

Assessment Policy

Borrisokane Community College

Mission Statement.

We seek to promote a caring and committed school community which will facilitate the education of our students and where each individual is valued as a unique human being.

“Is ar scáth a chéile a mhairimid”

1. Definition:

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.

2. Why Assess?

- to monitor a student’s progress and to provide the teacher with information to make decisions about what and how the student is learning.
- to provide students and parents with information regarding progress.
- to establish baseline data in relation to a student’s attainments in certain subjects
- to assess a student’s eligibility for additional support and services.

3. Types of Assessment.

- Formative – Questioning, Observation, AfL,
- Summative - Exams, Class Test, etc.
- Diagnostic – D.A.T., Reading and Reasoning Tests. Further testing carried out to determine students SEN.

4. Legislation:

- The Education Act (1998) 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.

5. Formative Assessment:

Definition:

- Formative assessment involves a range of strategies designed to give both students, teachers and parents’ feedback about students’ understanding of elements of their learning in courses. The aim is to improve learning.

The class teacher sometimes gives students opportunities to self-assess their own work or their peers work. This allows students to identify gaps in their own learning and give and receive positive feedback to and from their peers.

Borrisokane Community College has adopted the Assessment for Learning (AFL) approach to formative assessment. Its purpose is to use the whole process of assessment to help learners improve their learning. It is formative because its intention is to form, shape or guide the next steps in learning. It is about 'learning to learn. We recognise, however, that not all aspects of this approach are of benefit in all curriculum areas and the discretion of the teacher is advised to adapt the theory to suit the particular demands of the subject. The use of Assessment for Learning strategies allow the teacher to continuously assess their students and ensure that learning is at the optimum level.

The following are some of the Assessment for Learning strategies which can be used:

- Aims at the beginning of lessons
- Homework given at the beginning of lessons
- Giving students the criteria for success
- Questioning techniques
- Wait time after asking questions
- Summarising at the end of the lesson
- Comment only marking
- Beginning the next lesson with a recap
- Pair Work
- Group Work
- Peer Assessment
- Setting targets helps to focus the students on particular issue
- Criteria for Success

Using these student centered learning strategies gives lessons structure and stimulates learning.

6. Summative Assessment:

Definition:

Summative Assessment refers to the assessment of learning and aims to provide a summary of the achievements of the learner.

House Exams:

Sixth year students have exams in October, Mock Exams in February and the Certificate Examinations in June.

Third year students have Mock Exams in February

Fifth year have exams in December and May/June.

Second year students in subjects with no CBA's have exams in Summer.

First year students have exams in May/June

Transition Year student's complete projects during each session. These contribute towards the credits awarded for each session. The year is broken into two sessions ending in December and May.

Duration of House Exams:

- 1st Years: For summer duration of exam should be 1 hr –a double class. Summer exams to take place in official exam centre.
- 2nd Years: Exams of one to two hours in official exam centre
- 3rd and 6th Years: One to Two-hour exam in October and Mock Exams in line with State exam times.
- 5th Year: Two hours per subject.
- The content of house exams for all students will be in line with state exams at the appropriate level and depending on the course covered at that time.

Assessment of non-written aspects of subjects:

An increasing number of subjects have elements which are examined at certificate level by non-written methods e.g. Practical Subjects, Language subjects, History and Geography at Leaving Certificate level. Students will be given a percentage of marks in their house exams in relation to these non-written elements. Teachers will assess students by project work or class questioning during the term or the submission of a project at the end of term.

7. Involving the Partners:

It is well known that the student's progress in school is best achieved when all partners – student, teacher and parent are working together. The follow are the responsibilities of each:

- Student: Prepare well for exam. Follow guidelines for study at home as outlined in the school journal. Students are encouraged to self-assess and peer assess with guidance from their teacher. Keep a record of exam results in journal and predict and set goals for future results.
- Class Teacher: Prepare student, set exam, correct exam, (following AFL guidelines), assign projects, give feedback to student, fill in reports, organise aural and oral assessments outside of timetabled exams.
- Parent: Show interest in student's school work, exam prep, exam performance, encourage, motivate and act on recommendations. Provide a quiet place to study. Parent should keep own file on each child containing all reports from 1st year.
- Year Head: Sign each students report, speak to students re performance if necessary, comment on progress.
- Class Tutor: Tutor will have access to a copy of each students report to see how they are performing across all classes.
- Subject Department: Common Assessment, following same scheme, drawn up in subject planning meeting. Ideally same test should be given to classes in the year group.

8. Communication with parents/guardians:

Parent Teacher Meetings:

In the case of first year parents/guardians a parent teacher meeting takes place in December and a further meeting takes place in the second half of the school year. Third and sixth year students will have two parent teacher meetings one in November to discuss the October test results and the second in March to discuss the mock exam results. Other year groups have one parent/teacher meeting each year. The meetings take place shortly after a report is sent home. Teachers will have results of class tests and assessments during the term available for parents/guardians at the parent/teacher meeting.

School Examination Reports:

Following each house exam parents/guardians receive reports on their child's progress.

Transition Year students are assessed three times during the school year and reports are sent home following each assessment.

During the school year 2010/2011 two progress reports were sent home to parents of sixth year students to advice students and their parents on areas of focus over the short term. This was found to be beneficial to students, parents and teachers and will continue in future years. These reports will be sent home in September and January.

The student's school journal is used to keep parents and teachers informed on where progress needs to be made. The journal is also used to keep a record of results in examinations and credits achieved by students in first, second and third year.

Special Needs Students

Psychometric Tests: The following tests are administered to 1st Year students by the Guidance Counsellor and Special Needs Teachers at the beginning of October each year:

- Drumcondra Reasoning Test
- Drumcondra Reading

When the results of the tests become available:

- Guidance Counsellor meets with the Learning Support teachers.
- Students with particular needs are identified.
- Following a discussion with parents further testing is carried out by the SEN Teachers using the WRAT 4
- Students identified as having possible needs requiring further investigation are referred to the NEPS Psychologist. Parents are involved in this referral and subsequent assessment.
- Following the NEPS assessment if the student qualifies for additional support an application is made to the Special Education Needs Organiser.
- When replies are received re extra supports and parental permission obtained, a programme is devised by the learning support/resource teacher depending on timetable and availability of learning support staff.

Differential Aptitude Tests (DATS) are administered to all Third Year students in January. The results of the test are forwarded to parents.

Psychological/Medical Reports: All class teachers are aware of students who have Psychological/Medical reports and implement the recommendations in assessing students.

Reasonable Accommodation in State and House: If students have recommendations for Reasonable Accommodations in Certificate examinations in their Psychological/Medical Reports an application will be made for the relevant accommodations to the State Examinations Commission. These students will be provided with similar accommodations in house exams subject to resources for implementing these accommodations being available.

Teachers in marking examinations take into account any reasonable accommodations the student may have in their certificate exams and mark the tests accordingly.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on June 2nd 2011

This policy will be due for reviewed during the school year 2013/2014.

