



KILKENNY CITY

VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

ASSESSMENT POLICY



**kcetb**

Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna  
Chill Chainnigh agus Cheatharlach  
*Kilkenny and Carlow*  
Education and Training Board





## **1. Introduction**

Kilkenny City Vocational School (KCVS) is committed to the provision of high-quality, inclusive and equitable teaching and learning that enables all students to reach their full academic, personal and social potential. Assessment is a central pillar of this commitment. Effective assessment informs teaching, supports student progress, provides meaningful feedback, and promotes engagement, motivation and achievement for all learners.

This Assessment Policy sets out the principles, purposes, structures and practices that underpin assessment in KCVS. It reflects current national policy and reform, LAOS 2022 and DEIS priorities. The policy affirms assessment as a process that supports learning, enables improvement and strengthens outcomes, rather than simply measuring attainment.

## **2. School Mission, Vision and Ethos**

Kilkenny City Vocational School strives to provide a respectful, inclusive and supportive learning environment in which students are encouraged to develop academically, socially and emotionally. The school values effort, progress, resilience, fairness and achievement in all its forms. As a progressive, inclusive school we recognise the diverse experiences, strengths and challenges that students bring to their learning.

Kilkenny City Vocational School operates under the auspices of Kilkenny Carlow ETB and is guided by the values and principles of the ETB ethos, namely, Care, Community, Respect, Excellence in Education and Equality. This ethos promotes inclusion and learner-centred education. It recognises the role of education in supporting personal development, social responsibility and community engagement.

Assessment practices in KCVS reflect this ethos by:

- Valuing improvement and learning
- Encouraging students to take responsibility for their learning
- Recognising multiple ways of demonstrating achievement
- Supporting student confidence, wellbeing and self-belief

Assessment therefore plays a key role in supporting holistic student development and fostering a positive culture of learning.

### **3. Scope of the Policy**

This Assessment Policy applies to all members of the school community, including students, teachers, parents/guardians, school management and support staff. It applies to all forms of assessment used in the school, including formative, summative, standardised and diagnostic assessment.

The policy applies across all programmes offered by the school, including:

- Junior Cycle
- Transition Year
- Senior Cycle (including Leaving Certificate, LCA and redeveloped Senior Cycle subjects)
- Level 1 and Level 2 Programmes

It references assessment practices within classrooms, house examinations, state examinations, reporting processes, the use of assessment data and the communication of achievement and progress.

### **4. Legislative and Regulatory Framework**

This policy has been developed in line with relevant legislation, national frameworks and guidance, including though not limited to:

- Education Act (1998)
- Junior Cycle Framework (2015)
- Senior Cycle Redevelopment (Department of Education / NCCA)
- State Examinations Commission (SEC) regulations and circulars
- Reasonable Accommodations at the Certificate Examinations (RACE)
- Data Protection and GDPR
- Looking at Our School 2022

These frameworks ensure that assessment practices in KCVS are fair, transparent, inclusive, evidence-based and compliant with statutory requirements.

## **5. Relationship to Other School Policies**

This Assessment Policy operates within the wider policy framework of KCVS and should be read in conjunction with: (not an exhaustive list)

- Code of Behaviour
- Inclusion Policy
- Guidance Plan
- Wellbeing Policy
- Student Support Team Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy
- EAL Policy
- LCA Policy
- Transition Year Plan

Together, these policies/plans provide a coherent, consistent and integrated approach to supporting student learning, behaviour, wellbeing and inclusion.

## **6. Rationale for Assessment**

Assessment is an essential component of effective teaching and learning. In KCVS, assessment is used to:

- Support and monitor student learning and progress over time
- Identify strengths, areas for development and learning needs
- Provide constructive feedback that supports improvement
- Inform and adapt teaching strategies
- Guide subject choice and progression
- Inform teaching, support learning and identify students who may require additional supports
- Inform parents/guardians about progress and achievement
- Support DEIS targets, particularly examination attainment

- Inform school self-evaluation and improvement planning

Assessment is viewed as a continuous process that supports improvement and equity for all learners.

## 7. Definitions

Assessment refers to the process of generating, gathering, recording, interpreting, using and reporting evidence of learning. Evidence may relate to knowledge, skills, understanding, competencies, learning strengths and needs.

Types of assessment include:

- **Formative** Assessment – assessment for learning that informs next steps
- **Summative** Assessment – assessment of learning that summarises achievement eg. Class Tests, Exams etc
- **Standardised** Assessment – norm-referenced testing used to benchmark performance eg NGRT etc
- **Diagnostic** Assessment – assessment used to identify specific learning needs and inform support (if applicable)

## 8. Core Principles of Assessment

Assessment practices at KCVS are guided by the following principles:

- Fairness and consistency: shared standards, clear criteria and transparent processes
- Inclusivity: opportunities for all students to demonstrate learning
- Student agency: encouraging reflection, ownership and responsibility
- Formative focus: assessment used to improve learning, not only to grade
- Collaboration: assessment as a shared process involving teachers, students, parents and leadership

### Wellbeing and Assessment

Kilkenny City Vocational School recognises the importance of student wellbeing in relation to assessment practices. The school seeks to avoid unnecessary assessment overload by ensuring that assessment is purposeful, balanced and aligned with learning objectives. Teachers collaboration and communication practices ensure that assessment enhances learning rather than contributing to undue stress or pressure.

## **9. Types of Assessment at KCVS**

### **9.1 Formative Assessment (Assessment for Learning)**

Formative assessment is embedded in daily classroom practice. Teachers gather evidence of learning continuously and provide feedback that supports improvement. Strategies used include:

- Sharing learning intentions and co-creating success criteria
- Questioning and discussion (Talk Moves)
- Peer and self-assessment
- Comment-only feedback
- Error analysis and reflection
- Target setting
- Pair work and Group Work
- Two Stars and a Wish

Formative assessment helps students understand how to improve and develop as independent learners. The purpose of Formative assessment is to form, shape or guide students in their learning, it is about “Learning to Learn”. Using these student-centred strategies contributes to the structure of lessons and stimulates learning.

### **9.2 Summative Assessment (Assessment of Learning)**

Summative assessment takes place at key points to evaluate achievement. It includes:

- In-house examinations
- Class tests
- Practical, project and coursework assessment
- Mock examinations
- State examinations

Summative assessment supports reporting, certification and progression decisions. It aims to provide a summary of the achievements of the learner.

#### **9.2.1 In-House Examinations**

In-house examinations are a key element of assessment practice at Kilkenny City Vocational School and form part of the school's summative assessment framework. They are used across Junior and Senior Cycle at designated times during the school year.

The purposes of in-house examinations include:

- Providing students with structured opportunities to demonstrate learning under examination conditions
- Supporting the development of examination techniques, time management and study skills
- Preparing students for State Examinations and formal assessment requirements
- Reporting to parents/guardians on progress and attainment
- Supporting target setting, guidance and decision-making around subject choice and progression
- Identifying learning strengths and areas requiring additional support

In-house examinations assess learning that has been taught during a defined period and are aligned with curriculum content and learning outcomes. They complement ongoing formative assessment and do not replace classroom-based assessment practices.

The organisation and supervision of in-house examinations are governed by clear procedures in order to ensure fairness, consistency and an appropriate examination environment for all students. Expectations for teachers supervising in-house examinations are outlined in Appendix 1, and expectations for students are outlined in Appendix 2 of this policy.

#### **Typical Examination Schedule (subject to change)**

| <b>Year Group</b>                                                                | <b>Examination Session(s)</b>                | <b>Typical Duration (exceptions may apply)</b>                 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>First Year</b>                                                                | December and May                             | 1 hour per examination                                         |
| <b>Second Year</b>                                                               | December                                     | 1 hour per examination                                         |
| <b>Third Year</b>                                                                | November (In-House Exams)                    | 1 hour in November                                             |
|                                                                                  | February (Pre/Mock-Exams)                    | February Pre-Exams held in line with State Examination timings |
|                                                                                  | June (Written Certificate Examination)       | June- State Examination timings                                |
| <b>Fifth Year</b>                                                                | December and May                             | 2 hours per examination                                        |
| <b>Fifth Year LCA</b>                                                            | June (Certificate Examination)- LCA Language | June- State Examination timings                                |
| <b>Sixth Year</b>                                                                | November (In-House Exams)                    | 2 hours in November                                            |
|                                                                                  | February (Pre-Exams)                         | February Pre-Exams held in line with State Examination timings |
|                                                                                  | June (Written Certificate Examination)       | June- State Examination timings                                |
| <b>** Note section 9.2.2 of this policy regarding additional exams schedules</b> |                                              |                                                                |

#### **Additional Notes on In-House Examinations**

- The content of in-house examinations for all year groups is aligned with State Examination requirements, at the appropriate level, and reflects the course content covered at the time of assessment.
- Due to the fact that an increasing number of subjects have elements which are examined at certificate level through non-written methods, students will be given a percentage of marks in their house exams in relation to these non-written elements (where feasible)

### **Missed In-House Assessments**

- Where a student is unable to attend an in-house assessment due to illness, an exceptional circumstance, or other verified reason, the school will make reasonable arrangements for the assessment to be completed at an alternative time where practicable. Such arrangements are subject to school discretion and may take account of the nature of the assessment and the timing within the academic year. Students and parents/guardians are expected to inform the school as soon as possible where an absence may affect assessment participation. Unauthorised absences from in-house assessments may result in no alternative assessment being provided.

### **Assessment Appeals and Queries**

- Where students or parents/guardians have a concern or query regarding an assessment outcome, this should be raised in a timely and respectful manner. In the first instance, queries should be directed to the subject teacher, who can provide clarification on assessment criteria, feedback and outcomes. If the matter remains unresolved, it may be referred to the Year Head, and subsequently to school management where necessary. This process supports clear communication, transparency and consistency while ensuring that assessment concerns are addressed fairly and appropriately.

### **9.2.2- Additional Notes on State Examinations**

Written State Examinations are typically held in June of each academic year. Kilkenny City Vocational School adheres to all timetables, deadlines and key dates issued by the State Examinations Commission (SEC) and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) in relation to assessment, both during the June examination period and throughout the academic year. This includes, where applicable, dates associated with Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs), Assessment Tasks, projects, practical examinations, interviews, oral examinations and other certified assessment components.

## **10. Assessment by Programme**

### **10.1 Junior Cycle**

Assessment in Junior Cycle reflects the Framework for Junior Cycle (2015). It includes:-

- Ongoing formative assessment
- In-house Summative Assessments
- Two Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) (Arrangements subject to change)
- A written Assessment Task (Arrangements subject to change)
- Final written examinations marked by the SEC
- Completion of Priority Learning Units (PLU's) by Level 1 and 2 students

Achievement is reported through school reports (Twice per Year) and the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) following completion of the three year Junior Cycle. The State Examination Commission also issues a final examination statement of results to each student prior to the issuance of the JCPA. Level 1 and Level 2 students who may not receive state certification of results are provided with a school issued version.

### **10.2 Transition Year**

Assessment in TY is developmental and formative, focusing on engagement, key skills and reflection. Assessment methods include projects, portfolios, presentations, performances and reflective tasks. There are no state examinations in TY. The KCVS Transition Year Plan should be referred to for specific details

### **10.3 Senior Cycle**

Senior Cycle assessment combines school-based assessment and external certification. Assessments include:

- Additional Assessment Components (AACs)
- Practical, oral and project work
- Ongoing formative assessment
- In-house Summative Assessments
- Terminal written examinations set and marked by the SEC
- Level 1 and 2 assessments (as appropriate)

## **Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) Assessment**

The Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme uses a continuous, cumulative and practical approach to assessment. Student achievement is assessed primarily through the completion of modules, assignment work, key tasks and practical activities throughout the two-year programme, with a lesser emphasis on final written examinations. Assessment focuses on the development of practical skills, life skills, personal responsibility and work-related competencies. Evidence of learning is gathered on an ongoing basis and contributes to the student's overall LCA credit accumulation, supporting engagement, retention and successful programme completion.

## **Assessment in the New Senior Cycle Level 1 and Level 2 Programmes**

The redeveloped Senior Cycle Level 1 and Level 2 programmes are new national programmes, currently being introduced on a phased basis. At this early stage of implementation, it is anticipated that assessment approaches will be comparable to those used at Junior Cycle, with a strong emphasis on school-based, formative and portfolio-led assessment rather than terminal written examinations. Assessment is expected to focus on students demonstrating learning through tasks, practical activities and evidence of achievement aligned to specified learning outcomes, supporting inclusion, engagement and student wellbeing. As national guidance continues to develop, Kilkenny City Vocational School will implement assessment and reporting arrangements in line with Department of Education and NCCA guidance as these emerge.

## **11. Supporting Assessment: Standardised and Diagnostic Testing**

Standardised and diagnostic assessments play an important role in supporting teaching and learning at Kilkenny City Vocational School. They are used alongside classroom-based assessments to provide a broader understanding of students' learning needs, strengths and progress over time. Such assessments are never used in isolation but are interpreted in the context of ongoing classroom performance, teacher observation and professional judgement.

Standardised assessments are used to:

- Establish baseline data upon entry to the school or at key transition points
- Identify trends in literacy, numeracy and cognitive ability
- Monitor progress over time
- Inform planning at individual, class, year group and whole-school level

Standardised assessments used in the school may include CAT4, NGRT, Progress in Maths and English as an Additional Language (EAL) assessments

Diagnostic assessments are administered where further detailed information is required to inform targeted support. These assessments assist in identifying specific learning needs and guide individual planning, interventions and, where applicable, applications for reasonable accommodations in examinations.

All assessment data is managed in accordance with GDPR. Relevant data is used, where appropriate, to inform Student Support Plans and the planning of additional supports. Parents/guardians are regarded as key partners in the assessment process and are fully informed and involved where diagnostic testing is being considered or undertaken. Results are shared, where appropriate, with teachers, Year Heads, the SEN team, students and parents/guardians in a clear, sensitive and supportive manner. Parents/guardians who require further information or clarification regarding standardised or diagnostic assessments are encouraged to contact the school, where staff will provide guidance on the purpose, outcomes and implications of such assessments.

#### **Standardised Testing Schedule at Kilkenny City Vocational School**

| <b>Assessment Area</b>                         | <b>Test Used</b>                         | <b>Students Assessed</b>              | <b>Timing</b>          | <b>Purpose</b>                                                          |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Cognitive Ability</b>                       | Cognitive Abilities Test (CAT 4)         | Incoming First Years                  | On entry to the school | To ascertain general academic ability                                   |
|                                                | Cognitive Abilities Test (CAT 4)         | Transition Year students              | January/February       | To provide updated information on cognitive ability                     |
| <b>Literacy</b>                                | New Group Reading Test (NGRT)            | First, Second and Third Year students | October and April      | To assess progress in literacy and language acquisition                 |
| <b>Numeracy</b>                                | Progress in Maths (PTM)                  | First, Second and Third Year students | October and April      | To assess progress in numeracy and numerical ability                    |
| <b>English as an Additional Language (EAL)</b> | NCCA EAL Post-Primary Testing Kit (IILT) | EAL students                          | October and April      | To assess English language proficiency (A1, A2 or B1 on the CEFR scale) |

### Diagnostic Testing

| Diagnostic Tests Used | Purpose                                                                                   | Responsibility                            |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| RACE, WRAT, DASH etc  | To provide further detailed investigation following analysis of standardised test results | Special Education Department led by SENCO |

### Supporting EAL Students During Examinations

Students are supported through the provision of translated instructional materials related to school examination guidelines. In addition, bilingual dictionaries are made available to assist students during examinations.

## 12. Students with Additional Educational Needs

Kilkenny City Vocational School is committed to the early identification of, and appropriate response to, students who present with Additional Educational Needs (AEN). The school adopts a collaborative, student-centred approach that aligns with the Continuum of Support and ensures that assessment and intervention are timely, inclusive and evidence-based.

### Identification and Referral

Students who present with learning, emotional, behavioural or medical needs, or whose progress gives rise to concern, are identified through a range of measures including:

- Classroom observation and teacher professional judgement
- Analysis of assessment data, including standardised and diagnostic testing
- Information provided by parents/guardians and external professionals
- Reports from primary school or previous educational settings

Data is triangulated to ensure fair and accessible identification of AEN. KCVS uses a needs-based support model to allocate supports.

### Continuum of Support

Assessment Data is used to inform placement at the appropriate level:

- Support for All (Universal)
- Support for Some (Targeted)
- Support for Few (Individualised)

Student Support Files outline targets, strengths, interventions and review dates. Assessment practices in KCVS promote inclusion, equity and participation in line with DEY Guidelines.

Where further investigation is considered necessary, the student may be referred to the most appropriate external agency, such as the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), HSE services or other relevant professionals. Parents/guardians are fully informed and actively involved in this process, and their consent is sought. Assessment in KCVS is used not only to measure attainment but to identify barriers to learning and to inform targeted supports under the Continuum of Support.

### **Access to Additional Support**

Following assessment and review, where a student meets the criteria for additional support, supports are planned and delivered in line with available resources and are informed by professional reports, school-based evidence and individual student need.

Support may include:

- In-class support and differentiated teaching approaches
- Targeted withdrawal or small-group intervention
- Use of assistive technology or alternative assessment methods
- Support planning through student support or Student Support team structures
- Adjusted time allocations

Students' needs and supports are reviewed regularly to ensure effectiveness and responsiveness.

### **Psychological and Medical Reports**

All relevant psychological and medical reports are shared, in line with data protection requirements, with staff who are involved in supporting the student's learning. Subject teachers are made aware of recommended strategies and are updated by our SENCO regularly, so that teachers can plan accordingly to ensure that the student's needs are met within the classroom environment.

Teachers use the recommendations in reports to inform:

- Classroom differentiation
- Assessment and feedback approaches
- Support strategies that promote access, engagement and progress

### **Reasonable Accommodations in State Examinations (RACE)**

Where professional reports/testing data suggest/recommend reasonable accommodations in certificate examinations, applications are made to the State Examinations Commission (SEC) in line with the RACE scheme. Applications are supported by appropriate documentation and school-based evidence and are submitted in accordance with SEC guidelines and timelines.

Approved accommodations are implemented during in-house examinations where feasible, to ensure consistency of support and to reduce disadvantage for students during assessment.

Parents/guardians are kept informed throughout the RACE application process, and students are supported in becoming familiar with approved accommodations in advance of State Examinations.

## **13. Roles and Responsibilities**

Effective assessment at KCVS is a shared responsibility and requires collaboration across the school community.

### **Students are expected to:**

- Engage actively with assessment tasks and feedback
- Reflect on feedback and use it to inform improvement
- Take increasing responsibility for their own learning and progress
- Follow guidelines for study at home as outlined in the student journal
- Engage in self assessment and peer assessment with guidance from their teachers
- Set targets and goals for themselves-use student journal to record same

### **Teachers are responsible for:**

- Planning and implementing appropriate formative and summative assessments
- Providing timely, constructive and actionable feedback
- Using assessment information to inform teaching, differentiation and support
- Recording assessment outcomes in line with school procedures
- Prepare students for exams
- Set and correct in-house exams
- Engage in post-test analysis/error correction
- Complete reports in a timely manner, using formative language in comments

- Organise Oral and Aural assessments (if applicable) outside of timetabled in-house exams
- Using the school MIS to monitor their own students progression
- Participation in SLAR's if applicable

**Parents/Guardians support assessment by:**

- Engaging with reports and feedback
- Attending parent-teacher meetings
- Supporting learning and study at home
- Encouraging and motivating their child

**Year Heads and Subject Departments play a key role in:**

- Monitoring progress and attainment trends
- Supporting consistency and coherence in assessment practices eg common assessments and marking schemes
- Using assessment data to inform interventions and supports

**Collaborative Implementation of Assessment Practices**

While assessment at Kilkenny City Vocational School is a shared responsibility across the entire school community, its effective and consistent implementation is supported by a core Assessment Team who meet regularly to plan, review and coordinate assessment practice. This team works collaboratively to ensure a shared understanding of assessment approaches, to monitor assessment data, and to respond proactively to emerging student needs across programmes and year groups. Their purpose is to promote fair, inclusive and meaningful assessment, to support consistency and coherence, and to ensure assessment informs teaching, learning and support. Through a strong emphasis on teamwork and professional dialogue, the Assessment Team has a direct and positive impact on student learning experiences, engagement and outcomes, ensuring that assessment supports progress, wellbeing and achievement for all students.

## **14. Target Setting**

Target setting is a core component of Assessment for Learning at KCVS. It enables students to identify specific areas for improvement and provides a clear focus for learning.

Targets may be set:

- By students, through self-assessment and reflection
- By teachers, informed by assessment evidence and professional judgement

- Collaboratively, through teacher-student dialogue

Effective targets are:

- Specific and clear
- Achievable within a defined timeframe
- Reviewed regularly and adjusted as needed

Target setting supports motivation, accountability and steady progress over time and plays a particularly important role for students preparing for state examinations.

## **15. Homework**

Homework practices at KCVS are included within this Assessment Policy as homework is an integral component of the assessment process. Homework provides ongoing evidence of student learning, supports Assessment for Learning, and informs teacher feedback, planning and intervention. By embedding homework within the Assessment Policy, the school recognises its role in reinforcing learning outcomes and supporting progress over time, while also ensuring that homework practices remain balanced, purposeful and consistent, and that they promote student wellbeing and positive engagement with learning, rather than undue pressure.

Homework at KCVS aims to:

- Consolidate and extend learning completed in class
- Support the development of independent study, organisation and time-management skills
- Prepare students for upcoming lessons, assessments or examinations
- Provide opportunities for practice, revision and reflection
- Support formative assessment through feedback and review

### **Homework Expectations**

Homework expectations are appropriate to students' age, stage of learning, programme and individual needs. Teachers take account of balance, workload and student wellbeing when assigning homework.

Homework may take a variety of forms, including: (not an exhaustive list)

- Written tasks
- Study and revision
- Reading, research or preparation work

- Practical, creative or project-based activities
- Digital or online tasks, where appropriate

#### **Roles and Responsibilities regarding Homework**

- Students are expected to record homework accurately, complete tasks to the best of their ability, and submit work on time. They are encouraged to seek clarification where work is not understood.
- Teachers are responsible for assigning purposeful and meaningful homework, providing clear instructions, and offering feedback that supports improvement.
- Parents/Guardians support homework by encouraging routines, providing a suitable environment for study, and engaging with communication from the school where concerns arise.

#### **Feedback on Homework**

Homework is reviewed and used to inform teaching and learning. Feedback may be provided orally, in written form, or through class discussion. Homework may be used formatively to identify learning strengths and areas for further support.

#### **Homework and Additional Educational Needs**

Homework is differentiated where appropriate to support students with Additional Educational Needs. Adjustments may be made to task length, format or presentation, in line with individual learning needs and supports.

#### **Non-Completion of Homework**

Where homework is not completed, the matter is addressed in a supportive and restorative manner, in line with the school's Code of Behaviour. Ongoing difficulties with homework completion are communicated to parents/guardians and addressed collaboratively.

## **16. Appropriate Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Assessment**

Kilkenny City Vocational School recognises the increasing presence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in education. The use of AI in assessment is guided by Department of Education guidance, principles of academic integrity and the school's commitment to authentic learning.

AI tools may be used:

- To support learning and understanding
- As a scaffold to develop skills, where permitted by the teacher

Students are expected to submit work that accurately reflects their own learning. Where AI tools are used, students must clearly acknowledge their use. The misuse of AI, including presenting AI-generated work as one's own, is addressed under the AUP and the code of behaviour can be implemented as required.

## **17. Academic Integrity and Authenticity of Student Work**

Kilkenny City Vocational School places a strong emphasis on academic integrity and the authenticity of student work. Students are expected to present work that is their own and to engage honestly and responsibly with all assessment tasks. Practices such as plagiarism, copying, collusion, the inappropriate use of Artificial Intelligence tools, or any other form of academic dishonesty undermine the assessment process and are not acceptable. Where concerns arise regarding the authenticity of a student's work, these will be addressed in a fair, transparent and educational manner. Sanctions may be imposed if deemed appropriate. The school promotes positive learning behaviours by fostering an understanding of ethical assessment practices and supporting students in developing integrity, accountability and respect for learning.

## **18. Communication and Reporting**

Clear and effective communication of assessment information is central to supporting student learning. At KCVS, assessment outcomes are communicated through:

- Formal written reports
- Parent-teacher meetings

- Ongoing communication between teachers, students and parents/guardians
- Information available through the school management information system TYRO

Reports provide information on attainment, progress, effort and engagement, and include guidance on how learning can be improved. Reporting processes support partnership between home and school. School reports are issued following all in-house examinations. Appendix 3 of this policy provides further details pertaining to Grades and Grade Descriptors. Appendix 4 provides a brief summary of this policy to assist parents in their understanding of same.

## **19. Student Voice**

Student voice is valued as an integral part of the assessment process. Students are encouraged to engage actively in reflecting on their learning, responding to feedback and setting targets.

Opportunities for student voice include:

- Self-assessment and reflection activities
- Feedback on learning and assessment experiences
- Representation through the Student Council

Listening to student perspectives supports more responsive teaching and promotes learner agency. Appendix 5 provides a brief summary of this policy to assist students in their understanding of same.

## **20. Sustainability**

KCVS is committed to environmentally sustainable practices. Assessment practices support this commitment through:

- Increased use of digital platforms for assessment and reporting
- Reduced reliance on paper-based assessments where appropriate
- Efficient sharing and storage of assessment data

## **21. Alignment with DEIS Targets and Examination Attainment**

Assessment practices at KCVS directly support the school's DEIS Plan, with a strong emphasis on improving examination attainment. Assessment data is used to track progress, identify students requiring additional support, and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

Assessment contributes to DEIS goals by:

- Monitoring attainment and progression in Junior and Senior Cycle
- Supporting early intervention and targeted support
- Informing strategies to improve attainment, retention and student outcomes

Regular analysis of assessment outcomes ensures that actions taken are evidence-informed and aligned with DEIS priorities.

## **22. Alignment with Looking at Our School (LAOS) 2022**

Assessment practices in KCVS align with the standards and themes of *Looking at Our School 2022*. Assessment supports high-quality teaching and learning, student engagement, effective feedback and reflective practice.

Assessment information is used to support School Self-Evaluation (SSE), subject review and whole-school improvement planning in line with LAOS 2022.

## **23. Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner if required. The review process will involve consultation with staff, students and parents/guardians and will be informed by School Self-Evaluation (SSE), DEIS review processes, inspection feedback and national developments.

## **Appendix 1: Guidelines for Teachers when Supervising In-House Exams**

- Please ensure you take note of who is present/absent/late for the exam. This should be noted on the envelope used to return exam scripts and/or in your own records/on TYRO.
- It is your responsibility to attend your supervision slots on time and to maintain exam conditions at all times.
- Encourage students to try their best in the exam.
- If a student claims to be finished their exam, encourage them to read over their work/to try questions that have not attempted/to answer extra questions.
- Students should not be permitted to leave an exam early (even if they do claim to be finished).
- If a student disrupts an exam please report this to the relevant year head using the behaviour report sheet at the earliest opportunity.
- If you believe a student is cheating in an exam, remove the work they have already completed and provide them with another blank exam to start again. Provide the confiscated work along with a report sheet to the relevant year head.
- Students are not permitted to use the bathroom during exams unless the exam is a lengthy one or using your own professional judgement you believe it is necessary.
- Ensure students sit in their assigned seats during exams.
- Students are not allowed to eat during exams except for medical reasons (water is permitted).
- Use of Phones by students is strictly forbidden

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## **Appendix 2: In-House Exams – Student Guidelines & Procedures**

Please read these carefully as they will apply to all In-House Exams

- Students should turn up for their exams **ON TIME** to ensure they have given themselves every opportunity to achieve to their potential. This also ensures other students are not disrupted.
- Students should bring all relevant equipment for their exams, e.g. tech sets, calculator etc. Please organise what you need in plenty of time and **NOT** as the exam is about to start.
- Students should sit in their appointed seats at the beginning of each exam.
- Students are expected to work silently for the full duration of each exam. Raise your hand if you have a question.
- Anyone who disrupts an exam will be referred to their Year Head at the earliest opportunity.
- Students should not ask to go to the toilet during the exams unless it is genuinely necessary or the exam is a lengthy one.
- Students who are exempt from Irish and French use those timetabled exams for study.
- If a student feels they are finished their exam, they should go over their paper again to check for mistakes/attempt unanswered questions/answer further questions.
- Normal school rules apply regarding behaviour and uniform.
- Use of phones is strictly forbidden.
- Students must keep the area around their appointed seats litter free. Eating is not allowed during exams except for medical reasons.
- Students are responsible for ensuring that their exam paper is handed up to the designated teacher at the end of the exam.
- Students remain seated until all exam papers are collected and they receive instructions from a teacher that they can leave.
- Students **CANNOT LEAVE EXAMS EARLY.**
- Cheating or attempts to cheat in exams are not acceptable. If a teacher believes that you have cheated or attempted to cheat, your exam will be taken from you and you will be asked to start again. The matter will be dealt with by your year head as soon as possible and you will be given opportunity to make your case at that point.
- Students should try their best. Don't give up easily. Try, Try, Try.

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## Appendix 3

### State Assessment Descriptors and Grading Scales

For clarity and transparency, the following tables outline the official State descriptors and grading scales used across Junior Cycle, Senior Cycle (Leaving Certificate Established) and Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA). These descriptors are issued by the Department of Education, the State Examinations Commission (SEC) and the NCCA and are used nationally for reporting and certification.

#### *Junior Cycle – State Examination Grade Descriptors*

| Descriptor         | Percentage Range |
|--------------------|------------------|
| Distinction        | 85% – 100%       |
| Higher Merit       | 70% – 84%        |
| Merit              | 55% – 69%        |
| Achieved           | 40% – 54%        |
| Partially Achieved | 20% – 39%        |
| Not Graded (NG)    | 0% – 19%         |

*Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs)* are reported separately on the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) using the descriptors: Exceptional, Above Expectations, In Line with Expectations, Yet to Meet Expectations.

### **Senior Cycle – Leaving Certificate (Established) Grading Scale (Comparable Table)**

The table below presents Leaving Certificate grading at Higher, Ordinary and Foundation levels side-by-side, so that grading bands can be directly compared. Foundation Level applies to LC Mathematics only. CAO points included.

| <b>Percentage Range</b> | <b>Higher Level (H)</b> | <b>Ordinary Level (O)</b> | <b>Foundation Level – Mathematics (F)</b> |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <b>90% – 100%</b>       | H1 (100 pts)            | O1 (56 pts)               | F1 (20 pts)                               |
| <b>80% – 89%</b>        | H2 (88 pts)             | O2 (46 pts)               | F2 (12 pts)                               |
| <b>70% – 79%</b>        | H3 (77 pts)             | O3 (37 pts)               | F3 (0 pts)                                |
| <b>60% – 69%</b>        | H4 (66 pts)             | O4 (28 pts)               | F4 (0 pts)                                |
| <b>50% – 59%</b>        | H5 (56 pts)             | O5 (20 pts)               | F5 (0 pts)                                |
| <b>40% – 49%</b>        | H6 (46 pts)             | O6 (12 pts)               | F6 (0 pts)                                |
| <b>30% – 39%</b>        | H7 (37 pts)             | O7 (0 pts)                | F7 (0 pts)                                |
| <b>0% – 29%</b>         | H8 (0 pts)              | O8 (0 pts)                | F8 (0 pts)                                |

**Bonus Points** – Higher Level Mathematics: Students who achieve H6 or higher in Higher Level Mathematics receive 25 bonus CAO points, added to their overall Leaving Certificate points total in line with national CAO arrangements.

### **Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) – Award Descriptors**

The Leaving Certificate Applied is assessed on a credit-based, cumulative system. Students accumulate credits across four sessions over the two-year programme through modules, key assignments, tasks and final examinations.

| <b>Award</b>       | <b>Credit Range (out of 200)</b> |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Distinction</b> | 170 – 200 credits                |
| <b>Merit</b>       | 140 – 169 credits                |
| <b>Pass</b>        | 120 – 139 credits                |

Students who do not meet the minimum credit requirement may be awarded a **Record of Experience**.

## **Appendix 4**

### **Kilkenny City Vocational School — Parent Summary of the Assessment Policy**

Assessment at KCVS is designed to support learning and wellbeing. It helps students improve and is not used just to measure attainment.

#### **1. Purpose**

- Assessment helps teachers track progress, identify strengths and needs, and guide teaching.
- It supports DEIS targets and the school's commitment to fair, inclusive education.

#### **2. What assessment looks like**

- **Formative assessment** (day-to-day): feedback, teacher comments, self and peer assessment, targets, class tasks.
- **Summative assessment** (at points in the year): class tests, in-house exams, mock exams, projects and State Examinations.
- Standardised tests (eg CAT4, NGRT, Progress in Maths) and diagnostic tests are used to inform supports.

#### **3. In-house and State Examinations**

- In-house exams give students practice with exam conditions and help teachers report on progress.
- State Examinations are organised by the State Examinations Commission and usually take place in June.
- If a student misses an in-house exam for a verified reason, the school will consider an alternative arrangement where practicable.

#### **4. Support for students with Additional Educational Needs**

- Early identification through classroom observation and test data.
- Supports may include classroom differentiation, small-group or withdrawal support, assistive technology and adjusted exam arrangements.
- Where appropriate, applications are made to SEC for Reasonable Accommodations (RACE); parents/guardians are kept informed throughout.

## **5. Homework and Wellbeing**

- Homework is part of assessment and is set to reinforce learning, develop study skills and inform teacher feedback.
- Teachers consider workload and student wellbeing when assigning homework.
- Non-completion of homework is addressed supportively and in line with the school's Code of Behaviour.

## **6. Academic integrity and AI**

- Students must submit their own work and acknowledge any use of AI tools.
- Plagiarism, collusion or presenting AI work as one's own is not acceptable.

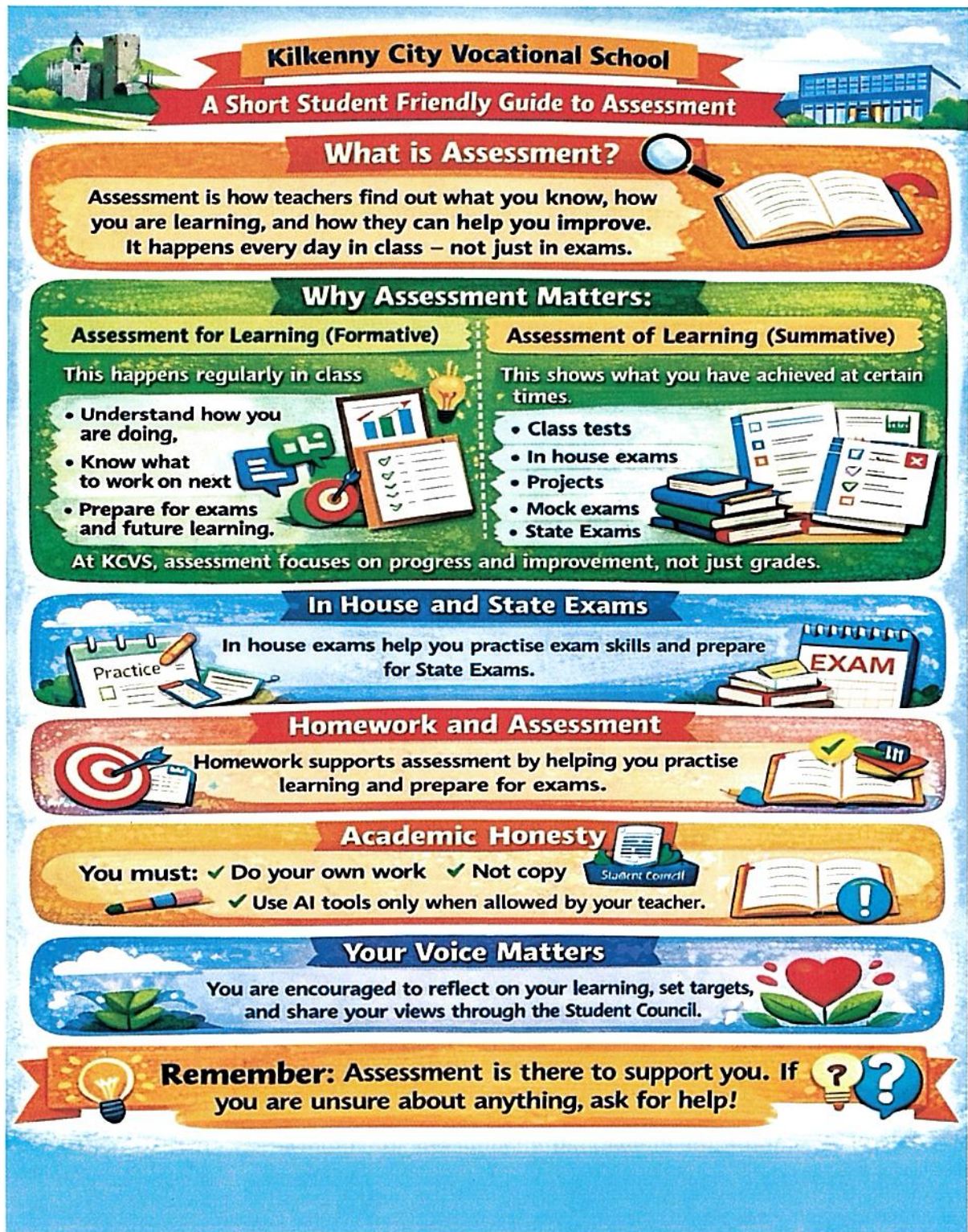
## **7. Communication and how Parents can help**

- Assessment information is shared through school reports, parent-teacher meetings and the TYRO system.
- How parents can help:
  - Read reports and attend meetings
  - Encourage routines for homework and revision
  - Contact the subject teacher first with queries, then Year Head or school management if needed

## Appendix 5

### Kilkenny City Vocational School

#### A Student-Friendly Guide to Assessment



**Kilkenny City Vocational School**  
**A Short Student Friendly Guide to Assessment**

**What is Assessment?**

Assessment is how teachers find out what you know, how you are learning, and how they can help you improve. It happens every day in class – not just in exams.

**Why Assessment Matters:**

| Assessment for Learning (Formative)                                                                                                                                  | Assessment of Learning (Summative)                                                                                                                   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| This happens regularly in class                                                                                                                                      | This shows what you have achieved at certain times.                                                                                                  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understand how you are doing,</li><li>• Know what to work on next</li><li>• Prepare for exams and future learning.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Class tests</li><li>• In house exams</li><li>• Projects</li><li>• Mock exams</li><li>• State Exams</li></ul> |

At KCVS, assessment focuses on progress and improvement, not just grades.

**In House and State Exams**

In house exams help you practise exam skills and prepare for State Exams.

**Homework and Assessment**

Homework supports assessment by helping you practise learning and prepare for exams.

**Academic Honesty**

You must: ✓ Do your own work ✓ Not copy ✓ Use AI tools only when allowed by your teacher.

**Your Voice Matters**

You are encouraged to reflect on your learning, set targets, and share your views through the Student Council.

**Remember:** Assessment is there to support you. If you are unsure about anything, ask for help!

## Appendix 6

## EXAM COVER SHEET

|                             |                       |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Subject =</b>            | <b>Level =</b>        |
| <b>Date and Time =</b>      | <b>Exam Length =</b>  |
| <b>Year group =</b>         | <b>Teacher Name =</b> |
| <b>Is Paper Required? =</b> |                       |

[illegible]

## Appendix 7

### Preparing for Exams at KCVS

Name:

Subject:

Chapters/Topics to be Studied:



|                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

What I Need to Look at from my Teacher:



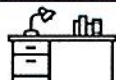
|                                                       |                                                |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reading my textbook chapters | <input type="checkbox"/> Handouts in my folder |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Past class tests             | <input type="checkbox"/> Notes in my copy      |

What will the Test be like?



|                                                  |                                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Short questions         | <input type="checkbox"/> Fill in the blanks              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> True or False questions | <input type="checkbox"/> Write a paragraph               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple choice         | <input type="checkbox"/> Labelling a picture/map/diagram |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Long Questions          |                                                          |

What ways can I Study?



|                                                                            |                                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Make a mindmap for each topic                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Make a PPT on a topic                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Make my own quiz                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Make flashcards                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Organise a study group                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Rewrite notes from my copy                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ask my teachers for any tips                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Test myself on keywords                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Practice old questions                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Say the main ideas out loud                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Read my textbook and write summary notes          | <input type="checkbox"/> Ask my friend to ask me questions              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Make a Quizlet card and test myself               | <input type="checkbox"/> Watch YouTube videos on the topic              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Record me saying my notes and listen back to them | <input type="checkbox"/> Answer the questions at the end of the chapter |

How can I Look after Myself?



|                                                                      |                                                        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Get plenty of sleep                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Take regular breaks           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eat right and drink lots of water           | <input type="checkbox"/> Ask for help if I need it     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Remember to exercise and spend time outside | <input type="checkbox"/> Relax with family and Friends |

Gairm Scoil na Cathrach  
Sráid Nua  
Cill Chainnigh

Priomhoide: Cait Nic Somhairle  
Leas-Phriomhoide: Deirdre Ní Coisteagáin

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### Ratification: KCVS Assessment Policy

This Policy was ratified by B.O.M Kilkenny City Vocational School on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2026.

Signed: Cathy Mc Sorley

Date: 13/4/26

BOM - 13.04.2026

### KCVS Assessment Policy

Signed: Principal

Cathy Mc Sorley

Chairperson BOM

Cathy Mc Sorley



KCETB Registered Charity Number: 20083434

