

St. Mary's College Dundalk



Assessment Policy.

Ratified by the Board of Management on 13th December 2022.

1. DEFINITION OF ASSESSMENT

The term 'assessment' refers generally to the gathering, collating and interpretation of information related to a student's learning abilities, learning attainments, learning strengths and areas of learning that need addressing.

The Education Act (1998) requires schools to regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to students and their parents. In fulfilling this requirement, schools develop assessment procedures, which provide an accurate account of a student's progress and achievement.

This Assessment Policy outlines the importance of assessment and the key role students, parents and guardians, and staff play in supporting this policy document.

1.1 AIMS OF THE POLICY

This Assessment Policy aims to

1. Explain the rationale and importance of assessments
2. List the different types of assessments
3. Detail the annual schedule of assessments
4. Detail the reporting procedures post assessments

2. RATIONALE FOR ASSESSMENT

Assessment is an essential part of positive teaching and learning for the following reasons:

1. Assessments enable the teacher to monitor a student's progress and make decisions about what and how the student is learning. This information allows the teacher to identify the next steps in advancing the students learning and adapt teaching strategies and learning activities as appropriate.
2. Assessments help to identify appropriate subject levels for students in the Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate.
3. Assessments help identify students who may need additional support and services and to inform consultations with the NEPS psychologist where necessary.
4. Assessments assist school management in identifying students, subjects, classes and areas of the curriculum that require further timetabled support.
5. Assessments play an important role in subject choice, career guidance and progression to third level and further education.
6. Monitor a student's progress and to provide the teacher with information about what and how the student is learning. This information allows the teacher to identify the next steps in progressing the student's learning and to adapt teaching strategies and/or learning activities as appropriate.
7. Provide the student and his parents with information regarding his progress.
8. Establish baseline data in relation to a student's attainments in certain subjects.
9. Assist in the identification of students who may need to be referred to an outside professional or agency for assessment or direct intervention.
10. Teach students self-reflection and assessment.

3. TYPES OF ASSESSMENT

3.1 FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT: (ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING)

Formative assessment is ongoing and involves teachers and students reflecting on how learning is progressing and deciding on the next steps to ensure successful outcomes. It involves a shift from focusing mainly on summative judgments to engaging in ongoing activities that can be used to support next stages of learning.

A vital part of formative assessment is the feedback that teachers provide to their students and students' feedback to teachers. Through a range of assessment for learning strategies the teacher helps the student to identify what has been achieved and where there is room for further learning and development.

Some examples of Formative Assessment used in the College include:

- Success Criteria
- Target Setting
- Effective Feedback Stickers
- Peer/Self Assessments
- Group work
- In-class discussions
- Homework Assignments
- Graphic Organisers
- White boards
- Traffic Lights
- Think-Pair-Share
- Observations
- Effective Questioning
- Quizzes
- School
- Reflection
- Presentations /Performances
- Surveys
- KWL
- Differentiation
- Stand up / Sit Down
- Role Play
- Placement
- Exit Tickets
- Mind Maps
- Posters
- PowerPoints
- Two Stars and Wish
- Digital learning Tools e.g. Kahoot, Quizlet

In-school AFL Toolkit (Click [here](#))

3.2 SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT: (ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING)

Formal Assessment

There are many types of formal assessments that take place in the school. The results of these generally form the basis for the reports issued to parents.

Formal Assessments include, but are not limited to:

- Units of learning/Chapter Tests
- House Examinations

- Pre Examinations
- Aural/Oral Tests
- Aptitude Tests (CAT 4 / DATS / NGRT / Accelerated Reader etc.)
- Leaving Certificate and Junior Cycle Examinations
- Baseline Tests
- Project work
- Practical assignments
- Presentations

The goal of **summative assessment** is to evaluate student learning at the end of an instructional unit. It aims to provide a summary of the achievements of the learner.

3.3 CLASSROOM BASED ASSESSMENTS

Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) have been introduced to allow students to demonstrate their understanding of concepts and skills and their ability to apply them in ways that may not be possible in an externally assessed examination. They will be used in the assessment of learning in subjects and in short courses. CBAs will be assessed by the students' teachers and reported on to students and parents/guardians during junior cycle and in the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA). Students will (usually) undertake two Classroom-Based Assessments facilitated by their teacher (usually one in second year and one in third year). CBAs in all subjects will be reported on at a common level.

When assessing the level of student achievement in a Classroom-Based Assessment against the learning outcomes, teachers will use 'on-balance' judgement in relation to the Features of Quality, which are set out in four level descriptors - Classroom Based Assessment Descriptors are as follows:

- *Exceptional.*
- *Above Expectations.*
- *In line with expectations.*
- *Yet to meet expectations*

A Final Examination set, held and marked by the SEC.

3.4 ASSESSMENT WINDOWS.

There are four assessment windows in the College year, which are shared with parents / guardians at the beginning of each school year, via Compass.

Assessment Window 1	1 st , 2 nd 5 th	Class Based
	3 rd & 6 th	Exam Hall
Assessment Window 2	1 st , 2 nd , TY 5 th	Exam Hall
	3 rd & 6 th	Class Based
Assessment Window 3	1 st , 2 nd 5 th	Class Based
	3 rd & 6 th	Pre Exams
Assessment Window 4	1 st , 2 nd , TY, 5 th	Exam Hall

	3 rd & 6 th	State Exams
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The duration of these exams shall be as follows:

First Years:	1 hour.
Second Years:	1.5 hour.
Third Years:	1.5 hours.
Transition Yr:	2 hours. Optional subjects 1 hour.
Fifth Years:	2 hours.
Sixth Years:	2 hours.

- All students undertake formal exams at either Halloween or Christmas.
- First, Second and Fifth Year students undertake further exams at Easter and summer.
- Third and Sixth Year students undertake 'Pre-examinations' early in the second term.
- All examinations are marked internally.
- Classroom Based Assessments are also reported on to parents and guardians.
- All house / exam hall exams are organised on a departmental and whole year basis, to allow for increased collaboration and benchmarking in each subject area.
- As Transition Year is focused on experiential learning and personal development, the forms of assessment used may vary from the standard practices used in other years. Transition Year assessments (particularly non-core subjects) may involve the following: external certification, portfolio, project, oral presentation, self / peer evaluation as illustrated in the Portfolio Assessment.

All Junior Cycle exams will be graded as follow:

Grade	Range
Distinction.	≥ 90 to 100
Higher.	≥ 75 and 90
Merit.	≥ 55 and <75
Achieved.	≥ 40 and <55
Partially achieved.	≥ 20 and <40
Not graded.	≥ 0 and <20

All Senior Cycle exams will be graded as follow:

Grade (same for OL)	Range
H1	≥ 90 to 100
H2	≥ 80 to 89
H3	≥ 70 to 79
H4	≥ 60 to 69
H5	≥ 50 to 59
H6	≥ 40 to 49
H7	≥ 30 to 39
H8	Less than 30

4. SEN ASSESSMENTS.

- Incoming First Years will undertake 'Assessment Tests' in February of each academic year. This assessment will offer an early indicator of the student academic potential.
- Where a student has a learning requirement the SEN Coordinator will discuss the matter with the Senior Management Team and School Staff. Classroom strategies such as differentiated assessment, visual aids, hearing aids, spelling waivers, increased time and dictionaries amongst others, may be used, as determined by the SEN Coordinator in consultation with individual subject teachers. Screening tests, such as WIAT-T, Bangor dyslexia screening, NGRT etc. are carried out by the SEN coordinator for the particular year group.
- The College's NEPS psychologist, in consultation with Senior Management and SEN Coordinator, may carry out psychological assessments and other assessments on students at different times throughout the year.

5. REPORTING PROCEDURES

There are many different methods whereby the results of formal and informal assessments will be reported to students and parents.

- **Student Journal** – the teacher may communicate the outcome of any assessment to the parents/guardian of a student by writing the result or a note in the student journal. The parent/guardian may be requested to acknowledge receipt of this note by countersigning it.
- **Direct Contact** - the teacher may decide as they see fit to contact the parent/guardian directly with respect to the outcome of any assessment undertaken by a student
- **Signature of Parent on Assessment** – the teacher may send the corrected assessment itself home with the student to be viewed and signed by the parent/guardian.
- **Compass** - Parents are informed when reports are uploaded and may access their child's academic records through the Compass system. Formal reports are periodically posted out.
- **Parent Teacher Meetings** – there are Parent Teacher Meetings for all year groups throughout the academic year. At these meetings it will be possible for teachers to relay the outcomes of varying assessments to parents/guardians of individual students that generate an accurate picture of the student's progress
- **JCPA** - Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement: The JCPA captures student achievements in a number of assessment elements undertaken over the three years of junior cycle, including the grades in the state certified examinations at the end of the three-year programme. It will also report on student's achievement in CBAs in subjects and short courses. The JCPA also provides an opportunity for comments on student's achievement, participation or progress in other areas of learning and wellbeing. The JCPA will be issued to students and their parents before the end of the first term following the completion of the Junior Cycle.

Signed: 

Chairperson, Board of Management, St. Mary's College

Dated: 13th December 2022.

Appendices.



In-school AFL Toolkit (Click [here](#))

Junior Cycle Exam Grades – Understanding my child's grade.

Grade Descriptor	Grade Band (As per April 2025).
Distinction	≥ 85 to < 100
Higher Merit	≥ 70 and < 85
Merit	≥ 55 and < 70
Achieved	≥ 40 and < 55
Partially Achieved	≥ 20 and < 40
Not Graded	≥ 0 and < 20



Distinction (90–100%)

- **Grade Meaning** - The student has demonstrated an exceptional level of knowledge, understanding and skill.
- **Example** - Answers are detailed, accurate, well-organised, and go well beyond basic expectations. Shows an excellent application of skills.

Higher Merit (70–84%)

- **Grade Meaning** - The student shows a very high standard of performance.
- **Example** - Work is mostly complete and well-expressed. Demonstrates clear understanding, insight, and good skill application.

Merit (55–69%)

- **Grade Meaning** - The student has achieved a good, solid understanding of the subject.
- **Example** - Most questions are answered well. There may be some errors or gaps, but the overall performance shows competence.

Achieved (40–54%)

- **Grade Meaning** - The student has reached a basic but sufficient standard to pass.
- **Example** - Answers show some understanding, but may be inconsistent, lacking detail or clarity in parts.

Partially Achieved (20–39%)

- **Grade Meaning** - The student shows limited understanding or skill in the subject.
- **Example** - Many gaps in answers. Shows difficulty in explaining or applying concepts.

Not Graded (0–19%)

- **Grade Meaning** - The work submitted was insufficient to be assessed or demonstrated very little understanding.
- **Example** - Most questions are unanswered or completely incorrect