

Elysian

Assessment, Recording & Reporting Policy



Reviewed February 2023

Next Review due February 2024

For the purposes of this policy, where the term Elysian is used, it refers to Elysian Animal Assisted Interventions Ltd including Elysian School and Elysian Animal assisted Therapy and Learning. This policy is applicable to all Elysian sites.

Introduction

Elysian regards assessment as a critical element of teaching and learning. Valid, regular and various assessments of young people's progress informs both teachers and young people as to how they are doing, what progress they are making and areas to work on. Feedback is given to the young person as an ongoing part of the therapeutic learning process rather than in addition to it.

We set both formative and summative assessment tasks as part of day-to-day teaching through marking, testing and providing opportunities for self and peer assessment. Due to the history of the young people that attend Elysian, low self-esteem is a common barrier to learning. Conventional methods of assessment are usually counter-productive in raising self-esteem in young people. Our first aim is to support the young people to build on their self-esteem and emotional resilience, enabling them to access the benefits marking, feedback and reflection can bring. An individual, sensitive and measured approach is then taken to introducing methods of assessment.

Aims

Through our methods of assessment, we aim to;

- Create a baseline which shows the starting point for each young person on entry. This will include academic, social, emotional, mental health, readiness to learn and any other areas where progress can be made.
- Provide the opportunity for young people to demonstrate and review their progress.
- Inspire each young person to understand what they have achieved and to believe that, through hard work and perseverance, they can achieve great things.
- Regularly assess progress, allowing us to plan effectively and to identify areas to celebrate and areas to develop.
- Understand which areas need more or less input from specialist staff.
- Provide an accurate representation of progress and next steps for Parents, Carers and other stakeholders.
- Gather data to ensure we are continually improving as a wider provision.
- Ensure compliance with all regulations, guidance and law.
- Gather data to allow us to compare progress across groups.
- Gather data to ensure decisions based on progress are made with facts in mind.

Baselines

Elysian will carry out baseline assessments for Numeracy, Literacy and other curriculum areas. Elysian also uses a baseline assessment which measures cognitive, emotional, behavioural, environmental and social difficulties that are affecting the young person's ability to learn. This assessment creates a holistic snapshot of the young person's individual needs. The needs identified are then used to inform the young person's PSHE curriculum and Individual Learning Plan. All summative assessments will be carried out in a sympathetic way that is appropriate to each pupil.

Examinations

Where appropriate, examinations at levels from EL1 to L2 (GCSE equivalent) are encouraged sensitively to ensure anxious learners develop the confidence and self-assurance to stretch themselves to achieve their potential. Due to the high anxiety levels of the majority of pupils at Elysian, examinations will only be encouraged where it gives the opportunity for enhancing self-esteem and mental health rather than increasing anxiety and stress. Where a young person has a clear aspiration and feels they want to undertake an examination to access a post-16 college course, Elysian will facilitate and support this. Examinations are carried out throughout KS4, building the confidence of the young people and offering every opportunity to achieve.

Ongoing and Summative Assessment Process (SeeSaw App)

All staff at Elysian all have access to the Seesaw App.

SeeSaw is an online Learning Journal. Individual Learners develop a digital portfolio, made up of observations: notes, photos, videos, voice notes and images of paper-based learning. At Elysian we use SeeSaw to record and celebrate moments of teaching and learning. This provides a snapshot of the Learners' progress in skills and knowledge in subjects such as English, Maths, Science and PSHE and when interacting with the animals, as well as evidence of their development of Readiness to Learn attributes. This information can be used as part of an assessment to inform future teaching and learning, as well as reporting back to parents/carers.

Observations

Observations are made during the Learner's engagement in provision, using the SeeSaw app on Staff mobiles.

We aim to capture:

- moments when Learners demonstrate progress in their skills/knowledge, for example when they independently demonstrate a new skill handling or caring for an animal, progress towards maths or literacy targets, or in their riding.
- moments when Learners demonstrate progress in their Readiness to Learn attributes, for example when engaging in a small group or demonstrating resilience.
- moments that Learners are particularly proud of and would like to capture as part of their Learning Journey.

Observations should follow a common format giving the following information:

- Who the Learner is
- What they have engaged in
- How Staff have supported/extended/interacted with them
- Which skills they have demonstrated
- Reference any evidence (photos, videos, voice notes, Learner Voice).
- Initial the observation and make assessments

All sessions are carefully planned and shared with staff on Seesaw. A different focus for assessment is listed on each plan, including different objectives for different levels. For example, feeding the goats might have a focus on the 'shape, space and measure' strand (weighing food, measuring water). The same activity plan might have a literacy focus, looking at reading instructions. Assessment information gathered from these sessions is collated using SIMS, helping to build a picture of academic progress.

Marking and feedback

Due to the complex difficulties faced by the young people who attend Elysian, marking and feedback is only applied where appropriate. It is our ambition to build resilience through positive feedback applied in a targeted, sensitive way. Areas for development are suggested and discussed on an individual level, only in those circumstances where a young person is able to use this information to improve their work without damaging their self-esteem. Where marking and annotation is deemed appropriate, the following will be used;

- I for independent work
- S for supported
- tick followed by a praise comment
- small stars followed by an improvement comment.

Reports

Elysian termly reports will use the guiding principle that all reports are written in a positive, personal and individual way. Where there is a need to report on areas for development, this will still be couched in positive language and will be clear in how the young person can move forward in this area. Our reports will focus on the wider holistic progress and achievements of our pupils as well as including academic and behaviour data.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Head of Education

Appendix – Individual Learning Plan template