

Meánscoil na mBráithre Críostaí, Cill Chainnigh
Christian Brothers Secondary School, Kilkenny.

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ASSESSMENT POLICY June 2019

School Name:	Christian Brothers Secondary School, Kilkenny
School Address:	James's Street, Kilkenny
School Details:	CBS Kilkenny is a Voluntary Roman Catholic Secondary School under the trusteeship and the patronage of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust (ERST). The school is grant aided by the Department of Education and Skills and is a single sex boys school.
School Management:	The Board of Management of CBS Kilkenny is a statutory Board appointed pursuant to the provisions of the Education Act 1998.

Mission Statement

Inspired by its founder, CBS Kilkenny aims to provide Catholic education in the Edmund Rice tradition. The school endeavours to be a caring Christian Community which promotes to the best of its ability the personal, spiritual, physical and intellectual development of its students.

Ethos

As an Edmund Rice School, CBS Kilkenny seeks to promote the five key elements of an Edmund Rice School as espoused by the ERST Charter:

- Nurturing faith, Christian spirituality and gospel-based values
- Promoting partnership in the school community
- Excelling in teaching and learning
- Creating a caring school community
- Inspiring transformational leadership.

LEGISLATION

The Education Act (1998) requires schools to regularly evaluate students and to periodically report the results of the evaluation to students and their parents/guardians. In fulfilling this requirement schools develop assessment procedures which provide an accurate account of a student's progress and achievement.

This Assessment Policy plays a key role in striving to ensure that each student realises his full academic potential in a learning environment that reflects a culture of partnership between teachers, parents / guardians and students.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment is integral to the process of teaching and learning and the development of a culture of lifelong learning. Through both its formative and summative facets, it is the catalyst which shapes the learning experience in CBS Kilkenny. The consistent utilisation of a broad and differentiated range of formative assessment practices empowers the students to take ownership of their own learning journey. The application of regular summative assessments facilitates teachers / students in measuring the quality of learning taking place, honing pedagogical practices and informing educational interventions. These assessment forms work best in tandem, helping to enrich the teaching / learning relationships and to further highly effective practice in CBS Kilkenny where a blended approach to assessment is adopted.

This policy has been reviewed in line with GDPR, Child Protection and Safeguarding and student Wellbeing policies and procedures.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THIS POLICY

The primary aims and objectives of the policy are:

- To facilitate and further highly effective teaching and learning practices
- To equip students with the skills necessary to improve the quality of their learning
- To empower students to manage their own learning journeys
- To embed, foster and develop revised Junior Cycle practices and to assist in their successful implementation
- To create a consistent and standardised assessment procedure for monitoring and reporting achievement in the school
- To assist in co-ordinating assessment procedures within subject departments
- To develop meaningful learning conversations between the educational partners in our school (teachers / students / parents / guardians)
- To ensure that the actions and targets of the School Improvement Plans are addressed.

THE PURPOSES OF ASSESSMENT

- To continuously strengthen the quality of teaching and learning
- To inculcate in our students a positive attitude towards learning
- To develop in our students a culture of lifelong learning
- To equip students with the skills necessary to manage their own learning journeys
- To measure and evaluate the progress of a student in a particular area of learning over time
- To provide feedback to students in a timely and constructive manner
- To provide feedback to teachers on the success of particular teaching methodologies
- To highlight difficulties and shortcomings in the learning process which will inform intervention strategies
- To strengthen the relationships with parents / guardians
- To identify students who require additional supports and services such as learning support
- To keep records of attainment that will inform parents/guardians of progress through the school's reporting process
- To identify students' academic levels for state examinations and act as an incentive for students in the learning process
- Plays an important role in subject choice, career guidance and progression to third level and future education.

FORMS OF ASSESSMENT

1. FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Formative assessment is integral to the process of creating a culture of lifelong learning for our students. It empowers students to take ownership of their own learning journeys through identifying purpose and process, articulating success criteria, adopting reflective practices and goal setting. It reinforces highly effective teaching / learning through fostering learning relationships and deepening reflective practice among teachers and students. The selection of formative assessment methodologies in classroom practice across all year groups (see below) is at the discretion of individual teachers and should: represent highly effective practice in teaching and learning, further the key skills of Junior Cycle and provide consistency in students' learning journeys through Transition Year and Senior Cycle.

- Assessment for Learning (AFL)
- Peer Assessment
- Reflective practice (Reflection / Learning Journals)
- Group Work
- Discussion
- Performance and Presentation
- Differentiated tasks
- Written and oral feedback
- Higher and Lower Order Questioning
- Portfolios

- Classroom based assessments
- Assignments and worksheets
- Homework

2. SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

There are many types of summative assessment that take place in the school environment.

- **Assessment On Entry** - Incoming First Year students sit a number of standardised tests prior to their entry to the school. These standardised tests are used to identify students' cognitive abilities such as verbal, quantitative, non-verbal and spatial. Tests are used to identify reading ages and students' abilities in Irish. Their results are collated and analysed. This assessment offers an early indicator to the school of a student's potential. This information is available to the Principal, the Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor and other teachers as appropriate. Learning difficulties are discussed confidentially with parents/guardians, disclosed to the relevant teachers, and an appropriate programme of learning support is put in place.
- **Topic / Unit Assessment** - These forms of assessment are conducted at the discretion of the teacher on a periodic basis. These formal tests are a vital component in providing feedback to teachers, students and parents on the level of each student's attainment and learning in that specific subject area. It is intended that these assessments inform and deepen the learning conversations arising out of formative assessment practices and place emphasis on learning outcomes at Junior cycle.
- **Mid-term Assessments** - Second and Fifth Year students are assessed at both mid-term breaks, and reports are issued to parents. In some subjects Classroom Based Assessment Tasks (CBAs) may replace formal summative assessments. This represents a blended approach with the assessment process containing both formative and summative elements and is at the discretion of subject teachers.
- **House Exams – Junior Cycle**

First, Second and Third Year students sit Christmas examinations in December. First and Second Year students also sit formal examinations in the summer. In Second Year subjects which currently involve CBAs, these are shorter one hour examinations and are reflective of the blended approach to assessment. While cognisant of the need to avoid over assessment of Second Year students during this period, these brief assessments strike a good balance between the skill development of the formative CBAs and the course specification content during this crucial year in the Junior Cycle. The completion of Subject Learning Assessment Review (SLAR) meetings is fundamental to the assessment process at this point.

Third Year students also sit Pre-Junior Cycle examinations in Spring each year to prepare them for their state examinations in June. These Pre-exams are seen as being very beneficial to students in measuring their progress in their Junior Cycle years. Students gain valuable experience in time management and answering technique by sitting these examinations which use external papers and are corrected both internally

and externally. The results of these form the Pre-Junior Cycle Reports sent out in March/April. The results of these exams are also used to decide on the levels the students will take in the state exams in June. Third Year students do not sit formal in-house exams at the end of May and do not receive Summer Reports.

- **Other Areas of Learning**

The Other Areas of Learning (OALs) which comprise an important part of Junior Cycle provide an important opportunity for students' achievements in extra-curricular and co-curricular areas to be recognised and celebrated. At CBS Kilkenny all students are encouraged to partake in the myriad of activities and opportunities which are provided and which contribute to their social, mental, emotional and physical wellbeing. These are collated during Third Year and reported on in the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA).

- **House Exams - Senior Cycle**

Fifth and Sixth Year students complete Christmas examinations in December. Fifth Year students sit formal examinations in the summer. These are two hour examinations and as far as is practicably possible, and cognisant of the need for differentiation, subject departments are encouraged to produce common examinations. The purpose of these examinations is to measure student learning and attainment in each subject and to give students experience in sitting formal examinations.

Sixth Year students also sit Pre-Leaving Certificate examinations in Spring in preparation for the state exams in June. The Pre-Examinations are set externally and are marked internally and/or externally. These Pre-Examinations enable teachers to guide students in their decision regarding higher or ordinary level papers and are very useful to the students in measuring their progress in their Leaving Certificate years. Students also gain valuable experience in time management and answering technique through sitting these Pre-Examinations. Results of Pre-Examinations are communicated to parents in a Pre-Leaving Certificate report sent out in March / April. Sixth Year students do not sit formal house exams at the end of May and do not receive Summer Reports.

- **Transition Year (TY)**

Transition Year is designed to act as a bridge between a structured examination oriented learning environment and a more autonomous self-directed one where students are responsible for managing their own learning. Transition Year focuses on students' learning about their own strengths, competencies and skills. Christmas and Summer Reports are based on continuous assessments and formal class tests (particularly in the core subjects) conducted by their individual subject teacher.

TY assessments may involve the following: external certifications, portfolios of work, individual and group projects, multimedia, oral presentations and discussions, self and peer assessments. A summary of TY Work Experience reports from employers is included on the Christmas and Summer Reports. In Transition Year, standardised testing is mandatory to assist students in subject choice. The scores identify aptitudes in a range of areas which may assist students to rule in or rule out certain subject areas. Students do not sit timetabled exams.

- **State Exams**

CBS Kilkenny strives to ensure that all Third and Sixth Year students participate, as directed by the State Exams Commission, in the many assessments that make up the Junior Cycle and Leaving Cert exams. These assessments which include CBAs, Assessment Tasks (AT –worth 10%), oral and aural examination, course work, practical work, portfolio work, etc. are operated in accordance with the regulations set down by the State Exams Commission. The timing of these is coordinated through a shared calendar which aims to strike the right balance, avoid over testing and ensure best practice in teaching and learning. Level 2 Learning Programs (L2LPs) are completed by a small cohort of students at Junior Cycle where appropriate.

- **Other Assessments**

CBS Kilkenny engages in other forms of assessment also. Standardised testing is completed at various intervals throughout students' time in the school. In some cases, students are screened for dyslexia using the WIAT 2 and WRAT4 which gives a standardised score in spelling and word reading. The continuum of support is used to gather information on the student and should all of this information point towards a need for formal assessment then a referral can be made.

All students from First Year to Sixth Year take part in a variety of assessments in activities being undertaken in Physical Education.

Standardised testing required for Junior Cycle Reasonable Accommodation in Certificate Examinations (RACE) are completed if a need is identified and/or where students have a diagnosed specific learning difficulty. Test results, even within the criteria, are not sufficient on their own to confer reasonable accommodations. Other criteria must be adhered to.

Students whose applications give rise to RACE have their applications reactivated for Leaving Certificate. Standardised testing must be completed for Leaving Certificate students who are not covered by reactivation. The criteria for RACE must be met.

All assessment methods will progress in line with best practice and will be reviewed in line with any changes made by the Department of Education and Skills (DES). Should national standardised testing be introduced by the DES then CBS Kilkenny will comply with the guidelines.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

The forms that these summative and formative assessments take are dependent on the subject area being assessed and vary from subject to subject. Certain forms of assessment may often be specific to a particular subject.

Classroom strategies such as differentiated assessment, visual aids, hearing aids, spelling waivers, increased wait time and dictionaries, etc. may be used from time to time, as determined by the individual subject teacher.

Where feasible, and as determined by each department plan, common assessments across a year group are used in each subject area. This provides for increased cooperation and a common benchmark across each subject area.

REPORTING

There are different methods whereby the results of summative and formative assessments are communicated to students and parents/guardians.

Informal:

- **Student Journal** - students record continuous assessment results in their journals for all subjects. A specific page has been dedicated to this, Mapping My Progress. The teacher may communicate the outcome of any assessment to the parent/guardian of a student by writing a result or a note in the student's 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 an assessment undertaken by a student. If a teacher, tutor or Year Head has concerns regarding the student's progress, an Interim Report may be completed with a result/comment from each teacher.
- **Signature of Parent/Guardian 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 Meeting (PTM)** - a PTM is held for each year group throughout the academic year. At these meetings it is possible for teachers to relay the outcomes of varying assessments to parents/guardians of individual students, providing an accurate picture of the student's progress.
- **VShare** - Results are recorded onto a database for each individual student and parents/guardians can access their child's academic records through the VShare system.

Formal:

- **Published reports (guideline dates)**

First Year	Jan / June
Second Year	Oct / Jan / March / June
Third Year	Jan / Pre-exams
Transition Year	Jan / June
Fifth Year	Oct / Jan / March / June
Sixth Year	Jan / Pre-exams

The report template is computerised and allows teachers to distinguish levels. A mark and grade are awarded and comments for Attitude and Application are added.

CAO point totals are published on all Fifth and Sixth Year reports.

- **Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA)** - Upon completion of the Junior Cycle programme the school issues a JCPA certificate highlighting the totality of the students learning across both curricular and non curricular activities.

APPROVAL

This policy has been approved by CBS Kilkenny Board of Management.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Chairperson, Board of Management