Best Foot Forward - Teaching, Learning & Assessment Policy

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Purpose / Background

Best Foot Forward (BFF) provides personalised one-to-one education and mentoring for learners with varied strengths, needs and prior experiences. Provision may take place at home, in school, in the community or online. This policy applies to employees, self-employed tutors and mentors, contractors and others supporting teaching, learning or assessment.

Learners may have SEND, disrupted education, anxiety, health needs or other barriers to participation. Staff must explore these with curiosity and avoid assuming that distress, withdrawal or task avoidance reflects low ability or unwillingness to learn.

Teaching combines appropriate challenge with accessible tasks, safe relationships and reasonable adjustments. BFF is a non-school alternative provision provider: agree its contribution, curriculum, hours, responsibilities and intended outcomes with the commissioning school or authority and learner/family, rather than implying that each placement provides a full school curriculum.

Policy Objectives

Provide suitable, ambitious and achievable learning that develops knowledge, skills, confidence and independence. Plan for the learner's next step, which may include reintegration, sustained alternative provision, further education, training or preparation for adulthood. Academic progress and wellbeing are both important; do not promise accelerated learning or make wellbeing support conditional on attainment.

Procedures and Practices

- Set high but realistic expectations, with clear learning goals based on the learner's starting point and commissioned programme.
- Provide inclusion and reasonable adjustments reflecting relevant EHCP provision, SEND, communication, health and accessibility needs. Review adjustments for effectiveness, rather than assigning fixed labels or assumptions about ability.
- Build consistent learning relationships and involve the learner, family and commissioning professionals where appropriate and safe. Follow professional boundaries, safeguarding and approved communication arrangements.

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- Offer voluntary, accessible reflection on learning and behaviour when the learner is ready. Follow the Understanding and Supporting Behaviour Policy; reflection, an apology or a disclosure must not be a condition of learning support.
- Develop skills for the learner's agreed destination and preparation for adulthood. Reintegration to mainstream is considered individually, rather than treated as the required outcome of every placement.
- Teach in manageable steps, explain and model new ideas, use guided practice, check understanding and gradually reduce prompts as skills develop. Provide appropriate challenge without overwhelming the learner.
- Use referral information, school assessments, relevant EHCP advice, work samples, discussion and initial diagnostic activities to establish a baseline. Record date, method, conditions, adjustments and assistance. If anxiety, fatigue or limited attendance affects assessment, explain the limitation and assess gradually; no single score determines ability or a diagnosis.

Build confidence and learner agency through:

- recognising specific effort, strategies and achievement, including small steps;
- modelling self-management and providing suitable scaffolds rather than requiring independence before the learner is ready;
- teaching a range of strategies and helping the learner select and evaluate them;
- developing skills for further study, communication, everyday life and employability where relevant.

Equipping students with the skills of 'learning to learn', for example, by:

- self-management, organising time, workload and projects;
- using varied representations, clear explanations and accessible resources suited to the task and learner; do not categorise learners by fixed "learning styles";
- developing effective learning behaviours, developing resilience and concentration;
- building confidence in literacy, oracy and numeracy;
- learning how to research, organise and present;
- practising analysis, explanation, justification and logical argument at an appropriate level;
- practising collaboration where safe and suitable, while recognising the one-to-one model and individual social/communication needs;
- developing higher-order thinking skills, learning to review and reflect.

Use assessment before, during and after teaching to guide the next step. Check understanding through suitable questioning, observation, discussion, retrieval, practice and work samples; record misconceptions and adjust teaching. Assessment should be proportionate to the programme and learner's needs:

- agree clear learning outcomes and success criteria, explain what is being assessed and choose an accessible method;
- record whether work was independent, prompted, modelled, scribed or supported, and any adjustment or resource used; distinguish demonstrating a skill with support from using it independently;
- give timely, specific feedback and an opportunity to use it; revisit learning after an appropriate interval to check retention and application, rather than counting task completion alone;

Use end-of-topic or programme assessments when useful, with consistent criteria and appropriate adjustments. Compare results fairly, explaining changed conditions, task difficulty or support; avoid repeatedly testing a distressed learner simply to obtain a score. Mock grades or teacher estimates must be clearly labelled provisional and tied to a stated assessment and marking method, rather than presented as awarded grades.

Involve learners accessibly in planning, reviewing goals and evaluating useful strategies. Participation may be verbal, written, visual or supported; inability to complete a reflection form must not prevent their views being heard:

- offer meaningful choices within the agreed curriculum and safeguarding boundaries;
- discuss progress against the baseline and targets, recognising both gains and ongoing barriers;
- invite feedback on tasks, adjustments, pace and support, and record agreed changes.

Approved AI may assist planning or resource preparation under the ICT Policy. Staff must check accuracy, suitability, bias, copyright and accessibility, protect personal information and retain professional responsibility. Do not use AI as the sole basis for a consequential assessment decision. Explain permitted learner assistance, authenticate assessed work and follow awarding-body rules on AI, plagiarism and malpractice; learning use and formal assessment use may differ.

Evaluate teaching and assessment using several sources of evidence, including:

- proportionate lesson/session observations, professional discussion, supervision and role-appropriate development, taking account of self-employed engagement arrangements;
- review of curriculum sequencing, planning, teaching resources and assessment methods;
- dated work samples and accurate evidence of each learner's progress, including the level of support and assessment conditions;
- DCPro attendance, session and weekly progress records, learner/family feedback and commissioner reviews;
- verified qualifications or unit achievements where part of the agreed programme. AQA Unit Award Scheme certificates recognise achievement; they must not be presented as regulated qualifications or GCSE grades;

For unit awards and assessed qualifications, retain the required evidence and follow current rules on authentication, assessor judgement, internal quality assurance, reasonable adjustments, malpractice and appeals. Do not certify achievement solely from attendance or completion of a teaching resource. Provide an accessible route to query a judgement, involving the responsible centre or awarding organisation where required.
- documented transition and destination outcomes where known, without claiming BFF caused an outcome that has not been evidenced.

Roles and Responsibilities

Andrew Russell, CEO, oversees teaching quality, staffing and commissioning arrangements. Bethany Russell, DSL, oversees safeguarding and, as DPO, safe handling of learner information. Relevant senior tutors or advisers undertake delegated curriculum/quality roles only where agreed. Management will ensure that:

- There is a continuous cycle of self-review and improvement
- Staff allocation reflects verified subject knowledge, role-appropriate qualifications, experience and competence for the learner's needs. Do not assume every practitioner is qualified for every subject, SEMH need or assessment role; obtain advice or change the allocation where needed.
- Staff development needs are identified through observation, discussion and review, with agreed support and refresher learning.
- Quality assurance checks planning, delivery, assessment accuracy, adjustments, safeguarding and progress. Sample work and compare marking or judgements

between practitioners where relevant; investigate inconsistencies and record corrective action. Share necessary reports with the commissioner under agreed arrangements.

- Schemes of work and session plans sequence learning towards agreed outcomes, using suitable curriculum or qualification specifications where applicable. Plans identify objectives, resources, adaptations, checks for understanding and next steps, with flexibility for emerging needs.
- An individual learning plan (ILP) records starting points, strengths, needs, measurable targets, teaching approaches, relevant adjustments, responsibilities and review dates. Distinguish academic targets from engagement, wellbeing or independence goals so that each can be evaluated honestly.
- Timetables match the commissioned hours, priorities, stamina and risk assessment. Agree changes with the commissioner and family as appropriate; do not add subjects or alter provision without the necessary agreement. Home sessions require the agreed responsible adult to be present and available.
- Tutors and mentors share relevant planning and progress information through approved systems, maintain continuity and receive the current learner plan before delivery.
- Staff use assessment evidence to adapt tasks, address misconceptions and reduce scaffolding appropriately. A learner's confidence, willingness to attempt a task and independent mastery are different outcomes and must not be conflated.
- Existing assessment information and baseline findings inform the ILP. Agree an initial review timetable with the commissioner; review targets and provision at least every six weeks, and sooner for short placements, changed needs, stalled progress or significant concerns. Record the learner's views and required changes without waiting for a scheduled review where safety or suitability is affected.
- Learners receive accessible opportunities to set goals and reflect. Agree independent work only where suitable, with clear instructions, workload and feedback; check that required resources and safe support are available outside sessions.
- Where a qualification or unit award is planned, confirm the qualification/specification, registration, approved centre or delivery partner, assessor responsibilities, evidence, assessment and examination arrangements before making commitments. Tutoring does not itself establish BFF as an approved examination or awarding centre.

Formal assessment access arrangements must follow the relevant awarding organisation's current rules and JCQ guidance where applicable. Record the learner's normal way of working and evidence of need, and work with the entering centre/SENCo or authorised assessor early enough for approvals. Classroom adjustments do not automatically confer exam arrangements; BFF must not promise extra time, a reader or other approval. Preserve assessment standards and refer temporary exam-day difficulties through the centre's special-consideration process where applicable.

Staff

Staff will:

- Maintain and develop competence, use approved suitable resources and seek advice if allocated work exceeds their knowledge or role.
- Read relevant learner plans and risk assessments, make agreed reasonable adjustments and plan suitable challenge; raise unmet EHCP or other support needs promptly with management and the commissioner.
- Record session attendance and progress promptly in DCPro and provide weekly reports under agreed procedures. Include content taught, engagement, learning outcomes with evidence, assistance/adjustments, barriers and clear next steps. Describe cancellations or uncompleted work accurately; do not invent outcomes, grades or progress.

- Plan safely for the one-to-one setting and use only support staff or other adults whose role and involvement are approved. Follow the behaviour, lone-working, online-safety and handover policies; do not assume classroom behaviour-support staff are available.
- Communicate progress with parents/carers and commissioning professionals through approved routes. Record safeguarding concerns immediately in CPOMS and tell the DSL; keep sensitive safeguarding details and staff allegations out of ordinary progress reports.
- Prepare transition information based on evidenced strengths, progress, remaining needs and effective adjustments. Share it securely with authorised receiving professionals under the Data Protection Policy and agreed commissioning arrangements.

Management reviews this policy annually and after significant changes to provision, assessment requirements, law or guidance. Record quality-assurance findings, actions, ownership and follow-up, and communicate changes to staff. October 2027 is the proposed next review.

Related Policies and Guidance

Read alongside Safeguarding and Child Protection; Equality and Diversity; Behaviour and Positive Relationships; Understanding and Supporting Behaviour; Behaviour and Physical Intervention; Attendance; Professional Boundaries and Communication; ICT and Online Safety; Data Protection and retention; Complaints; and relevant qualification/assessment procedures. Guidance informing practice includes current SEND and alternative provision guidance, DfE non-school AP voluntary national standards, relevant KCSIE 2026 and Working Together 2026 arrangements, and current awarding-organisation/JCQ rules. School guidance does not automatically impose every school duty on BFF.