



St. Mary's Secondary School, Mallow

Assessment Policy

Review dates

| | | |
|---------------------|------------|--|
| Staff | 29-8-2017 | Staff Consultation |
| Parents | 26-9-2017 | Parents Association Meeting Presentation |
| Student Council | 12-10-2017 | Student Council Meeting |
| Board of Management | 9-11-2017 | Ratified by BOM 9-11-2017 |

Due for next review _____

Contents

| | Page |
|---|------|
| 1. Operating Context | 3 |
| 2. Vision | 4 |
| 3. School Mission Statement | 4 |
| 4. Assessment Policy Statement | 4 |
| 5. Definition and Types of Assessment | 5 |
| 6. Purpose of Assessment | 7 |
| 7. Range of Assessment Experiences at Junior Cycle | 8 |
| 8. Assessment & Reporting in the New Junior Cycle of Achievement | 11 |
| 9. Transition Year Assessment Experiences and Reporting | 12 |
| 10. LCA Assessment Experiences and Reporting | 13 |
| 11. 5 th & 6 th Year Assessment Experiences and Reporting | 15 |
| 12. The New CAO Common Points Scale for Leaving Certificate | 16 |
| 13. Links with other Policies | 17 |
| 14. Review and Ratification of Policy | 17 |

1 Operating Context

St. Marys Secondary School, Mallow operates within the context of the religious and educational philosophy of the Mercy tradition and the values outlined in the CEIST Charter. Inspired by the vision of Catherine McAuley, Mercy Education is committed to holistic development and to the achievement of the full potential of each student, particularly those who are disadvantaged or marginalised. It is a process informed and influenced by the teaching and example of Jesus Christ and is conducted in an atmosphere of care, respect and joy.

Mercy Education is committed to ongoing whole school development in collaboration and partnership with the Board of Management, Staff, Parents/Guardians and the wider community. The Board of Management supports and fully subscribes to the underlying principles of the Education Act 1998, the Education Welfare Act 2000, the Equal Status Act 2000, the CEIST Charter and the Mission Statement of St. Marys Secondary School, Mallow.

The Education Act 1998, Section 22(2)(b) states: “...*the Principal and teachers shall – (b) regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to the students and their parents*”. Our Assessment Policy also reflects curricular changes mandated by the Dept. of Education of Skills and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) including the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) and Senior Cycle syllabi. 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.

The Core Values of CEIST are:

- Promoting Spiritual & Human Development
- Achieving Quality in Teaching and Learning
- Showing Respect for Every Person
- Being Just and Responsible

2 Our Vision

As a CEIST School St Mary's Secondary School *“is a faith community that is characterised by the quality of its personal relationships. A caring, welcoming school promotes a culture of good relationships where people thrive and grow. Relationships within the school aim to promote quality teaching and learning in an ordered and safe environment, where discipline, responsibility and accountability are achieved”*. We strive to build community with all the partners in education by fostering positive relationships with each other, maintaining professional standards, and by nurturing each student to reach her full potential.

3 School Mission Statement

St. Mary's Secondary School, Mallow is a voluntary Catholic secondary school for girls only under the trusteeship of CEIST. In co-operation with the Department of Education and Skills, with parental and community support and within the available resources our mission is:

- To develop a community of learning which is geared towards the holistic development of each student;
- To foster the pursuit of academic excellence, respecting the specific potential and talents of each student;
- To promote within the school community the values of a Christian, caring society;
- To value, within the total school community, self-respect, respect for others and for the environment;
- To recognise and affirm the unique value and contribution of each individual.

4 Assessment Policy Statement

St. Mary's Secondary School believes that assessment plays a pivotal role in the provision of a meaningful educational experience. The aim of assessment is to provide a supportive and positive mechanism that helps students to improve their learning. Teaching, learning and assessment are inextricably linked. The rationale for developing an Assessment Policy is to inform the school community of the school's position regarding the main types of assessment. Assessment is on formal and informal basis and includes; oral and aural, written and practical.

Students' will experience different types of assessment reflecting best practice and aligned to the curricular changes mandated by the Dept. of Education of Skills and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) including the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) and Senior Cycle syllabi.

5 Definitions & Types of Assessment

The term "Assessment" is defined as the gathering and interpretation of information related to a student's learning abilities, learning attainment, learning strengths and learning needs. Assessment generates important information about how a learner is progressing. This information can be shared with students in the form of feedback which should help the learner to become more aware of her own strengths and weaknesses, and identify next steps and strategies for improvement.

There are two main types of assessment, firstly assessment for learning which is formative in nature, involves continuous assessment and occurs during the learning process. Examples include student self-assessments, portfolios and reflections. Secondly, assessment of learning, which is summative in nature and takes place after the learning has occurred. Examples include House Exams and State Exams. In St. Mary's Secondary School we strive to combine a balance of both types of assessment to facilitate rich student learning experiences. The table below distinguishes between both types of assessment.

| Assessment OF Learning (Summative) | Assessment FOR Learning (Formative) |
|--|--|
| Happens after learning takes place | An integral part of learning process |
| Information is gathered by teacher | Information is shared with learner |
| Information is usually transferred into marks e.g. State Exams | Information is available on quality of learning e.g. features of quality in classroom-based assessments. |
| Comparison with performance of others | Is linked to learning outcomes and success criteria |
| Looks back on past learning | Looks forward to the next stage of learning |

Assessment for learning (AfL) is diagnostic, on-going and formative. St. Mary's Secondary School supports 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 reflects a view of learning in which assessment helps students' "learning to learn".
- It involves both teacher and student in a process of continual reflection and review.
- It is for on-going planning and can involve teacher assessment, student self-assessment and student peer-assessment.
- It is criterion-referenced with the criteria based on prescribed learning outcomes identified in the curriculum/syllabus, reflecting performance in relation to a specific learning task. The criteria for success is shared with the learner.
- It involves providing feedback, which helps students to recognise what they must do to close any gaps in their knowledge or understanding
- Teachers adjust their plans and engage in corrective teaching in response to formative assessment.

Assessment of Learning is summative and is used for the purpose of providing evidence of achievement for grading or reporting.

- It is teacher assessment and may be either criterion-referenced (based on Learning Outcomes) or norm-referenced (comparing student achievement to that of others)
- Information on student performance can be shared with parents, and with other teachers when engaging in curriculum development e.g. school reports
- AoL can be used to make judgments about a students' performance in relation to national standards.

The relationship between AfL and AoL: if the goal of learning is to achieve deep understanding, then formative assessment should identify problems and progress toward that goal, and summative assessment should measure the level of success at reaching that goal. They are different stages of the same process and should be closely tied together in design and purpose.

6 Purpose of Assessment

Assessment enables Students:

- To improve their achievement
- To become actively involved in their own learning
- To be motivated to achieve to their full potential
- To become self-directed and autonomous learners
- To engage in reflection and self-assessment
- To develop an awareness of how to look at their own work in a reflective way, identify aspects of it that are good and that could be improved, and then set personal learning targets for themselves.

Assessment enables Teachers:

- To assess progress and adapt planning as required
- To evaluate their pupils' learning needs
- To ensure that pupils know how to improve the standard of their work
- To evaluate teaching and learning styles and outcomes
- To monitor a student's progress and to provide the teacher with information to make decisions about what and how the student is learning. This information allows the teacher to identify the next steps in progressing the students learning and adapt his/her teaching strategies and/or learning activities as appropriate.
- To provide the 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 and to inform consultations with NEPS Psychologist where necessary.

Assessment should enable Parents:

- To be involved in their daughter's learning
- To understand and encourage the progress their daughter is making
- To check their daughter's progress throughout their time in St. Mary's
- To gain an insight into the broad spectrum of assessments undertaken by students

- To be informed about their daughter’s academic progress through bi-annual reports and Parent-Teacher meetings.

7 Range of Assessment Experiences at Junior Cycle

First Years

- Homework which may include written, oral, aural, reading, project or portfolio work is assigned regularly.
- Engage in Assessment for Learning (AfL) strategies with the purpose of progressing student learning to the next stage.
- Formative feedback from teachers both verbal and written feedback, which may include comments and/or grades.
- First Years develop the 8 key skills of the Junior Cycle of Achievement e.g. self-assessments promote the ‘managing myself’ key skill.
- Referred to NEPS for: review if needed or assessment if concerns arise from incoming First Year assessment.
- The Wellbeing Unit of Learning entitled “Moving Up” and SPHE cover study skills, a good homework routine, organisation skills and time management skills to prepare students for summative and formative assessments.
- First Year students receive a written report bi-annually, in January and June after completing Christmas class tests and Summer House Exams.

Second Years

- Homework which may include written work, oral presentations, research, aural, reading, project or portfolio work is assigned regularly.
- Engage in Assessment for Learning (AfL) strategies with the purpose of progressing student learning to the next stage.
- Formative feedback from teachers both verbal and written feedback including comments and/or grades.
- Second Years develop the 8 key skills of the Junior Cycle of Achievement e.g. self-assessments promote the ‘managing myself’ key skill.
- Second Years undertaking new Subject Specifications for the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement complete the first classroom-based assessment (CBA). Classroom-Based Assessments are best described as the occasions when the teacher assesses the students using the specific tasks set out in the subject specification e.g. oral presentation in English or the Business in Action Group Project in Business Studies or the Extended Experimental Investigation in Science.
- The criteria for assessment are found in the features of quality linked to each Classroom-Based Assessment. Although the assessment is similar to the formative assessment that occurs every day in class, in the case of Classroom-Based Assessment the teacher’s professional assessment is recorded for Subject Learning and Assessment Review, and is subsequently used in the school’s reporting to parents and students.
- Second Year students receive a written report bi-annually, in January and June after completing Christmas and Summer House Exams.

Third Years

- Homework which may include written work, oral presentations, research, aural, reading, project or portfolio work is assigned regularly.
- Engage in Assessment for Learning (AfL) strategies with the purpose of progressing student learning to the next stage.
- Formative feedback from teachers both verbal and written feedback including comments and/or grades.
- Third Years develop the 8 key skills of the Junior Cycle of Achievement e.g. self-assessments promote the ‘managing myself’ key skill.
- WRAT4 and CAT4 are completed to support RACE applications where required (The WRAT4 is a norm referenced test that measures the basic academic skills of word reading, sentence comprehension, spelling and maths computation).
- Third Year students complete the practical components in certain subject areas.
- Third Year students undertaking new Subject Specifications for the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement complete the second classroom-based assessment (CBA). Examples of the second CBA due for completion in 3rd Year include; the Collection of Student’s Texts in English, the Science in Society Investigation and an individual presentation in Business Studies on a Business topic or business related issue of local or personal relevance.
- The criteria for assessment are found in the features of quality linked to each Classroom-Based Assessment. Although the assessment is similar to the formative assessment that occurs every day in class, in the case of Classroom-Based Assessment the teacher’s professional judgment is recorded for Subject Learning and Assessment Review, and is used in the school’s reporting to parents and students.
- Third Year students complete an Assessment Task for new subject specifications. The Assessment Task is a written task completed by students during class time, which is not marked by the class teacher, but is sent to the State Examinations Commission for marking. The Assessment Task is specified by the NCCA and is related to the learning outcomes on which the second Classroom-Based Assessment is based.
- Third Year students receive a written report after completing their Pre-Examinations in February/March.

8 Assessment & Reporting in the New Junior Cycle of Achievement

As the new subject specifications are rolled out up to 2022, they will continue to be examined by the State Examinations Commission (SEC) in June of third year, however each subject exam paper will be no longer than 2 hours in the case of new specifications. The results will form part of each student's Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA), which will offer a more complete report on progress during junior cycle. The JCPA will also include descriptors awarded for levels of achievement in classroom-based assessments, short courses and other learning experiences. The Assessment Task mark will be included in the final examination grade and both are graded by the SEC. The grading of new subjects will be as follows in State Exams:

Grading of the Final Examination

- Distinction $\geq 90\%$ to 100%
- Higher Merit $\geq 75\%$ and $< 90\%$
- Merit $\geq 55\%$ and $< 75\%$
- Achieved $\geq 40\%$ and $< 55\%$
- Partially Achieved $\geq 20\%$ and $< 40\%$
- (not graded) $\geq 0\%$ and $< 20\%$

Grading Classroom-Based Assessments

Classroom-Based Assessments in all subjects will be specified at a common level and marked by the teacher. CBAs will be undertaken by students within class time to a national timetable. When assessing the level of student achievement in a Classroom-Based Assessment the Features of Quality, are used to assign one of the following four descriptors.

Classroom-Based Assessment Descriptors

- Exceptional
- Above Expectations
- In Line with Expectations
- Yet to Meet Expectations

9 Transition Year Assessment Experiences and Reporting

- Rich learning experiences and personal development are the hallmarks of the Transition Year Programme in St. Mary's Secondary School.
- Participation in TY events and activities is continuously assessed
- Engage in Assessment for Learning (AfL) strategies with the purpose of progressing student learning to the next stage, promoting personal growth, developing self-confidence, discovery learning and embracing leadership and learning.
- Focus on portfolio assessments, reflective journaling, learning logs, oral presentation, multi-media, self and peer assessments.
- TY students compile their portfolios over the course of the year and are interviewed in May by a teacher. Students' articulate their personal learning milestones, examples include the TY Musical, Outdoor Pursuits Trip, Young Scientist, work experience, YSI, Apprentice Chef, mini-company, Gaisce, Build a Bank and so many more.
- Homework which may take the form of written work, oral presentations, research, aural, reading, project or portfolio work is assigned regularly.
- Transition Years and their parents/guardians receive an overview of the students' rich learning experiences at the TY Parent Evening and the plethora of learning experiences is celebrated at the TY Graduation in May.
- TY students receive a written report bi-annually in January and June.

10 Leaving Certificate Applied Assessment Experiences and Reporting

- LCA is a distinct, self-contained two-year Leaving Certificate programme aimed at preparing learners for adult and working life.
- Work experience, continuous assessment and personal development are key features of the LCA Programme in St. Mary's Secondary School.
- Prepares learners for the transition to adult and working life.
- Recognises talents of all learners and our LCA programme is responsive to aptitudes, abilities, needs and interests.
- Provides opportunity to develop in terms of responsibility, self-esteem and self-knowledge.
- Develops communication and decision making skills.
- Helps learners achieve a more independent and enterprising approach to learning and to life.
- Continuous assessment through a combination of practical project work, tasks and coursework and key assignments.
- Students engage in Assessment for Learning (AfL) strategies with the purpose of progressing student learning to the next stage.
- Formative feedback from teachers both verbal and written feedback including comments to assist students in improving their work.
- 90% attendance requirement for successful completion of modules and award of credits.
- Each Task is weighted at 10 Credits and following task examinations SEC grades are posted to the school and results are shared with students.
- LCA students are required to complete a number of key assignments per module and must sign-off on all key assignments in their LCA School Journals as a record of completion.
- Credits are awarded for successful completion of key assignments and tasks.
- LCA students receive a written report bi-annually in January and June.

Leaving Certificate Applied Assessment Overview

A maximum of **200 credits** may be achieved. Credits are awarded for Modules and Tasks at the end of each Session and for SEC written exams.

| | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| <p><u>School Award of Credits</u></p> <p>Satisfactory completion of Modules (44)</p> <p><i>* 90% attendance required</i></p> | <p>62 Credits</p> <p>(31%)</p> |
|---|--------------------------------|

| | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| <p><u>7 Student Tasks</u></p> <p>6 require interview with External Examiner (Except the Personal Reflection Task).</p> | <p>70 Credits</p> <p>(35%)</p> |
|---|--------------------------------|

| | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| <p><u>Final 7 SEC Examinations</u></p> <p>Written exams in English, Maths, Hotel Catering & Tourism, Social Education, Vocational Preparation & Guidance, Irish, Spanish</p> | <p>68 Credits</p> <p>(34%)</p> |
|---|--------------------------------|

| | |
|---|--|
| <p><u>Certificate Awarded at 3 levels:</u></p> <p><u>Pass</u></p> <p><u>Merit</u></p> <p><u>Distinction</u></p> | <p>120 - 139 Credits</p> <p>140 - 169 Credits</p> <p>170 – 200 Credits</p> |
|---|--|

11 5th and 6th Year Assessment Experiences and Reporting

Fifth Year Assessment Experiences and Reporting

- Homework which may take the form of written work, oral presentations, research, aural, reading, project or portfolio work is assigned regularly.
- Engage in Assessment for Learning (AfL) strategies with the purpose of progressing student learning to the next stage.
- Formative feedback from teachers both verbal and written feedback including comments and/or grades.
- Project work for Leaving Certificate subjects
- Referred to NEPS for: review or assessment if required
- WRAT-IV and CAT-IV for RACE applications where required
- Fifth Year students receive a written report bi-annually, in January and June after completing Christmas and Summer House Exams.

Sixth Year Assessment Experiences and Reporting

- Homework which may take the form of written work, oral presentations, research, aural, reading, project or portfolio work is assigned regularly.
- Engage in Assessment for Learning (AfL) strategies with the purpose of progressing student learning to the next stage.
- Formative feedback from teachers both verbal and written feedback including comments and/or grades.
- Sixth year students engage in a range of formal and informal assessments.
- The Pre-Examinations are in February or March.
- The Leaving Certificate State Exams are in June.
- Project or practical course work for Leaving Certificate subjects.
- Preparation for and completion of the oral component of Irish, German or French.
- Sixth Year students receive a written report after completing their Pre-Examinations in February/March.

12 The New CAO Common Points Scale for Leaving Certificate from 2017

From 2017 onwards the number of grade bands were reduced from 14 to 8 are now called H1 to H7. The Common Points Scale is detailed below and reflects the reduction in grade bands. All applicants will be competing using the same scale.

The mechanics of the CAO application and offer process will remain the same; applicants must meet the minimum entry requirements, and places will be awarded based on an applicant's position on the order of merit list. 25 bonus points will continue to be awarded for Higher Level Mathematics for H6 and above.

| New Grades and Common Points Scale for Leaving Certificate 2017 | | | |
|--|---------------|------------------|---------------|
| Grade (%) | Points | Grade (%) | Points |
| H1 (90-100) | 100 | | |
| H2 (80<90) | 88 | | |
| H3 (70<80) | 77 | | |
| H4 (60<70) | 66 | | |
| H5 (50<60) | 56 | O1 (90-100) | 56 |
| H6 (40<50) | 46 | O2 (80<90) | 46 |
| H7 (30<40) | 37 | O3 (70<80) | 37 |
| H8 (0<30) | 0 | O4 (60<70) | 28 |
| | | O5 (50<60) | 20 |
| | | O6 (40<50) | 12 |
| | | O7 (30<40) | 0 |
| | | O8 (0<30) | 0 |

What points will be given for the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme?

| LCVP Grade | Revised LCVP Points |
|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Distinction | 66 |
| Merit | 46 |
| Pass | 28 |

13 Links with Other Policies

- Homework Policy
- Teaching & Learning Policy
- Subject Options Policy
- SEN Policy
- Wellbeing Policy & Programme
- Pastoral Care Policy

14 Review and Ratification of Policy

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of St. Mary's Secondary School, Mallow on 9-11-2017

Chairperson's signature: _____

Principal's signature: _____

Review Date: _____