



Assessment and Reporting Policy, Scoil Mhuire Trim

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1. Introduction

Scoil Mhuire is a Catholic, all girls, voluntary secondary school with a Catholic ethos under the trusteeship of CEIST (Catholic Education an Irish School's Trust). The Assessment and Reporting Policy has been developed in consultation with staff, students, parents/guardians and the Board of Management.

The characteristic spirit of the school is based on the vision and values of the CEIST Charter as outlined in the school's mission statement: **"Scoil Mhuire seeks to provide a quality education for all its students in a challenging and positive environment. We are committed to holistic development and to the achievement of the full potential of each student, particularly those who are disadvantaged or marginalised."**

The mission statement directs all aspects of school life in Scoil Mhuire.

Rationale

There is a legal obligation on schools to assess the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process and to report learning outcomes to parents/guardians - "Principal and teachers shall regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to the students and their parents" [Article 22 (2(b)), Education Act 1998].

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) reporting booklet 'Ongoing Reporting for Effective Teaching and Learning' states that a whole-school policy on assessment appropriate to the curriculum and to students should be developed and implemented consistently and that the assessment calendar should be organised to maximise the manageability and impact of assessment events.

3. Ethos

Scoil Mhuire values teaching and learning as one of the most important of all human activities. Scoil Mhuire seeks to build a quality learning community that welcomes, and bears witness to the Gospel values of Jesus Christ, expressed through the lens of the CEIST Charter (printed in bold below). These are encapsulated in the core values which are intended to support and nourish the lives of the people who are at the heart of CEIST schools.

- ✓ **Promoting Spiritual and Human Development**
- ✓ **Achieving Quality in Teaching and Learning**
- ✓ **Showing Respect for Every Person**
- ✓ **Creating Community**
- ✓ **Being Just and Responsible**

4. Assessment

The term "Assessment" is defined as **the gathering and interpretation of information related to a student's learning abilities, learning attainment, learning strengths, and learning needs.**

Assessment is part of effective teaching and learning and it takes place for the following reasons:

- To monitor a student's progress and to provide the teacher with information to make decisions about what and how the student is learning. This information allows the teacher to identify the next steps in progressing the students learning and adapt teaching strategies and / or learning activities as appropriate.
- To reinforce the learning carried out in the classroom.
- To provide students and parents/guardians with information regarding progress.
- To foster student self-reflection on their learning.
- To help students become independent learners who apply learning from assessment to goal setting for improvements.

- To establish baseline data in relation to a student's attainments in certain subjects.
- To identify students for levels in Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle. It is school policy at Scoil Mhuire to encourage and support ongoing assessment as part of the teaching and learning process.

5. Formative Assessment - Assessment for Learning (AfL)

Definition:

“Practice in a classroom is formative to the extent that evidence about student achievement is elicited, interpreted, and used by teachers, learners, or their peers, to make decisions about the next steps in instruction that are likely to be better, or better founded, than the decisions they would have taken in the absence of the evidence that was elicited”.

(Black, Paul; Wiliam, Dylan (2009). "Developing the theory of formative assessment". Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability. 21 (1): 5–31

The goal of formative assessment is to monitor student learning to provide ongoing feedback that can be used by teachers to improve their teaching and by students to improve their learning. This happens during the learning process in order to allow teachers and students to modify teaching and learning strategies, thereby maximising the potential for meaningful learning. A broad range of evidence and a variety of sources may be drawn upon to achieve this. Formative assessment is intended to complement the use of summative assessment rather than replace it.

Formative assessment:

- a. helps students to better understand their strengths and to identify areas of concern that need work using teacher feedback.
- b. helps teachers recognise where students need support and address this appropriately.

6. Implementation of Formative Assessment

Scoil Mhuire endeavours to implement formative assessment. This is in line with our School Self Evaluation Report and Improvement Plan 2021 - 2022 and may involve using some of the following methods:

- **Learning Intentions:**

Teachers will share the learning intentions with students at an appropriate time in each lesson, refer to them throughout the lesson and again at the end of the lesson where deemed necessary. This will help to clarify what the student was supposed to have learned and will assist both teachers and students in determining the levels to which the outcomes have been achieved.

- **Features of Quality/Criteria for Success:**

Teachers will tell students in advance of a piece of work what exactly they will be looking for when assessing it. Teachers are aware that it is important to share this information with students beforehand so that they will be in a better position to know what is expected of them. They can also decide how far they want to push themselves.

- **Self-assessment:**

Teachers will, from time to time, supervise students to correct their own work, based on a list of criteria for success. Departmental rules/guidelines are applied to suit specific subject needs. Following such methods, teachers will encourage students to reflect on their work and write down how they can improve and assist them in achieving it.

- **Peer-assessment:**

Teachers will also, from time to time, supervise students to correct their peer's work, based on a list of criteria for success. Following such methods, teachers will encourage students to reflect on their work and write down how they can improve and assist them in achieving it.

- **Formative feedback:**

Teachers, from time to time, will engage in comment only feedback. It allows both the teacher and the student to identify the next steps in learning.

This includes the following: **“What the student has done well”**, **“Where the areas for improvement are”** and **“How the improvement might be made”**.

7. Feedback

Oral feedback:

Oral feedback to students is an effective method of highlighting strengths and target areas for improvement. It is therefore necessary to use effective dialogue appropriate to the student. It is good practice to ask the student to repeat the feedback to the teacher and take note in their copy for future reference. Most feedback between students and teachers should be in the form of oral communication. Oral feedback happens frequently and can be given following homework exercises, classwork, class questioning, or examinations.

Written feedback:

It is school policy to state what the student has done well, what they need to improve and how to improve. Written feedback happens from time to time and can be given following homework exercises, classwork, or examinations. Recording all feedback to learners in written form can impinge on valuable time for learning and teaching.

Therefore, it is not expected that all feedback should be provided in written form. In the case of school reports, feedback is short but meaningful. Teachers endeavour to comment on how the student can make progress.

The following are considered to be key classroom practices and strategies needed for AFL:

- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Questioning skills (student to teacher/ teacher to student/ student to student), which stimulate thinking and reflecting on learning and explicit teaching of how to consciously reflect on what one knows and how to make an evaluative comment on it (see appendix on 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. This may be facilitated by various means including online platforms.

8. Summative Assessment - Assessment of Learning (AoL)

Definition: Summative Assessment refers to the assessment of learning and aims to provide a summary of the achievements of the learner. All years have timetabled house examinations in November each year. Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate students have Mock examinations in early February and the State examinations in June. Other years except for Transition Year students have house exams in May.

- Teachers give regular class tests in various subjects and results are recorded on the relevant pages of the Homework Journal to track academic progress. Results will be returned to students in a timely manner.
- The mode of assessment may include written examinations, practicals, aurals, oral work, project work, Classroom Based Assessments (CBAs)/assessment tasks.
- Transition Year (TY) assessments may involve the following: external certification, portfolio, oral presentation, and self and peer evaluation.

- Examinations generally follow a similar format to the Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate Examinations and a marking scheme is clearly defined.
- Mock Examinations are set and corrected externally.
- Reports are available to parents/guardians following examinations.
- Parents of TY students receive progress reports in January.
- Classroom Based Assessment (CBA) descriptors are awarded to students on completion of CBA 1 in Second year and CBA 2 in Third year. The descriptors from CBA 1 will be included in the student's end of year report.
- The Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) will include the student's results from their Junior Cycle State examinations, their descriptors from CBA 1 and CBA 2 and results from any short courses undertaken or LPL1 and LPL2 results.
- Any other areas of Learning from any non-academic achievements will also be included on the JCPA. The student journal has a dedicated area where students can record other areas of learning.

9. Psychometric Tests

The following tests are administered to incoming First Years students:

- **CAT 4** Level E – Verbal, Numerical, Non-Verbal, Spatial
When the results of the tests become available appropriate action is taken in line with the Special Education Needs (S.E.N.) Policy. Students with numeracy and/or literacy issues are identified.
- **The New Group Reading Test (NGRT)** is a standardised, termly assessment that reliably measures reading skills against the national average to help you get to the root of any problems precisely and quickly. NGRT provides information about sentence completion and comprehension skills allowing you to identify where difficulties lie. Being a termly assessment allows for regular monitoring of reading progress and measuring the impact of intervention, and a pupil's reading ability can be benchmarked using the Standardised Age Score (SAS).

When the results of the test become available, they will be shared with the S.E.N department to provide extra information on students as learners.

All results of psychometric tests, CAT and NGRT are available to teaching staff on the school network.

10. New Junior Cycle

From September 2020 all subjects are assessed under new subject specifications, and in June 2022 all subjects will be examined by the State Examinations Commission (SEC). The state exams will be no longer than 2 hours, the results will form a part of the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA). This offers students a more complete report on progress throughout the Junior Cycle. The JCPA will also include descriptors awarded for levels of achievement in Classroom Based Assessments, short courses, and other learning experiences.

The Assessment Task mark will be included in the final examination grade, and both are graded by the SEC. The grading of new subjects will be as follows in State Exams:

Grading of the Final Examination:

Distinction	90% - 100%
Higher Merit	75% - 89%
Merit	55% - 74%
Achieved	40% - 54%
Partially Achieved	20% - 39%
Not graded	0% - 19%

Classroom Based Assessment (CBA) and Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA)

Classroom-Based Assessments emphasise the importance of formative assessment in supporting teaching and learning. In each subject, students will undertake two Classroom-Based Assessments facilitated by their teacher.

The reporting process at Junior Cycle will culminate in the award of the JCPA to students. The JCPA will reward achievement across all areas of learning as applicable: Subjects, Short courses, Wellbeing, Priority Learning Units, Other Areas of Learning. The JCPA will be issued by the school in December after the Junior Cycle is completed.

Classroom-Based Assessments will provide students with opportunities to demonstrate their understanding and skills in a way which would not be possible in a formal examination. A particular purpose of the Classroom Based Assessments is to facilitate developmental feedback to students during their engagement with the assessment task and at the end of the process.

Examples of CBAs include oral presentations, written work of different types, practical or designing and making activities, artistic performances, scientific experiments, projects, or other suitable tasks. Work related to the Classroom-Based Assessments is best seen as an integral part of ongoing assessment and routine classroom practice. (See appendix for more information on CBAs.)

Marking of CBAs.

There are four descriptors of achievement for classroom-based assessment as follows:

- 1) **Exceptional.**
- 2) **Above expectations.**
- 3) **In line with expectations.**
- 4) **Yet to meet expectations.**

Teachers develop an understanding of the above descriptors by attending Subject Learning Assessment Review (SLAR) meetings. This is where teachers come together in subject department meetings to discuss the quality of the students work. The SLAR meetings play a key role in helping teachers to understand standards and expectations. The descriptors from CBA1 and CBA2 will be communicated to parents/guardians on VShare. The descriptors will also be included on the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) received from the school after the Junior Cycle.

Assessment Task (AT)

The written Assessment Task, marked by the SEC, relates to the learning outcomes of the second Classroom-Based Assessment. The written Assessment Task may require the student to demonstrate an understanding of the knowledge and skills developed during the second Classroom-Based Assessment. The Assessment Task will be completed in class under the supervision of the teacher and will be sent to the SEC for marking along with the script for that subject in the state-certified examination. Marks for the Assessment Task in each subject will be incorporated into the presentation of the grade for that subject.

Further details and the specifications for the Classroom-Based Assessments are available on the Assessment Toolkit at www.juniorcycle.ie

11. Reporting

Teachers use the teacher journal, student journal, and the VShare software system to keep records and report progress on assessment. From time to time, teachers may arrange formal and informal meetings with parents/guardians and/or students in support of this ongoing progress.

12. School Reports

A school report is an official document completed by a student's teachers setting out the achievement and progress of a student in all subject areas at particular stages of the academic year. The report is addressed to a student's

parents/guardians but will be written in a manner that is easily understood by the individual student. A school report complements the ongoing assessment of a student by their teachers that takes place regularly during the academic year e.g., correction of homework, classroom tests.

School reports will be issued as follows:

- I. December (6th Year) - grade and comment from winter assessments.
- II. December (3rd Year) - depending on subject/course but generally a grade and comment based on winter assessments.
- III. December (5th Year) - grade and comment from winter assessments.
- IV. December (1st/2nd Year) - depending on subject/course but generally a grade and comment based on winter assessments.
- V. March (3rd/6th Year) - grade based on results of the mock examinations
- VI. June - (1st/2nd/5th Years) grade and comments based on summer examinations
- VII. Transition Year will receive reports from winter assessments and at the end of the academic year.

Every report will be available to staff and parents/guardians on VShare.

In commenting on student performance and progress on reports, teachers will use as much formative feedback as possible i.e., pointing out areas of strength as well as how improvement can be made, where applicable.

Parents/guardians are strongly advised to monitor their daughter's progress by also having regard to the more frequent marking and correction undertaken by teachers throughout the full school year e.g., homework, class tests.

13. Parent-Teacher Meetings

The school arranges a formal parent-teacher meeting for each year group in the course of the academic year. Each meeting takes place between 16.15 and 18.45 on a date that is stated in the annual school calendar.

Given the structure of parent-teacher meetings, it is essential that certain protocols will apply, as follows:

- i. Consultations between teachers and parents/guardians should be kept as brief as possible in an attempt to minimise delays.
- ii. These meetings must conclude by 18.45. Parents/guardians are asked, therefore, to attend as early as possible at the relevant meeting.
- iii. It is expected that all meetings between teachers and parents/guardians will be conducted in a professional and respectful manner with focus on the student's performance in the relevant subject.
- iv. Because of the relative lack of privacy and time constraints at these meetings, any matters requiring more detailed discussion and sensitivity should be addressed at a separate meeting that can be arranged at a mutually suitable time. The Principal and/or Deputy Principal will also be available to meet parents/guardians in the course of these meetings.

14. Project work:

There are various deadlines for project work, Classroom Based Assessments, portfolios, and orals to be met by each student at Junior Cycle level and Leaving Certificate level. The key dates for the Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate can be checked on the State Examinations timetable. It is expected that students do not leave class in a subject to complete project work in another subject.

15. Evaluation

Scoil Mhuire is committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of this policy.

16. Review and Development

As part of the ongoing review process, this policy will be examined to reflect feedback from evaluation practices and to ensure legal compliance and the maintenance of best practices.

Ratified by Board of Management on **24th November 2022**

To be Reviewed: **November 2024.**

Appendix: FAQs on CBAs and Bloom's Taxonomy Diagram

Retrieved from <https://www.ict.ie/perch/resources/maths/new-cbaslar-frequentlyasked-questions.pdf>

Q: Can students get help with their work outside the classroom?

Support for students can be given but the teacher must monitor the student throughout the process. Only work that is the student's own can be accepted for assessment in the JCPA. Q: I have a student with special educational needs (SEN). What supports can they be given? If a student has a specific physical or learning difficulty, reasonable supports may be put in place to remove, as far as possible, the impact of the disability on the student's performance in the Classroom Based Assessments. These supports e.g., the support provided by a special needs assistant or the support of assistive technologies, should be in line with the arrangements the school has put in place to support the student's learning throughout the school year.

Q: How do we assess the work using the features of quality?

Page 7 of the Assessment Guidelines describes how to use the Features of Quality as follows: 'When using the Features of Quality to assess the level of student achievement in a Classroom-Based Assessment, teachers use 'on balance' judgement. The teacher should read the Features of Quality (starting with Yet to meet expectations) until they reach a descriptor that best describes the work being assessed. Where it is not clearly evident which descriptor should apply, teachers must come to a judgement based on the evidence from the student's work to select the descriptor that best matches the student's work overall. This 'best fit' approach allows teachers to select the descriptor that 'on balance' describes the work being assessed'.

Q: Does the CBA count towards the SEC grade at the end of Third Year?

CBAs do not form part of the SEC component. The Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement will document achievement in CBAs and for the SEC component separately. The SEC component includes student achievement in the assessment task and the final assessment towards the end of third year. It should be noted that 'The Assessment Task is directly related to the nature and focus of the second Classroom-Based Assessment the Statistical Investigation, which is to pose a question, gather and analyse data and interpret it in the context of the original question. The knowledge and skills developed by students during this Classroom Based Assessment emerge from their growing awareness of statistical inquiry' (*Assessment Guidelines p.32*).

Q: Can a descriptor be appealed?

Queries in relation to the Descriptors awarded for the Classroom-Based Assessments, where they arise, will be dealt with by the school (Assessment Guidelines page 23).

Bloom's Taxonomy Diagram: <https://www.pinterest.ie/pin/218565388138370379/>,
<https://duffystirling.wordpress.com/2011/09/11/simpsons-blooms-taxonomy-and-multiple-intelligences-posters/>



Evaluating

Justifying a decision or course of action

Checking, hypothesising, critiquing, experimenting, judging



Applying

Using information in another familiar situation

Implementing, carrying out, using, executing



Remembering

Recalling information

Recognising, listing, describing, retrieving, naming, finding

More Brainpower Needed

Creating

Generating new ideas, products, or ways of viewing things

Designing, constructing, planning, producing, inventing.



Analysing

Breaking information into parts to explore understandings and relationships

Comparing, organising, deconstructing, interrogating, finding



Understanding

Explaining ideas or concepts

Interpreting, summarising, paraphrasing, classifying, explaining



Less Brainpower Needed