

# Assessment Policy

**St. Caimin's Community School**



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## **Introduction**

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning. In keeping with our school's Mission Statement, we seek to enable each child to develop his/her full potential. Assessment forms an integral part of educational process. Its purposes include fostering learning, improving teaching and providing valid information about what has been done or achieved. It provides feedback for students and teachers and offers opportunities for the evaluation of curriculum and of students' progress.

This policy aims to:

1. Explain the rationales and importance of assessment
2. Ensure that St. Caimin's Community School meets statutory obligations for assessment
3. Promote coherence and consistency in approach to assessment across the school
4. Promote a common understanding of standards both within the school and nationally
5. List the different modes of assessment used in St. Caimin's Community School
6. Raise expectations of student success
7. Detail the annual schedule of assessment and
8. Detail the reporting procedures of assessment results

## **Definition of Assessment**

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. Methods include examinations; homework; class work; projects; written, oral and aural work. This list is not exhaustive.

## **Legalisation**

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. This Assessment Policy outlines the importance of assessment and the key role students, parents and teaching staff play in supporting this policy document. All procedures are in keeping with the assessment procedures as outlined in Framework for Junior Cycle, 2015 and Circular Letter 0055/2019

## **Purpose of Assessment**

Assessment is part of good teaching and learning and allows the school 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 teaching strategies and / or learning activities as appropriate.
- Reinforce the learning carried out in the classroom
- Provide the students and parents with information regarding progress
- Establish baseline data in relation to a student's attainments in certain subject
- Identify students for levels in Junior Cycle at Senior Cycle
- Assess a student's eligibility for additional support and services and to inform consultations with the NEPS psychologist where necessary.
- Assist in the identification of students who may need to be referred to an outside professional or agency for assessment or direct intervention
- Fulfil the course requirements in certain subjects.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### *Role of Individual Teachers*

In relation to JC assessment, individual teachers shall:

- familiarise him/herself with assessment procedures and requirements. Information is available at [www.curriculumonline.ie](http://www.curriculumonline.ie)
- facilitate assessment events
- keep attendance records at all assessment events
- inform the Year Head in the event where a student is absent from an assessment event and provide additional details if required
- input CBA results into ePortal
- follow procedures laid out by the relevant department in regard to assessment
- engage in the SLAR process where appropriate

### *Role of SEN Core Team*

In relation to JC assessment, SEN core team shall:

- approach individual teachers to discuss which supports are necessary for students with extra needs
- ensure that appropriate supports are put in place, e.g. scribe, reader, laptop etc.
- inform students with additional needs and their parents/guardians, as to what supports are in place
- organise USB keys to save assessment materials where appropriate. Such USB keys should be labelled with the individual student's exam number
- liaise with RACE to ensure that digital booklets and other relevant material are made available
- oversee the special supports put in place for SEN students
- liaise with key workers and management where appropriate

### *Role of Junior Cycle Co-ordinator*

In relation to JC assessment, the Junior Cycle Co-ordinator shall:

- share all relevant assessment dates with staff when they are made available
- communicate with parents/guardians providing information regarding assessment events
- answer any queries or concerns regarding assessment procedures
- collate information for the JCPA in relation to the 'Other Areas of Learning' component
- liaise with Senior Management regarding deferred assessment events where appropriate

### *Role of State Examination Liaison Coordinator*

In relation to JC assessment, the State Examinations Coordinator shall:

- distribute relevant booklets and examinations material as they are made available
- distribute examination numbers
- collect examination booklets and other relevant material from teachers, and post them to the State Examinations Commission
- collect students' signatures where appropriate

The tasks prescribed for this position are subject to review in light of the increased workload envisaged as new assessment procedures are rolled out.

### Role of Subject Departments

In relation to JC assessment, subject departments shall:

- discuss assessment procedures and put appropriate plans in place
- nominate one teacher to act as SLAR Facilitator as outlined in Circular Letter 0015/2017

### Role of Year Heads

In relation to JC assessment, Year Heads shall:

- liaise with management and other teachers where appropriate
- receive information from teachers and key workers regarding attendance
- make contact with home where appropriate, particularly in the case of absence

### Role of Senior Management

In relation to JC assessment, Senior Management shall:

- facilitate teachers to carry out all roles as outlined above
- oversee all assessment events
- liaise with teachers and other management as appropriate

### **Forms of Assessment**

Our policy covers both Assessment **of** Learning and Assessment **for** Learning. Assessment **of** Learning is assessment for accountability purposes, to determine a student's level of performance on a specific task or at the conclusion of a unit of teaching and learning. The information gained from this kind of assessment will be used in reporting. Assessment **for** Learning, on the other hand, is a continuous process which combines a grade with advice to the student towards further improvement. Both forms of assessment are invaluable, and will be used by equally by teachers in this school.

The following table outlines the main differences between summative (Assessment **of** Learning) and formative (Assessment **for** Learning). Source: [www.pdst.ie](http://www.pdst.ie)

<b>Assessment OF Learning (Summative)</b>	<b>Assessment FOR Learning (Formative)</b>
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	Information is available on quality of learning
Comparison with performance of others	Is linked to learning intentions and success criteria
Looks back on past learning	Looks forward to the next stage of learning

Assessment **of** Learning and Assessment **for** Learning should not be seen as opposing or contradictory practices. While the Assessment **of** Learning will always have a place in education and in classroom and school practice, the development of Assessment **for** Learning offers new opportunities for teachers.

### Summative

Summative assessment aims to provide a summary of the achievements of the learner. It can take the form of homework, class tests, House Examinations, State Examinations and practical exams. It generally takes place after the learning has taken place and the information is usually transformed into marks or grades. It allows the teacher to check student progress since the last test or examination. It also allows for comparison with the performance of others.

### Formative

Formative assessment is ongoing and involves teachers and students reflecting on how learning is progressing and deciding on the next steps to ensure successful outcomes. It involves a shift from focusing mainly on summative judgements to engaging in ongoing activities that can be used to support next stages of learning. A vital part of formative assessment is the feedback that teachers provide to their students and students' feedback to teachers. Through a range of assessment for learning strategies the teacher helps the student to identify what has been achieved and where there is room for further learning and development. St. Caimin's Community School 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 demands of the subject. The key elements of Assessment for Learning are:

1. Sharing Learning Intentions = Teachers will share the learning intentions with students at the beginning of each lesson/ where deemed necessary and refer back to them during questioning throughout the lesson and at again at the end of the lesson if necessary. This will help to clarify what the student was supposed to have learned and will assist both teachers and students in determining the levels to which the outcomes have been achieved.
2. Sharing Success Criteria = Teachers will tell students in advance of a piece of work what exactly they will be looking for when assessing it. Teachers are aware that it is important to share this information with students beforehand so that they will be in a better position to know what is expected of them. They can also decide how far they want to push themselves.
3. Effective Feedback = Feedback will be linked to the Learning Intentions and the Success Criteria that have been shared with the student. Focused feedback will help students identify aspects of their work that is of high standard and areas where they can make improvements.
4. Effective Questioning = Teachers' use a variety of lower and higher order questioning. Sequencing of questions that build on and extend students' thinking. Question levels are also used to help differentiate for the various learning needs and styles in the class.
5. Self-assessment (Students as owners of their own learning) and Peer Assessment (Students as instructional resources for each other) = Teachers will, occasionally, supervise students to correct their own or their peer's work, based on a list of criteria for success. Following such methods, teachers will encourage students to reflect on their work and write down how they can improve and assist them in achieving it.

### Classroom Based Assessments

Classroom Based Assessments (CBAs) are the occasions when the teacher assesses the students in the specific assessment that are set out in the subject specification. CBAs provide students with opportunities to demonstrate their learning and skills in ways not possible in a pen and paper examination, for example, their verbal communication and investigation skills. CBAs will be facilitated by the classroom teacher. CBAs will be undertaken during a defined time period within normal class contact time and to a national timetable. Students will complete one CBA in second year and the other CBA in third year in each subject (except in Gaelige when both CBAs will be completed in third year). CBAs will be reported on in the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) using the following descriptors:

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

A summary of the type of CBAs in each subject is shown in the Appendix 1.

This assessment is conducted by teachers and where appropriate, is moderated by means of a Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meeting. Once the descriptors are agreed on, feedback will be provided to the student in class and on the school report cards. The material pertaining to the SLAR meeting can then be disposed of.

### Assessment Tasks

The written Assessment Task for each subject will be specified and published by the NCCA. It will relate to the learning outcomes of the second Classroom-Based Assessment. Students must complete their second CBA in order to undertake the associated Assessment Task. The Assessment Task will be completed in class under the supervision of the teacher in accordance with a timeframe and guidance from the NCCA. The Assessment Task will be returned to the SEC for marking and will be marked as part of the Final Examination. Marks for the Assessment Task in each subject will be incorporated into the calculation of the grade for that subject by the SEC. The value to be assigned to the Assessment Task will be included in the assessment guidelines for each subject. A separate Assessment Task will not be required in those practical subjects where the second CBA will continue to be assessed by the SEC (Art, Craft and Design, Music, and the Technology subjects – MTW and T.G).

Subjects in Junior Cycle with new specifications will be assessed through:

- Two Classroom Based Assessments (one in second year and one in third year) reported on to parents/guardians by the school
- An Assessment Task (marked by the SEC) in each subject
- A Final Examination set, held and marked by the SEC.

The combination of the Assessment Task and the Final Examination will generate a final grade, certified by the SEC.

### Homework as a means of Assessment

Homework is an important element in reinforcing the student's grasp of material and work covered in class. It allows the teacher to informally assess how well the students have grasped new concepts and allows both the teacher and student to identify the next steps of learning. It consists of both written assignments and the learning of work done in class. Homework is corrected in a variety of ways at the discretion of the individual teacher. These methods may include the teacher collecting and correcting it and giving a grade or comment only marking. It could also consist of the teacher demonstrating in class how the homework should have been completed and students peer or self-correct. Alternatively, the teacher gives the students the marking scheme or the list of "features of quality" and students peer or self-correct. The teacher ascertains during such activities how well students are progressing.

### **Assessment in the Event of Student Absence**

It is recognised that the Junior Cycle programme presents many assessment events. It is likely, that on occasion, circumstances will result in student absences during these times. Students and parents/guardians should look to minimise such occurrences. To allow for planning of medical, dental and other essential appointments, St. Caimin's Community School shall provide dates of assessment events as they become available. Parents/guardians are encouraged to schedule essential appointments outside of school time where possible. Parents/guardians are advised not to schedule appointments during the times of assessment events. In the case where illness precludes a student from engaging with an assessment task event, a deferred session will be offered to students who provide a medical certificate. This is in keeping with the practice in other state examinations. In exceptional circumstances where a student is precluded from engaging with an assessment event, parents/guardians should contact the Year Head. The Year Head following discussion with Senior Management, will exercise his/her discretion as to whether students may avail of a deferred session to engage with the assessment event. St. Caimin's Community School is an inclusive school and looks to meet the needs of all students. In the case where a student has a need identified by a psychologist, or a medical condition identified by a doctor, the school shall endeavour to put arrangements in place to facilitate engagement with the assessment event.

## Schedule of Assessment by Year

The table below outlines the schedule for assessments for each of the year groups.

Years	Exam format	Schedule	Reports**	P/T meetings
<b>1st year</b>	Continuous Assessment (3 pieces of work)	Christmas	January Term 2	January Term 2
	House Exams	Summer	June Term 3	n/a
<b>2nd year</b>	Continuous Assessment (3 pieces of work)	Christmas	January Term 2	January Term 2
	Classroom based Assessments or House Exams for non-CBA subjects	Summer	June Term 3	n/a
<b>3rd year</b>	October Exams	October	November Term 1	November Term 1
	Classroom based Assessments	December/January	March Term 2	March Term 2
	Mocks	February	March Term 2	March Term 2
<b>LC1*</b>	House Exams	Christmas	January Term 2	January Term 2
	House Exams	Summer	June Term 3	n/a
<b>LC2</b>	October Exams	October	November Term 1	November Term 1
	Mocks	February	March Term 2	March Term 2
<b>TY</b>	Portfolio & CA	Christmas	January Term 2	January Term 2
	Portfolio, CA & formal interview	Summer	June Term 3	n/a
<b>LCA1 and LCA2</b>	Key assignments	Christmas	January Term 2	January Term 2
	Key assignments Summer exam in class time or State Examinations	Summer	June Term 3	n/a

\* Flexibility is allowed for in this schedule of assessment, for subject departments that would prefer to offer continuous assessment at senior cycle level.

\*\* The administration and awarding of grades for continuous assessment will be at the discretion of subject departments.

### State Examinations

The school will support students in preparation for the State Examinations. We will ensure that students are fully informed of the practices and procedures necessary for these exams. The Junior and Leaving Certificate Examinations begin the first Wednesday after the June Bank Holiday Monday each year. The exact timetable of examinations is usually available from the previous January.

### Reporting Procedures

As Christmas examinations are held immediately preceding the Christmas break, adequate time will be given for correction of these exams after term resumes in January. An agreed date will be set for the input of these results to ePortal. Reports are made available to parents in January and in June through ePortal. In the case of mock examinations, reports are available to parents as soon as possible following the examinations. Subject Departments or individuals are free to incorporate results of continuous assessment

with the results of the formal Christmas and/or summer exams. There are many different methods whereby the results of formal and informal assessments will be reported to students and parents e.g.:

- Student Journal – the teacher may communicate the outcome of any assessment to the parents/guardian of a student by writing the result or a note in the student 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 any assessment undertaken by a student.
- Parents are welcome to arrange a meeting by appointment.
- Signature of Parent on Assessment – the teacher may send the corrected assessment itself home with the student to be viewed and signed by the parent/guardian.
- Parents may access their child's academic records through the ePortal system.
- Parent Teacher Meetings – there are Parent Teacher Meetings for all year groups throughout the academic year. At these meetings it will be possible for teachers to relay the outcomes of varying assessments to parents/guardians of individual students that generate an accurate picture of the student's progress.
- All strands of assessment are reflected in the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) which is awarded to students following completion of the Junior Cycle programme. The JCPA will also reflect learning that has occurred outside the classroom. This is recorded in the Other Areas of Learning section.

### **Special Educational Needs (SEN)**

Students with SEN may be facilitated with differentiated modes of assessment as appropriate.

SEN students who meet the criteria for Reasonable Accommodations are facilitated in Leaving Certificate and Junior Cycle Mock Examinations e.g. access to a reader, use of a laptop, recording answers etc. As far as possible, SEN students are given opportunities to avail of Reasonable Accommodations in House Exams.

### **Standardised Tests**

The following tests are administered to 1st Year students by the Learning Support Team & Guidance Counsellors:

- Cognitive Ability Test (CAT4 Level E) – this is administered prior to entry (May)
- Standardised literacy tests are administered to all first students
- CAT 4 (Level F) are administered to all third-year students (Term 1)

When the results of the tests become available:

- Students with particular needs are identified.
- A programme is devised by the SEN coordinator/resource teacher depending on timetabling and availability of learning support staff.
- Student support plans are drawn up by the SEN Team in conjunction with parents and school management.

## **Related Policies**

This policy document may be read in conjunction with the following:

- Guidance and Student support Plan
- Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy
- GDPR Policy
- Mission Statement
- Suspension and Expulsion Policy
- Wellbeing Plan
- Homework Policy

## **Monitoring and Review**

We are committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of our Assessment Policy and Procedures. This is conducted through student reflections and evaluations, feedback via the student council, staff review and parental feedback. This policy will be reviewed every two years, unless a need arises at an earlier time.

## **Ratification**

This Policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2020.

The policy will come into effect from 30<sup>th</sup> January 2020.

SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_ (Chairperson of Board of Management)

SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_ (Principal)

Once ratified this policy will be shared on the school website and Staff Teams.

## APPENDIX 1 – Summary of Classroom Based Assessments by Subject

Subject	CBA 1	CBA 2
<b>English</b>	<b>Oral Communication:</b> Individual or group communication or presentation/performance. During a period of 3 weeks, with support/guidance by the teacher.	<b>Collection of the Student’s Texts:</b> Two texts chosen by the student from their collection of texts
<b>Gaeilge</b>	<b>Language Portfolio:</b> The portfolio with samples of their work may include a range of student-created texts, e.g. projects, learning logs, creative pieces (poems/songs etc. created by the student) reflective pieces, recorded material (audio-visual and visual), texts, presentations completed etc.	<b>Communicative Task:</b> 3-4 minutes of an oral task in the format of a presentation, role play or interview. Can be completed alone or in a group.
<b>MFL – French or German</b>	<b>Oral Communication in the target language:</b> Individual, pair or group communication using an interview, role-play, presentation (accompanied by question-and - answer session) or conversation in response to stimulus material. During a maximum of three weeks, with support and guidance from teacher.	<b>Student Language Portfolio:</b> Three items chosen by the student from their collection. Texts produced over time with support and guidance from their teacher.
<b>Geography</b>	<b>Geography in the news:</b> Structured inquiry through a response to a recent geographical event(s). Response to a media source. Response may be presented in a wide range of formats. At the end of a three-week period students will report on their inquiry, based on a recent media source, relating to a geographical event.	<b>My Geography:</b> provides students with the opportunity to apply the knowledge and experience gained through the first Classroom-Based Assessment to undertake an active investigation into geographical aspect(s) of their local area.
<b>History</b>	<b>The Past in My Place:</b> Display which can be completed by a group, pair or individual. During a maximum of 3 weeks with support/guidance from teacher.	<b>A Life in Time:</b> Students deepen their understanding of the human condition and the motivations underpinning the achievements and follies of humankind that have shaped the world they live in.
<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Mathematical Investigation:</b> A report may be presented in a wide range of formats. A student will, over a three-week period, follow the problem-solving cycle to investigate a mathematical problem. Problem-solving cycle: define a problem; decompose it into manageable parts and/or simplify it using appropriate assumptions; translate the problem to mathematics if necessary; engage with the problem and solve it if possible; interpret any findings in the context of the original problem.	<b>The Statistical Investigation (SI):</b> Students carry out an investigation that involves varying data. This data may be related to work they have encountered in other subjects or to a question they have about some quantitative phenomena of interest from the world around them.
<b>Science</b>	<b>Extended Experimental Investigation (EEI):</b> A student will, over a three-week period, formulate a scientific hypothesis, plan and conduct an experimental investigation to test their hypothesis, generate and analyse primary data, and reflect on the process, with support/guidance from the teacher	<b>Science in Society:</b> Investigation (SSI): A student will, over a three-week period, research a socio-scientific issue, analyse the information/secondary data collected, evaluate the claims and opinions studied, and draw evidence-based conclusions about the issues involved, with support/guidance from the teacher.

Subject	CBA 1	CBA 2
<b>Visual Art</b>	<b>From Process to Realisation:</b> Group or individual project where students choose to work from one of a range of given themes to develop their ideas and create a realised work. During a maximum of four months with support/guidance from teacher.	<b>Communicate and Reflect:</b> Individual project where students choose one from a range of given themes and generate preparatory work which they present to their class for discussion and feedback. During a maximum of three months with support/guidance from the teacher.
<b>Business</b>	<b>Business in Action Group Project:</b> Based on one of three options: (1) Enterprise in action (2) Economics in action or (3) Finance in action  During a maximum of four weeks with support/guidance from teacher.	<b>Presentation:</b> Individual presentation and investigation on a business-related topic. During a maximum of three weeks, with support/guidance from teacher.
<b>Home Economics</b>	<b>Creative Textiles:</b> This is an individual project. Students will produce evidence of the application of the design brief process to one of the following options: Make a creative textile item for an individual or the home or recycle or upcycle a creative textile item for an individual or the home.	<b>Food Literacy Skills Brief:</b> Students will show evidence of their research based on a selected practical food skills brief issued by the State Examinations Commission. Students will also record the feedback they receive from their teacher and peers. They will use this to reflect on their work to date as well as the possible direction/s of their practical food skills examination.
<b>Music</b>	<b>Composition Portfolio:</b> Two pieces chosen from their portfolio. Compositions are produced over time with support and guidance from teacher.	<b>Programme Note:</b> Students inform an audience on the content of their upcoming performance which itself will comprise the practical examination.
<b>Religion</b>	<b>A Person of Commitment:</b> Students undertake an investigation into a person of personal interest to them who has made a positive impact on the world with a particular focus on exploring the values, worldview and/or belief that have influenced the person.	<b>The Human Search for Meaning:</b> Students in explore artistic, or architectural, or archaeological evidence that shows ways people have engaged in religious belief/the human search for meaning and purpose in life. It aims to develop their curiosity and understanding about the many ways that humans have expressed the search for meaning – a quest that transcends cultural and generational boundaries.
<b>Engineering</b>	<b>Engineering in Action:</b> Students engage in practical, authentic learning experiences that gives them the experience of exploring the applications of engineering in the world around them. The Classroom-Based Assessment will ask students to research, analyse and draw conclusions on the application of engineering from their chosen engineering discipline.	<b>Research and Development:</b> Students investigate and develop their understanding of a theme related to their upcoming project, which will be issued by the State Examinations Commission. The theme will change each year and will be derived from the project the students will undertake in that same academic year.
<b>Wood Technology</b>	<b>Wood science in our environment:</b> Students to engage in practical, authentic learning experiences that gives them the experience of investigating a wood science-related issue within a local/global context. The Classroom-Based Assessment will ask students to research, analyse and draws conclusions on their findings.	<b>Student self-analysis and evaluation:</b> Students conduct an analysis of their coursework and skills to date in Wood Technology. Students will focus their analysis and evaluation on a range of completed tasks or on a specific completed task. Students are expected to critically review their progress and identify areas of strength and areas for improvement, with a view to informing their work for the State Examination Commission project.

Subject	CBA 1	CBA 2
<p><b>Graphics</b></p>	<p><b>Communicating through sketching:</b> Students engage in practical, authentic learning experiences giving them the opportunity to develop their skills to become competent in communicating through sketching. Students will be asked to choose a stimulus theme to graphically communicate their ideas using two-dimensional and/or three-dimensional sketching techniques. The theme is agreed between the student and the teacher and can be individual to student or broad enough to allow an entire class to respond with varying responses</p>	<p><b>Graphical presentation skills:</b> Students develop and demonstrate skills in researching and investigating the domain in which the project will be situated and present their findings graphically through any appropriate graphic media. The domain will change each year and will be related to the project the students will undertake in that same academic year.</p>