



NORTH WICKLOW
EDUCATE TOGETHER
SECONDARY SCHOOL

Aims and Objectives of this Policy

The document *Looking at our School* (LAOS) describes a range of standards underpinned by statements of effective and highly effective practice. The School Self-Evaluation (SSE) process is a vehicle of enormous value to the entire school community. This policy is based on an amalgamation of work done in relation to SSE, LAOS, the Teaching, Learning and Assessment team, standard practices in schools and the ASN department.

The primary aims and objectives of the policy are:

- To facilitate improved teaching and student learning
- To create a consistent and standardised assessment procedure for monitoring and reporting student progress and achievement and guidelines towards constructive feedback in the school
- To co-ordinate assessment procedures within departments on a whole school basis
- To develop a whole school approach to assessing, recording and reporting students work

Scope of this policy: This policy is three dimensional:

- 1- The whole school assessment and reporting policy
- 2- The administration of psychometric assessment
- 3- The administration of ASN assessment

Relationship to Mission Statement

North Wicklow Educate Together Secondary School (NWETSS) is an equality based secondary school under the patronage of Educate Together. The school mission statement is:

North Wicklow Educate Together Secondary School is dedicated to creating a co-educational, learner-centred, caring, happy and positive environment where equality and democracy are celebrated and nurtured. We are committed to enabling students to become creative, empathetic, life-long learners who are prepared to meet the challenges of the 21st century in a sustainable and ethical way.

We embrace collaborative educational practices both in our school and through engagement with the wider community. Through the process of teaching and learning we aim to inspire, support, and challenge all students to develop their skills and passions. In doing so, we dedicate ourselves to empowering all students to truly understand themselves and others better so that when they leave school, they are ready to actively engage in society and to lead purposeful, fulfilling, and happy lives.

This Assessment Policy identifies assessment practices used in NWETSS and anchors these practices in the idea that we aim ‘to inspire, support and challenge...’ our students and engage parents in the learning process and progress at home. There is a focus in NWETSS on the professional judgements of teachers in coming to decisions about student progress. The teachers will be able to provide a comprehensive picture of student achievement.

Forms of Assessment for Teaching and Learning

This policy covers ongoing assessment, formative assessment and summative assessment which are explained below in 'forms of assessment.'

Assessment 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. It's important to have a shared understanding of what we mean by assessment. We have adopted the following NCCA definitions for ongoing assessment, formative assessment and summative assessment.

Ongoing Assessment

As part of their classroom work, students engage in Assessment activities that can be either formative or summative in nature. Teachers assess as part of their daily practice by observing and listening as students carry out tasks, by looking at what they write and make, and by considering how they respond to, frame and ask questions. Teachers use this assessment information to help students plan the next steps in their learning. Periodically, this assessment will be in more structured, formalised settings where teachers will need to obtain a snapshot of the students' progress to make decisions on future planning and to report on progress. This may involve the students in doing projects, investigations, case studies and/or tests and may occur at defined points in the school calendar.

Formative Assessment

Assessment is formative when either formal or informal procedures are used to gather evidence of learning during the learning process and used to adapt teaching to meet student needs. The process permits teachers and students to collect information about student progress and to suggest adjustments to the teacher's approach to instruction and the student's approach to learning. Assessment for learning covers all aspects of formative assessment but has a particular focus on the student having an active role in his/her learning.

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

- Helping them to understand the assessment criteria before an assignment begins
- Telling them **what** they have done well and **what** they could improve upon
- Telling them **how** to improve their work
- Making available examples of work which do meet the criteria
- Being a part of effective planning
- Focusing on how students learn
- Being central to classroom practice
- Recognising all educational achievements

Summative Assessment

Assessment is summative when it is used to evaluate student learning at the end of the instructional process or of a period of learning. The purpose is to summarise the students' achievements and to determine whether and to what degree the students have demonstrated understanding of that learning by comparing it against agreed success criteria or features of quality etc.

Examples of summative assessment in our school include:

- Winter/ Summer Assessments
- End of unit / course tests
- Classroom based assessments (see below)
- Mock examinations
- Junior Cycle examinations
- Transition Year portfolio assessments
- Transition year interviews
- Presentations
- LCA Key assignments
- LCA Task and interviews
- Leaving Certificate examinations

North Wicklow Educate Together Secondary School (NWETSS) has established a range of assessment practices, some of which are identified here:

- Use of ongoing assessment as a norm in all classes
- The use of assessment as a means of informing learning and teaching
- The use of formative feedback in written work, homework and oral presentations
- The use of a reporting template which includes comments on 'what went well' and 'even better if' in line with high expectations of learners
- Teachers are encouraged to use the WWW/EBI format in their own assessment of work and learning
- The use of baseline/attainment assessments such as the NGRT and PTM2 and aptitude tests to ensure equality of access to a mixed ability learning and teaching environment
- The use of homework in a judicious way – this has been an area of considerable consultation between the staff, students, parents/guardians and the Board of Management
- The use of ongoing assessment for Transition Year

Role of a mainstream teacher in relation to L2LP students:

- Students participating in the Level 2 Learning Programmes will be assessed using a formative based approach and evidence of learning will be collected collated and recorded by the mainstream subject teacher.
- Assessment of Level 2 Learning Programmes is school-based and ongoing. Students create a portfolio of evidence which demonstrates their achievement of learning outcomes over the three years of Junior Cycle.
- Evidence at L2LP can be hard copy, audio, video, blogs, photographs, artefacts and so on, this promotes much more accessible learning and assessment activities.

- As there is no formal exam at level 2. Assessment is no longer a barrier but an opportunity to showcase a student's strengths, skills and talents.
- Mainstream subject teachers are responsible for applying PLUs and recording them in their subject departments.

The Purposes of Assessment:

- To evaluate what a student has learned in a particular area
- To provide feedback to students on their learning so that they can improve
- To provide feedback to teachers on the success of teaching methodologies in the learning process
- To highlight difficulties and shortcomings in the learning process to develop intervention strategies
- To identify students who may require additional supports
- To enable the Additional Support Need (ASN) Coordinators to identify students that will require RACE and apply accordingly
- To encourage and develop the skills of self-assessment
- To keep records of attainment that will inform parents through the school's reporting process
- To measure the progress of students over time
- To raise expectations and standards
- To prepare students for state examinations and further progression
- To encourage students to take responsibility of their own learning for them to become self-motivated learners
- To ascertain whether it is appropriate for a student to continue studying in any given subject area
- To facilitate target setting for individual students in individual subject areas
- To give students an opportunity to showcase their progress

Schedule of Assessment Report:

First Year	Second Year	Third Year	Transition Year	Fifth Year	LCA 1	6th Year	LCA 2
Baseline Assessments Term 3 Prior to entry							
Winter Report	Winter Report	Winter Report	Winter Report	Winter Report	Winter Report	Winter Report	Winter Report
	Progress Report	Mock Report	Progress Report	Progress Report	End of Session 1 & 3 SEC results	Mock Report	Mock Report
Summer Report	Summer Report	Junior Cycle Exam	Summer Report	Summer Report	Summer Report	Leaving Certificate	Leaving Certificate Applied
CBA	CBA	CBA					
Parent Teacher Meeting*	Parent Teacher Meeting*	Parent Teacher Meeting* x2	Parent Teacher Meeting*	Parent/Teacher Meeting*	Parent/Teacher Meeting*	Parent/Teacher Meeting* x2	Parent/Teacher Meeting* x2

* Parent/Student/Teacher conference meetings are summative and formative in nature. Students are central to the process and encouraged to attend with their parent/guardian.

Junior Cycle Assessment:

Classroom Based Assessments - CBAs have been introduced to allow students to demonstrate their understanding of concepts and skills and their ability to apply them in ways that may not be possible in an externally assessed examination. CBAs will be undertaken by students within class time to a timetable agreed at the start of the school year in the context of an overall state timeline. The timetable for CBAs is developed in consultation with staff and circulated to students and parents.

CBAs will be used in the assessment of learning in subjects and in short courses. CBAs will be assessed by the individual class teachers. Students will undertake the required two CBAs in core and option subjects. CBAs will be facilitated by the individual class teacher, in second year and/or third year. CBAs in all subjects will be specified at a common level.

The assessments associated with CBAs will cover a broad range of activities including oral communication tasks, written work of different types, practical or designing and making tasks, artistic performances, scientific experiments, research projects or other suitable tasks.

In the area of Art, Craft and Design, Music and the practical subjects, the second CBA will involve practical work/ the creation of an artefact or a performance. Assessment of this practical work will be marked by the State Examinations Commission, together with accompanying written evidence, where appropriate.

On completion of the CBAs, subject teachers will engage in Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings (SLARs) to assess the CBAs. The teachers will assess the work completed and the outcomes

will be reported to the students. When assessing the level of student achievement in a CBA against the learning outcomes, subject teachers will use 'on-balance' judgement in relation to the features of quality, which are set out in four level descriptors:

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

In relation to CBAs in Short Courses there will be one CBA and SLARS will be required for the assessment of CBAs that are completed in short courses.

Please reference circular 0076/2020 in relation to requirements for CBA arrangements for Junior Cycle 2021.

Assessment Task:

Students complete a formal written Assessment Task to be submitted to the State Examinations Commission for marking along with the Final Assessment. The member of staff assigned Junior Cycle management resource hours will notify teaching staff of dates relating to the assessment tasks and a calendar of same will be devised and shared.

As per circular 0076/2020 the Assessment Task (AT) in subjects with this element will not be examined in 2021.

General Guidelines:

The form that these informal and formal assessments will take, are dependent on the subject area being assessed and will vary from subject to subject.

All forms of assessment will strive to meet the individual needs and differences of all the students in the classroom. Classroom strategies such as differentiated assessment, visual aids, hearing aids, spelling waivers, increased time and dictionaries amongst others, may be used as determined by the individual subject teacher.

Accommodations for assessments (RACE)

Applications are made for reasonable accommodations for state examinations by our additional support needs team as per Department of Education Guidelines, which are issued annually. These accommodations are applied for on an individual basis based on a combination of standardised school-based testing, reports from outside agencies and in line with Department of Education guidelines. Applications will be made in consultation with parents/ guardians/ carers, students and the State Examinations Commission.

These accommodations may include and are not limited:

- Reader/ reading assistance
- Spelling and Grammar waiver
- Access to a word processor/ recording device/ scribe
- Access to a shared/ individual centre

- Sign language interpreter
- Enlarged/ modified examination papers
- Access to a helper for practical subjects
- Additional time
- Bi-lingual dictionary
- Rest breaks

The school will endeavour to provide, where possible, reasonable accommodations as needed for in-house examinations.

Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA)

The JCPA captures student achievements in a number of assessment elements undertaken over the three years of junior cycle, including the grades in the state certified examinations. It reports on student achievement in CBAs in subjects and short courses, and in Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LPs) where relevant. The JCPA also provides an opportunity for comments on student achievement, participation, or progress in other areas of learning that may have been included in the school Junior Cycle programme. Examples of these include participation in school choir, member of the school council or participation in various sports teams. The JCPA will provide an opportunity for every student to have their own strengths and their engagement in areas of school life recognised and affirmed. The JCPA will be issued to students and their parents before the end of the first term following the completion of the Junior Cycle

Transition Year Programme Assessment

The Transition Year Programme is designed to act as a bridge between the Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate programmes. The Transition Year programme in North Wicklow Educate Together Secondary School aims to:

- Give students the opportunity to become more independent in their learning and in social and work situations.
- Create opportunities for students to understand themselves and others better and in so doing to make good choices about Leaving Certificate, the world of work and further education.
- Enable students to become creative, empathetic, life-long learners who are prepared to meet the challenges of the 21st century in a sustainable and ethical way.

Students will be awarded a Transition Year Certificate upon completion of the TY programme. The certificate awarded which is based on a credits system. The certificates are graded platinum, gold, silver or bronze. In the event of insufficient credits, a certificate of participation is awarded. Credits are awarded for:

- Transition Year subjects and portfolio
- Work experience completion
- End of year portfolio interview
- Engagement and participation
- Attendance and punctuality

Students are required to maintain a digital portfolio and reflection report on work experience placements. Students are interviewed about their portfolio and Transition Year experience in May. Subject credits are awarded by subject teachers throughout the year.

Senior Cycle Assessment

The progress of the senior cycle students is recorded over the two years. Students are assessed by a means of ongoing, formative and summative assessment by the subject teacher. Formative assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning for senior cycle and supports the learning of the student and measures the outcomes. Fifth year students complete school assessments in November and May. They receive a Winter and Summer report and a progress report in February. Sixth years complete school assessments in November and mock examinations in February. Formal reports are received for both.

The state examinations commission assess Senior Cycle subjects. Additional assessment methods including oral and aural examinations, practical examinations and assessment of practical coursework at the end of the two-year programme of study. The State Examination Commission (SEC) awards the grades for these examinations.

Leaving Certificate Applied Assessment

Assessment for Leaving Certificate Applied takes place on the completion of modules, and there is also a final examination in each of the following areas:

- English and Communication
- Two vocational specialisms
- Mathematical Applications
- Language
- Social Education

Students are required to complete key assignments based on the modules, seven tasks over the two years and final examinations. Credits are awarded based on 90% attendance and completion of key assignments. Students are assessed on their tasks by the State Examinations Commission in the form of an interview. They also complete an oral which is assessed by the State Examinations Commission in Spanish and Irish. Students who successfully complete the programme are awarded a Leaving Certificate from the Department of Education and Science. The certificate is awarded at three levels: Pass; Merit; and Distinction.

Assessment and Reporting

As per NNCA guidelines reporting of assessment to parents should be:

- easy for parents to understand.
- meaningful and it should communicate useful information using plain language and clear jargon-free reporting.
- a way for parents to understand where they are in their learning and what their child needs to do to improve.

Assessments should enable parents:

- To be involved in their child's learning
- To understand and encourage the progress their child is making
- To check their child's progress throughout their time in NWETSS

Written Reports:

Effort rating: The school values and recognises the importance of effort in relation to learning. We report on effort using a scaling system in our school reports. Each student's report is accompanied by an effort rating. Students are rated on their efforts out of 5 marks, 5 being the highest level of effort and 1 being the lowest.

Reporting on effort levels informs the school on potential actions to assist a student in reaching their full potential and can highlight discrepancies and potentially is a student requires more support in a subject area.

EBI/WWW comments: The school uses task-based comments based on formative assessment in line with NCCA Guidelines on Reporting and Assessment.

Here are examples of the EBI/WWW comments:

Science – 1st Year

What went well:	Even better if:
X has developed a good knowledge of laboratory safety and the digestive system.	It would be beneficial if X practised line graphs and revised states of matter.

Music – 5th Year

What went well:	Even better if:
X demonstrated good listening skills in the question on Berlioz 'Symphonie Fantastique.' There was evidence of good preparation with excellent understanding of descriptive vocabulary.	It's time to really engage with minor key signatures. Lack of understanding of these hampered what could have been good melodic composition and harmony.

Tutor comments: Class Tutors also enter a student comment on these reports which refer to student attendance and punctuality/co-curricular involvement/social interactions/engagement in class. These comments seek to identify and reinforce positive behaviours and are constructive in nature.

Progress Reports:

Progress report are used for second and fifth years and are completed mid-year using a scale of 1-4.

(4 = All the time/ 3 = Most of the time / 2 = Some of the time/ 1 = Never)

The areas reported on are:

Arrives on time with books, equipment and is ready to learn:

Interacts with others respectfully and positively

Focuses on learning in class

Completes homework set to the best of their ability

Punctuality and attendance are also reported

Senior Cycle progress reports:

The areas reported on are:

Arrives on time with device and required equipment and is ready to learn:

Interacts with others respectfully and positively

Focuses on learning in class

Completes assigned work to the best of their ability

Is up to date with LCA key assignments

Completes homework set to the best of their ability

Current average grade

Punctuality and attendance are also reported

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting of

_____ (date)

Signed: _____

Chairperson:

Next review date: _____