



Assessment and Reporting Policy Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore

Assessment

The purpose of assessment is to help the student discover 'where to go next' and help the teacher support that growth. Assessment in the widest sense is a snapshot of where a student is at a particular point in time. In planning for effective assessment and reporting teachers in Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore will use the Looking at our Schools 2022 document to support their classroom practice. This document will direct the teacher in the planning, preparation and assessment practices that progress students' learning. Subject specifications, curriculum and assessment guidelines are all key documents in the planning for assessment and reporting.

Meaningful assessment can help

- identify students' individual needs
- inform planning and further work
- assist continuity of work within the school
- offer a means of accountability to BOM, parents, DES and other agencies
- provide information that can be used to raise standards

Rationale

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning. In keeping with our school's Mission Statement, we seek to enable each child to develop his/her full potential. The school's policy on assessment and reporting procedures are guided by the various legislative requirements enshrined within the following:

- The Education Act (1998)
- The Data Protection (Amendments) Act (2003)
- The Equal Status Act (2000)
- The Education (Welfare) Act (2000)
- The Education for persons with special Educational Needs Act (2004)
- The Freedom of Information Act (1997,2003)
- Framework for Junior Cycle (2015)
- The General Data Protection (2016)
- Looking at our Schools 2022

Inclusive Assessment

Inclusive assessment practices are a key feature of teaching and learning in schools. Accommodations, 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 year. Where a student has a specific physical or learning difficulty, reasonable accommodations will be put in place to remove, as far as possible, the impact of the disability on the student's performance in their assessments. Accommodations which enable all students to access learning, and assessment are based on specific needs.

Reporting

Principles

- Reporting is an important part of our relationship with parents/ guardians and our educational partners and encourages authentic engagement with parents and guardians.
- Reporting should communicate relevant and useful information and opinions to parents/guardians in a clear way.
- Provides opportunities for students through feedback to reflect on their learning
- Uses the language of learning to provide effective feedback
- 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 practices an inclusive approach. (NCCA, 2018)
- Diary students tracking their results - parents sign for first years . Tutor time signature.

Recording student progress

Teachers will record all student marks in their own records and using Vsware. Individual teachers record their assessment and results of students progress in their own records. However, attainment in individual classes is also shared at subject meetings in order to track progress of groups and identify trends.

Athena tracker is a software programme for analysing student results and trends in their results. At Mercy secondary School we use the software to ensure our Exam year students are on track and reaching their full potential. This will be analysed by the year head and student support team.

Annual Reports

Annual reports are produced at different points throughout the academic year for various year groups. They are generated by VSware, which is available to staff both at school and elsewhere through the secure School Network.

Teachers will make a written detailed (including both formative and summative feedback) comment per pupil per subject on annual reports. Comments will be as detailed and constructive as possible. They should be as full as possible and state what a student can and cannot do and how far this matches potential. Comments will be made on progress throughout the year and should not be confined to simply reporting on examination results. Within the reporting schedule time is set aside for Programme Coordinator/Tutor to read reports and comment on progress. Principal/Deputy Principal will read all reports produced for each student under their care and ensure that they are of the expected quality.

Ongoing Feedback/Reporting

Ongoing reporting on student progress can take a variety of forms in Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore

- Informal oral and written feedback
- Student Journal

- Parent teacher meetings
- Discussions with class teacher/tutor/year head/SEN coordinator and HSCL supports for students/parents where appropriate
- Student learning logs, eportfolios, diaries, reflections
- End of topic/term/year reports
- Communication and engagement with parents/guardians via telephone, VShare, post, twitter, school newsletter
- Students' learning progress and achievement in subjects and short courses
- Engagement with the learning behaviours and dispositions of students
- The wellbeing of students
- Student participation and achievement in extracurricular activities
- The results of classroom-based-assessments (CBA'S)
- Areas such as punctuality, behaviour and attendance

Assessment types in Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore

- Formative Assessment
- Summative Assessment
- Classroom Based Assessments
- Oral and Aural assessments in languages
- Assessment Tasks
- Project Work – Presentations, PowerPoints, Eportfolios, visual displays, posters,
- Practical Exams in Home Economics, Art, Music
- Log Books/Field Study – Home Economics, Science, History, Geography
- Online assessments – Entrance Exams
- Learning Reflections for ALL year groups
- Literacy
- Numeracy

Other Assessments

Ability and Attainment

As part of our Admissions Policy incoming first years are asked to take assessment tests. The three tests currently used are;

- Cognitive Abilities Test 4 (CAT4) which is made up of a series of short reasoning tests which assess the student's reasoning abilities in key areas.
- New Group Reading Test (NGRT) which assesses the reading age of incoming students.
- Progress Test In Maths (PTM) which is used to assess students' mathematical skills and knowledge and helps to see the current level of attainment across each year group.

Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore uses the digital version of both tests which will be used to form mixed ability classes in first year. This assessment offers an early indicator to Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore of a student's potential ability and areas requiring focus and support. Student's ability is tested again before entering senior cycle (end of 4th year/beginning of 5th) to help students in their decisions of which pathway to take for Leaving Certificate and which subjects might be best suited to their strengths and learning style.

Learning Support Assessments

If a student is identified as being in need of additional support the Learning Support Co-ordinator will apply to the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) for that assistance. Classroom strategies such as differentiated assessment, team teaching, one-to-one tuition, visual aids, spelling waivers, increased time and dictionaries amongst others, may be used from time to time, as determined by the Learning Support Co-ordinator in consultation with individual subject teachers. The psychologist from the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) assigned to Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore, in consultation with school management, may carry out psychological assessments and other assessments on students at different times of the year.

L2LP - Students gather evidence of their learning through a digital portfolio and with the support of the L2LP co-ordinator.

Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement

The JCPA is the award that students will receive at the end of their junior cycle. The award will reward achievement across all areas of learning and assessment including ongoing, formative assessment; Classroom-Based Assessments; and SEC grades, which include results from the final examinations and the Assessment Tasks.

Subject Learning Assessment and Review (SLAR) Meeting

Following the completion of a Classroom-Based Assessment, teachers will engage in review meetings, where they will share and discuss samples of their assessments of student work and build common understanding about the quality of student learning.

State Exam subject descriptors

New Junior Cycle Subject Grade Descriptors

Distinction > 90 to 100

Higher Merit > 75 and < 90

Merit > 55 and < 75

Achieved > 40 and < 55

Partially Achieved > 20 and < 40

Not Graded (NG) > 0 and < 20

Reporting Descriptors for Junior Cycle CBA's

Exceptional

Above Expectations

In line with Expectations

Yet to Meet Expectations

Reporting Descriptors for Transition Year

Distinction 85-100%

Merit 60-84%

Pass 40-59%

Fail 0-39%

Reporting Descriptors for Leaving Certificate Applied

Distinction 85-100% (170-200 credits)

Merit 70-84% (140-169 credits)

Pass 60-69 % (120 - 139 credits)



+25 Bonus points for H1-H6 maths

LCVLP link modules ■ Distinction 66 ■ Merit 46 ■ Pass 28

State Examination Results and National Average Comparison

Each subject department is required to compare their Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate results to the National average. The differential in the results are reported in the minutes of subject department meetings and strategies for improvements are outlined and discussed. Teachers are asked to collaborate and reflect on the results and set measurable targets that can lead to incremental improvements. Areas of good practice should be identified to ensure these results are maintained.

Moderation

The moderation of Summer and Christmas exams is best practice and this takes places where possible. Moderation ensures that we are adhering to a national standard required for assessment rather than a school-based standard which is key and in line with the SEC. Samples of standards / model answers should be taken into consideration when marking all exams. These can be accessed on www.examinations.ie with the Chief Examiners report key to this process. Standardised exemplars can be made used to ensure that grading is kept in line with the national standard. These samples are all available on www.examinations.ie and www.curriculumonline.ie.

Standardised Marking and reporting

In line with moderation, standardised marking and reporting is key. Where possible a marking scheme should be set out. It is vital that this is not subjective but a definite descriptor of what is a correct or incorrect answer. It is important therefore when applying overall marks in grading that there is a consensus as to what is 'very good' 'good' and so on. This can only be achieved when the paper or assessment piece is discussed among the setters and examination teachers. The use of SEC marking schemes and Chief examiners reports play a vital role in this process. This is best practice particularly when common level tests are the norm. The language of feedback and marking is very important in creating an understanding of the state examinations. Where possible students should receive marking criteria similar to the state examinations.

Procedures for House Exams

Students will be issued with a timetable 3 weeks in advance. It will also be share with

parents.

House Exams take place before Christmas for all year groups and in May for students not sitting State Examinations. The purpose of house exams is to allow students to experience a setting similar to that of the State Examinations. Junior exams are scheduled for 1.5 hours, Senior Exams 2 hours and LCA exams for 1 hour. There are also special centres for those who require additional support. Students receive all exam timetables and rules regarding House Exams from their year head prior to the exams taking place.

HSCCL supports

For those students who are unable to complete the house exams in June for medical reasons there is a dedicated 3 day slot during the state exams where they have the opportunity to repeat the tests.

Updated April 2023 - Assessment Committee