Blackness Learning Environment Policy

RATIONALE:

A high quality learning environment has a direct impact on the learning, contribution, attitudes and outcomes of the children in our school based on the Dundee Standard of Inclusive Practice (see Appendix 1).

We believe that the learning environment plays a key role in supporting the ethos, aims and values of the school. A high quality learning environment sends a message to children, parents / carers, staff and visitors throughout the school that children and their learning is highly valued.

Classroom environments can both support and enrich the learning of all children. As well as being calming and welcoming, the classroom environment is a learning resource, the 'second teacher,' a way of engaging children and building the class community. It can create a sense of ownership and be used to support and promote learning as well as celebrating children's learning. With careful thought and planning, an effective classroom environment is used as an interactive resource supporting teaching, learning and assessment. We believe that a well organised and stimulating, yet low arousal, environment has a direct impact on the quality of teaching and learning and therefore supports raising standards. It enables pupils to develop independence as learners.

The purpose of this policy is to:
- Provide support for all staff in developing learning environments
- Provide a framework for a whole school approach
- Provide clarity for staff in the expectations of learning environments
- Provide consistency for all children and ease transitions
- Challenge children to give their best

We know that each teacher is an individual and will offer the children something unique, but if consistency, continuity and progression are to remain meaningful to the experiences of children it is important there is a consistent approach to the learning environment across our whole school. Whilst we have whole school expectations and a consistent approach, we encourage the use of innovation to make each learning space individual and tailored to the needs of the pupils and their learning.

AIMS OF THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT
- To create a purposeful and relevant learning environment which supports learning and celebrates success.
- To create a welcoming, safe, rich and stimulating environment for the pupils to support the children's learning and engagement.
- Reflect the school's visions, values and aims and improvement priorities.
- To encourage pupils to have pride and confidence in their learning and achievements by demonstrating that we value their work and learning.
- Create a learning environment that stimulates interest and discussion to challenge children's knowledge and understanding of the world.
- Encourage respect for the school environment and actively work to ensure it is an enriched place to learn.
- Support children in their learning, presentation, personal organisation and general tidiness.
- To motivate and challenge our children by promoting independent learning skills.
- Reflect, support and challenge the current learning.
- Foster self efficacy and celebrate achievement for all children.
- Use the learning environment, display and resources to positively impact on learning; through consolidation/reminder of previous learning and introducing new information & knowledge and stimuli.
- Empower the children to be active learners with a sense of responsibility, ownership and independence by involving them in the development of their learning environment.
- Represent every child in the learning environment including in our displays valuing pupil's contributions, outcomes and learning.
- Scaffold the children's learning and independent work.
- Support children's understanding of their stage of learning and what they need to do next.

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Classroom Organisation

Classroom environments should reflect the high priority placed on children's learning.

- Furniture should be organised to enable ease of movement around the room.
- All resources should have a place that is known by all the pupils.
- Learning resources should be available and accessible.

- Pupils should be involved in the maintenance and care of all resources and equipment.
- Ensure teaching resources and pupil work are always returned to their rightful place.
- Shared school resources should be promptly returned to the storage base so others can access them easily.
- Teachers should be selective in what is kept, clutter and 'stuff' should not feature in any classroom or learning space.
- Surfaces should not be used for a teacher's personal organisation, they should be clutter free to support children's engagement with the learning taking place.
- Teacher's desk area should be well organised as an example of the expectation for their own tables. They should clearly demarcate to the children that this is an adult space.
- Teachers are expected to develop organisation systems within their classroom and maintain them.
- Children's tables should be tidied at each transition and the end of each day to allow for cleaning.
- Chairs and tables should be kept straight and tidy and chairs tucked under.
- Storage mechanisms (files / plastic boxes etc) should be in good condition.

Classroom Routines

- Good routines for tidying away are crucial to the learning process.
- Classes should not be dismissed to break / lunch / home until the classroom is tidy and organised.
- Teachers will support children in developing the routines for packing activities and equipment away.
- Adequate time will be planned for transitions between activities by the class teacher, to enable the children to engage effectively in transitions.
- Teachers are encouraged to delegate some responsibility to named pupils for the upkeep and maintenance of the classroom and general learning environment.

It is expected that teachers support the pupils in developing and maintain good routines and behaviours:

- Introduction of the visual timetable at the start of each day. It should be displayed vertically. At the end of a subject the symbol should be removed from the timetable and stored for future use.
- Instructional visuals should be displayed and referred to frequently.
- Greeting each child as they enter the classroom showing them, they are valued and the teacher is pleased to see them.
- Modelling how to access resources, equipment etc in the classroom.
- Scaffolding how to put equipment away.
- Scaffolding how to pack away / tidy up between lessons and transitions.
- Ensuring tables are tucked under tables between lessons and key transition points.
- Tables are left in an organised manner between transition points.
- Modelling how to maintain a calm and purposeful learning / working space.
- Supporting pupils at all times in moving around the building at key transition points (gatherings, playtime, lunch time, break time, at the end of the day). This includes being at the front of the line of the children modelling movement and tracking what is taking place in the line, maintaining expectations of behaviour and noise level.

Resources

- Each classroom should be equipped with a basic set of resources and books appropriate to the age range.
- Equipment is stored in an appropriate area and labelled clearly.
- From P1 onwards children will be expected to take an active role in helping to maintain a well - organised classroom
- Drawers, cupboards and boxes to be labelled clearly using words and pictures (Boardmaker) where appropriate to compliment the label.
- Resources are available to support all learners e.g. left handed scissors, pencil grips, coloured overlays, digital technology etc.
- Support resources for maths will be accessible e.g. A maths one hundred square, number lines, place value charts, Numicon etc.
- Support for phonics will be accessible e.g., RWI sound charts, common word lists etc.
- Resources are checked regularly and repaired or discarded making sure all equipment is high quality and inviting to use.
- Classrooms are expected to be fully set up for the first lesson of the day before children arrive in school.

Storage of Jotters

Children's jotters should always be stored in a neat, accessible, child friendly way. This ensures that pupil books are always maintained in good order and do not become dog eared or worn. Children's jotters should be easily accessible for children to find or distribute. Building good routines for pupils to find their books is key to managing a workable system.

Labelling

Labelling on trays, cupboards and equipment should be consistent in terms of the font used and quality of labelling. (template provided to ensure consistency.)

DEVELOPMENT OF DISPLAYS

Displays should only be on pinboards, not painted/wooden panelled surfaces (apart from the infant classes if the display is required at eye level).

Purpose of displays:
- To visually convey the ethos of the school – to pupils, parents / carers and visitors.
- To celebrate learning and achievement.
- To give purpose and value to children's work.
- To encourage a positive attitude towards learning and the learning environment.
- To give children support and guidance with their learning.
- To model the quality and standard of learning we expect.
- Enable the children, staff and visitors to gain an instant insight into the diversity of the learning going on in school.
- Encourage children to take an interest in other children's work across the school.
- Inspire children and adults to think and stimulate further learning.

Displays will include a range of stimuli, these include:
- Key questions and key vocabulary related to topics / specific subject areas.
- Table top displays of artefacts / books / resources linked to the curriculum.
- Library areas set up / labelled and books attractively displayed (an area demarcates from the rest of the classroom to add interest).
- As learning is generated from the children this should be used to support the development of learning walls and displays.
- Door sign with teacher name, class and photo.

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Between 50% and 80% should display children's learning. Children's learning should significantly outweigh other display resources (although there is a role for these as they can be very effective in supporting, consolidating / extending learning).

Classroom displays should include:
- Class charter
- Numeracy/Maths working wall
- Literacy Working wall
- IDL wall
- Achievement wall
- Recognition board (above and beyond etc)
- Notice board – class timetable, classroom jobs, learning partners, cooperative learning groups, UNCRC focus, social goal focus (class/school), wet break/lunch activities, stuck strategies etc
- Self regulation check in/supports/strategies

All displays must have:
- A title banner/sign (template provided to ensure consistency)
- Learning Intention
- Process (what the children did)
- Reinforcement of key vocabulary
- Quality labelling

They may also include:
- Open / closed questions
- Planning steps
- Success criteria
- Children's drawing and writing
- Children's thinking, ideas, suggestions, predictions
- Links in learning
- Comments made by children
- Observations
- Suggestions
- Explanations
- annotated photographs,
- context / experiences / opportunities.

USE OF DISPLAYS TO SUPPORT TEACHING AND LEARNING
It is expected that a range of displays are evident in each classroom to include:
- Working Walls
- Interactive displays
- Curriculum / Interest tables

At a practical level, teachers should refer to displays when teaching to make meaningful links with previous learning / new learning.

Display is not intended as decoration:
- It celebrates achievement
- Gives a wider audience to learning, reminds pupils of what they have learned / achieved
- Encourages higher levels of engaging through accessing the work of others
- Enriches learning.

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Lighting and Temperature

The use of natural colours will help to reflect the light and maximise natural light. When possible natural light is preferable to artificial light. To allow for this please keep windows clear of display material. Door window should also be free from displays.

Allowing fresh air into the classroom by having windows open, when possible, is important. This should be balanced with maintaining a reasonable temperature. In Winter, windows could be opened when the class is not present (break, lunch, gym session etc) to provide the necessary ventilation.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Completion of the Environment checklist is expected (see Appendix 2). The Senior Leadership Team will regularly review the learning environment and classroom/school displays throughout the school, via the Quality Assurance calendar, by observing lessons/classrooms; completing learning walks; analysing visitor feedback; speaking to learners and analysing pupil and parent feedback. After any of these take place, an analysis will be made and feedback will be given to teachers.

The Dundee Standard of Inclusive Practice

Physical Environment

- All learners can see and hear what they need to.
- The space is well organised and uncluttered.
- Everyone can move around easily and access what they need to.
- The sensory environment, e.g., lighting, noise, temperature, smell etc. has been considered.

Resources

- Location of resources - All learners know where the resources are.
- Training in use of resources - The learners know how to use the resources that can help them.
- The range of resources are suitable to the needs of all learners, e.g., pencil grips, left-handed scissors, iPad, etc.
- There are resources available to support self-regulation for learning, and self-regulation for emotional and social skills.
- Impact of resources - The available resources help all learners to access the curriculum, e.g. literacy tools such as a laptop with accessibility tools enabled (e.g., Immersive reader, number lines/ numicon, wall displays etc.)

Relationships

- Learners feel valued and safe.
- Learners have at least one trusted adult.
- I know who in my class has ASN and how to support them.
- I am aware of influences which may affect my expectations of learners e.g. siblings, ability, background.
- I know which children can support or distract each other and seat them accordingly.
- Class activities /teaching approaches/ groupings support relationships, a sense of belonging and effective engagement.
- There is regular communication with parents/carers.

Routines/Structures

- Learners are helped to understand routines and any changes that may occur.
- There are up to date visual timetables that the learners understand and can follow independently.
- Consistent and predictable seating plans are in place and the learners know what these are.
- Lessons are planned to follow a predictable format where possible.
- Rules and boundaries are simple, fair, relevant to learning, and understood by all.

Relevance

- The curriculum links to the life experiences of the learners in a way that is meaningful.
  - I am mindful of different personal circumstances that might affect learners in the class e.g., Father's Day cards, family trees.
  - Learners' experiences are used to help include, motivate and inspire them.

Teaching Input

- Children are allowed time to process and develop their thinking before they are invited to share learning.
- Activities are focused on the learning intention and success criteria (rather than things like copying the date/ copying L.I.s from the board etc.).
- Activities provide appropriate pace, challenge and enjoyment for all.
- Verbal instructions are reinforced with gestures and visual prompts to support working memory.
- Routines are in place to ensure all learners are listening before instructions are given.
- Key learning is highlighted to help learners focus on what is important.
- Modes of teaching reflect where learners are in their understanding (e.g., demonstrating, instructing, inquiry or project-based learning, peer-to-peer collaboration).

Developing Independence

- There is a learning culture in the class where mistakes are seen as an opportunity for learning (e.g., The Learning Pit/Growth Mindset/Adults modelling helpful responses to mistakes).
- Learners are specifically taught strategies for planning and monitoring their learning.
- Support builds further independence rather than encourages over-reliance on adults.
- Feedback supports learners to identify what they have done well and what thier next steps might be.

Demonstrating and Applying Learning

- Questioning and prompts are used to help learners recall and apply their learning.
- Learners are encouraged to share their learning in different ways, such as through speaking, drawing, and technology.

Supporting Long-term Learning

- There are regular opportunities for learners to revisit skills and knowledge to support their long-term understanding/ consolidation/retrieval.
- There are regular opportunities for learners to make connections between different knowledge and skills across the curriculum.

Dundee City Council

CHANGING FOR THE FUTURE

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Inclusive Classroom Environment Checklist

Please tick off each area when setting up your classroom. The checklist should be completed by: ....

Physical Environment	Tick when complete
Furniture organised to ensure ease of movement around room	
Furniture arranged so that all pupils can easily view interactive board	
Tables laid out in groups of four to ensure ease of learning partners/cooperative learning	
Wall space usage clearly defined (banners/signs)	
Trays are labelled	
High level of tidiness	
Designated calm area/space	
Designated library space	
Room is uncluttered from resources that are currently not in use	
Resources	
Resources are easily accessible and labelled (words and Boardmaker symbol)	
Resources kept on desks are in desk tidies/trays	
Jotters/textbooks/workbooks easily accessible	
Maths supports well organised and easily available	
Resources available to support self regulation	
Pupils who require specific resources to access their learning are readily available and easily accessed by said pupil	
Extension activities are organised by subject area and easily accessibly	
Clearly identified area for pupils returning finished work/tasks in progress	
Displays (pinboards only)	
Cream backing paper with natural boarder	
Banner/Signs only in black and Primary Sassoon font	
Door sign with name, year group and teacher photo	
How many are here today? sign (displayed near the door)	
Vision, values, aims display (Ready, Respectful, Safe)	
Class visual timetable displayed prominently and in use	
Instructional Boardmaker symbols visible and regularly referred to	
Each space is clearly identifiable by a banner/sign	
Literacy working wall – including RWI sounds posters	
Maths working wall – including relevant vocabulary	
Class charter	
IDL	
Achievement	
Recognition	
Self Regulation	
Class notice board (see policy for details)	
Learning Intentions are clearly visible for each learning display	
Pupil voice evident in the process/understanding of their learning	