ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING POLICY

Version	v1
Date Ratified by Board of Management	16/12/2020

Relationship to Mission Statement

Ennis Community College / Gaelcholáiste an Chláir with the co-operation of its educational partners will continue to provide an environment where each student is cherished equally and is nurtured to a personal, intellectual and moral maturity.
The school is committed to creating an atmosphere of excellence in learning by challenging pupils to reach their full potential.
The school will foster an appreciation of the arts, our National culture and all other cultures and ethnicities in response to an ever changing society.
The school is multi-denominational and provides equality of access to children of all social, cultural & religious backgrounds. The characteristic spirit of the school is one of care and attention to all students, irrespective of economic circumstance, gender, sexual orientation, religious or philosophical outlook, race or social situation. It aspires to provide a holistic education encompassing, as far as practicable, all dimensions of the student's being.

Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to provide students and parents with information regarding our Assessment Policy and procedures in line with the Education Act 1998, which requires schools to "regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to the students and their parents". In fulfilling this requirement, schools develop assessment procedures, which provide an accurate account of a student's progress and achievement. As a school we recognise that parents, teachers and students need to have an effective learning-focused partnership to ensure the best possible outcomes can be achieved for our students. The quality framework in Looking at Our Schools 2016, the School Self Evaluation (SSE) process and distributed/shared model of leadership give us, in Ennis Community College / Gaelcholáiste an Chláir, an opportunity to focus on continuous improvement in teaching and learning. This Assessment Policy was developed in partnership with all stakeholders of the Ennis Community College / Gaelcholáiste an Chláir school community and will be presented to and reviewed as appropriate by the school's Board of Management.

Assessment

The term 'assessment' refers generally to the gathering and interpretation of information related to a student's learning: abilities, attainments, strengths and needs.

The Board of Management, staff, students and parents of Ennis Community College / Gaelcholáiste an Chláir recognise that assessment is an important component in achieving the effective educational progress of each student. Such assessment facilitates ongoing learning growth and improvement on the part of the students and teachers.

We recognise that assessment is the bridge between teaching and learning and should motivate pupils, enabling and encouraging them to achieve to the best of their ability. An effective assessment policy will help teachers to identify early and ongoing interventions that need to be put in place to assist students in reaching their potential.

We utilise the NCCA's 'Focus in Learning- Ongoing Assessment Toolkit' to plan our whole school approach to professional learning which in turn improves our assessment practices. We do so while remaining cognisant of our school's School Improvement Plan (SIP) and Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) targets.

The Purpose of Assessment

Assessment should enable students:

- To realise and reach their full academic potential
- To be involved in their own learning
- To develop each student's ability to self-monitor and judge her own performance
- To be motivated to achieve their full potential

Assessment should enable teachers:

- To assess progress and adapt planning as required
- To evaluate their student's learning needs
- To ensure that students know how to improve the standard of their work
- To evaluate teaching and learning styles
- To review and change practice
- To monitor a student's progress and to provide the teacher with information to make decisions about what and how the student is learning
- To identify the next steps in progressing learning and adapt teaching strategies and/or learning activities as appropriate
- To meet statutory requirements
- To provide the students and parents with information regarding progress
- To establish baseline data in relation to a student's attainment in subjects
- To identify appropriate subject levels for subjects for State Examinations purposes
- To identify areas of difficulties for students in order to provide them with additional support
- To identify high achieving, gifted and talented pupils
- To assess a student's eligibility for additional support and services and to inform consultations where necessary
- To assist in the identification of students who may need to be referred to an outside professional or agency for assessment or direct intervention
- To give positive feedback to the learner
- To ensure consistency and the standardised agreement of levels of work within each subject area
- To coordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis
- To establish baseline data which may be used for school self-evaluation purposes

Reporting of assessment should enable parents:

- To be involved in their son's / daughter's learning
- To understand and encourage the progress their son / daughter is making
- To check their son's / daughter's progress throughout their time in secondary school

Formative and Summative Assessment

This policy recognises the importance of on-going assessment both formative (assessment for learning) and summative (assessment of learning) that supports student learning.

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment involves a range of strategies designed to give students, teachers and parents feedback about students' understanding of elements of their learning. It is an integral part of the learning process where information is shared with the learner on the quality of learning. It is linked to learning intentions and success criteria and looks forward to the next stage of learning.

The most common forms of assessment used in the school are of a formative nature and take place regularly in the classroom. Formative assessment is 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. In line with the Framework for Junior Cycle 2015, 'Most of the assessment activities over the three years of junior cycle will be formative in nature'.

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

- Helping them to understand the assessment criteria before they begin an assignment
- Providing feedback on what they have done well and how they can improve
- Comparing their work with examples of work that meet criteria for success
- Recognising all the students' educational achievements
- Helping them develop as independent learners with the capacity to identify how they themselves can further improve their learning

We consider the following to be key classroom practices and strategies needed for formative assessment:

- A positive classroom culture and ethos, which encourages students to think and talk about their learning and which provides a safe place for open, honest and respectful discussion and teacher-pupil relationship.
- Questioning skills (student to teacher/ teacher to student/ student to student), which stimulate thinking and reflection on learning and the explicit teaching of how to consciously reflect on what one knows and how to make an evaluative comment on it (Bloom's Taxonomy).
- Frequent identification and review of learning goals through teacher-directed discussion, clearly defining learning objectives and success criteria thereby empowering students and enabling them to take responsibility for their learning.
- A recognition and acknowledgement of the purpose and importance of collaboration between home and school in the student's learning process.

Ennis Community College / Gaelcholáiste an Chláir has adopted the following key formative assessment strategies:

- Effective Questioning using Bloom's Taxonomy: Teachers have a Bloom's Taxonomy in their Teacher's Journal with verbs to prompt questions at each level of thinking.
- Assessment for Learning Strategies: Teachers utilise, where appropriate, varied formative (AFL) strategies in lessons. Whole school strategies include use of 'Show me' boards, traffic lights in student journal, the use of success criteria, amongst others.
- Learning Intentions: Lessons are guided by specification/syllabus linked learning intentions that are shared with students. Teachers at their own discretion share the learning intention(s) as appropriate for the lesson either before, during or as a result of learning. Teachers 'check in' with the learning intention(s) at the end of lesson(s) using AFL strategies to move students on in their learning.
- Comment Related Marking: Staff use the 2 stars and a wish strategy when commenting on assessments including on summative assessment reports. Teachers will also periodically engage in comment-only feedback: This includes:
    - What the student has done well
    - Where the areas for improvement are
    - How the improvement might be made

  This allows both teacher and student to identify the next steps in learning.
- Sharing Criteria for Success: Success criteria are co-created by teachers and students with specific activities in mind. They are discussed and agreed prior to the undertaking of an activity. Success criteria provide a scaffold and focus for students while engaged in the activity and are used as a basis for feedback and peer-/self-assessment.
- Peer Assessment and Self-Assessment: Teachers will, occasionally, supervise students as they assess their own or their peer's work, based on criteria for success. Following such methods, teachers will encourage students to reflect on their work, write down how they can improve and assist them in achieving it.
- Feedback: As part of the schools' focus on assessment in planning for school improvement formative feedback is provided based on success criteria. Students are encouraged to use feedback to reflect and make improvements.
- Homework: In line with the demands of specifications / syllabi and our Homework Policy, teachers set regular homework, comment on this homework, and make suggestions for improvement.
- Differentiated Learning: Assessment work may be differentiated to suit the needs and abilities of the individual, determined by individual teachers.

There are several purposes to formative assessment:

- To provide feedback for teachers during the learning process so that subsequent learning activities and experiences can be modified
- To identify and remediate group or individual areas for improvement
- To encourage peer-assessment and self-assessment
- To encourage student self-reflection which enables the student to see where exactly they are and how they can improve on this

- To move the focus away from achieving grades and onto learning processes. This results in increasing self-efficacy and reducing the negative impact of extrinsic motivation.
- To encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning

Feedback is the central function of assessment. It typically involves a focus on the detailed content of what is being learned rather than simply a test score or other measurement of how far a student is falling short of the expected standard.

Principles of good feedback practice:

- Clarifies what good performance is (success criteria, expected standards)
- Facilitates the development of self-assessment in learning
- Provides high quality information to students about their learning
- Encourages both teacher and student self-reflection
- Encourages teacher and peer dialogue around learning
- Motivates students and encourages growth and development
- Provides opportunities to close the gap between current and desired performance
- Provides information to teachers that can be used to help shape teaching

Summative Assessment

Summative Assessment is used to determine a student's level of performance on a specific task or at the conclusion of a unit learning. It refers to the assessment of learning, looking back on learning and aims to provide a summary of the achievements of the learner. It happens after the learning takes place. Information is gathered by the teacher and information is usually transferred into grade descriptors or marks. Comparison with performance of others can take place.

Class Tests Assessments:

These forms of assessments will be conducted at the discretion of the teacher on a monthly or end of topic basis. These formal tests are a vital component in providing feedback to teachers, students and parents, on the level of each student's attainment and learning in that specific subject area. Constructive feedback will be given by teachers to students.

End of Term Exams:

Students take formal in house examinations, to monitor their academic performance. Common tests are encouraged. These examinations follow the SEC procedures for the running of state examinations.

Mock Examinations:

These are held for Third and Sixth Year students during the second term. The purpose of these is to further prepare students for the Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate examinations.

Classroom Based Assessments and Assessment Tasks:

Classroom Based Assessments: Students undertake two Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) facilitated by their teacher, generally one in Second Year and one in Third Year. Classroom-Based Assessments in all subjects are specified at a common level. The assessments associated with CBAs

cover a broad range of activities. CBAs will be undertaken by students within class time to a national timetable. Details of the timetable along with assessment guidelines for each subject are available on www.ncca.ie. When students have completed CBAs, the CBAs are assessed by the students' teachers, and the outcomes will be reported to the students and parents/guardians. To support teachers in assessing students' Classroom-Based Assessments, teachers engage in Subject Learning and Assessment Review Meetings (SLARs). At these meetings, teachers share and discuss representative samples of students' work and build a common understanding about the quality of their students' learning.
Assessment Task: The Assessment Task will be completed in class under the supervision of the teacher. The Assessment Task will be returned to the SEC for marking and will be marked as part of the Final Examination. Marks for the Assessment Task in each subject will be incorporated into the calculation of the grade for that subject by the SEC. A separate Assessment Task will not be required in practical subjects where there will be a practical examination.

Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA):
There are a range of modes of assessments in LCA which include: satisfactory completion of modules through key assignments and 90% attendance. Tasks which are assessed through an interview with an examiner from the State Examinations Commission. Oral examinations in languages and English. Final examinations at the end of the second year of LCA.

Types of Assessment in Ennis Community College / Gaelcholáiste an Chláir:

- Formative Assessment
- Summative Assessment
- Classroom Based Assessments (CBA)
- Oral and Aural assessments in languages
- Assessment Tasks (AT)
- Project Work – Presentations, PowerPoints, visual displays, posters
- Practical Examinations in Home Economics, Art, Music, Engineering, Construction Studies, Wood Technology and Technology
- Beep tests in P.E.
- Coursework/Projects – Home Economics, History, Geography, Wood Technology, Engineering, Technology, Constructions Studies and Art
- Online assessments
- Learning Reflections
- Pre and Post Testing in Literacy and Numeracy
- The Cognitive Ability Test 4 (CAT4) are administered to all First Year and Third Year students.

Standardised Tests - CAT 4 and WRAT 4:
The results of these assessments are utilised to:

- Guide Resource and Learning Support teachers
- Identify students with particular needs
- Enable learning support / resource teachers to devise a suitable programme of support
- Develop Student Support Files by the Learning Support Team in conjunction with parents and school management

- Apply for reasonable accommodations for the Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate State Examinations where applicable.

Time of Assessment

- All summative assessments will take place on a planned and regular basis.
- First Year assessments are common level for all subjects
- Class tests at the discretion of the teacher
- House exams at Christmas (late November) and summer
- Mock examinations during the second term for third and sixth year students

Recording of assessments:

- Teachers record both formative and summative assessment
- Summative assessments such as house, mock examinations and CBA reports will be reported to senior management and recorded on school records
- Students record assessments in their log in the school journal

Reporting:

Reporting aims to support and underpin ongoing learning and assessment, and to be manageable, accessible and effective for the school, teacher, student and parent (Junior Cycle Framework, 2015).

Ongoing reporting on student progress can take a variety of forms in Ennis Community College / Gaelcholáiste an Chláir:

- Informal oral and written feedback
- Feedback on areas such as punctuality, behaviour and attendance
- Student Journal
- Parent Teacher Meetings
- Discussions with class teacher / year head / SEN Team
- Student learning logs, diaries, reflections
- End of unit assessments in subject areas either formative or summative
- End of term / year reports
- Communication and engagement with parents / guardians via telephone, VSware, post, social media channels and newsletter
- Feedback in relation to the student engagement in the school's Wellbeing Programme.
- Student participation and achievement in extracurricular activities – Other Areas of Learning
- Classroom-Based-Assessments (CBA'S) reports.
- Effective reporting in Ennis Community College / Gaelcholáiste an Chláir reflects the guiding principles of reporting (in line with the NCCA guidelines 2018):
- Provide opportunities for student feedback to reflect on their learning
- Use the language of learning to provide effective feedback
- Encourages authentic engagement with parents
- Values the professional judgements of teachers
- Is manageable and does not take away from learning and teaching
- Clearly communicates students' progress in learning
- Provides information on a broad range of achievement

- Is sensitive to the self-esteem and general wellbeing of students and takes an inclusive approach. (NCCA, 2018)

There are many methods whereby progress is reported:

- Reports containing results of the end of term / House exams are sent home using VSware. It allows teachers to distinguish levels (where appropriate) as well as enter the mark achieved. A comment is also entered which is specific to the individual students learning. All reports are reviewed by the Year head who also provides feedback to the student and parent / guardian. Records of the results are kept in the school.
- 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. The Year Head should be consulted prior to any contact with parents.
- Signature of Parent on Assessment – the teacher may send the corrected assessment home with the student to be viewed and signed by the parent/guardian.
- Parent-Teacher Meetings – At these meetings it will be possible for teachers to relay the outcomes of varying assessments to parents/guardians of individual students.
- Student Journal – the teacher may communicate the outcome of any assessment to the parent/guardian of a student by writing a note in the student's journal. The parent/guardian is expected to acknowledge receipt of this note by countersigning it.
- Formal reporting on the progress and achievements of students in Junior Cycle will be through the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement which will be issued from the school within the calendar year of the examination. This will complement reporting on progress to parents/guardians during parent-teacher meetings and through normal student feedback sessions, including feedback after the completion of each CBA.
- The JCPA will report student achievement across a range of areas of learning in Junior Cycle, including in: - SEC Final Examinations inclusive of the Assessment Tasks; Classroom-Based Assessments; The area of Wellbeing and Other Areas of Learning.
- Parents of Transition Year students receive regular text messages / emails to inform them of important dates and milestones regarding their son's / daughter's learning.

Improving results:

- In house analysis of summative results and state examinations takes place as appropriate. This provides the basis for discussion and planning within departments and Senior Management in addition to allowing comparisons and evaluation with national results.
- Study skills sessions are held with students to ensure that they are familiar with effective study techniques.
- In order to encourage First Year students to study and adapt to the workload in secondary school homework club is offered free of charge.
- An Student Awards night is held once a year for all year groups. Students who are nominated by their teachers in any of their subject areas will be invited to attend on the night. This is a very effective way of acknowledging and rewarding students' hard work and commitment while encouraging and motivating others to apply themselves to a greater degree.
- Reflection on feedback is actively encouraged. Initiatives and strategies to develop the necessary skills include; individual teacher initiatives, whole school initiatives such as those

promoted by the curriculum leaders team and in our planning for school improvement. Central to this is the principle of reflection as metacognition, where students are aware of and can describe their thinking in a way that allows them to "close the gap" between what they know and what they need to learn.

Roles and responsibilities

Teachers are responsible for:

- Monitoring and formatively assessing student learning on an ongoing basis
- Setting and marking assessments
- Filling in reports
- Providing clear feedback to students in relation to how they can improve their performance
- Liaising with other teachers in the department to coordinate assessments where appropriate.

Subject Coordinators are responsible for:

- Coordinating the review of departmental procedures used for assessment throughout the year.

The Principal is responsible for:

- Overseeing the completion of school reports
- Organising training and support for staff in areas related to assessment when required.

The Deputy Principals are responsible for:

- Organising the logistics of examinations.

The School Guidance Department is responsible for:

- Organising the assessment of needs of students as appropriate
- Reviewing CAT4 tests and follow – up assessments for particular Year Groups / students
- Administering and collating the results of the Career Guidance Assessments.

The SEN Coordinator and team are responsible for:

- Organising the assessment of needs of the incoming 1st Year students in conjunction with school management
- Organising the CAT4 tests for particular Year Groups
- Identifying students with particular needs
- Testing SEN students and liaising with external agencies
- Identifying students suited to the variety of programmes available in the school, implementing these programmes with SEN students and monitoring and assessing their progress
- Liaising with and assisting Senior Management in the structuring and allocation of Educational provision
- Assisting and guiding learning support/resource teachers to devise a suitable programme of support

- Supporting the classroom teacher through the setting of individual targets for SEN students
- Developing Student Support Files by the Learning Support Team in conjunction with parents and school management
- Applying for reasonable accommodations for the Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate State Examinations where applicable

Parents/Guardians have a responsibility to:

- To encourage attendance
- To be familiar with key dates relating to assessment
- To engage in active and positive communication with teachers when necessary and appropriate
- To support teachers in their work to help students achieve their full potential
- To be actively involved in their son's / daughter's education
- To ensure that their son / daughter completes all work assigned in the time designated
- To monitor their son's / daughter's progress.

Students have a responsibility to:

- Have good attendance
- Be aware of key dates for assessment
- Complete all work assigned by their teachers in the time designated
- Put in the effort required for their studies
- Learn and revise course content on an ongoing basis
- Follow the advice and guidance of teachers as to how best achieve their potential
- Encourage each other
- Ask for help as appropriate.

Signed: ***Cllr Ann Norton*** Date: 16/12/2020
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: Date: 16/12/2020
Principal