



Assessment Policy for Sancta Maria College

1. Mission Statement:

The core value of Sancta Maria College is respect for all and the nurturing of individual potential academically, spiritually and culturally as a member of the school community and in the spirit of the Mercy/Ceist Ethos.

2. Scope of Policy:

This policy applies to all students, their Parents/Guardians, staff and Board of Management.

3. Rationale:

Students are encouraged to aim for excellence in all they do. At Sancta Maria College we are committed to excellence and to continually improving the quality of teaching and learning. *(CEIST core value).*

4. 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.

5. Why Assess?

Assessment is fundamental to effective teaching and learning and takes place for the following reasons:

- 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 her/his teaching strategies and/or learning activities as appropriate.
- to provide the students and their parents/guardians with information regarding progress
- to establish baseline data in relation to a student's attainment in certain subjects
- to identify students levels in Irish, English and Maths in Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle
- to assess a student's eligibility for additional support and services and to inform consultations with the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) psychologist where necessary

- to assist in the identification of students who may need to be referred to an outside professional or agency for assessment or direct intervention

6. Legislation:

The Education Act (1998) requires schools to regularly evaluate students and 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.

7. Formative Assessment:

(i) Definition:

Formative assessment involves a range of strategies designed to give students, teachers and parents'/guardians' feedback about students' understanding of elements of their learning in courses.

(ii) Sancta Maria College has adopted Assessment for Learning (AFL) approaches 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.

Some examples are:

- Comment only marking
- Homework—Peer Assessment
- Setting homework at the beginning of the class
- Allocate time at the end of the class for homework
- Keywords explained related to exam terminology in all subject areas
- Self- assessment- target setting, self-correction/peer assessment
- Indicating learning outcomes at the beginning of class
- Homework using student exemplars to illustrate standards and to explore how an answer could be improved upon. Regular procedures for recording homework and reviewing student progress.

(iii) In line with the demands of the syllabus in each curriculum area, teachers set regular homework and comment on the merits of work and make suggestions for improvement. Grades/marks may be given.

(iv) Assessment work may be differentiated to suit the needs and abilities of the individual i.e. the less able or the exceptionally able.

8. Summative Assessment:

(i) Definition:

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

(ii) Class tests may be given by teachers to test the students learning at the end of a particular topic. Third and Sixth year students have examinations in early November and First, Second and Fifth year students have examinations in December. Mock examinations are held for third and Sixth year students in February and they sit the Certificate Examinations in June. First, Second, Fourth and Fifth year students have examinations at the end of May. Transition Year students have assessments at the end of each module.

(iii) The mode of assessment may include: written examinations, practicals, aural and/or oral work. Transition Year assessments may involve the following: External certification, portfolio, oral presentation, multimedia, self/peer evaluation and performance.

(iv) Examinations generally follow a similar format to the Junior and Leaving Certificate Examinations and a marking scheme is clearly identified.

(v) Reports are sent out to Parents/Guardians of all students following November and December exams.

Reports are sent out in March for third and sixth year students, following the mock exams, and in June for first, second, fourth & fifth year students following the summer exams. The report template is computerised and allows teachers to distinguish levels. A mark and grade are awarded and a comment is generated from a menu generated by staff. Alternatively, an original comment can be given. All reports are signed off by the Year Head and the Principal and a general comment may be made on progress to date.

In Transition Year each subject has its own verbal and written assessments. Students produce a portfolio of work which is assessed by the TY Team and the TY Tutors. This forms part of the end of year assessment. Students are awarded an overall pass, merit or distinction at the end of the year. Twice/three times a year teachers are asked to assess the performance of TY students and grades are allocated.

9. Psychometric Tests:

Students sit an Assessment Test prior to entry. This standardised test reflects the verbal and numerical ability of the students. The students reading ability is tested as is their spelling.

Primary schools submit the results of standardised tests, together with report cards for all incoming first year students.

The Guidance Counsellor reviews the results with the Special Educational Needs/Learning Support teacher and students with particular needs are identified.

A programme of support is devised by the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator depending on timetable and availability of resource/learning support staff. IEPs (Individual Educational Plans) are drawn up by the Special Educational Needs/Learning Support Team in conjunction with parents and school management as appropriate. (see Whole School Inclusion Policy)

Where a concern arises the student is referred to the Special Needs Team.

Differential Aptitude Tests (DATS) are administered to senior students. Students may then discuss their career plans with the Guidance Counsellor.

10. Related Policies

- (i) Positive Behaviour Code
- (ii) Pastoral Care Policy
- (iii) Guidance & Counselling Policy
- (iv) Whole School Inclusion
- (v) Internet Acceptable Use Policy
- (vi) Homework Policy

11. Monitoring and Evaluating

The effectiveness of this assessment policy needs to be monitored and evaluated. It is envisaged that the progress of each student is monitored and the staff need to evaluate the quality of the learning and the appropriate recognition of same. The system can also be evaluated through staff appraisal at staff meetings.

The key criterion should be the extent to which the policy is contributing to the progress students make at school and their attitude to learning.

12. Review of policy

Review of this policy will take place every three years.

Ratified: 14th December 2015

Signed: John Shortt

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: Gerardine Kennedy

(Principal)