POLICY – Assessment

Education Universal

Policy Author	Laura Dickie, Head of Policy Tonia Lewis, Education and Quality Improvement Lead
Approval Date	Feb 2026
Policy Approver	Jo Dunn, Compliance, Regulation and Quality Director
Next Review Date	Feb 2029
Version No.	001
Policy Level	Education
Staff groups affected	All Education

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis through the service's established governance and quality assurance systems. Responsibility for ensuring that the policy remains compliant with legislation and regulatory frameworks sits with the Proprietor Representative and Regional Lead.

A formal review of this policy will be undertaken no later than three years from the date of approval**,** or sooner if changes in legislation, regulatory guidance, or operational requirements necessitate it.

The Head of Policy will support this process by identifying relevant changes in legislation, regulation, national standards and emerging best practice. The Head of Policy will also incorporate learning from inspections, audits and practice developments into future revisions whilst overseeing all proposed amendments to the universal content to ensure accuracy, consistency and compliance.

Tonia Lewis
Divisional Education Lead

Karen Carrington
Head teacher

Terminology

Our aim is to use consistent terminology throughout this policy and all supporting documentation as follows:

Term	Definition
'Establishment' or 'Site'	A generic term referring to the school/college owned by CareTech.
Learner	Any child or young person under the age of 18, or young adult over 18 who receives education.
Service Head	The senior person with overall responsibility for the school/college.
Tutor/Teacher	Members of staff who have teaching responsibility for learners at the school/college.
Parent/Carer	Parent or person with parental responsibility.
Regulatory Authority	The independent regulatory body responsible for inspecting and regulating services (e.g., Ofsted, Estyn, Education Scotland).
Social Worker	The worker allocated to the individual learner; if none is allocated, the Duty Social Worker or Team Manager is responsible.
Placing Authority	The local authority/agency responsible for placing the learner or commissioning the service.
Local Authority	The local authority for the establishment's location.
Staff	All staff working at the location, including employed staff, students on placement, contractors, agency staff, volunteers and proprietors.

1. School Profile

At Cambian Dunbroch School, our mission is to inspire children and young people to achieve their goals and become worthwhile citizens, by supporting them in a holistic way to overcome barriers and develop their confidence. The very specific nature of the students accessing Dunbroch School dictates that they require a very nurturing, individualised educational experience, whilst also ensuring a quality of curriculum content that matches their abilities. This will enable them to engage and benefit a wide range of positive educational and personal development experiences.
In our school, all members of staff work together in a way conducive to learning, by creating a safe, nurturing and stimulating environment that encourages respect for others, and acknowledging the particular difficulties this represents for our students.
We aim for every member of the school community to feel valued and respected, and each person to be treated fairly and well. We will promote a caring community, whose values are built on mutual trust and respect for all.

2. Purpose

This policy applies to Dunbroch School and sets out the organisational standards for safe, compliant and responsible Assessment practice.
It provides a universal framework and outlines the expectations that apply to:

- Staff
- Senior leaders
- Learners
- Visitors and contractors (where relevant)

This policy enables Dunbroch School to meet statutory duties, uphold safeguarding responsibilities, comply with data protection requirements, and maintain high-quality provision.

3. Scope (Universal Application)

This organisational policy applies across all education sites, services and functions. It establishes the universal standards and expectations that must be followed consistently throughout the organisation.

Each site implements these standards in accordance with the statutory and regulatory requirements of the nation in which it operates as set out in Appendix A**.**

4. Legal and Regulatory Context (Universal)

Dunbroch School is governed by the statutory duties, safeguarding requirements and inspection arrangements of the nation in which it operates. The universal standards in this policy are implemented in line with the correct national frameworks set out in Appendix A which summarise the legal, regulatory and inspection requirements for England, Wales and Scotland.

5. Policy Statement

Assessment exists to move Learners forward in their learning. Ongoing monitoring gives the education team a clear view of what knowledge has been remembered, which skills have been secured, and which concepts are understood. This informs day-to-day teaching, medium-term planning, and broader curriculum leadership, and it helps Learners to raise their own expectations by understanding their progress and next steps.

Our approach to assessment:

- **Personalises learning** by building a rounded picture of each Learner's strengths and development needs, supporting a curriculum that is right for each Learner and enabling informed choices.
- **Enriches classroom practice** by anchoring lessons and Teachers/tutors–Learner's dialogue in a shared understanding of progression.
- **Strengthens curriculum planning** by ensuring short- and medium-term plans start from what Learners have achieved and found difficult; subject and curriculum leads use wider evidence of response and progress to adapt long-term plans.
- **Enables robust tracking** of progress against individual targets (e.g., ILP, care plans, risk assessments evaluate the impact of interventions, and supports clear reporting to parents/carers, other professionals, and Local Authorities.
- **Provides evidence for improvement** at site and organisation level—showing the effectiveness of the curriculum, priorities for improvement, and contributions of individual colleagues and teams.

Assessment aims to:

- Give a transparent, evidence-based picture of progress in behaviour and personal development, often the foundation for wider academic progress.
- Set out a clear baseline for each Learner on entry (literacy, numeracy, emotional and cognitive development), and report progress to parents/carers and Local Authorities.
- Compare progress within and across sites to determine what constitutes good progress.
- Triangulate diverse evidence—external exams, in-class observation, attendance and behaviour data, and Learner self-evaluation.
- Show progress in relation to statements of special educational
- Create coherence between the academic and 24-hour curriculum, enabling all staff to see academic and personal development in relation to one another.
- Enable all colleagues—including care workers, education support staff, therapists, and Teachers/tutors—to contribute meaningfully to learning and assessment.

6. Principles for Good Assessment Practice

Good assessment practice:

- Is based on clear curriculum intentions.
- Is an integral part of classroom activity.
- Is appropriate to the task and context.
- Focuses on learning processes as well as outcomes.
- Draws on a wide range of evidence.
- Involves Learners in reflection and review.
- Identifies strengths and development needs.
- Informs understanding of individual progress.

We use assessment to:

- Help Learners understand their strengths, areas to develop, and targets so they can take an active role in their learning.
- Enable Teachers/tutors to know Learners well as learners, monitor progress, and plan forwards for individuals and groups.
- Provide a shared language to describe achievement and progress, supporting constructive dialogue with Learners, colleagues, and parents/carers.
- Give subject and whole-School/College theme leaders a framework to monitor schemes of work, support colleagues they line-manage, and evaluate progress in their areas.
- Provide Headteacher/Principal and the senior leadership team with an accurate picture of achievement and progress across the site(s) to inform curriculum planning, self-evaluation, and performance management.

7. Rationale

Assessment is a vital link in the cycle of planned learning experiences. Sensitive, well-judged assessment recognises each Learner's achievements, supports motivation and self-esteem, and improves teaching by giving precise feedback. We provide Learners with regular feedback so they understand what to improve and why. Planning is based on detailed knowledge of each Learner, and parents/carers receive regular reports so that Teachers/tutors, Learners, and families work together to raise standards and wellbeing across our sites.

In short: assessment draws together effective practice from within and beyond our School/College into a coherent framework that directly feeds tracking, planning for improvement, and raising attainment.

8. Aims and Objectives

At our School/College, we educate and nurture the whole Learner, providing opportunities to discover and develop talents and abilities. We cultivate a culture of achievement within a vibrant, stimulating environment, using appropriate differentiation and positive reinforcement at all levels of ability. Our vision is for

Learners to become confident, independent, lifelong learners who contribute to wider society and global challenges.

The Assessment Policy supports our mission - 'Inclusiveness; Resilience; independence' —ensuring every Learner can and will achieve their personal best.

How assessment supports the mission

Achievement & reinforcement

- Create a culture of achievement with positive reinforcement for all abilities.
- Support learning by identifying strengths and development areas; help Learners evaluate progress and reach their highest attainable outcomes.
- Close gaps between potential and current performance.

Meeting individual needs

- Enable Teachers/tutors to identify needs (including additional support) and plan work that accurately reflects each Learner's profile.

Innovation with strong foundations

- Provide information and guidance on up-to-date assessment methods without losing traditional strengths.
- Prepare Learners for transitions within and beyond the School/College, including FE and onward destinations.

High-calibre staff and professional learning

- Offer ongoing CPD so colleagues are confident in assessment.
- Monitor and develop the curriculum; evaluate teaching impact.

Environment and communication

- Maintain a high-quality learning environment characterised by trust, respect, and purpose.
- Ensure meaningful, regular communication with parents/carers (and care homes where relevant) about achievement and progress.
- Provide Headteacher/Principal and SLT with the information needed to judge effectiveness.

Educating the whole Learner

- Enable Learners to demonstrate what they know, understand, and can do; make clear what needs to happen next.

9. Principles of Assessment

We base our work on research-informed approaches:

- **Summative assessment** planned and conducted frequently as a reflective process after tasks or units.
- **Shared criteria**: **Learners** and **Teachers/tutors** co-own success criteria.
- **Learner agency**: self-assessment and target-setting are central.
- **Appropriate challenge**: results inform targeted stretch and support.

- **Assessment-aware planning**: plans recognise the full range of outcomes and how Learners learn.
- **Professional skill**: assessment is a core professional competence.
- **Sensitivity**: assessment has emotional impact; feedback is constructive.
- **Motivation**: approaches build confidence and engagement.
- **Clarity on goals**: commitment to learning intentions and success criteria.
- **Actionable feedback**: guidance shows how to improve.
- **Developing self-regulation**: Learners recognise next steps and how to achieve them.
- **Formative emphasis** in routine practice; summative checks termly to track progress.

10. Processes: What We Do and When

10.1 On Entry (within two weeks)

GL Assessment
Bedrock learning

This is dependent on the individual student; other assessment methods may be used.

We establish a **baseline** drawing on:

- Education, social, and medical history, including prior learning (e.g., SATs, attendance, exclusions, emotional/social background, safeguarding, and agency involvement.
- Statement of SEND / ALN / ASN
- Current attainment in core areas: English (reading, writing, speaking, listening), Maths, ICT, Science.
- Cognitive ability (e.g., non-verbal reasoning).
- Learner voice on strengths and perceived barriers.
- Specialist assessments triggered by the above.

10.2 Targets and Planning (after baseline)

- Set realistic progress targets across the curriculum phase.
- Establish interlinked plans (e.g., ILP, PCP, risk assessment with priorities, targets, and strategies—shared with parents/carers/LA as appropriate.
- Ensure all relevant staff know each Learner's academic and care needs and targets.

10.3 Ongoing Cycle

- Plan for progress aligned to ability, with regular reviews in:
    - timetabled, ILP reviews, keyworker meetings, personal support meetings—covering behaviour and learning
- All involved staff contribute; reviews lead to updated plans/targets and, where needed, further assessments/interventions.
- Keep Learner involvement central.

- Communicate successes and difficulties regularly to parents/carers.

10.4 Key Transitions (termly, end-year/annual review, key stage)

- Review progress against targets and relative to ability.
- Use a comprehensive view (learning and behaviour) involving all key staff.
- Report to parents/carers/LA on achievement, behaviour, contributing/impeding factors, and agree next steps.

11. Assessment Strategies

We select methods based on the focus of assessment and triangulate evidence:

- Observation during tasks
- Learner self-- and peer-assessment (checklists, progress ladders)
- One-to-one questioning during/after activities
- Whole-class questioning
- Plenaries and group reviews
- Marking of ongoing work
- Periodic tests/examinations
- Online/electronic assessments

For success, we ensure:

- Effective tracking of academic and personal development (incl. behaviour in class, engagement, attendance, punctuality).
- Planned moderation opportunities within and across subjects and with partner School/College settings.
- Long-term planning clarifies assessment strands/foci and progression steps.
- Short/medium-term planning identifies what will be assessed in specific lessons or sequences.
- Emotional, social, and behavioural development is a key focus, with a shared understanding (e.g., QCA “Supporting School Improvement: Emotional and Behavioural Development” as a model.

12. Formative In-Class Assessment

- In ongoing lessons**,** Teachers/tutors and Learners self-assess against lesson-specific criteria (some terminology historically stems from EYFS
- Although we use Summative Assessment too, the formative loop

13. Summative Assessment

- **Years 7–9**: BKSB and NGRT at start of each academic year and termly; end-of-unit/half-term tests in all subjects; regular vocabulary tests in Modern Languages (where taught); regular spelling (English) and arithmetic checks.
- **Years 10–11**: Regular end-of-unit tests aligned to exam syllabi; AQA Units; Functional Skills diagnostics (if followed); GCSE examinations (May/June in

Y11 or Y10 as appropriate), including ISAs/Assessed Practical/Controlled Assessments; BKSB and NGRT at start of Y10 and Y11 and termly thereafter.
- **Years 12–13 / FE**: Regular end-of-module tests in study areas; AS/A2 module exams (where applicable); other formal assessments/qualifications linked to enrichment or progression aims; BKSB at start of Y12 and termly thereafter.

14. Baseline Assessment Systems

We use a range of nationally standardised tools (as relevant to the Learner and programme):

- **CAT4 (Cognitive Abilities Test)** - verbal, non-verbal, quantitative, spatial; provides indicators of likely outcomes at Key Stages 2–4
- **PiE - Progress in English**—assesses reading/writing; supports monitoring over time and evaluation of interventions
- **PiM - Progress in Maths**—diagnostic information on mathematical strengths/needs; supports monitoring and intervention evaluation
- **MidYIS (Y7–9)** - mathematics, vocabulary, non-verbal, PSA skills; provides indicators for KS3/GCSE
- **Ye11IS (Y10)** - mathematics, vocabulary, patterns; indicators for GCSE outcomes
- **WIAT-IIUK-T**—individually administered reading and spelling assessment
- **NGRT (New Group Reading Test)** - assesses vocabulary, inference, deduction, authorial intent, grammar; informs literacy strategy annually.
- **BKSB** - diagnostics and tracking for English and Maths (KS3–FE) Together, these tools help the School/College understand strengths and needs in a national context and support realistic, ambitious academic targets.
- **GL Assessment**- Assessments help to pinpoint areas of need while our teaching and learning tools can help to tailor teaching to meet the needs of each child.

15. Assessing and Reporting Progress

- **Y1–9**: We may use a level-based system for reporting to parents/carers.
- **Y10–11**: We use GCSE grades informed by tests, classroom interactions, and quality of work; sub-levels/split grades are permitted where appropriate.
- Predicted outcomes for the end of the junior/secondary phases are generated from BKSB, CAT4, and NGRT alongside teacher judgement; data analysis identifies Learners requiring extra support.

16. Roles and Responsibilities

Titles reflect your preferred terminology; where original roles differ, both are shown for clarity.

Headteacher will:

- Hold overall responsibility for monitoring and evaluation of Learner progress and achievement.
- Monitor assessment processes for fidelity and consistency.
- Ensure judgements are moderated, recorded, and evidenced at individual and subject level.
- Report regularly to senior leaders on performance.
- Ensure Local Authorities and parents/carers receive timely progress reports.
- Ensure every Learner has an identified tutor/mentor for timetabled progress reviews.
- Chair Annual Reviews.

Senior leader with these responsibilities will:

- Arrange baseline assessments and periodic objective assessments; co-develop **ILPs** and related plans with education/care staff to inform teaching and interventions.
- For Learners needing additional support, produce, share, and monitor a Learning Support Plan.
- Enable regular reviews against ILP targets, drawing on academic and personal development evidence and engaging Teachers/tutors, support and care staff.
- Coordinate reports that feed the statutory annual review process, including Learner contributions.

Subject Leaders will:

- Ensure baselines are in place for all Learners in their area.
- Embed assessment in schemes of work and monitor consistent use.
- Moderate assessments where multiple colleagues teach the subject
- Use assessment evidence to inform short-, medium- and long-term planning.
- Contribute to ILP reviews
- Produce an annual subject progress report.

Teachers/instructors will:

- Make assessment integral to every lesson (clear objectives, success criteria, responsive teaching, purposeful plenary).
- Provide Learners with opportunities to reflect on learning and understand progression in the subject.
- Offer regular written and verbal feedback—celebrating what's been achieved and specifying next steps.
- Monitor and evaluate progress to inform future planning.
- Attend to both academic and personal progress.
- Report on progress for ILP reviews or formal reports

Support Staff will:

- Know the lesson plan and their role (e.g., target group support, specific individuals).
- Understand the assessment objectives for the Learners they support.
- Record performance as directed for later discussion and planning.
- Attend to both academic and personal progress (incl. behavioural targets).
- Contribute actively to periodic progress reviews.

Subject Leads will:

- Maintain a consistent, continuous focus on achievement, using data to monitor learning (in discussion with Subject and Phase Coordinators).
- Organise a diverse, flexible curriculum with an effective assessment framework.
- Oversee the collection and interpretation of assessment data.
- Implement recording/reporting processes based on regular assessments.
- Report outcomes of assessment activities to the Headteacher/Principal.

External Support Staff will:

- Contribute to baseline/admissions/referral processes; lead on diagnostic assessments in their discipline.
- Participate in target setting; advise colleagues on supporting therapy-related targets.
- Conduct clinical interviews/assessments and psychological risk assessments as needed.
- Undertake observation assessments in classrooms, residential units, trips, gym, and other learning environments; occasionally with primary caregivers.
- Contribute to integrated reviews; provide reports for the annual review process.

Learners will:

- Share views of progress on entry and at reviews.
- Know personal development targets and how to work towards them.
- Engage in peer and self-assessment during lessons and at the end of modules.
- Discuss achievements, challenges, and attitudes with identified staff.
- Make their statutory contribution to annual reviews.

Parents/Carers will:

- Respond to periodic reports, sharing perceptions of progress and development areas.
- Be aware of key targets set through annual reviews and contribute actively.

Local Authorities will:

- Provide relevant prior attainment, background, and learning/behaviour information at admission.
- Participate in periodic reviews of progress.
- Facilitate additional support (e.g., CAMHS) where indicated

17. Recording

- We keep up-to-date records of Learners' achievements. While primarily formative, records also underpin reports and parent/carer consultations.
- Teacher Assessments and summative reports are recorded and shared with the Headteacher/Principal, deputies, relevant staff, and parents/carers.
- Teachers/tutors record weekly/half-term results (e.g., spelling, times tables, end-of-unit tests); subject teams record regular test/homework outcomes.
- A Learner Planner (or equivalent) and daily handovers facilitate two-way communication with parents/carers (Years 3–11/Homework Diary, enabling oversight of homework and dialogue about difficulties.
- Judgements are based on work reviewed in varied contexts; teacher notes capture attainment demonstrated orally or through less tangible activity.

18. Feedback to Learners

- Feedback explains how well a Learner has done and what to do next.
- We prioritise in-lesson verbal feedback; written comments are provided where verbal feedback is not possible.
- Comments reference the lesson objective/success criteria, state whether they were met (and why/why not), and specify next steps.
- Work may also be graded in line with marking criteria for final assessment where appropriate.
- Outstanding effort/achievement is recognised through certificates as per the Reward Scheme. Parents/carers are encouraged to complete feedback forms alongside reports and return them to Tutors.

19. Reporting to Parents/Carers

We use a range of strategies to keep parents/carers fully informed:

- Termly data reports and half-term progress reports
- Phone calls to discuss excellent work or concerns
- Postcards/notes for excellent work
- Informal verbal updates at the start/end of the day (where appropriate)

Parents/carers are encouraged to contact the School/College with any concerns; they should feel informed, involved, and confident in our procedures.

Written reports

Each subject provides a formal written report based on continuous formative assessment. Reports highlight strengths and give clear guidance for addressing any weaknesses. Reports are phased across the academic year to align with key milestones.

Secondary phases (England terminology)

- **Years 7–11**: Half-termly ILP Reviews per subject (Effort in Class, Homework, Behaviour). End-of-term Grade Summary with current GCSE grade, target grade, and traffic-light indicator.

Reward Scheme descriptors include:

- Participation
- Focus and concentration
- Teamwork/independence
- Behaviour
- Going above and beyond in lessons

Learners may earn bonus tokens during the day for positive engagement in lessons and extra activities.

20. SEND

- Where Learners face challenges accessing the taught curriculum, assessment arrangements may be modified to meet need without compromising outcomes or marking integrity.
- Adjustments vary by Learner and are at the discretion of Teachers/tutors, informed by any educational psychology recommendations and agreed with parents/carers as appropriate.

21. Quality Assurance, Moderation, and Data Use

- **Moderation** occurs routinely within subjects, across subjects, and—where possible—across partner School/College settings to secure consistency.
- **Data reviews** (class, subject, phase, site) identify patterns, evaluate interventions, and inform curriculum/CPD priorities.
- **Site-level** and **organisation-level** views allow benchmarking and sharing of effective practice across our privately owned specialist sites.

Equality Impact Statement

This policy has been developed to promote equality, safeguard individual's rights, and ensure fair and inclusive practice across all services. The potential impact of the policy on children, young people, young adults, families, and staff with protected characteristics has been considered in line with the Equality Act 2010.

No negative impacts have been identified. Staff must apply this policy with sensitivity to individual need and make reasonable adjustments to ensure equitable access, safety, wellbeing, and participation for every individual. Any emerging risks of differential impact should be reported and addressed through ongoing review and quality assurance

Appendices

Appendix A – Legal and Regulatory Framework in England

Appendix A — England

The legal and regulatory frameworks and guidance underpinning Assessment in England.

Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 — Part 1 Quality of Education

- **Means:** Curriculum & assessment must secure progress; inspected under ISS Parts 1 & 8.
- **Requires:** Assessment cycle, moderation, SEND adaptations.
- **Our stance:** One organisation-wide assessment model + site addenda.
- **Implementation Example:** Half-termly moderation; termly rapid-cycle intervention review.
- **Links:** Independent School Standards (Regulations 2014)
  DfE guidance on meeting the ISS

Children and Families Act 2014 (Part 3) & SEND Regulations 2014

- **Means:** Legal basis for **0–25** SEND, incl. EHC assessments/plans and multi-agency duties.
- **Requires:** Clear referral routes; evidence packs for EHC assessments/reviews; termly progress feeding outcomes.
- **Our stance:** Annual review = data-in, decision-out with one collated evidence set.
- **Implementation Example:** Pre-review bundle from MIS (-2 weeks); actions closed within 10 working days.
- **Links:** Children and Families Act 2014 — Part 3 [gov.uk]
  SEND Regulations 2014

SEND Code of Practice (0–25)

- **Means:** Statutory guidance on identification, assessment and graduated response across Schools/Colleges/FE.
- **Requires:** APDR cycles; measurable targets; assessment evidence linking provision and reviews.
- **Our stance:** Every SEND target states measure, cadence and responsible practitioner.
- **Implementation Example:** Two live APDR cycles per term; SENCO monthly QA sample.
- **Link:** SEND Code of Practice (0–25)

Ofsted — Education Inspection Framework (EIF)

- **Means:** Inspects Schools and sites FE; assessment is a core evidence stream.
- **Requires:** Assessment informing adaptive teaching; triangulated evidence; proportionate data use.
- **Our stance:** Evidence “assessment for learning” mainly via work + learner conversations.

- **Implementation Example:** Subject deep-dive folder: curriculum map, typicality samples, adaptation notes, progression narratives.
- **Link:** Education Inspection Framework (current)

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)

- **Means:** Statutory safeguarding guidance for all Schools/Colleges; SEND learners may be more vulnerable.
- **Requires:** Planned curriculum/assessment of safety knowledge and digital resilience; clear recording/escalation.
- **Our stance:** Safeguarding objectives embedded in PSHE/RSE; termly knowledge checks reviewed by DSL.
- **Implementation Example:** Half-termly online-safety checks; targeted sessions adjusted from outcomes.
- **Link:** KCSIE 2025 (current edition)

Equality Act 2010 — Education

- **Means:** Anti-discrimination and reasonable adjustments duties across teaching/assessment (incl. FE).
- **Requires:** Anticipatory adjustments for assessments; monitor impact on participation/attainment.
- **Our stance:** Run an "assessment accessibility checklist" before major summative points.
- **Implementation Example:** Alternative formats (scribe/reader/AT) logged as normal way of working for awarding bodies.
- **Link: Equality Act 2010: advice for schools (DfE)** — https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools