



Assessment and Reporting Policy

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Rationale

The purpose of the Assessment policy is to provide students, parents/guardians, teachers and relevant stakeholders with information regarding our Assessment Policy and procedures in line with the Education Act 1998, which requires schools to “regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to the students and their parents” and in line with Circular 0058/2019: “Advice on the use of assessment instruments/tests for Guidance or for additional and special educational needs (SEN) in post-primary schools”).

In fulfilling this requirement, schools develop assessment procedures, which provide an accurate account of a student’s progress and achievement. As a school, we recognise that parents/guardians, teachers and students need to have an effective learning focused partnership to ensure that the best possible outcomes can be achieved for our students.

The quality framework in Looking at Our Schools 2016, the School Self Evaluation (SSE) process and distributed/shared model of leadership give us, in Ashbourne Community School, an opportunity to focus on continuous improvement in teaching and learning.

This Assessment Policy was developed in partnership with all stakeholders of Ashbourne Community School and will be presented to and reviewed as appropriate by the school’s Board of Management.

Definition – the ‘term’ assessment

The term ‘assessment’ generally refers to any activity that is used to gather and interpret student information relating to a student’s learning; ability, attainment, strengths and learning needs.

The Board of Management, staff, students, and parents/guardians recognise that ‘assessment’ is an important part of school life which supports student progress. Assessment is a link between teaching and learning and should encourage students to achieve their best. Assessments help teachers to identify early and ongoing interventions that support students reaching their academic potential.

Relationship to Mission Statement

“We pursue academic excellence while recognising the diversity of our student body. Through a relevant curriculum, designed to meet the needs of all, we endeavour to help all students realise their potential”

Ashbourne Community School is an inter-denominational mixed secondary school under the trusteeship of the Bishop of Meath and the LMETB. The school fosters an inclusive environment where all students are supported to reach their full potential. The school aims to provide a holistic education to all which is supported through the following principles:

- Inclusivity – to all students within our community, particularly to those with a disability or other special educational needs.
- Positive relationships with all stakeholders – we aim to work with all partners and value their ongoing input into school life
- Respect – for the diversity of values, beliefs, languages, traditions and, ways of life in our community and the wider society.

Why Assess?

Assessment is a fundamental tool which facilitates effective teaching and learning. It is necessary to:

- Reinforce teaching and learning that takes place in the classroom.
- Assessment informs the next step/stage, where and how students need to progress.
- Allow teachers to monitor students' progress by gathering relevant information about individual learning needs. This allows the teacher to identify the most effective methods to enhance student learning, and to tailor their teaching and learning methods in accordance with this.
- Promote student ownership of their learning. Assessment (and associated feedback) enables students to monitor their performance and motivates them to reach their full academic potential.
- Provide parents/guardians with information regarding student performance, enabling them to encourage student progress
- Help identify appropriate subject levels for students at both Junior and Senior Cycle.
- Fulfil course requirements in specific subjects at both Junior and Senior Cycle, including preparation for the State exams.
- Establish baseline data in relation to a student's attainments in certain subjects.
- Assess a student's eligibility for additional support and services, both inside and outside of the school environment, where applicable e.g., the SEN department within the school, the NEPS psychologist outside school.

➤ Types of Assessment

Formative and Summative Assessment

This policy recognizes the importance of on-going assessment both formative (assessment for learning) and summative (assessment of learning) that supports student learning.

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment involves a range of strategies designed to give students, teachers and parents feedback about students' understanding of elements of their learning. It is an integral part of the learning process where information is shared with the learner on the quality of learning. It is linked to learning intentions and success criteria and looks forward to the next stage of learning.

The most common forms of assessment used in the school are of a formative nature and take place regularly in the classroom. Formative assessment is at the discretion of individual teachers who will use them constructively for learning to take place. Timely feedback and constructive advice are vital components in this process. Where appropriate, teachers will keep records of these assessments to provide an insight into a student's progress over time and to fully inform the learning process. In line with the Framework for Junior Cycle 2015, 'Most of the assessment activities over the three years of Junior Cycle will be formative in nature'.

There are several purposes to formative assessment:

- To provide feedback for teachers during the learning process so that subsequent learning activities and experiences can be modified.
- To identify and remediate groups or individual areas for improvement.
- To encourage peer-assessment and self-assessment.
- To encourage student self-reflection which enables the student to see where exactly they are and how they can improve on this.
- To move the focus away from achieving grades and onto learning processes. This results in increasing [self-efficacy](#) and reducing the negative impact of [extrinsic motivation](#).
- To encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning

Effective formative assessment enables students to understand how to improve their work by:

- Helping them to understand the assessment criteria before they begin an assignment.
- Providing feedback on what they have done well and how they can improve.
- Comparing their work with examples of work that meet criteria for success.
- Recognising all the students' educational achievements.
- Helping them develop as independent learners with the capacity to identify how they themselves can further improve their learning.

We consider the following to be key classroom practices and strategies needed for formative assessment:

- 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 and teacher-pupil relationships.
- Questioning skills (student to teacher/teacher to student/student to student), which stimulate thinking and reflection on learning and the explicit teaching of how to consciously reflect on what one knows and how to make an evaluative comment on it (Bloom's Taxonomy).
- Frequent identification and review of learning goals through teacher / student - 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.

Ashbourne Community School has adopted the following key formative assessment strategies:

1. Effective Questioning using Bloom's Taxonomy: Teachers have a Bloom's Taxonomy poster on their wall and in their Teacher's Journal with verbs to prompt questions at each level of thinking.
2. Assessment for Learning Strategies: Teachers utilize, where appropriate, varied formative (AFL) strategies in lessons. Whole school strategies include use of 'traffic lights' in student journal, amongst others.

3. Learning Intentions: Lessons are guided by specification/syllabus linked learning intentions that are shared with students. Teachers at their own discretion share the learning intention(s) as appropriate for the lesson either before, during or because of learning. Teachers 'check in' with the learning intention(s) at the end of lesson(s) using AFL strategies to move students on in their learning.
4. Comment-Only Marking: Teachers will also periodically engage in comment-only feedback: This includes:
 - What the student has done well.
 - Where are the areas for improvement?
 - How the improvement might be made, helping students to understand and make progress.

This allows both teacher and student to identify the next steps in learning.

5. Sharing Criteria for Success: Success criteria are co-created by teachers and students with specific activities in mind. They are discussed and agreed prior to the undertaking of an activity. Success criteria provide a scaffold and focus for students while engaged in the activity and are used as a basis for feedback and peer/self-assessment.
6. Feedback: As part of the school's focus on assessment in planning for school improvement formative feedback is provided based on success criteria. Students are encouraged to use feedback to reflect and make improvements.
7. Peer Assessment and Self-Assessment: Teachers will, occasionally, supervise students as they assess their own or their peer's work, based on criteria for success. Following such methods, teachers will encourage students to reflect on their work, write down how they can improve and assist them in achieving it.
8. Homework: In line with the demands of specifications/syllabi and our Homework Policy, teachers set regular homework, comment/provide feedback on this homework, and make suggestions for improvement.
9. Differentiated Learning: Assessment work may be differentiated to suit the needs and abilities of the individual, determined by individual teachers.
10. ePortfolios: During Transition Year students plan and create their own ePortfolio (also known as a digital portfolio). This is a process where students reflect on their learning to choose specific examples of work that best represent their progress and achievement to showcase within their ePortfolio. These examples are ideally the result of a reflective drafting and redrafting process where Learning Intentions, Success Criteria, and Effective Feedback are central.

Summative Assessment

Summative Assessment is used to determine a student's level of performance on a specific task or at the conclusion of a unit learning. It refers to the assessment of learning, looking back on learning and aims to provide a summary of the achievements of the learner. It happens after the learning takes place. Information is gathered by the teacher and information is usually transferred into grade descriptors or marks. Careful consideration of student's work and assessments takes place to ensure the student is in a class where their learning needs are met.

- a) Class Tests Assessments: These forms of assessments will be conducted at the discretion of the teacher on a regular basis. These formal tests are a vital component in providing feedback to teachers, students and parents/guardians on the level of each student's attainment and learning in that specific subject area. Constructive formative feedback will be given by teachers to students.
- b) End of Term Exams: Students take formal in-house examinations, to monitor their academic performance. Common tests within Subject Departments are encouraged where appropriate. These examinations follow the SEC procedures for the running of state examinations.
- c) Pre-Examinations (Mocks): These are held for 3rd and 6th Year students during the second term. The purpose of these is to further prepare students for the Junior and Leaving Certificate examinations / to identify gaps in their learning.
- d) CBAs and Assessment Tasks: Classroom-Based Assessments: Students undertake two Classroom-Based Assessments facilitated by their teacher, generally one in 2nd Year and one in 3rd Year. Classroom-Based Assessments in all subjects are specified at a common level. The assessments associated with CBAs cover a broad range of activities. CBAs will be undertaken by students within class time to a national timetable. Details of the timetable along with assessment guidelines for each subject are available on www.ncca.ie. When students have completed CBAs, the CBAs are assessed by the students' teachers, and the outcomes will be reported to the students and parents/guardians. To support teachers in assessing students' Classroom-Based Assessments, teachers engage in Subject Learning and Assessment Review Meetings. At these meetings, teachers share and discuss representative samples of students' work and build a common understanding about the quality of their students' learning.
- e) Assessment Task: The Assessment Task will be completed in class under the supervision of the teacher. 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. A separate Assessment Task will not be required in practical subjects where there will be a practical examination.
- f) Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA): There are a range of modes of assessments in LCA which include: satisfactory completion of modules through key assignments and 90% attendance. Tasks which are assessed through interview with an examiner from the State Examinations Commission. Oral examinations in languages and English. Final examinations at the end of the second year of LCA.
- g) Completion of an ePortfolio: Transition Year students participate in an interview where they reflect on the learning that occurred when completing their ePortfolio. The result of this interview contributes towards their overall Transition Year grade.

➤ Range of Assessment Experiences at Junior Cycle

The following are examples of the assessment experiences at Junior Cycle:

- Class and homework, which may include written, oral, aural, reading, worksheets, key words, sample questions, practical, project or portfolio work.
- In-house exams in November/December and May in 1st and 2nd year, with 3rd year's being assessed in November and during the Mock Exams in February.
- End of topic or unit class tests.
- Strategies such as 'Show me' boards, traffic lights in students' journals.
- Effective use of questioning by teachers using Bloom's Taxonomy.
- Verbal and written feedback and advice by teachers may include comments and/or grades.
- Learning intentions shared with students at the start or during the class.
- Peer assessment and Self-assessment based on criteria for success, allowing for student reflection and improvement in future work.
- Classroom-based assessments (CBA's) in all exam subjects and short courses in 2nd and 3rd year. These are assessed by their teachers using the features of quality given for each subject.
- Most of the assessment activities during the teaching of short courses will be formative in nature. There will be no more than two Classroom-Based Assessments involved and the achievement of students will be described using a nationally determined common set of descriptors. Short courses will be assessed by the students' teachers and reported on to students and parents/guardians during Junior Cycle and in the JCPA
- The Classroom-Based Assessments will be set at a common level and there will be a common level externally assessed state-certified examination.
- Assessment Task, which is worth 10% of the final grade in each subject and relates to the outcomes of the second CBA takes place in 3rd year.
- In the case of a small number of subjects (Art, Music, Home Economics and Technology Subjects), the second structured Classroom-Based Assessment will involve practical work, or the creation of an artefact or a performance. The formative assessment related to the production of these artefacts and performances will be reported upon to the student and parent/guardian by the school as for all other second structured Classroom-Based Assessments. However, as the finished artefact and performances are currently marked by the SEC, the artefact or performance (for example, the piece of art or project work created by the student) will continue to be marked by SEC, together with the related written evidence as appropriate

➤ Reporting in the New Junior Cycle of Achievement

Assessment at Junior Cycle places the student at the centre of the learning process allowing for new ways of learning and a broader range of skills to be assessed.

Students complete Classroom Based Assessments (CBA) during class time in both 2nd and 3rd year, which are reported on the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA). Students achieve one of 4 grade descriptors for their CBA, awarded by their teachers following a Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meeting in which students' work is moderated. There is no appeal to the allocation of a student's grade descriptor. The Grade descriptors are:

E – Exceptional
AE – Above Expectations
I – In Line with Expectations
Y – Yet to Meet Expectations

Where a descriptor for a Classroom Based Assessment has not been given to a student, the term 'Not Reported' is used.

In addition, students in 3rd year complete an Assessment Task (in most subject areas) which accounts for 10% and is linked to their CBA 2. They then sit a formal exam by the State Examinations Commission in June of that same year.

There are also opportunities for students to contribute towards their JCPA by participating in 'Other Areas of Learning'. These are activities which must be school based and are also recorded on their JCPA. Finally, when the students receive their JCPA, they are awarded one of the following final grades:

Distinction $\geq 90 - 100$
Higher Merit $\geq 75 - < 90$
Merit $\geq 55 - < 75$
Achieved $\geq 40 - < 55$
Partially Achieved $\geq 20 - < 40$
Not Graded $\geq 0 - < 20$

➤ Assessment and Certification in Transition Year

Here in ACS, we endeavour to ensure that assessment is an integral part of the learning process in TY. In turn, we hope that this will underpin a realistic, robust form of certification. Assessment must be flexible, varied and transparent, while the certification must be credible and be a real reflection of the student's progress and contribution right across all areas of the TY Programme.

TY Certification is awarded at the TY Graduation, which takes place at a designated date in the school sports hall. The following grades are awarded:

1. Excellence; 90% +
2. Distinction; 80-89%
3. Merit; 65-79%
4. Pass; 50-64%
5. Completed TY; 49% or less

Certification is based on the following,

- 50% for curricular and class work
- 25% for completing work placement and the work diaries in Transition Year journal
- 25% for personal reflection, Transition Year journal, portfolio and end of year interview
- a. **Class and curricular work** are assessed using a wide variety of methods, which are specified in each subject/module programme. The assessment methods include, written and practical work, oral and aural project work, portfolio/folder presentations, student logs/diaries and interviews. These are clearly outlined to students at the beginning of each module and student participation in methods of assessment is actively encouraged. A maximum of 10 credits are awarded at the end of each module, in early January and mid-May. The criteria for the awarding of these credits are set by the teacher, the relevant department and the student. A maximum of 2 credits is awarded for attendance in most modules/subjects. Emphasis is placed on assessment of key skills, such as teamwork, communication, planning, organising, goal setting, in addition to academic criteria. This process can be reinforced by teacher/student assessment in the Transition Year Journal. A report is sent home to parents/guardians in late January, to help access and evaluate each student's progress. A final report is sent in late May. Final certification is awarded at the TY Graduation Ceremony.
- b. **Work placement** accounts for 25% of the assessment. This is assessed on a weekly basis and is based on a student account of their placement under relevant headings, employer and parental signatures and completion of both the employer and student evaluation at the end of each placement.

Completion of actual work placements is awarded up to 13% and completion of the work diary entries in the Transition Year Journal are awarded up to 12%. Online certificate courses can also be used as work placement on Fridays and for work placement credits.
- c. **Personal reflection, Transition Year journal, portfolio and interview** accounts for the final 25% of the assessment. Each student from the outset, compiles a portfolio, which covers all aspects of their progress in, and contribution to Transition Year. Before being interviewed, each student completes a 2-page typed personal reflection under 8 headings. Each Transition

Year journal is also checked during the interview, to look at how effectively each of the sections were used during the year by the student.

The intention with this process is to place greater emphasis on student responsibility and more focus to be placed on call-work. It will be based on the following process:

- At the end of each module 10 credits will be available to each student based on the work which they have completed in class. It is intended that this is based on completion of assignments/tasks. However, a teacher has discretion to include other criteria if they so wish. Issues like attendance, punctuality and discipline will be dealt with elsewhere in the report.
- To facilitate this, there is a section in the scheme of work where the teacher outlines how the work is to be assessed, when it is due and the criteria on which it is going to be assessed. The template is available in the TY folder. It is essential that students are aware at the outset what the conditions are.
- The changeover for the second module occurs in January each year.

Transition Year End of Year Portfolio

Interview Marking Scheme

1. Personal reflection: 5 credits

Maximum of 2 typed pages under the following 8 headings:

- 1) Personal statement of skills and qualities
- 2) Academic achievements
- 3) Extra-curricular achievements
- 4) Personal achievements
- 5) Skills gained
- 6) Work placement highlights
- 7) Sum up your performance in TY in a few sentences
- 8) Plans/goals for Senior Cycle and how TY has prepared you

2. TY journal: 5 credits

Effective use made of the journal throughout the year.

3. Portfolio: 8 credits

Examples of class work, projects, work placement, community work, achievements, certificates, workshops, speakers, trips, adventures, extra-curricular activities, etc. presented in a box, folder, scrap book along with online e-Portfolio.

4. Interview: 7 credits

Ability to talk about the personal reflection, portfolio entries and experiences in Transition Year.

Total = 25 credits

➤ **Range of Assessments & Reporting Experiences at Senior Cycle**

Assessment at Senior Cycle is intended to help students succeed in the Established Leaving Certificate, Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and Leaving Certificate Applied Programmes (LCA).

Reporting/Communication with parents:

Parents/guardians access their son's/daughter's school reports throughout their time in Ashbourne Community School via CloudSchool. Once reports are completed by subject teachers, reviewed by the relevant Year Head & Deputy Principal, they are uploaded to parent/guardian CloudSchool accounts.

Parents/guardians also can discuss their son's/daughter's academic and holistic progress during the annual Parent/Teacher meeting that takes place for each year's group. This allows the Parents/Guardians, Subject Teachers, Year Head, relevant Deputy Principal, Principal, Chaplains and Careers Department the opportunity to meet and have a frank and honest discussion. We also invite and encourage students to attend the meeting and be part of the conversation on their progress to date.

Leaving Certificate Programme

5th Year Assessment Experiences and Reporting

- Assessment for learning (AFL) strategies used to inform students how they are progressing, and to target areas to work on in future.
- Formative feedback from teachers- this can take the form of both verbal and written feedback including comments and/or grades.
- Homework, including written exercises, reading material, research tasks, oral presentations and aural work is given frequently.
- Project work for Leaving Certificate subjects.
- Referred to NEPS for review or assessment where appropriate.
- WRAT-IV and CAT-IV for RACE applications where applicable.
- Parents/Guardians and students receive a report following Christmas and Summer House Exams.

6th Year Assessment Experiences and Reporting

- Assessment for learning (AFL) strategies used to inform students how they are progressing, and to target areas to work on in future.
- Formative feedback from teachers- this can take the form of both verbal and written feedback including comments and/or grades.
- Homework, including written exercises, reading material, research tasks, oral presentations and aural work is given frequently.
- Parents/Guardians and students receive a progress report following in November/term 1.
- The Pre-Leaving Certificate Examinations are in February.
- 6th Year students/parents/guardians receive a report after completing their Pre-Leaving Certificate Examinations in February/ March.
- Project or practical course work for several subjects.

- Preparation for and completion of the oral component of Irish and all modern foreign languages studied in the school.
- Practical examinations in certain subjects take place in April/May.
- The Leaving Certificate State Examinations (written and aural components) are in June.

LCVP – Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme

Assessment in the LCVP Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme

The LCVP is a Leaving Certificate with a focus on enterprise and preparation for working life. This 2-year programme combines the academic strengths of the Leaving Certificate with a dynamic focus on self-directed learning, enterprise, work and the community. In most ways, the LCVP is like the established Leaving Certificate. What makes it different is that students take some of their Leaving Certificate subjects from a specified set of vocational subjects, they study a recognised course in a modern European language and have 2 additional courses, called Link Modules, in the areas of Preparation for the World of Work and Enterprise Education. On completion of the programme, students must present evidence in relation to the specific learning outcomes.

The following assessment arrangements apply for the Link Modules:

- The Link Modules of Preparation for the World of Work and Enterprise Education are treated as a unit for assessment purposes.
- Assessment is at a common level (no higher or ordinary level).
- Students sit a written examination paper, representing 40% of the total marks, on the first Wednesday of May in 6th year.
- Students submit a portfolio of coursework, representing 60% of total marks, developed over the 2 years of the programme and submitted in early March of 6th year
- Grades awarded for the Link Modules are Distinction (80-100%) - 66 points, Merit (65-79%) - 46 points and Pass (50-64%) - 28 points.

Assessment in LCA

Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) is a specialised, two-year Leaving Certificate programme aimed at preparing students for life beyond school. Work experience, continuous assessment and personal development are key features of the LCA Programme in Ashbourne Community School.

Assessment Experiences and Reporting

- Assessment for learning (AFL) strategies used to inform students how they are progressing, and to target areas to work on in future.
- Formative feedback from teachers- this can take the form of both verbal and written feedback including comments and/or grades.
- Completion of Modules:
 - 44 modules are completed over the 2 years of the programme and credits are awarded for the satisfactory completion of a module.
 - Success criteria and learning goals are shared with students to enhance attainment in completion of modules.

- To complete modules and achieve credits, students are required to have an attendance of at least 90% in classes and out-of-school activities related to the module. They must also ensure the completion of several key assignments per module.
- Performance of student tasks:
 - The candidate completes 7 Student Tasks over the 2 years. Each task represents a significant piece of work (at least 10 hours). The task enables the candidate to integrate learning and practical experiences from the different courses and modules of the LCA programme.
 - To receive credits for a student task, the candidate must produce authentic evidence of task completion, produce a task report, present for interview by external examiners appointed by the State Examination's Commission
- Final examination:
 - Final examinations are provided in Gaeilge Chumarsaideach, English and Communication, Spanish, Social Education, Mathematical Applications and Vocational Specialisms (ICT and Engineering).
- LCA students/parents/guardians receive a report in January and June after students have completed the end of each session.
- The State Examinations Commission will issue a provisional statement of results to candidates for each session reflecting the credits awarded for the satisfactory completion of modules, the results of the assessment of student tasks and final examinations as appropriate.

Arrangements for Certification of the Leaving Certificate Applied

6. Introduction

The Leaving Certificate Applied is a single award made based on credits accumulated over four sessions and in final examinations. A candidate may accumulate a maximum of 200 credits. Students who successfully complete the Leaving Certificate Applied programme will be awarded a certificate from the State Examinations Commission. The Leaving Certificate Applied is awarded at 3 levels.

- Pass 120 credits (60%-69%)
- Merit 140 credits (70%- 84%)
- Distinction 170 credits (85%-100%)

Student achievement and performance in the Leaving Certificate Applied will be recorded in three modes as follows:

- Satisfactory completion of modules: 62 credits (31%)
- Performance of student tasks: 70 credits (35%)
- Performance in a terminal examination: 68 credits (34%)

The arrangements for the satisfactory completion of modules and the assessment of Student Tasks are detailed below.

➤ Homework as a Means of Assessment

Homework is one form of Formative Assessment that is used in our school. Teachers set regular homework, in line with our Homework Policy, which is checked and commented on with suggestions made for improvement by the Subject Teacher. It's an extension of the lesson to see how well the student has retained the information.

Homework is one method teachers use to reinforce learning from lessons and allows teachers to carry out informal assessment of student' work. Homework is used to identify a student's next step for learning so material can be learned more thoroughly. Homework can be set through many different formats including, but not limited to, written work and revision of class work.

Teachers may assess homework using a method at the discretion of the individual teacher, including, but not limited to, collecting and correcting work and giving a written comment and/or grade, using peer-assessment or using self-assessment.

Students must complete all homework to the best of their ability, as outlined in the student's role surrounding homework in the Homework Policy

Standardised Ability Tests / Psychometric Tests

The following tests are administered to incoming 1st Years students by the Guidance Counsellors, SET and interested members of staff on 1st Year Assessment Day in September:

- CAT 4 Level E – Verbal, Numerical, Non-Verbal, Spatial.
- NGRT – General Reading Test to assess reading age.
- NGST – Spelling age.

When the results of the tests become available, appropriate action is taken in line with the Additional Needs Policy. Results are password protected and are available on the school server for all relevant staff to access. Students with numeracy and/or literacy issues are identified, and applications made to the DES for low incidence hours were necessary.

Standardised numeracy and literacy scores for each incoming 1st year student are gathered from the feeder primary schools in advance of their attendance at second level through their 'school passport' information which is forwarded from the Primary Schools in June. All the scores gathered are used for academic monitoring purposes.

Assessment Instruments:

Definition of Assessment Instruments:

Standardised ability tests (sometimes referred to as psychometric tests) are designed to be curriculum-independent and measure more enduring and long-term traits than the attainment of learning, that is, they measure what a student is capable of knowing rather than what is known.

Standardised achievement tests (sometimes referred to as attainment tests) measure what a student knows and can be used to assess, for example, students' knowledge and skills in literacy and numeracy, and to determine progress in these areas. On foot of information garnered from various assessment practices including ability and achievement tests, further information may be gathered through the administration of diagnostic tests to provide a more detailed view of a student's learning strengths and needs, examples being WRAT, WAIT II,

A diagnostic test is designed to provide specific information about a student's strengths and needs in some aspect of learning, for example, word identification skills or understanding of number concepts e.g., Dyslexia Screening tests.

Career and interest tests/inventories are types of assessments used to measure a student's interests in different occupational areas. Guidance Counsellors may use the outcomes of ability and interest tests to guide and to support students' decision-making regarding subject choice and Senior

Cycle Programme options and to support their career development, including planning for higher education and/or further education and training.

Use of Standardised Ability Tests (Psychometric Tests):

- All test results are used to discuss vocational avenues/subject choices with students/parents/guardians.
- Psychological tests are carried out in accordance with Test Manual Instructions.
- The most appropriate norms for the students will be used in the scoring of such tests.
- Students will be informed and advised about the tests and their purpose prior to testing.
- Adequate notice of the testing days will be given to both staff, students & parents/guardians.

Schedule of Standardised Ability Tests (Psychometric Tests):

Year Group	Test Administered	When	Purpose
1 st Year	CAT4 Tests NGRT NGST	September of First year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a diagnostic tool –to establish in an objective manner to ability levels of our student intake. • Identify students who need Educational Support and Learning support Dept. • To establish a profile of each student’s learning.
3 rd Year	EirQuest MyAptitude and Career Choices	February/ March before Senior Cycle subject choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is EirQuest / MyAptitude? • EirQuest is an online careers programme for students that helps identify the career areas and Leaving Certificate choices in which they are interested. Responses are analysed and each student receives instant personalised results and feedback matching the student with selected careers areas. • My Eirquest assessment reveals a picture of the student’s stronger career and academic interests, related abilities and personal qualities. My Aptitude accesses seven aptitudes: Verbal Reasoning, Numerical Reasoning, Abstract Reasoning, Spatial Reasoning, Spelling, Arithmetic Calculation and Working Quickly and Accurately. These results are relevant in making university course and career decisions and they also explore a student’s thinking and learning styles. These assessments are used to assist students in recognising their strengths and so aid them in making their subject choice for the Leaving Certificate. • As a tool to help identify students’ strengths. • To help students to identify areas of career interest. • To encourage and assist students to make good decisions in subject choice for Leaving Certificate. • To help give a better objective picture of a student’s ability or potential. • To give students an opportunity to experience ‘aptitude tests’ which may be used as a method of job /course selection in their future careers. • To provide parents/guardians with a discussion tool to discuss vocational choices.

Year Group	Test Administered	When	Purpose
3 rd 4 th /5 th /6 th	Careers Interest Inventory	Throughout 3 rd to 6 th year. This interest inventory can be repeated several times to fine tune interests.	To help students to identify vocational interests To highlight the relationship between vocational interests and abilities

****The assessment tools used change year on year depending on updated norms.**

Administration of Assessment Instruments

Administration of assessment instruments will be undertaken by appropriately qualified school staff, which in some instances will involve subject teachers, the school guidance counsellors and/or the learning support teachers (depending on the nature of the test).

Data Protection, Storage & Retention

The school will ensure that the information, in line with data protection requirements, is kept secure with access confined to appropriate persons. In the case of electronic information this will be kept secure through password protection. School teaching staff will have access to this password. The Guidance Department of Ashbourne Community School is aware of obligations relating to access to stored data under the Freedom of Information Act 1997, the Freedom of Information (Amendment) Act 2013, associated regulations, and the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003 and 2018. The school will retain the information in line with the Data Protection Policy of Ashbourne Community School.

Access to Data

To ensure that the student receives an education that best supports his/her development, the information and results may be shared with the student's teachers in accordance with established test practice. This is to ensure that teaching approaches can be adapted to accommodate the different learning needs and styles of students. In addition, the guidance counsellors and the learning support teachers will have access to the information.

Provision for Feedback

All parents/guardians will be informed of the test results in relation to CAT4 and EirQuest/My Aptitude. The information will be presented in accordance with established test practice and in a format that is easily understood. Students who completed the EirQuest/My Aptitude will also receive feedback with a view to making informed choices for Senior Cycle options. This will be through a meeting with the Guidance Counsellors.

Interpretation of Results

Results of an individual standardised test are not interpreted in isolation. Information from ability tests, attainment tests, teacher observations, the Education Passport and parental reports are also very important aspects of a thorough assessment. This evidence-based approach facilitates the identification of individual student's needs in relation to learning behaviour and emotional wellbeing.

1st year:

- All parents/guardians will be informed of test results in relation to CAT 4 by post and are invited to call a Guidance Counsellor with any query they may have. 1st year will not be given CAT4 test results, but test results may be interpreted for parents/guardians at their request.
- All teaching staff will have access to the results on the school server. Consultation with SET (Special Education Team) may be appropriate with students with low scores regarding student support plans.

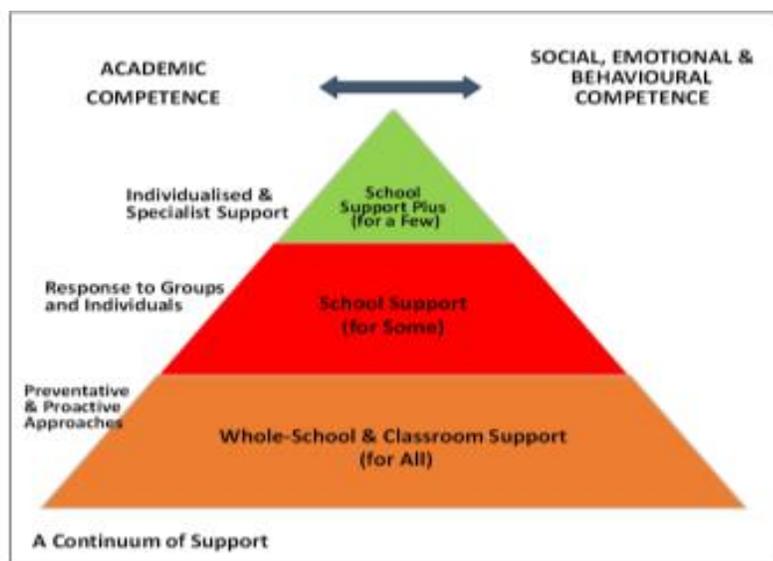
3rd year:

- 3rd years are met individually, and results explained. Students are provided with online results which can be accessed by Parents/Guardians.
- Results may be interpreted for Parents/Guardians at their request.
- The results of the tests will be discussed with the students and a printed copy of their results will be given to the students to bring home. These workbooks contain the student's results and provide a guide to further career research and advice on Leaving Certificate subject selection. We would encourage Parents/Guardians to look at these workbooks with their children and invite them to contact us if they have any queries or require further information regarding the assessments.

Data Protection: The Guidance Department of Ashbourne Community School is aware of obligations relating to access to stored data under the Freedom of Information Act 1997, the Freedom of Information (Amendment) Act 2013, associated regulations, and the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003 and 2018.

➤ Special Educational Needs (SEN) / RACE

With the new model and the Continuum of Support all students receiving additional support are evidence based. There are various stages during the school year when testing takes place and it is used to determine who requires support, for how long it is required and exactly what support is provided.



For students who have additional needs there is a three-step process to determine:

- How are needs identified?
- How these needs can be met?
- How progress can we monitored and reported on

Currently base-line data is established in the First Year with the following tests:

CAT4 – Cognitive Ability Test

NGRT – Neffer Group Reading Test

NGST – Neffer Group Spelling Test

This assessment allows for the base-line data to be established for each student in the school community.

Students where English is not their first language are assessed using the Post Primary Assessment Kit, NCCA and the Cambridge English Test. Results from these tests indicate if additional language support is required.

Further individual assessments must be carried out for students who have very low Verbal Comprehension Scores on the CAT and where this is also supported by a low score on the NGRT and/or NGST.

Currently the SEN Department is determining when to switch to PPAD-E (Post-Primary Assessment & Diagnosis – English), which is Irish normed, for use with a 1st year cohort. While this suite of tests provides very comprehensive information, there is the issue of the time needed to carry out the testing, to score it and how it underpins a Support Programme for the student. PPAD-E has been devised by the ERC in conjunction with NEPS.

Where students have an assessed need there are several professional and clinical reports that are used to determine the individual student's Support Plan. These include:

- Educational Psychological Report
- Occupational Therapy Report
- Speech and Language Report
- CAMHS Reports
- Psychology Reports

The school's NEPs psychologist, in consultation with school management, may carry out psychological assessments and other assessments with students at different times throughout the year.

Behavioral assessments may be carried out on students presenting with behavioral difficulties and students may be referred to external agencies e.g., S&L; Occupational Therapist; CAMHS etc.

RACE: Reasonable Accommodation in Certificate Examinations

Further testing is used for RACE particularly in 2nd /3rd Year and again in 5th /6th Year where relevant.

All literacy testing for RACE is individual and involves the WIAT III^{UK}-T.

This is further supported with Reading Fluency Tests which are timed, and pieces must be at least 450 words with a maximum of 550 words to establish if students meet the criteria for some form of reading assistance.

The assessment of spelling, grammar and punctuation errors must be carried out on written work, completed under exam conditions with a minimum of 500 words and marked to a criterion established by the SEC.

All Christmas and summer reports are reviewed for students who have additional needs and support is provided for those who need it throughout their schooling.

The DASH (Detailed Assessment of Speed of Handwriting) is used to assess handwriting and to determine the speed of writing where students present with writing difficulties. Again, this allows for an evidence-based approach to the challenges that some students face. A programme of Support is put in place and then reviewed to monitor progress and to see what additional support may be required for individual students.

Feedback / Principles & Methods Used

High quality feedback is an integral part of assessment. It focuses on the detailed content of what is being learned rather than a simple percentage. Feedback from teachers can be both verbal and written including comments and/or grades

Principles of Good Feedback

- Clarifies success criteria and expected standards.
- Empowers student to take ownership of their own learning.
- Motivates students to work towards their potential
- Encourages student and teacher reflection.
- Provides teachers with the information to shape teaching to suit students' needs.
- Provides opportunities for communication between parents, students, and teachers

Methods of Feedback (this list is not exhaustive)

- Informal verbal feedback can emerge at any time as it is something that emerges spontaneously in the moment or during an action
- Formal Feedback
- Summative Feedback
- Student peer Feedback
- Student self-reflection
- Reflective strategies including the traffic light reflection

Improving Results in ACS/Monitoring Assessment in ACS

In house analysis of summative results and state examinations takes place annually. This provides the basis for discussion and planning within subject departments and at Senior Management level. In addition to time is given to individual teachers and subject departments for comparison and evaluation with national results.

- Study skills sessions are held with students to ensure that they are familiar with effective study techniques (both external facilitators and in-house facilitation).
- After school study is offered to 3rd, 5th & 6th year students each year
- A homework club is offered to specific students to support them in their progress.
- Academic Tracking is part of the Assistant Year Head role with their relevant year group. Subject teachers, year heads, guidance department & senior management refer students of concern to the assistant year head.
- Academic interviews can be conducted with students to further advise and encourage students which will enable them to reach their full potential.

- A core team of teachers (TY team) is responsible for monitoring, evaluating, and guiding Transition Year students through the process of creating and maintaining their Portfolio. A particular emphasis is placed on encouraging students to incorporate some reflection on the pieces they have selected for inclusion. The Portfolio process constitutes 25% of the grade awarded during the Transition Year interview in May.
- Reflection on feedback is actively encouraged. Initiatives and strategies to develop the necessary skills include individual teacher initiatives & whole school initiatives.
- The student journal is a resource used by teaching staff & students as part of their reflection, for example, students recording of results; traffic light system; subject revision planner, etc.
- A Whole School Academic Awards night is held annually for all year groups. Students who are nominated by their teachers in any of their subject areas will be invited to attend on the night. This is a very effective way of acknowledging and rewarding students' hard work and commitment while encouraging and motivating others to apply themselves to a greater degree.

Assessment is a fundamental tool which facilitates effective teaching and learning. The Board of Management, staff, students, and parents/guardians recognise that 'assessment' is an important part of school life which supports student progress. Hence, we take a whole school/community approach to assessment. All relevant stakeholders have a role & responsibility to encourage students to achieve their best and to identify any issues, put supports/interventions in place so that students in Ashbourne Community School reach their academic potential.

Evaluation & Review:

The Assessment Policy will be reviewed as required. The evaluation will take place on a regular basis and will include teachers, students, parents/guardians and senior management.

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management of Ashbourne Community School at its meeting 1st June, 2022. (Meeting Nr 270)

Date: 1st June, 2022.

Chairperson

Board of Management

Ashbourne Community School