

2019

St. Colman's Community College, Midleton Assessment Policy



St Colman's Community College

Assessment Policy

St Colman's Community College: Our Mission Statement

- ❖ seeks to provide the best possible education for students, where the talents of each student are developed in a positive atmosphere of respect, effort and fairness.

Policy Links

This policy is informed by and informs other policies including:

- ❖ SEN Policy
- ❖ Wellbeing Policy
- ❖ CBA Policy
- ❖ Assessment Task Guidelines
- ❖ Code of Behaviour
- ❖ Attendance Guidelines
- ❖ Homework Policy
- ❖ T.Y Policy

Aims of this Policy:

- ❖ To outline the aims of assessment in our school
- ❖ To create a consistent and standardized approach to assessment and reporting on learning in St Colman's C. C.
- ❖ To give an overview of the different types of assessment employed in our learning environment
- ❖ To detail the annual schedule of assessments for each year group

What is the Rationale for this policy?

The rationale/purpose of this policy is to ensure that assessment will play a key role in ensuring that each student realises his/her full academic potential in a learning environment that reflects a culture of collaboration between students, teachers, senior leadership and parents. Many stakeholders in St Colmans C.C have contributed to this policy so that this policy is appropriate to the curriculum and the needs of the students.

Definition of Assessment

Assessment is the process of gathering, recording, interpreting, using and reporting evidence of learning in individuals, groups or systems, which relies upon a number of instruments, one of which may be a test. Educational assessment provides information about progress in learning. Formative, diagnostic and summative assessment are undertaken on a regular basis at school level.

Aims of Assessment in St Colman's C.C.

- ❖ To facilitate continually improved student learning and teaching
- ❖ To provide a foundation for teachers to give feedback to students to improve learner outcomes.
- ❖ To help identify appropriate subject levels for students in the Junior and Leaving Certificate
- ❖ To help identify students who may need additional support and services and to inform consultations with the NEPS psychologist where necessary
- ❖ To identify areas of the curriculum that may require further development, subject to allocation
- ❖ To inform subject choice, career guidance and progression to third level and further education.

Types of Assessment:

“When the cook tastes the soup, that’s formative.

When the guests taste the soup, that’s summative.”

Robert E. Stake, Professor Emeritus of Education at the University of Illinois

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is used to monitor student learning which will provide ongoing feedback that can then be used by students to improve their learning and by teachers to improve on their teaching.

Formative assessment can be used to:

- Help students identify their strengths and weaknesses.
- Allow them to see areas that need work.
- Help teachers to see where students are having difficulty and provide relevant support.

Formative assessment is described as being used as a tool for **Assessment for Learning (AfL)**.

Assessment for learning covers all of the aspects of formative assessment but has a particular focus on the *student* having an *active role in his/her learning*.

Some examples of strategies that can be used include:

- ❖ Questioning
- ❖ Think-Pair-Share
- ❖ Anonymous polls
- ❖ Exit/Admit tickets
- ❖ Traffic Light Cards
- ❖ Venn Diagrams
- ❖ Peer assessment
- ❖ Self assessment
- ❖ CBAs

Summative Assessment

Summative Assessment is used to evaluate student learning at the end of a unit of work e.g. topic, chapter. Summative assessment results can be recorded as grades or descriptors and will be kept on student academic records.

Examples of summative assessments include:

- ❖ Standardised tests (Entrance Assessment)
- ❖ Chapter tests
- ❖ Midterm tests
- ❖ End of term tests (November Exams, Christmas Exams, Summer Exams)
- ❖ Classroom Based Assessments(CBA's)
- ❖ Assessment Tasks (AT)
- ❖ Pre-exams
- ❖ Junior Cycle
- ❖ Leaving Certificate Applied
- ❖ Leaving Certificate.

Summative assessment is described as being a tool for **Assessment of Learning (AoL)**.

Formal/In House Assessment

- ❖ In house exams take place for 1st, 2nd and 5th year students in *mid-December* and at the *end of May*.
- ❖ Class groups are assigned to exam centres and are supervised by teachers in a formal setting. These exams take place over a 3 to 4 day period.
- ❖ 6th year students undertake in house exams close to October mid term break.
- ❖ Exam Duration.
 - 1st Year: 1 hour
 - 2nd Year: 1 hour, 20 minutes.
 - 5th Year: 2 hours
 - 6th Years: 2 Hours
- ❖ Formal assessments are important in providing feedback to teachers, students and parents on the level of each student's attainment and learning in each subject area.

- ❖ In house exams provide a practice run of the state exams for junior cert. Students will sample similar styles of paper and questioning and can practice their timing for the exam paper in each subject.
- ❖ In general common assessments across a year group are given in each subject. This provides for increased cooperation and a common benchmark across each subject.
- ❖ A mark or descriptor (New Junior Cycle) and comment is available in every subject for each student on vsware, as a formal report for parents to provide an evaluation of the progress achieved and to encourage further achievement and success for students,

Junior Cycle Classroom Based Assessments.

- ❖ As part of the reformed Junior Cycle, students will undertake two Classroom Based Assessments in each new Junior Cycle subject across 2nd and 3rd year.
- ❖ CBAs in all subjects are specified at a common level.
- ❖ These assessments are undertaken throughout the school year, over a set period of time for each subject, within class time to a National Timetable. (Please refer to CBA Policy)

Assessment Tasks.

- ❖ 3rd Year students also undertake an Assessment Task in each new Junior Cycle subject (with the exception of practical subject)
- ❖ Marks for the Assessment Task in each subject will be incorporated into the calculation of the grade for that subject in the State Examinations by the SEC.
- ❖ (Please refer to CBA Policy)

Please Note:

- ❖ In practical subjects 3rd year students will have projects to complete
- ❖ In house exams for 3rd Year may take place in some subjects (at the discretion of the teacher) during *mid-December*.

Pre Junior and Pre Leaving Certificate Exams.

- ❖ Pre-Junior Cycle and pre Leaving Cert exams take place in February(usually before mid term break).
- ❖ These exams adhere as closely as possible to the formal structure and timing of the State Examinations and help students prepare for the State Examinations by gaining experience in time management and answering techniques.
- ❖ 3rd Year students must remain in school for study sessions when they do not have an exam.
- ❖ Examinations guidelines are shared with students and parents prior to examinations.
- ❖ There is an associated fee that all 6th year and 3rd Year Students for the supply of Exam Papers and Stationary and the correction of Pre Examinations. This fee has to be paid for all students and as it is not a state exam there is no means to waive the fee for those in receipt of social welfare. The exam papers and the correcting is provided by specialised companies as is the case in most second level schools.

Assessment in Leaving Cert Applied

As students complete and submit their LCA coursework they are awarded credits. There are 200 credits available in total which are awarded as follows:

- ❖ 62 credits: 31%: Ongoing attendance,class work and key assignments
- ❖ 70 credits: 35%: 7 Student Tasks(Project Work)
- ❖ 68 credits: 34%: 7 Final Assessments

Total: 200 credits=100%

Assessment in Transition Year

Assessment should be an integral part of the learning process in Transition Year not separate from it. (D.E.S. Guidelines)

Assessment in Transition Year should be diagnostic - so as to provide accurate information with regard to student strengths and weaknesses, and formative, so as to facilitate improved student performance through feedback, guidance and affirmation. In St. Colman's Community College we use a number of different types of assessment in Transition Year.

- ❖ Oral /Aural assessment – beyond just language subjects
- ❖ Project work – written and creative (variety)
- ❖ Self-assessment by students through interviews
- ❖ Peer-assessment through evaluation and discussion of learning outcomes
- ❖ Written /Practical Class tests
- ❖ Skills assessment – practical demonstrations of learning
- ❖ Regular written evaluation of activities and learning outcomes from trips
- ❖ Christmas and Summer reports
- ❖ Certification at end of Transition Year

Reporting

Student achievement/learning is reported on in a variety of ways.

- ❖ To students:
 - Oral feedback
 - Written feedback via subject specific feedback form/sheet
 - Written comments on assignments
 - Grading of assignments
- ❖ To parents
 - Parent/ Teacher meetings
 - Note in student journal
 - Progress Reports
 - Formal Reports on In house assessments
 - Phonecall (in some circumstances)
 - Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA)

Reporting on In House Exams.

- ❖ All in house assessments/CBAs are reported on formally using VShare.
- ❖ Student Reports are made available to parents/guardians via a link they receive from the office
- ❖ This link is made available as soon as possible after results/comments have been entered by teachers
- ❖ A hard copy of their child's report is available for any parent/guardian who requests one
- ❖ Reports may consist of a mark/grade/ descriptor (New Junior Cycle) and/or a teacher comment ensuring timely feedback and constructive advice to ensure further progress towards the State Examinations.

Please Note: GDPR/Over 18s

In the case of students who are 18 years and older we can only report to parents of these students if the student has given us permission to do so.

Assessment of/for students with SEN

1st Years

In February each year prior to their entry, incoming 1st Year students who have already accepted a place in St Colman's C.C. take a Cognitive Ability Test (CAT4 Level E). This test is based on Irish norms. The results of these tests:

1. enable the organisation of mixed ability classes
2. identify students who may be in need of additional support when they join the school
3. identify gifted students.

In addition to the CAT4 tests, the 1st Year students in complete a New Group Reading Test (NGRT). This is used to identify the reading ages of each of the students and to determine which if any students require additional help and support with reading and comprehension. This information is also given to class teachers so that they can take this into account when teaching these students.

Standardised numeracy and literacy scores for each incoming First Year student are gathered from the feeder primary schools in advance of their attendance at second level.

1st, 2nd & 3rd Year

MALT (Mathematics Assessment for Learning & Teaching)

These standardised group tests yield formative information which will directly support individual and whole-class teaching, as well as reliable summative assessments for screening, monitoring and progress tracking.

The WIAT (Wechsler Individual Achievement Test) is used as an individual assessment which covers the following areas: word reading, reading comprehension, reading rate and spelling. This is used within the SEN department as a means of determining supports required by individual students

The WRAT (Wide Range Achievement Tests) includes word reading, reading comprehension and spelling tests. This individually administered test also includes a maths assessment. This test may be particularly helpful in considering RACE applications.

Formal Assessment/In-house Exams

Students in receipt of (Reasonable accommodations for state examinations) RACE are provided with similar supports during in-house formal examinations. The school provides readers, scribes and special centres where possible. Students using Assistive Technology are supported in main examinations centres or special centres where possible. This is dependant on the availability of staffing and/or accommodation during in-house examinations.

Students attending the special class are supported in the Autism Unit for all formal examinations.

Student Wellbeing and Assessment

We aspire to create a progressive learning environment of the highest quality where students grow to become independent, respectful, resilient, responsible and caring men and women of integrity.

Students in St Colmans C. C. are encouraged to become reflective, self-directed learners, to think critically and to aspire to reach their potential academically, emotionally and socially. Student wellbeing is an integral aspect of our shared vision for the support and education of our students. Students are encouraged and expected therefore to engage in various forms of assessment in order to continually reflect on their learning and help work towards reaching their potential.

We expect students to try their best at all times – this includes efforts at participation, classwork, homework, tests and all forms of assessment. We foster positive attitudes towards academic work and effort and expect parents to lead in this regard. We encourage students who experience ‘success’ to work collaboratively with other students in helping to foster learning for all. We encourage students to use any experience of ‘disappointment’ for positive learning and improvement, and to seek advice and support from teachers and parents to help them to use the outcomes of assessment for positive improvements.

Our school journal outlines our Attendance and Homework strategies which promote maximum rates of attendance and participation, and outline the recommended approximate time per night spent on homework. Engagement in attendance, participation in learning and making one’s best effort at homework helps students to reach their potential in all forms of assessment, including class tests, house exams and day to-day learning as assessed through oral questioning, group-work, homework etc.

Supports for Students

We aim to support all students in their learning needs and work in a collaborative manner with parents to help each student experience success in their holistic development. Such supports may include:

- ❖ Teacher feedback (oral/written) to students about their work
- ❖ Care Team, Pastoral Care, Guidance Counsellors, SEN team, Class Tutor , Year Head and Senior Leadership Team Support
- ❖ Awarding and affirming Academic Excellence and achievement
- ❖ Homework Club
- ❖ After-school study
- ❖ Drop by Maths
- ❖ Drop in Art
- ❖ Attendance strategies
- ❖ IT support for CBA's
- ❖ Check and connect
- ❖ Easter Study
- ❖ DEIS initiatives (attainment group)

Policy Adoption

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____ [date].

Dissemination and Publication

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website or is otherwise available to parents and students on request. A copy will be provided to the Parents' Association and made available to parents if requested.

Review and Ratification

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website or is otherwise available to parents and pupils on request. This review will also be provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available.

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management.

Implementation Date 11th June 2019

This policy is in effect after being signed by the Board of Management

Signed: Francis O'Rourke

Date 11/06/19

Chairperson of Board of Management