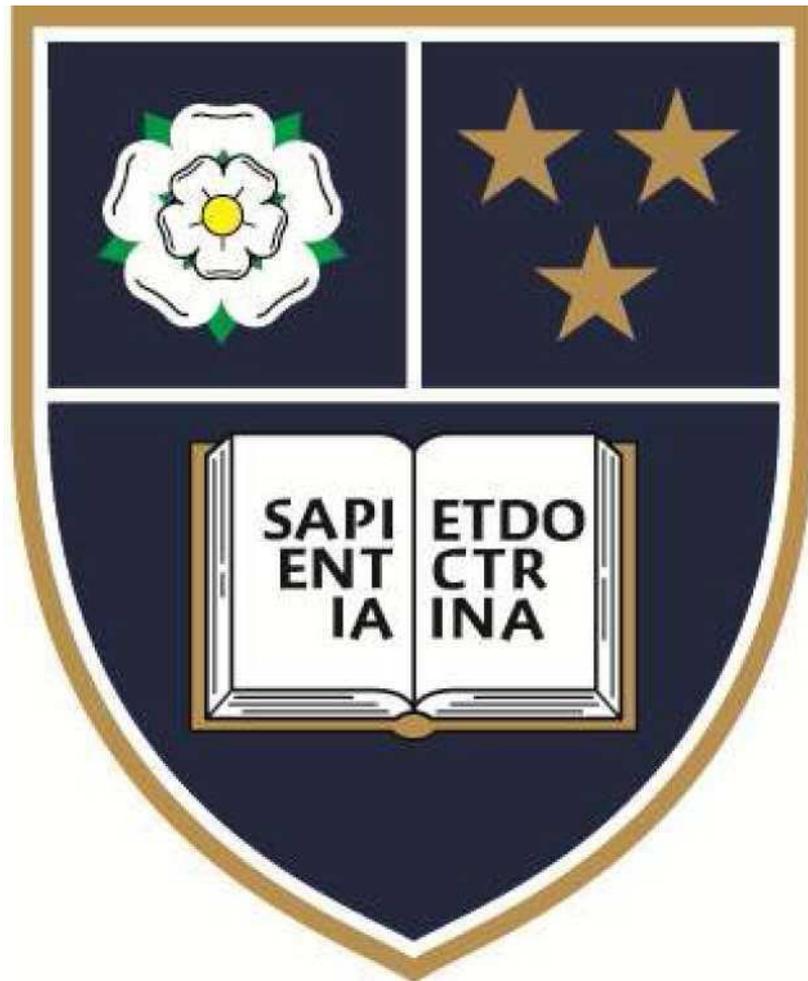


# **A Parents' Guide to the Reporting System at Hill House School**



## **Contents:**

<b>Introduction – The Importance of Feedback</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The Reporting Calendar</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Assessing Progress and Effort (Years 7 – 11)</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Parents' Evenings</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Contacting the school</b>	<b>8</b>

# Introduction – The Importance of Feedback

It is very important to us that pupils and their parents understand the reporting and feedback process.

Pupils can benefit greatly from reflecting upon their performance and from using these reflections, alongside the feedback that they receive from their teachers, to determine the next steps they need to take. Indeed, educational research suggests that feedback is one of the most powerful influences on learning and achievement.

Teachers at Hill House are designing the assessment activities they use to provide themselves and the pupils that they teach with feedback information relating to one or more of these questions:

**Where am I going? or What are my targets?**

**How am I doing? or What progress have I made towards my targets? Where to next? or What do I need to do to improve?**

Through comments on their work, oral feedback in lessons, discussions at parents' evenings and their reports, pupils will be expected to note and act upon any differences between their current status and the targets they have been set for their learning.

For pupils, it means:

- Finding out about how they learn best, what they understand and what they still need to learn;
- finding directions and strategies that they must take to improve;
- not being afraid to seek help so that they reach their full potential.

They may receive feedback on the ways in which they should tackle a task; the knowledge, skills and understanding required and about their engagement and commitment to learning.

Should you have any queries / concerns about any aspects of our reporting systems, please do not hesitate to contact us. Details of how to do so can be found at the end of this booklet.

# The Reporting Calendar

## Nursery to Year 4

**Michaelmas Term:** During the Michaelmas term, there will be a parents' evening in September to allow time for parents to meet with form tutors to discuss how their child/ren have settled in to the new academic year. At half term, every child from Reception – Year 4 will receive a short, personalised target for mathematics, English and science/topic. This also includes progress and effort data, where staff use their professional judgement of how they believe your child is getting on in school. The following indicators are used for progress and effort:

- \* excellent (some pupils)
- + good (most pupils)
- not good enough (a few pupils and a reason for this is given)

On the final day of this term, every child in Reception to Year 4 will receive an online end of term report which gives written feedback for mathematics, English and science/topic as well as progress and effort information for all other subject areas. Accompanying this will also be a Form Teacher and a Head of Junior School comment. Year 3 and 4 receive grades at this time taken from end of term assessments. In order to achieve consistency across different subject areas, assessments are graded as the following:

- A Top 40%
- B Next 40%
- C Next 15%
- D Remaining 5% of the cohort

**Lent Term:** During this term there will be a parents evening for all year groups. At half term, every child from Reception – Year 4 will receive a short, personalised target for mathematics, English and science/topic. Progress and effort is also reported on.

**Summer Term:** Children receive a half term target report as in Michaelmas and Lent. Towards the end of the academic year, there will be an informal parents' evening, where parents can speak to Form Teachers but also specialist staff about the progress that their child/ren has made over the year. This may also give chance for parents to meet other Junior School staff who may be involved with their child over the coming year. On the final day on the year, all children receive an end of year report. This consists of a full written report with progress and effort data as well as grades. Nursery children receive their report at this time.

## **Years 5 - 8**

During the first term, pupils will discuss and agree their target grades with their subject teachers for the year in each subject. They will record these in their planners. Subsequently, at the beginning of each school year, pupils will discuss their target grades and will then record these in their planners.

Every three weeks, all pupils will receive grades for progress and effort. These grades will be sent to parents by email.

A parents' evening is held twice a year and parents will receive one academic report and one house report every year. Reports will be sent to parents by email.

Internal examination results are published during or at the end of the Summer Term. In order to achieve consistency across the different subject areas, examinations are generally graded as follows:

- A\* Top 15% of the cohort
- A Next 25% of the cohort
- B Next 40% of the cohort
- C Next 15% of the cohort
- D Remaining 5% of the cohort

## **Year 9 and GCSE**

In Year 9, pupils make option choices for GCSE. Parents and pupils will receive booklets with information about the process and pupils will receive more information in school. An options parents' evening is also provided to ensure that parents are able to gain the information they need and that pupils are fully supported whilst making their options choices.

At the beginning of their studies in Year 9, in discussion with their form tutors, pupils set themselves aspirational targets using the GCSE scale of 9 – 1.

Over the first half-term, subject teachers monitor the progress and effort of their pupils and use a combination of this knowledge, the pupils' own target grades and projected grades from national data sets to formulate the School's target grades for every pupil.

Every three weeks, all pupils will receive grades for progress and effort. These grades will be sent to parents by email.

There will be two parents' evenings during the year and we will also report on any internal exams at the appropriate time. In addition, parents will receive one academic report and one house report every year. Reports will be sent to parents by email.

During Year 11, pupils are interviewed by members of the Senior Management Team. These interviews will discuss progress in general, their preparation for mock examinations, any necessary targets they need to set to ensure that they achieve their target grades and to ascertain whether they require any further support with study skills and career options.

## **Assessing Progress and Effort (Years 7 – 11)**

Your child's teachers will provide your child and you with an indication of how well, using their professional judgement, they believe he or she is getting on in school. There will be two indicators for this, **progress and effort**.

For each of these indicators we will use the following grades:

- \* (asterisk) excellent (some pupils)
- + (plus) good (most pupils)
- (minus) not good enough (a few pupils)

**Progress:** This will be measured against the teacher set target grade.

The nature of the different subject courses means that progress does not necessarily go steadily upwards. At times it may appear that a pupil is making no progress because their grade has remained the same or even appear to have "gone backwards" and yet they can still be on target to reach their expected grade. So, just following the grades that a pupil gains for pieces of work or on tests may not be sufficient to determine whether they are making the expected progress.

### **Why might my child get a minus for progress?**

- ⚡ A pupil may find work in one topic harder than another and therefore might be classed as making less progress relative to the other topic. Different subjects have different degrees of difficulty and require the mastery of different skills, knowledge and understanding at various stages of the course in order to reach a target grade. For example, science is taught in topics; each topic will have a number of learning objectives which, in turn, are graded as being at different levels of difficulty.
- ⚡ A pupil may have had less previous experience at a particular skill and therefore find it more difficult to reach the same standard in this as they have in another. In

English and languages, different skills are tested e.g. reading, writing, speaking and listening. It is not uncommon for pupils to find the last two of these skills more difficult, particularly when they first start a course. Therefore they can make less progress with these than expected.

## **Why does my child not seem to be making as much progress this year as last?**

❖ Work began at a very low level in a new subject. Pupils learning a new subject will make rapid progress initially. Once they have mastered the basic skills, there will often be a period of consolidation necessary and higher order skills to be learned before further progress is made. This type of learning pattern might be expected for a modern foreign language.

⚡ There much more to be learned as a pupil approaches the higher grades. It takes longer to get through the extra material and therefore to be able to move up to the next grade.

## **How can I help my child when they have received a minus grade for progress?**

Whilst a minus grade may not be desirable, it can be seen that this might be a "one off" event reflecting a pupil who has found a recent topic or skill more difficult / challenging than those they had previously encountered. This is why we want pupils to use their grades as a barometer of their progress in a subject. They need to recognise when they are having difficulty and react to this indicator to establish:

- What they are not doing that they need to;
- What they can do to make improvements.

Supporting your child to take the steps to identify what the problem is and then to tackle any conceptual difficulties will greatly assist them and their teachers. It can be very daunting to admit that we are not doing as well as we should but once we face that fact and ask what we can do about it, we can start to tackle the underlying issues and make things better. Sometimes pupils adopt the "bury your head in the sand" approach to difficult topics, thinking that it will miraculously be "alright in the end".

Please try to encourage your son / daughter to be proactive; asking when they do not understand and also to carry out more independent study at home to reinforce the work done in school. This will really help them to develop the learning skills that will bring success at GCSE and beyond.

**Effort:** The effort grade provides you and your child with an indicator of the aptitude that they show for learning both in and out of lessons. Teachers will award these grades by considering whether a pupil:

- Arrives at the lesson ready to learn with all necessary equipment?
- Shows a love for learning / inquiry by doing homework, background reading,

- etc.,?
- Shows respect for the learning of others, working well as an individual or as part of a group?
  - Gets down to work quickly and completes tasks in the set time?
  - Asks for help / guidance appropriately?
  - Joins in with discussion and makes positive contributions to the lessons?

**A minus grade for effort is, in many ways, more of a concern than one for progress since this is indicative that your child is not working in the way that we would expect.** Having a conversation with them about why they think their approach to learning is "not good enough" may help them to recognise what they are not doing and therefore how they can ensure that they don't get the same grade again. It will also be important to encourage them to talk to their teachers so that by the time of the next review in three weeks, they will be well on the way to putting things right.

Your child's Form Tutor will also be working with them in order to encourage them to put things right so please keep in contact with them so that they are aware of strategies at home and you know what is happening at school.

## Parents' Evenings

These events provide the opportunity for parents and pupils to discuss issues such as progress, concerns over teaching and learning, future options for advanced study, etc., with each of their child's subject teachers.

Pupils have pages in their planners to record appointment times with their teachers. There are also pages for them / you to record any important information that they can use later to set targets for future improvements.

Each appointment will normally last for five minutes. Although a seemingly short period of time, there is much information that can be gained if you have planned out your questions beforehand. The list below may help you to think about the sort of things that you might ask the teacher - there are certainly many more but we would ask you to stick to the five minutes allocated so that all parents have the same opportunity to gather the information that they need. Should you feel that a longer conversation would be of benefit, please ask your child's teacher if it would be possible to talk to them at length at another time.

Some examples of questions that you might ask a subject teacher at a Parents' Evening:

- What are my child's strengths?
- Does he or she have any weaknesses that need to be addressed? What should he or she do to improve / strengthen these aspects of his or her work?
- What can I do to help?
- Is he or she on target?

- If not - why not?
- Should his or her target grade be raised / lowered?
- Where is he or she relative to the rest of the class?
- Is this subject a realistic option for GCSE / A level?
- Why / Why not?
- Is my child's homework of a good quality; how long should he / she be spending on it; how much help should I be giving him / her?
- Does my child contribute well in lessons, are they attentive? Do they have all the necessary equipment?
- Is there any consolidation or extension work we could be doing?

## Information from you

Please don't forget to tell teachers of any concerns you or your child may have, especially if they / you feel that they are struggling with any aspect of the work or perhaps do not consider that they are being sufficiently challenged. Similarly, if you or they feel that the classroom dynamics are impeding their progress, it is very important to let the teacher know so that they can adjust seating plans or ensure that group work does not combine individuals who may not work well together.

## Contacting the school

If you have any **general** queries or concerns about any aspects of the school's reporting process please address these to Mrs McCrea who is responsible for its oversight. She can be contacted via the school office using e-mail on [parents@hllhouse.doncaster.sch.uk](mailto:parents@hllhouse.doncaster.sch.uk) or by telephone.

**If you have a more specific question concerning report grades / comments** which you wish to pose to your child's Form Teacher or one of their subject teachers, we recommend that you contact the school office as above and ask them to pass on your question or request to talk to an individual member of staff.