



Caring, challenging and achieving together



Assessment and Reporting Policy

1. Introduction

Coláiste Bhríde is a mixed ability school which provides inclusive education for its students. It recognises that assessment methods form an integral part of how and what our students learn. Our Assessment Policy reflects the values of our Mission Statement and Kildare Wicklow Education Training Board (KWETB) guidelines.

Our assessment methods include both formative and summative approaches.

2. Aims

Assessment is an integral part of effective teaching and learning and takes place for the following reasons:

2.1 Teachers:

- 2.1.1 To inform students and their parents/guardians on progress in students' learning
- 2.1.2 To establish baseline data in relation to student attainment in subjects
- 2.1.3 To allow teachers to identify the next steps in progressing students' learning and to plan for relevant progress
- 2.1.4 To review and modify classroom practice
- 2.1.5 To ensure that students know how to improve their work
- 2.1.6 To inform decision-making on entry levels for state examinations

2.1.5 Students:

- 2.2.1 To reflect on their own learning, understand and evaluate how they learn
 - 2.2.2 To gauge what stage they are at in their learning
 - 2.2.3 To be motivated to achieve their full potential
 - 2.2.4 To improve their achievement and grades
 - 2.2.5 To make decisions about appropriate levels in state examinations
 - 2.2.6 To make informed choices regarding subjects for Leaving Certificate Examination and courses for study post Leaving Certificate
- 2.2 Parents/Guardians:
- 2.3.1 To enable parents/guardians to be involved in their child's learning
 - 2.3.2 To understand and encourage the progress their child is making
 - 2.3.3 To check their child's progress throughout their time in secondary school

3 Definition

- 3.1 The term “assessment” refers generally to the gathering and interpretation of information related to students’ learning abilities, learning attainments, learning strengths and learning needs.
- 3.2 Coláiste Bhríde employs a variety of assessment methods including: Assessment for Learning / Formative Assessment (AfL), Assessment of Learning / Summative Assessment (AoL), Self-Assessment and Peer Assessment.

4 Legislation

The Education Act (1998) requires schools to regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of evaluation to students and their parents/guardians. In fulfilling this requirement, Coláiste Bhríde has developed assessment procedures, which provide an accurate and insightful account of a student's progress and achievement.

The policy is developed with the aim of meeting the standards set out in the *Looking at Our School*, 2016 document in the domains of Learner Experiences and Teachers' Individual Practice.

5 Assessment for Learning / Formative Assessment

- 5.1 The goal of formative assessment is to monitor student learning, to provide ongoing feedback that can be used by teachers to improve their teaching, by students to improve their learning and by parents to improve their understanding of their child's

learning in school. A range of strategies are used to give students, teachers and parents/guardians such feedback.

- 5.2 Coláiste Bhríde has adopted the AfL approach to formative assessment. Its purpose is to establish effective learning strategies which reflect positive outcomes for students through assessment procedures. AfL is formative because its intention is to form, shape and guide the next steps of learning. It is about “learning to learn”.
- 5.3 AfL should support learning as well as measure learning outcomes. Effective AfL enables students to understand how to improve their work by:
 - 5.3.1 Sharing learning intentions with students at the beginning of the lesson
 - 5.3.2 Helping students to understand the success criteria before an assignment begins
 - 5.3.3 Informing students what they have done well and what they could improve on
 - 5.3.4 Providing samples of work which meet the criteria and demonstrate the standards required
 - 5.3.5 Encouraging students to reflect on their learning
 - 5.3.6 Planning for all of the above when designing lessons
- 5.4 In order to develop effective AfL methods teachers must adapt the following strategies:
 - 5.4.1 Sharing learning intentions and success criteria which requires the teacher to engage the students in how and why they are learning.
 - 5.4.2 Using effective questioning which elicits evidence of students’ understanding in order to assess the level of knowledge acquired and to prepare for further learning (methods such as a dialogic approach to classroom discussion is an effective technique in this instance).
 - 5.4.3 Providing timely effective feedback that contributes to students moving forward in their learning. Comments provided should enable students to understand what they did well, why it was done well, what needs to be improved and how to make these improvements.
The best feedback is highly specific, directly revealing or highly descriptive of what actually resulted, clear to the performer and available or offered in terms of specific targets. (Wiggins, Grant, Educative Assessment, 1998)
 - 5.4.4 Homework assignments should be viewed as an important part of AfL.
 - 5.4.5 Consideration should be given to the medium employed when giving feedback e.g. oral feedback in class, written and oral feedback on Teams, written comments on students’ work etc (see Digital Learning Plan (DLP), School Improvement Plan (SIP), Homework and Study Policy).

6 Summative Assessment / Assessment of Learning

- 6.1 Summative Assessment (AoL) refers to the assessment of learning and aims to provide a summary of the achievements of the learner against a benchmark or standard. The results generally take the form of a grade, percentage or descriptor level. This helps to identify gaps in learning and informs teachers, students and parents of how learning is progressing.
- 6.2 AoL results inform teachers to plan differentiated assessments, special considerations and exemptions in conjunction with the Special Needs Department (SEN).
- 6.3 Common agreed AoLs are prepared and conducted across departments and year groups where applicable.
- 6.4 Types of AoL's include:
- 6.4.1 Entrance Assessment:
Incoming first year students sit an entrance assessment – CAT Level E Cognitive Ability Tests and in the February of the year of enrolment into the school. These tests are assessed under the supervision of the Guidance, Pastoral Care and Learning Support Teams.
Consultation with 6th class teachers is made to establish students' performance in particular subjects.
- 6.4.2 End of unit topic test:
These are tests conducted at the discretion of the teacher in various subjects when the end of a topic or unit of work is reached. These tests provide important feedback to teachers, students and parents/guardians on the progress of student learning in a subject.
- 6.4.3 3rd, 5th, 6th year AoL's:
6th year students have three formal examinations in each of their Leaving Certificate subjects during the autumn term. Results are recorded and reported to parents on VSWare.
5th and 3rd year students have two formal examinations which are recorded and reported similarly.
- 6.4.4 House examinations:
1st, 2nd, TY and 5th year students sit formal Christmas and summer examinations. Written reports of a formative nature, are provided to parents on VSWare.
- 6.4.5 Mock Examinations:
Timetabled mock examinations take place for 3rd and 6th year students from late January to mid-February. Exam papers are purchased from an outside company and are corrected by teachers. All marking schemes are clearly identified by teachers. Mock practical and oral exams take place around this time also. Results are recorded on VSWare and reports are made available to parents. Following this state examination levels are finalised in consultation with students, teachers and parents/guardians.
- 6.4.6 State Examinations:
These are directed in all aspects by the State Examinations Commission (SEC). This includes project briefs, timetables, exam papers, supervision, correction and processing results etc..

Other assessment components such as course work, portfolio work, oral and practical examinations will be managed in accordance with the regulations and timetable set down by the SEC. The school is available to the SEC when required. Examinations begin on the first Wednesday after the June Bank Holiday each year.

6.4.7 Classroom Based Assessments:

As part of the Junior Cycle Programme students are required to complete Classroom Based Assessments (CBAs) which act as distinct markers and form an integral part of ongoing assessment and routine classroom practice. They provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate knowledge and skills outside of other AoLs. Students complete their first CBA in 2nd year and another in 3rd year. They are marked by their subject teachers and the results are reported in the students Junior Profile of Achievement as a descriptor level.

6.4.8 Assessment Tasks:

After the completion of the second CBA students will complete an assessment task which is based on their second CBA in each subject. The completed tasks are returned to the SEC for marking. This accounts for 10% of the overall mark in each subject.

6.4.9 Psychometric Tests:

'MyCareersChoices' is administered to all Transition Year students under the supervision of the Guidance Counsellor. This typically takes place in November in advance of subject selection for Leaving Certificate programme. 'MyFutureChoices' incorporates:

EirQuest:

- It helps students to think carefully and identify the career areas and Leaving Certificate choices which the student is most interested in. This will furthermore prompt other investigations.
- It provides useful information for each student on key career areas.
- It offers a personalised subject selection and availability chart.

MyAptitude:

- MyAptitude is a psychometrically based aptitude test with Irish norms, developed by renowned Occupational Psychologist Dr. Charles Johnson. It gives valuable insights into work and careers best suited to a student's skills and interests and the academic potential of each student.
- MyAptitude is made up of 8 individual tests which include; Verbal Reasoning, Numerical Reasoning, Abstract Reasoning, 2D Spatial Reasoning, 3D Spatial Reasoning, Arithmetic Calculation, Working Quickly and Accurately and Spelling.

The results of the MyAptitude will present a differential analysis of each students' aptitudes which can be linked to a range of occupations.

It is also important to note that tests such as MyAptitude and EirQuest are components that make up a more comprehensive picture in deciding a future career. Talents, personalities, performances and a lifetime of experiences are not measured by these tests. It is imperative that the results of MyAptitude and EirQuest are assessed with a student's personality, experiences and academic attainment to date.

6.5 Assessment in the Event of Student Absence

- 6.5.1 It is recognised that the Junior Cycle programme presents a large number of 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.
- 6.5.2 To allow for planning of medical, dental and other essential appointments, Coláiste Bhríde shall provide dates of assessment events as they become available.
- 6.5.3 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.
- 6.5.4 In the case where illness or exceptional circumstances precludes a student from engaging with an assessment event, the year head in conjunction with the subject teacher will offer an opportunity to complete the assessment in a timely manner.

6.6 Assessment Procedures in the Case of Extra Need

Coláiste Bhríde is an inclusive school and looks to meet the needs of all its students. In the case where a student has a particular 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.

7 Leaving Certificate Applied Programme

7.1 The Leaving Certificate Applied Programme (LCA) encompasses the following assessment elements:

- Screening for participation in the course

- Successful completion of modules/key assignments
 - Completion of tasks
 - Oral examinations
 - Practical examinations
 - Task interviews
 - Credits for all modules including electives
- 7.2 Formal continuous assessment is a distinctive feature of this two year programme.
- 7.3 It is recommended that students have a 90% participation rate in each subject area in order to be awarded credits in that subject.
- 7.4 Fifth year LCA students are regularly informally assessed throughout class time. Students also sit formal Christmas and summer examinations and written reports on these tests are recorded by teachers and reported to parents through the VSWare system.
- 7.5 Modern Language requirements: LCA students sit their Leaving Certificate examination in Irish and in their Modern Foreign Language (French) at the end of either 5th or 6th year. This is done on an alternating basis. For example, 5th and 6th years will do French for one year and sit their exam in June. The following year they will study Irish and sit their exam in this in June of that year.

8 Reporting to Parents on Student Progress

- 8.1 The guiding principles of reporting
Reporting should:
- Encourage authentic engagement with parents
 - Provide opportunities for students to reflect on their learning through feedback
 - Consider the professional advice and judgments of teachers
 - Use the language of learning to provide effective feedback
 - Clearly communicate students' progress in learning
 - Be sensitive to the self-esteem and general wellbeing of students, taking an inclusive approach
- 8.2 The issuing of reports:
- Each student receives a minimum of two formal school reports per year.
 - Parents access these via VSWare. Hard copies are available on request.

- 8.3 Reports provide a grade, mark or descriptor level and formative constructive comments from individual subject teachers. These advise as to how students may improve their learning.
- 8.4 Monitoring by year heads
Year heads should:
- Liaise with subject teachers, students, parents/guardians and school management on matters relating to reporting.
 - Review the content of reports, monitor progress and underachievement.
 - Take the relevant action based on findings, include parents/guardians and students in target setting and to provide the necessary supports.
 - Engage in the academic tracking of students on a whole school level.
 - Liaise with the relevant deputy principal where issues arise.
- 8.5 Principal and Deputy Principals
The principal and deputy principals should:
- Support teachers and students in the smooth and effective running of assessment and reporting procedures.
 - Facilitate opportunities for professional dialogue by teachers to discuss assessment and reporting.
 - Analyse and evaluate assessment results and discuss implications and plans for development with relevant parties.
 - Support, monitor and evaluate assessment and reporting within the school as a whole.
- 8.6 Features of school reports:
School reports should contain a grade, mark or descriptor level and formative constructive comments from individual subject teachers. Report comments should advise as to how students may improve their learning.

Conclusion

Coláiste Bhríde acknowledges that assessment and reporting are central to the teaching and learning process. They enable students to understand, take action and ownership of their own learning. This is achieved through collaboration with their teachers and parents/guardians. The practices and skills they adopt will equip them for their future endeavours in life.

Policy Development Procedure:

Version number	2
Policy drafted by	Staff Parents Students
Approved by Board of Management	8/3/2021
Sent to KWETB for approval	18/3/2021
Next review date	TBC

Chairperson of Board of Management