



**First Thought
Independent School**

FIRST THOUGHT CARE SERVICES

Marking and Feedback Policy

2026-2027

Table of Contents

- STATEMENT OF INTENT.....3
- LEGAL FRAMEWORK3
- ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES3
- EXPECTATIONS.....4
- WORKLOAD4
- MARKING4
- FEEDBACK.....4
- REMOTE LEARNING.....5
- MONITORING AND REVIEW5
- APPENDIX: PUPIL REFLECTION TOOL.....6
 - I liked...*6
 - I learned...*6
 - I found... difficult*.....6
 - I am proud of*.....6
 - Next time I will...*6
- APPENDIX 2: GUIDANCE FOR STAFF USING THE PUPIL REFLECTION TOOL7
 - When to Use the Tool*7
 - How to Use the Tool*.....7
 - Key Principles*7

Statement of Intent

At First Thought Independent School (FTIS), we recognise that effective marking and feedback are central to high-quality teaching, learning, and assessment. For our pupils, all of whom have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) with primary needs in autism, complex needs or severe learning difficulties (SLD), marking and feedback must be meaningful, personalised, and accessible.

This policy ensures that marking and feedback:

- Celebrate success and progress, however small.
- Build pupils' confidence, self-esteem, and engagement in learning.
- Inform teachers' planning and link directly to EHCP outcomes and curriculum frameworks.
- Are adapted to pupils' communication profiles, using verbal, visual, and multisensory approaches as needed.

Legal Framework

This policy is informed by:

- DfE Teachers' Standards (2021)
- SEND Code of Practice: 0–25 years (2015)
- Equality Act 2010
- Independent School Standards (2014, as amended)

It operates alongside FTIS policies including:

- Curriculum Policy
- SEND Policy
- Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy

Roles and Responsibilities

The Head of Education will:

- Ensure this policy is implemented consistently.
- Monitor the effectiveness of marking and feedback across the school.
- Support staff in balancing meaningful feedback with manageable workload.

Teachers will:

- Provide personalised marking and feedback that motivates and informs next steps.
- Use verbal, visual, and practical methods of feedback appropriate to pupils' needs.
- Record assessment evidence in line with the Assessment Policy (e.g. Tapestry, annotated work, photos, videos).
- Ensure feedback links directly to EHCP outcomes and curriculum goals.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to reflect, with adapted methods (visuals, symbols, or simplified reflection tools).

Support Staff will:

- Reinforce feedback strategies in daily routines and activities.
- Provide communication support (Makaton, PECS, symbols, sensory stories) to ensure pupils understand feedback.
- Record observations and evidence of progress to support assessment and planning.

Pupils will:

- Be encouraged to engage with feedback in ways appropriate to their needs (e.g. choosing symbols, responding verbally, or showing through action).
- Celebrate their own achievements and progress with adult support.

Expectations

At FTIS, feedback is expected to be:

- Positive, pupil-friendly, and accessible.
- Focused on small steps of progress linked to EHCP outcomes and curriculum pathways (EQUALS Informal Semi-Formal and Formal).
- Purposeful and efficient, avoiding unnecessary written comments where these do not support pupil understanding.
- Flexible in format (verbal, visual, written, or practical demonstration).

Staff use professional judgement to decide whether feedback should be immediate (during the task) or reflective (after the task), always prioritising impact on learning and wellbeing.

Workload

FTIS recognises the workload implications of marking. Therefore:

- Feedback must always have a clear purpose and positive impact.
- Staff should prioritise verbal and visual feedback over lengthy written marking.
- Evidence collection (photos, videos, annotations) replaces unnecessary written marking.
- Workload balance will be monitored by leaders, ensuring practices remain sustainable.

Marking

Marking is adapted to pupils' needs and communication styles.

Key principles:

- Celebrate effort and success through symbols, stamps, stickers, or visual cues.
- Use simple annotation or highlighting to show success and next steps.
- Correct errors sensitively, with a focus on modelling improvement.
- Provide immediate feedback wherever possible, especially during practical and sensory tasks.
- Ensure that progress towards EHCP outcomes is noted and fed into Tapestry.

Marking is not about grades, but about recognising progress and guiding next steps in a personalised way.

Feedback

Feedback is central to pupil progress and wellbeing. At FTIS, it is delivered in accessible ways, including:

- Verbal feedback (calm, supportive tone, using clear language or communication systems).
- Visual feedback (symbols, smiley faces, colour coding, photos of achievement).
- Multisensory feedback (gestures, signing, modelling, physical prompts).

Feedback may include:

- Reminder (linking to a recent success).
- Scaffold (questions to guide next steps).
- Example (providing structured options for improvement).

Pupils are given time to respond to feedback in ways appropriate to them (e.g. re-trying a task, choosing a symbol, showing through action).

All feedback links directly to EHCP outcomes and assessment frameworks (EQUALS, MAPP, AQA Unit Awards where relevant).

Remote Learning

If remote learning is required, feedback will be adapted to ensure it remains accessible:

- Staff will use Tapestry, videos, and photos to provide feedback to pupils and families.
- Verbal/visual praise and suggestions will be recorded and shared with parents/carers.
- Staff will maintain regular communication with families to support understanding and consistency.
- Details are in our Remote Learning Policy

Monitoring and Review

The Head of Education will monitor marking and feedback practices through learning walks, evidence sampling, and pupil progress reviews.

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure alignment with the Curriculum Policy and Assessment Policy.

APPENDIX: PUPIL REFLECTION TOOL

This tool is designed to help pupils share their views about learning in a simple and accessible way. Its purpose is to capture pupil voice, build confidence, and contribute to EHCP and assessment evidence.

It can be used with symbols, smiley faces, or photos. Pupils may complete this with adult support, using pointing, choosing symbols, or verbal/gestural responses.

Feedback prompt	Pupil Feedback
I liked... Happy Face Okay Face ☹️ Sad Face	
I learned... Picture/Symbol choices of key learning activities	
I found... difficult ☹️ Symbol - Picture of activity/task	
I am proud of... - Photo - Symbol of achievement - Star/Sticker	
Next time I will... ✓ Try again - Keep going - Ask for help	

This tool should be adapted with Widgit symbols, photos, or real objects depending on the pupil's needs. It is intended for occasional use (e.g. after a project, at a review point, or for EHCP evidence).

APPENDIX 2: GUIDANCE FOR STAFF USING THE PUPIL REFLECTION TOOL

The pupil reflection tool is designed to capture pupil voice in a simple, accessible way.

It should not replace daily feedback but can be used to support evidence gathering and pupil participation in line with EHCP outcomes and Ofsted expectations.

When to Use the Tool

Occasionally – not daily. Use at meaningful points such as:

- After a project, activity, or piece of work where reflection is possible.
- During termly pupil progress reviews (3 times per year).
- For EHCP annual reviews, to evidence pupil voice.
- In PSHE or 'My Voice' sessions to encourage self-expression.

How to Use the Tool

- Introduce the tool positively, explaining that it helps pupils to share their ideas and feelings.
- Offer pupils a choice of symbols, photos, objects, or gestures to respond – adapt to their communication profile.
- Keep the process short and engaging – avoid overuse which may cause frustration.
- Support pupils to select or point, but avoid over-prompting to ensure genuine responses.
- Record outcomes briefly (photo, note, or upload to Tapestry).

Key Principles

- Focus on celebrating success as well as identifying difficulties.
- Responses do not need to be written – pointing, choosing, or gesturing is valid.
- The tool is optional and supplementary – not every pupil will use it in the same way.
- Adapt the tool to suit pupils (e.g. Widgit symbols, star charts, smiley faces, objects of reference).