

Presentation Secondary School Listowel

Co. Kerry



Assessment Policy

Date of policy adoption

This Policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Presentation Secondary School, Listowel

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Chairperson, Board of Management

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1. Rationale

This policy

- sets out to clarify the purpose and practice of assessment in Presentation Secondary School, Listowel
- Supports both Assessment for Learning (AfL) and Assessment of Learning (AoL) across all class levels and year groups,
 - AfL helps teachers and students to focus on three key questions:
 - where are students now in their learning?
 - where are students going in their learning?
 - how will students get to the next point in their learning?
 - (AoL) focuses more on medium and long-term assessment. AoL generally involves assessing a student's learning at the end of a given period, such as the end of a unit of work, a week, a term, or a year. The emphasis in AoL is on measuring a child's cumulative progress towards curriculum objectives. A grade or a score is often the only feedback a child receives.
- Identifies a range of assessment methods used to gather information about student progress and achievement, amount of student peer/ self- assessment in written tasks/ homework / tests,
- Supports consistency on what information is recorded about student learning progress and how this information is shared with parents, teachers and other professionals,
- Adheres to legislative requirements enshrined in:
 - the Education Act (1998) which requires schools to regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to the students and their parents.
 - The Data Protection (Amendment) Act (2003)
 - The Equal Status Act (2000)
 - The Education (Welfare) Act (2000)
 - The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004)
 - The National Strategy for Literacy and Numeracy (2011)
 - Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life 2011- 2020.
 - The Framework for Junior Cycle (2015)
 - Circular Letter
- Supports other school policies such as Inclusion for Students with Special Educational Needs, Whole School Guidance, Homework, Literacy and Numeracy and Attendance.

2. Definition of Assessment

Assessment is integral to teaching and learning and is concerned with students' progress and achievement. It involves gathering information to understand how each student is progressing at school and using that information to further a student's learning.

Classroom assessment involves gathering, recording, interpreting, using and reporting information about a student's progress and achievement in developing knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes.

Assessment, therefore, involves much more than testing. It is an ongoing process that concerns the daily interactions between the teacher and the student that include moment-by-moment conversations, observations and actions.

3. Purpose of assessment

- To inform planning for all areas of the curriculum
- To gather and interpret data at class/whole school level and in relation to national norms
- To identify the particular learning needs of students/groups of students including the exceptionally able
- To enable teachers to modify their programmes and their teaching methodologies in order to ensure that the particular needs of individual students/groups are being addressed
- To compile records of individual student's progress and attainment
- To facilitate communication between parents and teachers about students' development, progress and learning needs
- To facilitate the active involvement of students in the assessment of their own work

4. Aims of this policy

- The main aims of this assessment policy are:
- To benefit student learning
- To monitor student progress and attainment
- To monitor learning processes
- To gather and interpret data at class/whole school level and in relation to national norms
- To compile records of individual student's progress and attainment
- To generate baseline data that can be used to monitor achievement over time
- To involve parents and students in identifying and managing learning strengths or difficulties
- To facilitate communication between parents and teachers about students' development, progress and learning needs
- To facilitate the involvement of students in assessment of their own work
- To identify the particular learning needs of students/groups of students

- To enable teachers to modify their plans/ approaches/ methodologies in order to ensure that the particular learning needs of individual students/groups are being addressed
- To assist teachers' long and short term planning. Subject Department Plans are influenced by the information yielded from assessments and support teacher judgment by specifying what is to be learned by most of the students at the end of each year level.
- To coordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis

5. Types of Assessment carried out in Presentation Secondary School, Listowel

Type of assessment	Name of assessment	When administered	Administered by whom	Reporting Procedures
Standardised	Cognitive Ability Tests, The Cognitive Abilities Test (CAT4) is an assessment that is designed to help students and their teachers understand how they learn and what their academic potential might be. It assesses how students think in areas that are known to make a difference to learning. measures three principal forms of reasoning – verbal, nonverbal and numerical – as well as an element of spatial ability.	1 st Year	SENCO	Shared with teachers/parents
Standardised	NGRT - New Group Reading Test NGRT is an assessment that reliably measures reading skills against the national average to help get to the root of any problems precisely and quickly. NGRT provides information about sentence completion and comprehension skills allowing the school to identify where difficulties lie.	1 st year	SENCO	Shared with teachers/parents
Summative (AoL) Subject Teacher	February and Summer Exams.	Feb and End of May for 1 st 2 nd and 5 th year	Subject teacher	Results entered on compass for parents

Formative (AFL)	Classroom Based Assessments	Throughout 2nd and 3rd year, set to a national timetable	Subject Teacher	Results, in the form of descriptors, and feedback communicated to the student and entered on Compass. Results may also be used at Parent Teacher Meetings
Summative (AoL)	Mock Exams	February of 3rd and 6th year	Subject Teachers (exam papers sourced from an outside company)	Results entered on compass for parents
Summative (AoL)/ Formative (AFL) (depending on how the teacher decides to correct it)	End of chapter test/ periodic test throughout a chapter/ test at end of a few chapters or a topic	Any time throughout the year, at the discretion of the subject teacher	Subject Teacher	Results recorded in teachers' journals for use at Parent Teacher Meetings
Formative (AFL) Sharing of Learning Intentions with Students	At the beginning of each class or topic.	Done at the discretion of the teacher	Subject Teacher	Teacher observation notes kept privately in teachers' journals
Formative (AFL)	Peer or Student Self-Assessment	Periodically at the discretion of the teacher.	Subject Teacher	Teacher observation notes kept privately in teachers' journals
Formative (AFL)	In-class questioning and homework tasks	In every/ most classes at the discretion of the teacher	Subject Teacher	Private notes kept by teacher for use at ParentTeacher Meetings.

6 Formal and Informal Assessments.

Informal Assessment

The most common forms of assessment used in the school are of an informal nature, and these take place regularly in the classroom. These informal assessments are at the discretion of individual teachers who will use them constructively for learning to take place. Timely feedback and constructive advice are vital components in this process. Where appropriate, teachers will keep records of these assessments to provide an insight into a student's progress and to fully inform them regarding the learning process.

Informal Assessments methods include:

- Worksheets and written classwork
- Questions and answers in class
- Essays, projects and assignments
- Reading and writing in class
- Sample exam questions
- Homework – written or learned
- Presentations
- Performances

Formal Assessment

Many types of formal assessments take place in the school. The results of these generally form the basis for the reports issued to parents.

Formal Assessment methods include:

- Monthly/end of topic/chapter tests
- House examinations
- Mock examinations
- Aptitude tests
- Leaving and Junior Certificate Examinations
- Entrance Assessments CAT

7 . Schedule of Assessments

When appropriate, and as determined by each department plan, common assessments across a year group will be used in each subject area.

- Monthly/End of Topic/Chapter Tests

These forms of assessments will be conducted at the discretion of the teacher on a monthly, end of chapter or end of topic 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. Constructive feedback will be given by teachers to students who complete these tests.

- House Exams

First, Second, LCA and Fifth year students will sit In house exams in Feb and May of each year

The duration of these exams shall be as follows:

First years: 1 hour

Second Year: 1.5 hours

LCA: 1 hour

Fifth Years: 2 hours

These exams are of a serious nature, and this is recognised by students, parents and teachers alike. The purpose of these exams is to measure student learning and attainment in each subject area, and to give students experience in sitting formal exams similar in nature to the state exams.

Third & Sixth year students

Students will undertake Mock Exams in February each year to prepare them for their state exams in June. The Mock Examinations are set and corrected externally. These Mock Examinations are very beneficial to the students in measuring their progress in their Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate years. Students will gain valuable experience in time management and answering techniques through sitting these mock examinations.

Transition Year students

TY Students will have their Portfolio Assessment at Christmas and Summer.

TY students sit house exams in the school in February and May. Activities are not to be scheduled in a 2 week period before each inhouse exam sitting in preparation for these exams. As the Transition year is focused on experiential learning and personal development, the forms of assessment used may vary from the standard practices used in other years. Transition Year assessments may involve the following: external certificate, portfolio, project, oral presentation, multi media, self and peer evaluation as illustrated in the Portfolio Assessment.

State Exams

The School will strive to ensure that all 3rd and 6th year student participate (as directed by the State Exams Commission) in the many assessments that make up the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate Examinations. These assessments which may include orals, course work, practical work amongst others, will be conducted in accordance with the regulations set down by the State Exams Commission.

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.

Leaving Certificate Applied-Assessment and Certification

The following principles apply to the assessment and certification of the Leaving Certificate Applied

- i. Assessment criteria to be transparent
- ii. Participants to accumulate credit during the programme
- iii. The centrality of the Student Tasks to the nature of the Leaving Certificate Applied
- iv. External examination to incorporate a wide range of techniques
- v. Provision for early leavers to carry credit for achievement

Three Modes of Assessment

Participant achievement and performance will be recorded in three modes:

Module Completion

At the end of each Session the participant will be credited on satisfactory completion of the appropriate modules. In order to be awarded credit participants must

- Attend the classes and out-of-school activities related to the modules and
- Complete the key assignments related to the module.

No ranking of performance will be involved. A minimum attendance of 90% is required. The school must verify where there is absence due to exceptional circumstances.

Student Tasks

Individual performance in the Student Tasks will be assessed according to specific criteria (see the Student Tasks section of this book for details).

External Examinations

At the end of Year 2 participants will take final examinations in the following areas:

- English and Communication
- Vocational Specialisms (2)
- Mathematical Applications
- Languages (2)
- Social Education

Allocation of Credits

- A participant may accumulate a maximum of 200 credits. These credits are allocated on the following basis

Mode Credits Percentages

Satisfactory Completion of Modules* 62 31%

7 Student Tasks 70 35%

Final Examinations 68 34%

- *With regard to the assessment component of Module Completion, modules in the non-examination courses will have a value of two credits. Courses also assessed in the Final Examinations will have a value of one credit per module.

- Credits for Module Completion

Non-Examination Courses No. of Modules No. of Credits

Vocational Preparation & Guidance 8 16

Introduction to Information & Communication

Technology 2 4

Arts Education 2 4

Leisure and Recreation 2 4

Total 14 28

Final Examination Courses No. of Modules No. of Credits

English and Communication 4 4

Vocational Specialisms 8 (4x2) 8

Mathematical Applications 4 4

Social Education 6 6

Languages 4 (2x2) 4

Total 26 26
Elective Modules No. of Modules No. of Credits
Current and Validated Modules 4 8
Total 4 8
OVERALL TOTAL 44 62

- Credits for Student Tasks

General Education Task 10 credits
Vocational Preparation Task 10 credits
Vocational Education Task (x2) 10 + 10 credits
Contemporary Issue Task 10 credits
Practical Achievement Task 10 credits
Personal Reflection Task 10 credits
OVERALL TOTAL 70 credits

- Credits for Final Examinations

English and Communications 12 credits
Vocational Specialisms (2) 12 credits each
Languages (2) 6 credits each
Social Education 10 credits
Mathematical Applications 10 credits
OVERALL TOTAL 68 credits

- Award of the Leaving Certificate Applied

The Leaving Certificate Applied is a single award made on the basis of credits accumulated over four sessions and in final examinations. This approach

- Highlights the novel and innovative nature of the programme
- Promotes participant motivation by facilitating the gradual accumulation of credits for module completion, Student Task completion and final examinations
- Emphasises the integrated nature of the programme design and the co-ordinated approach to its implementation
- Enables greater flexibility by aggregating three very different yet complementary approaches to assessment in arriving at the final award
- Is consistent with the approach to the accreditation of pre-vocational education programmes in this and other jurisdictions

Participants who successfully complete the Leaving Certificate Applied programme will receive the Leaving Certificate of the Department of Education and Science. They may also receive a Record of Experience if they leave the school before completing the programme.

The Leaving Certificate Applied will be awarded at three levels

- Pass 120 - 139 credits (60% - 69%)
- Merit 140 - 169 credits (70% - 84%)
- Distinction 170 - 200 credits (85% - 100%)

Other Assessments

The school will engage in other assessments periodically throughout the year.

Entrance Assessments:

Incoming first years will undertake assessments in Literacy and Numeracy (CAT) which will be used as a basis to form mixed ability first year classes. This assessment will offer an early indicator to the school of a student's academic potential.

Fitness tests:

Students may have up to three tests each year to encourage healthy eating and exercise.

Learning Support Assessments:

All first years will be screened by the Resource/Learning Support Department to investigate the possible provision of additional help where necessary. If a student is identified as having a learning need/difficulty the SEN Coordinator will discuss the matter with the Principal. Classroom strategies such as differentiated assessment, visual aids, hearing aids, spelling waivers, increased time and dictionaries amongst others, may be used from time to time as determined by the SEN Coordinator in consultation with individual subject teachers.

The school's NEPS psychologist, in consultation with school management, may carry out psychological assessments and other assessments on students at different times throughout the year.

8 . Reporting on Assessment

There are many different methods whereby the results of formal and informal assessments will be reported to students and parents.

Non Standardised Reports

- Student Journal – the teacher may communicate the outcome of any assessment to the parents/guardian of a student by writing the result of 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.
- 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 Compass app.
- Parent Teacher Meetings – there are Parent Teacher meetings for all year groups throughout the academic year. At these meetings it will be possible for teacher to relay the outcomes of varying assessments to parents/guardians of individual students that generate an accurate picture of the student's progress.

Standardised Written Reports

Formal written reports are posted on compass to the parents/guardians of students on three occasions during the academic year, depending in which year group they are in. The report template is computerised and allows teachers to distinguish levels. A mark and grade are awarded and a comment can be generated from a menu. Alternatively, an original comment can be given.

- First, Second and Fifth year parents/guardian will receive their October/Midterm, February and summer reports on Compass. A minimum of two tests results are used for October reports
- Transition year parents/guardians will receive their Portfolio Assessment in December before the Parent/Teacher meeting and the second during the Summer holidays.
- Third and Sixth year parents/guardians will also receive a Christmas report in November and will then receive another report with the results of their Pre Junior and Pre Leaving Certificate Mock Examinations.

Exams results will be recorded onto the database for each individual student. Parents and teachers can access these through the compass app.

- CBA results where appropriate will be reported with the above reporting schedule.

9. Extra on Formative assessment

The school will engage in the following methods which are integral to the successful implementation of AFL:

- Sharing of Learning Outcomes with students:

Teachers will share the learning outcomes 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.

- Sharing of Features of Quality/ Criteria for Success:

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. In the case of Classroom Based Assessments (CBAs), teachers will share the features of quality with students and provide feedback to students as they research, prepare and present their completed work.

- Peer Assessment and Self-Assessment:

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 – perhaps in a separate section of their copy, similar to a reflective journal. It allows students to become more involved in their own assessment and assists them in identifying what their next steps in the learning process may be. It also requires them to ask themselves what they must do next in order to achieve the next steps. It empowers the students to become autonomous independent learners.

We consider the following to be key classroom practices and strategies needed for AfL:

1. A positive classroom culture and ethos, which encourages students to think and talk about their learning and which provides a safe place for open, honest and respectful discussion
2. Questioning skills (student to teacher/ teacher to student/ student to student), which stimulate thinking and reflecting on learning
3. Explicit teaching of how to consciously reflect on what one knows and how to make an evaluative comment on it (Bloom's Taxonomy)
4. Frequent identification and review of learning goals through teacherdirected discussion, clearly defining learning objectives and success criteria thereby empowering students and enabling them to take responsibility for their learning
5. A recognition and acknowledgement of the purpose and importance of collaboration between home and school in the student's learning process.

10. Roles and responsibilities

Teachers are responsible for:

- a) Monitoring and formatively assessing student learning on an ongoing basis
- b) Setting and marking assessments
- d) Filling in reports
- e) Providing clear feedback to students in relation to how they can improve their performance
- g) Liaising with other teachers in the department to coordinate assessments where appropriate.

Subject Coordinators are responsible for:

- a) Coordinating the review of departmental procedures used for assessment throughout the year.

The Principal/Deputy principal is responsible for:

- a) Overseeing the completion of school reports
- b) Organising training and support for staff in areas related to assessment when required.

The Exams coordinator is responsible for:

- a) Organising the logistics of examinations and liaising with the State Examinations commission.

The SEN Coordinator and team are responsible for:

- a) Organising the assessment of needs of the incoming 1st Year students
- b) Organising CAT4 tests and follow –up assessments for particular Year Groups
- c) Identifying students with particular needs
- d) Testing SEN students and liaising with external agencies
- e) Identifying students suited to the variety of programmes available in the school, implementing these programmes with SEN students and monitoring and assessing their progress

- f) Liaising with and assisting Senior Management in the structuring and allocation of Educational provision
- g) Assisting and guiding learning support/resource teachers to devise a suitable programme of support
- h) Guiding and supporting the classroom teacher through the setting of individual targets for SEN students
- i) Developing Student Support Files by the Learning Support Team in conjunction with parents and school management
- j) Applying for reasonable accommodations for the Junior and Leaving Certificate State Examinations where applicable

Parents/Guardians have a responsibility to:

- a) To encourage attendance
- b) To be familiar with key dates relating to assessment
- c) To engage in active and positive communication with teachers when necessary and appropriate
- d) To support teachers in their work to help students achieve their full potential
- e) To be actively involved in their daughter's education
- f) To ensure that their daughter completes all work assigned in the time designated
- g) To monitor their daughter's progress.

Students have a responsibility to:

- a) Have good attendance
- b) Be aware of key dates for assessment
- c) Complete all work assigned by their teachers in the time designated
- d) Put in the effort required for their studies. Learn and revise course content on an ongoing basis. Follow the advice and guidance of teachers as to how best achieve their potential
- e) Encourage each other
- f) Ask for help as appropriate