

ASSESSMENT POLICY



BALBRIGGAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Principal: Mr Emmet Sheridan

Balbriggan Community College - Assessment Policy

Assessment Policy Statement:

The Education Act (1998) and circular 0058/19 requires schools to regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to students and their parents. In fulfilling this requirement, schools develop assessment procedures, which provide an accurate account of a student's progress and achievement. This Assessment Policy outlines the importance of assessment and the key role students, parents and teaching staff play in supporting this policy document.

Aims of the Policy: This Assessment Policy aims to

1. Explain the rationale and importance of assessments
2. List the different types of assessments
3. Detail the annual schedule of assessments
4. Detail the reporting procedures post assessments
5. To account for the storing and distribution of assessments

Rationale - Why Assess?

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. Assessment is part of good teaching and learning and takes place for the following reasons:

- to monitor a student's progress and to provide the teacher with information about what and how the student is learning. This information allows the teacher to identify the next steps in progressing the student's learning and to adapt teaching strategies and/or learning activities as appropriate.
- to provide the student and their parents with information regarding their progress.
- to establish baseline data in relation to a student's attainments in certain subjects
- to help students to choose appropriate levels at Junior and Senior Cycle.
- to assess a student's eligibility for additional support and services and to inform consultations with the DDLETB psychological support service 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 teach students to assess their own work

Types of Assessment

Assessment arrangements for Junior Cycle subjects

A new dual approach to assessment has been introduced that supports student learning over the three years of junior cycle. This new approach measures and reports achievement at the end of those three years. This dual approach reduces the focus on one externally assessed examination as a means of assessing students and increases the prominence given to **classroom-based assessment** and **formative assessment**. This change of emphasis arises from an acknowledgement that students learn best when teachers provide feedback that helps students to understand how their learning can be improved.

All CBA assessment tasks must be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the Principals office. Class teachers must sign the appropriate paperwork/ sign off sheets and they will be stored in the Principals office

All assessment for certification purposes remains external (State Examinations Commission).²

Formative Assessment: (Assessment for Learning)

Formative assessment is ongoing and involves teachers and students reflecting on how learning is progressing and deciding on the next steps to ensure successful outcomes. It involves a shift from focusing mainly on summative judgements to engaging in ongoing activities that can be used to support next stages of learning. A vital part of formative assessment is the feedback that teachers provide to their students and students' feedback to teachers. Through a range of assessment for learning strategies the teacher helps the student to identify what has been achieved and where there is room for further learning and development.

Classroom-Based Assessments in subjects and short courses

Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) have been introduced to allow students to demonstrate their understanding of concepts and skills and their ability to apply them in ways that may not be possible in an externally assessed examination. They will be used in the assessment of learning in subjects and in short courses.

Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) will be assessed by the students' teachers and reported on to students and parents/guardians during junior cycle and in the JCPA. Students will undertake two Classroom-Based Assessments facilitated by their teacher, one in second year and one in third year. Classroom-Based Assessments in all subjects will be specified at a common level.

Assessment Task

The written Assessment Task for each subject will be specified and published by the NCCA. It will relate to the learning outcomes of the second Classroom-Based Assessment. Students must complete their second CBA in order to undertake the associated Assessment Task.

The Assessment Task will be completed in class under the supervision of the teacher in accordance with a timeframe and guidance from the NCCA. 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. The value to be assigned to the Assessment Task will be included in the assessment guidelines for each subject.

A separate Assessment Task will not be required in those practical subjects where the second CBA will continue to be assessed by the SEC (Art, Craft and Design, Music, and the Technology subjects – MTW and T.G).

Subjects in Junior Cycle with new specifications will be assessed through:

- Two **Classroom Based Assessments** (one in second year and one in third year) reported on to parents/guardians by the school
- An **Assessment Task** (marked by the SEC) in each subject
- A **Final Examination** set, held and marked by the SEC.

The combination of the Assessment Task and the Final Examination will generate a final grade, certified by the SEC.

Summative Assessment: (*Assessment of Learning*)

The goal of **summative assessment** is to evaluate student learning at the end of an instructional unit. It aims to provide a summary of the achievements of the learner.

- 1st, 2nd and 5th year students undertake in-house exams before in November and summer breaks.
- Third- and sixth-year students undertake 'Mock' exams in the two weeks before the midterm, in the second term. Examination papers are usually sourced externally.
- 1st and 5th years will have class exams in February.
- 2nd years will have a class exam in subjects that do not have a CBA in February
- The total number of days required for Leaving Cert mock exams will be kept under review.
- Tests are normally 60 - 90 minutes in duration for November, and 90-180 minutes for the Summer exam.
- Marked scripts will be handed back to students in all cases.
- For in-house exams a common assessment takes place in all subjects in first year and in when possible in 2nd and 5th year.. This will provide for increased cooperation and a common benchmark across each subject area.
- Monthly/End of Topic/Chapter Tests - These forms of assessments will be conducted at the discretion of the teacher on a monthly, end of chapter 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 students attainment and learning in that specific subject area. Constructive feedback will be given by teachers to students who complete these tests.
- Transition Years:
 - As Transition Year is focused on experiential learning and personal development, the forms of assessment used may vary from the standard practices used in other years.
 - Portfolio assessments take place in May. They will have formal house exams in May
 - Transition Year assessments involves the following: Written exams, portfolio work, oral presentation and interview.
 - TY are assessed based on credits
 - 60 credits for portfolio
 - 70 credits for 7 core subjects
 - 20 credits for 2 work experience

Schedule of Assessments

As indicated by *Circular Letter 0024/2016* - There is a need to avoid 'over-assessment' and the cumulative burden on students and teachers of multiple assessments across the full range of subjects. In this context, the Classroom-Based Assessments will substitute other assessments currently undertaken in the school such as in-house examinations, etc. as appropriate.

Acknowledging the DES's directive to avoid 'over-assessing', subject departments and management, in consideration of scheduled DES dates, will review the need for in-house examinations going forward.

State Exams

The school will support students in preparation for the State Exams. We will ensure that students are fully informed of the practices and procedures necessary for these exams.

The Junior and Leaving Certificate Examinations begin the first Wednesday after the June Bank Holiday Monday each year. The exact timetable of examinations is usually available from the previous January.

Reporting Procedures

- Reports are made available to parents in December and in June through VSware and or postal. In the case of mock examinations, reports are available to parents as soon as possible following the examinations.
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There are many different methods whereby the results of formal and informal assessments will be reported to students and parents (Non-Standardised Reports):

- Student Journal – the teacher may communicate the outcome of any assessment to the parents/guardian of a student by writing the result or a note in the student 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.
- Parents are welcome to arrange a meeting by appointment.
- 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 generate an accurate picture of the student's progress.

Continuous Professional Development:

Staff CPD is an integral component of the ethos and philosophy of Balbriggan Community College. Teaching & learning courses support formative assessment and this is embedded through initiatives such as TL21, TA 21 and other various initiatives.

Standardised Tests: Balbriggan CC

. Before entering 1st Year – CAT

December of 2nd Year – WRAT Spelling and Maths and Reading Test

February of 3rd Year – Students who are applying for RACE full WRAT individual tests

March of 5th year – Aptitude Testing

Classroom teachers can refer a student for assessment following the procedure for in school assessment

Parents can refer a student for testing following consultation with Special Education Needs Department.

Record Keeping

It is important that all student information is confidential. Special Education Needs Coordinator shall be responsible for updating files.

All files must be locked in filing cabinets and no Special Education Needs assessments/psychological assessments shall be kept by any staff member. Psychological assessments shall be held in secure accommodation and data contained in the assessment may be passed on by the Special Needs Coordinator or resource teacher

Communication within school

It is vital that regular communication takes place between Special Education Need Department Guidance counsellor, School Management, Classroom, Teachers and Special Needs Assistants. Learning Plans are available for viewing by classroom teachers and often contain standardised results. Teachers may choose to use these results to differentiate for those who require it.

Results

The SEN coordinator is responsible for updating files and the student's learning Plan. All Results are secured by the SEN coordinator and access to results is by arrangement with the SEN coordinator.

When the results of the tests become available:

- Students with specific needs are identified.
- A programme is devised by the SEN depending on timetabling and availability of staff.
- Student support files are drawn up by the SEN Team in conjunction with parents and school management.