to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding required to thrive in a rapidly changing global context. Learning is structured to ensure continuity from Year 7 through to Sixth Form, with clear progression and high expectations at every stage.

10.1 IMYC

In Key Stage 3 7Hills delivers the International Middle Years Curriculum (IMYC), which provides a concept-driven and inquiry-based framework for learning. IMYC supports a holistic approach by integrating academic learning with personal and international learning goals.

Through IMYC, students:

- Develop deep conceptual understanding across subject areas
- Engage in meaningful, connected learning experiences
- Build personal attributes such as resilience, collaboration and reflection
- Develop international mindedness and an awareness of global perspectives

IMYC ensures that learning is relevant, purposeful and engaging, laying strong foundations for future academic success.

10.2 IGCSE

In Key Stage 4 students follow internationally recognised IGCSE programmes that provide rigorous subject-based study and prepare learners for further academic progression.

IGCSE courses at 7Hills:

- Develop strong subject knowledge and disciplinary understanding
- Emphasise analytical thinking, application of knowledge and problem-solving
- Provide a balance of breadth and depth across the curriculum
- Prepare students effectively for external assessment and future pathways

Teaching and learning at this stage focus on building independence, academic confidence and examination literacy, while continuing to support students' personal development.

10.3 A Levels

In the Sixth Form, 7Hills offers A Level programmes that provide in-depth academic study and prepare students for university and beyond. A Levels at 7Hills:

- Promote intellectual curiosity and critical thinking
- Develop advanced subject knowledge and analytical skills
- Encourage independent learning and academic responsibility
- Prepare students for the demands of higher education and professional pathways

A Level teaching emphasises scholarly thinking, academic rigour and personal responsibility, enabling students to articulate ideas confidently and engage thoughtfully with complex concepts.

10.4 Planning and implementation of learning

At 7Hills, learning is intentionally planned to ensure coherence, progression and high levels of challenge for all students. Planning reflects our belief that every student can achieve excellence when learning is purposeful, inclusive and well-sequenced.

All learning experiences are planned to:

- Build progressively on students' prior knowledge, skills and understanding
- Ensure clarity of learning intentions and success criteria
- Promote deep thinking, reflection and transfer of learning
- Balance knowledge acquisition with skill development
- Foster independence, curiosity and learner agency
- Reflect the diverse backgrounds, strengths and needs of our students

Planning across all phases aligns with the school's agreed curriculum frameworks and pedagogical expectations.

10.5 Curriculum alignment and progression

Learning and teaching at 7Hills is underpinned by a coherent curriculum pathway from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 5.

Key Stage 3 planning reflects the principles of the International Middle Years Curriculum, ensuring learning is:

- Concept-driven and inquiry-based
- Focused on personal, international and academic learning goals
- Designed to develop knowledge, skills and understanding in a connected and meaningful way

Planning for IGCSE programmes ensures:

- Secure development of subject knowledge and disciplinary thinking
- Logical sequencing of content to support long-term retention
- Regular opportunities for application, analysis and evaluation

Planning for A Levels promotes:

- Depth of subject understanding
- Academic independence and critical thinking
- Preparation for external examinations and post-school pathways

Across all phases, planning ensures continuity and progression, enabling students to move confidently between stages of their education.

10.6 Schemes of work and curriculum documentation

Curriculum planning at 7Hills is organised across long-, medium- and short-term planning, ensuring a clear line of sight from whole-school intent to classroom practice.

10.6.1 Long-term planning

Curriculum maps outline:

- Curriculum coverage across the academic year or programme of study
- Progression of key concepts, knowledge and skills
- Alignment with IMYC learning goals, IGCSE specifications and A Level syllabi, as appropriate
- Opportunities for interdisciplinary learning and enrichment

Long-term plans ensure balance, breadth and appropriate depth within each phase.

10.6.2 Medium-term planning

Schemes of work are developed collaboratively within phases or departments and outline:

- Unit objectives and key learning outcomes
- Sequencing of lessons and learning experiences
- Core knowledge, skills and concepts to be developed
- Planned opportunities for assessment for learning
- Links to literacy, numeracy and oracy development
- Opportunities for challenge, support and inclusion

Schemes of work remain living documents, reviewed and refined in response to student outcomes and curriculum evaluation.

At a minimum, schemes of work at 7Hills should:

- Clearly articulate curriculum intent and learning outcomes
- Demonstrate logical sequencing that supports long-term learning
- Identify key concepts, subject-specific vocabulary and knowledge
- Include opportunities for modelling, practice and application
- Reference formative assessment strategies
- Indicate approaches for differentiation, scaffolding and challenge
- Highlight opportunities for independent and collaborative learning
- Reflect international-mindedness and real-world relevance where appropriate

Schemes of work should be accessible to all relevant staff and support consistent, high-quality teaching across the school.

10.6.3 Short-term planning

Lesson planning reflects the professional judgement of teachers and responds to the needs of individual classes and learners, while remaining aligned with agreed schemes of work and school expectations.

Teachers plan lessons that are purposeful, engaging and responsive to students' starting points. While allowing for professional autonomy and subject-specific approaches, lessons at 7Hills are expected to demonstrate the following characteristics:

- Clear learning intentions shared with students
- Well-structured sequences that support understanding and retention
- Appropriate modelling, explanation and guided practice
- Opportunities for students to practice, apply and extend learning
- Questioning strategies that promote thinking, reflection and dialogue
- Planned opportunities for feedback and improvement
- Explicit development of literacy, numeracy and oracy where appropriate

Learning experiences are designed to promote both collaborative and independent learning, supporting students to become reflective and self-regulated learners.

10.7 Professional collaboration and responsibility

Heads of Department and Curriculum Coordinators, in collaboration with the Deputy Head of School, are responsible for:

- Leading the development and review of curriculum documentation
- Ensuring alignment with whole-school expectations
- Supporting teachers through guidance, collaboration and professional dialogue

- Monitoring consistency and coherence of curriculum delivery

All teachers are responsible for engaging with curriculum documentation and contributing to its ongoing refinement in the best interests of student learning.

11. Monitoring & Review

The implementation of this policy is monitored through:

- Learning walks and lesson observations
- Student voice
- Work scrutiny
- Professional dialogue

12. Policy Review and Approval

This policy will be reviewed annually or as required to reflect changes in legislation, CIS standards, or school practice.

13. Distribution and Access

This policy is available to all staff, students, and parents via the school website and on the school Google drive. Printed copies can be requested from the school reception.