

Assessment Policy



"Live as free people"

St Peter's Community School

Scope:

This policy applies to the entire school community, i.e. students, parents, teachers, management and the board of management. It recognises assessment as an important element of effective learning and teaching. The term 'assessment' refers generally to the gathering and interpretation of information related to a student's learning abilities, learning attainments, learning strengths and learning needs.

Relationship to the School's Mission Statement:

This policy aims at helping students to become better and self-reflective learners which is central to St. Peter's fundamental aim to develop the student's full potential, foster a love of learning and contribute to future success.

Rationale:

As identified in Article 22 2(b) of the Educational Act 1998 "Principal and teachers shall regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to the students and their parents." Assessment is an integral part of the teaching process and guides and informs the appropriateness and effectiveness of methodology and practice.

Reporting the outcomes of assessment serves as a guide to students and parents/guardians in relation to learning progress or regression and assists in identifying how future progress can be made to enhance learning.

The policy was drawn up in order to have a consistent approach to assessment and a sense of responsibility for learning amongst all the partners.

Aims:

The aim of this policy is to ensure that students realise their full academic potential in a supportive learning environment. This in turn will improve the teaching and learning.

- To establish baseline data and identify the next steps in progressing students' learning.
- To ensure that students are motivated to achieve their full potential and to help students to become better, self-reflected learners.
- To enable subject teachers and class tutors to assess pupil progress effectively and to raise the achievement levels of all pupils.
- To ensure parents are aware of assessment procedures in our school and encourage parents to take an interest and supportive role in relation to assessment.

Policy Content:

Forms of Assessment:

Informal assessment which takes place regularly in the classroom and are used by teachers constructively for learning to take place. This includes activities such as; answering oral and written questions and tasks in class, group work, oral presentations, reading and homework.

Formative assessment (Assessment for learning) which involves a number of strategies designed to provide information regarding students' understanding and progress. Its purpose is to use the process of assessment to help students improve their learning and its intention is to form or guide the next steps in learning. It's about 'learning to learn'.

Summative assessment (Assessment of learning) which determines 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 type of assessment is used in end of term reports.

Examples of summative assessments in St. Peter's include:

- Class Tests
- Mid-Term Assessments
- Christmas Examinations
- Summer Examinations
- Pre Examinations for Junior and Senior Cycle

Psychometric testing which include tests such as CAT 4, the New Group Reading Test and progress tests in maths are conducted by the Career Guidance Counsellor. The results of these tests are made available to teachers and inform decisions about the needs of students based on ability and potential. This information helps set targets for learning and public examinations and allow us to track student progress in a systematic way.

Well Being A wellbeing survey is conducted with the first-year group called "Pupils Attitude to self and school". This information helps to identify specific needs and attitudes of students which allows the school to support students as they transition from primary school.

State Exams & CBAs The school strives to ensure that all third and sixth year students participate, as directed by the State Exam Commission (SEC), in the many assessments, projects and Classroom Based Assessments (CBAs) that make up the Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate Exams. These assessments are operated in accordance with the regulations as set down by the SEC.

Additional Educational Needs:

All forms of assessment strive to meet additional needs of students when they arise. Classroom strategies such as differentiated assessment, visual aids, spelling waivers etc. may be used from time to time, as determined by the individual subject teacher & the AEN Dept.

This department conduct specific tests such as WRAT 4/WIAT 3 which the school psychologist seeks and is needed for application for RACE and RA (reasonable accommodations). The SEN department endeavour to provide appropriate support for all students with SEN or RA and maintain individual support plans to assist the continued learning of students.

The school's NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service), in consultation with school management and parents, may conduct psychological assessments and other assessments on students throughout the year.

Feedback & Reporting:

Timely and appropriate feedback is a key component of assessment.

There are different methods whereby performance, progress/regression in assessments and how students can develop are shared with students and parents/guardians such as; written and oral feedback, direct contact with parents, school administration system reports and parent-teacher meetings.

Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) Before the end of the first term following the completion of the Junior Cycle, each student will receive a composite JCPA from the school which will report student achievement across a range of learning in Junior Cycle: SEC Final Examination inclusive of assessment tasks, CBAs, Well Being and other areas of learning.

Another key element of assessment in St. Peter's is our **Academic Monitoring System**. Class tutors track and analyse students' results and meet with students on a regular basis to discuss their goals and performance, and assist them in setting goals, identify practical ways in which they can improve and motivate students to reach their full potential.

Our **Barr Bua Awards** (whole-school annual student awards) acknowledges and celebrates students' successes and achievements in state exams, academic performance and students' contribution to school life.

Roles Regarding Assessment:

Subject Teachers:

- Are expected to explain assessment procedures and assessment techniques to students so that students can reach their full potential.
- Should explain and teach students how to study and prepare for assessments. When appropriate success criteria should be discussed and identified.
- Are expected to set regular, varied and appropriate assessments on topics covered in class. It should be suited to the material covered and the level of the class. A record should be kept of results.
- Should set assessments for exam classes that reflect the style of assessment tasks students will be expected to complete in state exams.
- Are expected to analyse and reflect on students' performances in state exams. This analysis should inform future planning, learning and teaching.
- Are expected to prepare students for Junior Cycle Classroom Based Assessments (CBAs), explain the features of qualities, provide descriptors, hold a Subject Learning Assessment Review (SLAR) meeting and report these descriptors to students and parents, which will form part of their Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA).
- Where appropriate and applicable, teachers will ensure special needs are catered for and marking schemes modified appropriately.
- Should explain marking schemes clearly and allocate time to allow pupils to reflect on feedback and revise their work.
- Provide feedback to the student which is constructive, identifying areas for improvement and guidance as to how these improvements can be achieved.
- Should notify parents, in the student journal or directly if a student's performance does not meet the student's ability and/or the school's expectations, or of any difficulties regarding their child's progress.
- Should liaise with other teachers in their subject department when planning, setting common assessments and identifying how assessment informs their teaching and learning.
- Should consider how to incorporate the use of ICT in assessment.
- Must implement the policy.

Students:

- Are expected to prepare and study for assessment tasks and complete all assessment tasks when feasible.
- Are expected to be punctual for assessments and to ensure they have all appropriate/permissible materials necessary.
- Should seek clarification from subject teachers about assessment procedures and techniques when unsure regarding these issues.
- Are expected to reflect and act on the feedback they receive. They should consider this feedback when completing future tasks/assessments.
- Should take responsibility for improving their performance by identifying, with assistance from their teacher(s), how this can be achieved.
- Are expected to set targets/goals (both short and long term) for their performance in each subject.
- Should read school reports carefully, identifying; areas for maintenance/improvement, how these improvements can be achieved and should apply this learning to future tasks. If unsure, they should seek clarification from their teacher(s).
- Are expected to be open to discuss their progress with relevant teachers e.g. Subject/Class/Year tutors, Career Guidance Counsellor, Management.

Parents:

Parents have a vital role to play in helping their children to achieve their full potential while at school. A positive and supportive home environment in which school and schoolwork are seen to be important provides an excellent starting point. All available evidence suggests that pupils of parents who show real interest in their children's education have a much better chance of making a success of their time at school.

- Are expected to motivate and support their children so that they can achieve their full potential.
- Should provide adequate facilities to enable your child undertake their homework and revision properly, if at all possible a quiet room with proper lighting and heating. It is not possible to do homework and revision effectively while watching television or listening to loud music.
- Are expected to discuss and reflect on school reports with their children, paying particular attention to how progress may be achieved and setting goals for future assessments.
- Are expected to attend parent – teacher meetings and to liaise with the teachers and the school in relation to their children's academic progress.
- Are expected to examine the homework journal and sign it weekly.
- If your child is experiencing difficulty with homework/revision please contact the school and request a meeting with the Year Head.
- Should discourage your child from engaging in part-time work during the school week. Weekend work should not be allowed to interfere unduly with school work.
- Are asked not to keep your child home from school unless it is absolutely necessary. Medical and other appointments should be arranged for outside of school hours if at all possible. If your child is absent please encourage your child to find out what

Duration of Homework & Revision:

The amount of time taken to complete homework will vary from student to student and from year to year. Nonetheless parents/pupils may find the following broad time allocation useful.

First Year	1.5 hours per night
Second Year	2 to 2.5 hours per night
Third Year	2.5 to 3 hours per night
Fourth Year	1.5 to 2 hours per night
Fifth Year	3 to 4 hours per night
Sixth Year	4 hours+ per night and dedicated weekend study

Senior cycle students should aim to incorporate homework and exam revision into their study. Pupils who are sitting for state/house examinations will probably require more time as exam time approaches.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In addition to the responsibilities already outlined in relation to homework, the following parties have a role to play to further support the area of homework.

Board of Management

The Board will consider reports from the Principal on the implementation of the policy and subsequently approve it.

The School

School management provides the following structures:

- Study skills seminars for students.
- Supervised study for students in sixth, fifth and third years. This is available after school 4 – 6 p.m. for all students who wish to avail of the service. The facility is extended to Saturdays and holiday breaks for sixth year students (when there is sufficient demand.)
- The Principal will monitor the implementation of the policy and ensure it is evaluated and if necessary developed.

Exam Co-ordinator

- Liaises with management and teachers to co-ordinate in-school end of term/Pre summative assessments; setting assessment timetables for each year group, teacher supervision timetables, communicating key details and ensuring all materials necessary for assessments are available.

Exam Secretary

- Liaises with teachers, students and management in relation to the logistics of state exams.

Subject Departments

- Each subject department will have particular homework & revision guidelines. Teachers will advise students of these requirements.
- Where feasible, and as determined by each subject plan, common summative assessments across a year group are used in each subject area. This provides for increased cooperation and a common benchmark across each subject area.

Pastoral Care Personnel

- Will monitor the effects of the policy and identify students experiencing difficulty.
- Class teachers will form the Academic Monitoring team, working with individual students to help them achieve their potential (as identified above)
- Will provide support and guidance for those students and liaise with subject teachers, especially in relation to consideration for students with special educational needs.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

- The Academic Monitoring team will implement the Academic Monitoring System.
- Each subject department will develop guidelines in relation to homework, revision and assessment in their own subject areas.
- Class/Year Tutors will instruct their class groups on the policy including the time guide.
- Learning & teaching strategies and how we can help students reach their full potential are a key focus of S.S.E. and the School Plan.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

- If the school partners are satisfied with the effectiveness of the policy.
- If results are accurately recorded and monitored and that students are achieving results in line with the student's ability/potential.
- If students' results in state exams are maintained/improved across all subject areas and are in keeping with National averages and the school's expectations of individual students..

MONITORING PROCEDURES

- Subject teachers will monitor students' learning and performance, results and school reports to check that individuals are learning and reaching their goals and full potential.
- Class teachers (Academic Monitoring Team) will track and analyse students' performances and will meet with students on a regular basis to ensure students set suitable goals and are taking responsibility for their own learning.
- Results in State exams will be monitored, analysed and reviewed annually.

REVIEW PROCEDURES

This policy will be reviewed annually by subject departments at the beginning of the school year. The policy will be reviewed by the parents, students and the Board of Management as appropriate.