



# **Learning Policy Summary**

This document can be made available in standard and large sized print and on tape

## 1. Mission statement:

The role of the Gallery is to provide exciting and stimulating learning initiatives providing a range of learning opportunities for all.

### Aims:

- To support informal learning
- To create a friendly and welcoming environment
- To develop education through the imaginative and innovative use of the museum collections and displays and to offer a wide choice of entry points
- To provide free access for all
- To provide an example of best practice in museum learning

### Objective:

- To develop an innovative programme of workshops, activities and non-didactic learning opportunities

## Our Philosophy

***“Museums aren’t schools. They are not appropriate for teaching, but they are brilliant places for learning.”***

**Peter Clarke**

The above statement underpins the philosophy adopted by Falmouth Art Gallery in its approach to display, interpretation and education

It recognises that to continue to make a real and positive impact in the community of Falmouth, and be truly socially inclusive it should dissolve as much as possible its role of an ‘invisible superior’

Its main priority in mounting exhibitions and displays is to create ‘learning atmospheres’, where learning can be stimulated and inspired. It is not to ‘tell stories’ or ‘impart information via text panels or captions’. In this way the gallery’s policy is providing a distinctly alternative approach to museums specialising in didactic, convergent interpretation.

For Falmouth Art Gallery museum learning is making positive, stimulating and exciting memories for its visitors. Whenever possible it tries to soften the didactic approach to learning and the mounting of exhibitions. According to

the *Campaign for Learning* as much as 90 per cent of our learning is informal, and this is reflected in Falmouth Art Gallery's approach

It also recognises and has confidence in the importance of pure visual learning. This learning should be promoted to all, whatever one's age, sex, background or race.

### **The Education Team**

The education team should be approachable and helpful. Their function is:

- To be welcoming and helpful to visitors and creating a happy atmosphere
- To ensure the smooth running of visits
- To carry out safety procedures, including risk assessments and to be alert during all workshops
- To be familiar with the museum and its collections and displays and best practise standards of stewardship

The learning programme will be delivered to a high standard of provision. If funding is short then we will do a few things well rather than a lot badly.

The Gallery will not adopt a two-tier set of standards in the presentation of work. As part of our policy we promise to display children's and workshop-produced art to the same high standards as we would a professional artist.

For this reason the staircase gallery will not be made available for outside groups, unless they are actively working in partnership with the gallery's temporary exhibition learning programme, and accept the quality standards that accompany this programme.

### **Dialogue**

Falmouth Art Gallery recognises that visitors will have much to add to our knowledge, understanding and interpretation of the collections. The learning programme will encourage people to share and develop this knowledge.

### **Literacy and Numeracy**

Art can provide a visual stimulation for a wide range of learning, particularly in the fields of numeracy and literacy.

E.Eisner in the *Journal of Art & Design Education* writes: *'Education in the arts cultivates sensitive perception, develops insight, fosters imagination, and places a premium on well-crafted form. These skills and dispositions are of central importance in both writing and reading. Without them children are unlikely to write – not because they cannot spell but because they have*

*nothing to say. The writer starts with the vision and ends with words. The reader begins with these words but ends with vision. The reader uses the writer's words in order to see.'*

## Evaluation

Falmouth Art Gallery recognises the importance of evaluation and exit strategies for learning projects.

Wherever possible it will seek funding to externally evaluate its educational initiatives, and carry out impact studies.

When funding is not forthcoming Falmouth Art Gallery will evaluate by the following processes:

- Consultation
- Evaluation forms (where appropriate and where this will not have a negative effect on provision users)
- Detailed records of visitor figures and educational visits
- Regular analysis of comment forms
- Observation, tracking and visitor surveys
- Achievement of aims and objectives
- Regular reporting to Falmouth Town Council

However, Falmouth Art Gallery recognises that if it is to be truly socially inclusive it cannot adopt forms of evaluation that isolate individuals or sectors of society. Some people have a negative experience of school. Constant testing does not promote self esteem or confidence for those who are not successful. We will not repeat this experience in the gallery. Projects will be evaluated, and the gallery's performance against its aims and objectives, but seldom the people taking part. Careful observation by experienced external educators will be adopted as a more suitable alternative.

*This policy was passed by Falmouth Town Council on 3 February 2003*