



St. Louis Community School

Assessment Policy

Introduction

This Assessment Policy was developed in partnership with all members of the school community of St. Louis Community School. It recognises the requirement of the school to *regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to the students and their parents*, as set down by the Education Act 1998. This Assessment Policy will be reviewed regularly, as directed by the Board of Management.

Aims and Objectives of this Policy

This Assessment Policy will play a key role in striving to ensure that each student realises his/her full academic potential in a learning environment that reflects a culture of partnership between teachers, parents and students.

The primary aims and objectives of the policy are:

- To facilitate improved teaching and student learning.
- To create a consistent and standardised assessment procedure for monitoring and reporting achievement in the school
- To co-ordinate assessment procedures within departments on a whole school basis
- To develop a whole school approach to assessing students work and recording and reporting of same.

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1. Assessment for Learning & Assessment of Learning

This policy covers both assessment *of* learning and assessment *for* learning. Assessment *of* learning is assessment for accountability purposes, to determine a student's level of performance on a specific task or at the conclusion of a unit of teaching and learning. The information gained from this kind of assessment will be used in reporting.

Assessment for learning is a continuous process which combines a grade with advice to the student towards further improvement. Both forms of assessment are invaluable, and will be used by equally by teachers in this school.

This form of assessment will facilitate target setting for individual students in the individual subject areas.

2. The Purposes of Assessment

- To evaluate what a student has learned in a particular area
- To measure the progress of students over time
- To raise expectations and standards
- To provide feedback to students in a timely and constructive manner
- To provide feedback to teachers on the success of particular teaching methodologies in the learning process
- To highlight difficulties and shortcomings in the learning process in order to develop intervention strategies
- To identify students who may require additional teaching hours and apply to the NCSE if necessary.
- To enable the SEN Coordinator to identify students that will require RACE and apply accordingly.
- To identify students who require extension activities such as learning support
- To encourage and increase the skills of self-assessment
- To keep records of attainment that will inform parents through the school's reporting process
- To encourage students to take responsibility of their own learning in order for them to become a driving force in their own education
- To ascertain whether it is appropriate for a student to continue studying in any given subject area.
- To facilitate target setting for individual students in the individual subject areas.

3. Forms of Assessment

a.) Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning. It does not contribute to the final mark given for work completed instead it contributes to learning through providing feedback. It should indicate what is good about a piece of work and why this is good; it should also indicate what is not so good and how the work could be improved. Effective formative feedback will affect what the student and the teacher does next.

Assessment should support learning as well as measure the outcomes.

Effective assessment for learning enables students to understand how to improve their work by:

- Helping them to understand the assessment criteria before an assignment is begun
- Telling them what they have done well and what they could improve on
- Telling them how to improve their work
- Making available examples of work which do meet the criteria so they can see how to improve their own work
- Being a part of effective planning
- Focusing on how students learn
- Being central to classroom practice
- Recognising all educational achievements.

Formative assessment involves a range of strategies designed to give students, teachers and parents' feedback about students' understanding of elements of their learning in courses.

St. Louis Community School has adopted the Assessment for Learning (AFL) approach to formative assessment. Its purpose is to use the whole process of assessment to help learners improve their learning. It is formative because its intention is to form, shape or guide the next steps in learning. It is about 'learning to learn.'

We recognise, however, that not all aspects of this approach are of benefit in all curriculum areas and the discretion of the teacher is advised to adapt the theory to suit the particular demands of the subject.

b.) Summative Assessment

Summative Assessment is an assessment of the students' learning. The main purpose of summative assessment is to grade and certify students' achievement. Summative assessment is formal in nature.

4. School assessment practices

a.) In-Class Assessment Practices (Formative Assessment)

The most common forms of assessment used in St. Louis Community School are of an informal nature, and these take place regularly in the classroom. These informal assessments are at the discretion of individual teachers who will use them constructively for learning to take place.

Timely feedback and constructive advice are vital components in this process.

Where appropriate, teachers will keep records of these assessments to provide an insight into a student's progress over time and to fully inform the learning process.

Formative assessment practice may include:

- Worksheets & written classwork
- Questions and answers in class
- Essays & assignments
- Reading & writing in Class
- Sample exam questions
- Homework – written or learned
- Observations –in class; in support groups; practical settings; during breaktimes

b.) Summative Assessment Practices

Methods of Summative Assessment used in St. Louis Community School are:

- *End of Unit/Chapter Tests* – Individual subject teachers may decide to administer a test on completion of units of work or chapters. These tests may take the form of formal tests but may also be longer pieces of work completed over a period of time. Some subjects may require the tests to have a practical aspect to them. The results of these tests will be recorded in the student's journal and individual class teachers will record them in their own journal. These tests results may also be recorded on VSware by the subject teacher.
- *Christmas Exams* – All students will sit their Christmas Exams in the school term between the October midterm break and Christmas. Where possible and in order to give students authentic exam practice, students from 3rd and 6th Year will sit these exams in the centres used for the State Exams in June. A special exam timetable will be drafted by the examination's secretary following consultation with the Principal. Reports following completion of these exams will be issued by the teachers. LCA students will be administered in-class tests during this period.
- *Mock Exams* – Mock exams will be scheduled for all 3rd Year, 6th Year and students during the two weeks leading up to the February mid-term. These exam papers will be corrected externally and report cards will be completed by teachers after the results have been received.
- *Summer Exams* – Students from 1st Year, 2nd Year, Transition Year, LCA 1 and 5th Year will complete summer exams during the last school term. A special exam timetable will be drafted by the examination's secretary following consultation with the Principal. Reports will be issued following completion of these exams.

The form that these informal and formal assessments will take, are dependent on the subject area being assessed and will vary from subject to subject. Certain forms of assessment may oftentimes be peculiar to a particular subject.

All forms of assessment above will strive to meet the individual needs and differences of all the students in the classroom when they arise. Classroom strategies such as differentiated assessment, visual aids, hearing aids, spelling waivers, increased time and dictionaries amongst others, may be used from time to time, as determined by the individual subject teacher.

Where feasible, and as determined by each department plan, common assessments across a year group will be used in each subject area. This will provide for increased cooperation and a common benchmark across each subject area.

Students are expected to treat all of the above forms of assessment with respect. Any student who willingly fails to participate fully, or who acts in a disrespectful way towards any form of assessment in the school will be dealt with accordingly.

5. Assessment of students with SEN

Students in St. Louis Community School are regularly monitored by class teachers and SEN support staff, in consultation with parents, to investigate the possible provision of additional help where necessary. The SEN department undertakes a number of assessments which help to identify the nature and level of support required. Some of the assessments that are conducted by the SEN department are as follows:

CAT IV Tests: Incoming 1st Years will undertake standardised assessment which will provide baseline data which may be used as a basis to form mixed ability 1st Year classes. This assessment will offer an early indicator to the school of a student's potential. The CAT IV will be administered in the Spring before the students commences 1st Year in St. Louis Community School.

RACE Applications: Following consultation with NEPS the school will apply for RACE in accordance with the guidelines as set down by the State Examinations Commission.

WIAT-III Testing: The WIAT-III is an individual assessment of academic achievement for students. The WIAT-III encompasses a broad range of academic skills such as reading, writing, mathematics and oral language. WIAT-III testing is conducted by teachers from the SEN department to determine the nature and level of support a student requires.

EAL Students: Students, where English is not their first language, will be assessed using the Department of Education & Skills Post Primary Assessment Kit and the Cambridge English Test. Results from these tests will indicate if any additional language support will be required and EAL classes will be scheduled accordingly.

Behavioural/Psychological Assessments: The school's NEPS psychologist, in consultation with school management, may carry out psychological assessments and other assessments on students at different times throughout the year.

6. State Examinations

St. Louis Community School undertake all assessment practices as outlined and directed by the Department of Education and the State Exam Commission in order to run the examination and assessment system in a fair, accountable and accessible way.

The school will strive to ensure that all 3rd, 6th Year and Leaving Certificate Applied students participate - as directed by the State Exams Commission - in the many assessments that make up the Junior Cert, Leaving Cert and LCA exams. These assessments which may include orals, course work, practical work, portfolio work amongst others, will be operated in accordance with the regulations set down by the State Examinations Commission.

7. Junior Cycle

Assessment at Junior Cycle places the student at the centre of the learning process allowing for new ways of learning and a broader range of skills to be assessed.

Classroom Based Assessments (CBAs)

Classroom-Based Assessments in subjects and short courses provide students with opportunities to demonstrate their understanding and skills in ways not possible in a formal examination.

Classroom-Based Assessments, facilitated by the classroom teacher, are undertaken by students in a defined time period, within class contact time and to a national timetable.

CBAs will be assessed by the individual class teachers. Students will undertake two CBA in all subjects as they are introduced to the curriculum. CBAs will be facilitated by the individual class teacher, one in second year and one in third year. CBAs in all subjects will be specified at a common level.

The assessments associated with CBAs will cover a broad range of activities including oral tasks, written work of different types, practical or designing and making tasks, artistic performances, scientific experiments, projects or other suitable tasks.

Assessment of this practical work will be marked by the State Examinations Commission, together with accompanying written evidence, where appropriate. CBAs will be undertaken by students within class time to a national timetable.

Assessing CBAs

On completion of the CBAs, subject teachers will engage in Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings (SLARs) in order to assess the CBAs. The students' teachers will assess the work completed and the outcomes will be reported to the students.

When assessing the level of student achievement in a CBA against the learning outcomes, subject teachers will use 'on-balance' judgement in relation to the features of quality, which are set out in four level descriptors:

- **Exceptional**
- **Above Expectations**
- **In Line with Expectations**
- **Yet to Meet Expectations**

As the second CBA completed in the practical subjects are marked by the SEC then SLAR meetings may not be required in these specific CBAs.

Assessment Task:

The Assessment Task is a written task completed by students during class time, and is sent to the State Examinations Commission for marking. The Assessment Task is specified by the NCCA and is related to the learning outcomes of the second Classroom-Based Assessment.

Students complete a formal written Assessment Task to be submitted to the State Examinations Commission for marking along with the Final Assessment. Each department plan will indicate the details of the assessment task specific to their subject.

8. Assessment and Reporting

Reporting of assessment should enable parents:

- To be involved in their child's learning
- To understand and encourage the progress their child is making
- To check their child's progress throughout their time in St. Louis Community School

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

Student Journal – students will record all continuous assessment results in their journals for all subjects. The teacher may communicate the outcome of any assessment to the parents/guardian of a student by writing a note in the students' journal. The parent/guardian is expected 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

VSware: Parents will be provided with access to their own child's account on the school's management system, VSware; This will allow parents to view the Christmas, summer and mock reports in relation to their child's academic performance, attendance and behaviour.

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.

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 generates an accurate picture of the student's progress.

Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA): The JCPA will capture 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 and in Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LPs).

The JCPA also provides an opportunity for comments on student's achievement, participation or progress in other areas of learning that may have been included in the school's junior cycle programme, for example, member of the school council or various sports teams. The JCPA will provide an opportunity for every student to have their own particular strengths and engagement in areas of school life, other than the traditional academic areas, recognised and affirmed.

The JCPA will be issued to students and their parents before the end of the first term following the completion of the Junior Cycle

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting of _____ (date)

Signed: _____
Chairperson

Next review date: _____