



# **Kilrush Community School**

## **ASSESSMENT AND HOMEWORK POLICY**

### **Kilrush Community School Mission and Ethos**

*In an Irish and global context, Kilrush Community School endeavours to create an inclusive community of mutual understanding and respect within which students can learn and thrive. We co-create opportunities for every student to fulfil their potential.*

### **Kilrush Community School Aims**

1. To develop an excellent learning environment which promotes high expectations of individual performance from students.
2. To give students access to a broad and balanced curriculum within a caring, co-operative and inclusive community.
3. To ensure that all staff and students enjoy equality of esteem and opportunity.
4. To foster among students an awareness of their environment, heritage and health enabling them to play a positive role within the local and wider community.
5. To equip students with a strong sense of self-esteem, self-discipline and self-motivation.
6. To foster universal values of care, inclusion respect and innovation.

## **Assessment and Homework policy**

### **Definition:**

The term “Assessment” refers generally to the gathering and interpretation of information related to a student’s learning abilities, learning attainments, learning strengths and learning needs.

Assessment is integral to teaching and learning and is concerned with students’ progress and achievement. Therefore, it involves much more than testing. It is an ongoing process that concerns the daily interactions between the teacher and the learner that includes conversations, observations and actions.

### **Rationale for assessment:**

Assessment is part of good teaching and learning and takes place for the following reasons;

- to monitor a student’s progress and to provide the teacher with information to make decisions about what and how the student is learning. This information allows the teacher to identify the next steps in progressing the students learning and adapt his/her teaching strategies and / or learning activities as appropriate.
- to reinforce the learning carried out in the classroom.
- to provide the students and parents with information regarding progress.
- to establish baseline data in relation to a student’s attainments in certain subjects.
- to identify student’s levels in Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle.
- to assess a student’s eligibility for additional support and services and to inform consultations with the NEPS psychologist where necessary.
- to assist in the identification of students who may need to be referred to an outside professional or agency for assessment or direct intervention.
- to fulfil the course requirements in certain subjects.
- to identify the particular learning needs of students or, groups of students.
- assessments can assist school management in identifying students, subjects, classes and areas of the curriculum that require further support.
- to gather and interpret data at class /whole school level and, in relation to national norms.

#### **Assessment should enable students to:**

- make more informed decisions about subject choice, career choice and progression to 3<sup>rd</sup> level/ further education and about life skills.
- gain a better understanding and appreciation of subject studied,
- be more motivated,
- gain a greater sense of achievement.

#### **Assessment should enable parents/guardians to:**

- be involved in their child’s learning
- understand and encourage the progress their child is making

- check their child's progress throughout their time in school

### **Legislation:**

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

### **Types of Assessment:**

#### **Formative Assessment:**

Formative assessment refers to a wide variety of methods that teachers use to conduct in-process evaluations of student comprehension, learning needs and academic process during a lesson, unit, or course.

In Kilrush Community School formative modes of assessment are used to help teachers identify concepts that students are struggling to understand, skills they are having difficulty acquiring, or success criteria they have not yet achieved so that adjustments can be made to lessons, instructional techniques, and academic support. More specifically, formative assessments:

- help students identify their strengths and weaknesses and target areas that need work.
- help teachers recognise where students are struggling and address problems in a timely manner.

Our policy in Kilrush Community School covers both **assessment for learning** and **assessment of learning**. Both forms of assessment are invaluable and are used by teachers in Kilrush Community School.

**Assessment for learning is a continuous process which** helps teachers and students to focus on three key questions:

1. Where are the students now in their learning?
2. Where are the students going in their learning?
3. How will the students get to the next point in their learning?

Providing feedback to students is central to assessment for learning (AFL). This feedback is based on evidence of how and what the students are learning. Feedback focused on the learning or task in hand, can help students identify their progress and achievements, pinpoint challenges they experience and, decide what the next steps should be. This level of involvement in shaping their own learning can heighten student's awareness of themselves as learners and encourage them to take more personal responsibility for and pride in their learning. **AFL does not generally happen at the end of a particular piece of work or a period of time. It generally takes place in the day-to-day interactions between subject teachers and students.**

Kilrush Community School endeavours to implement formative assessment. We recognise, however, that not all aspects of this approach are of benefit in all curriculum areas, and the discretion of the teacher is advised to adapt the theory to suit the particular demands of the subject. Formative assessment involves a range of strategies designed to give students, teachers and parents feedback about students understanding of elements of their learning in courses.

This involves using the following methods:

### **Sharing of Learning Outcomes and Learning Intentions with students:**

Teachers share the learning outcomes and learning intentions with students at the beginning of each lesson/ where deemed necessary and refer back to them during questioning throughout the lesson and at again at the end of the lesson if necessary. This will help to clarify what the student was supposed to have learned and will assist both teachers and students in determining the levels to which the outcomes have been achieved.

### **Sharing of Features of Quality/ Criteria for Success:**

Teachers 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. This also serves to encourage students to maximise their effort at a task.

Classroom based assessments (CBA) are now an integral part of the new Junior Cycle Curriculum in all subjects. In assessing the students work the teacher will use the listed criteria from the Features of Quality document in each CBA and will hence award one of four Descriptors that best fits the students own work.

Providing effective feedback is a crucial step in using CBA's to support learning in all subjects. Students will be informed of the descriptor they have been awarded once the Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meeting has taken place and its outcomes have been processed. Effective feedback goes beyond the naming of the descriptor awarded and in Kilrush Community School we as teachers endeavour to share with the students the strengths of their work and the areas that need improvement with a view to supporting their future learning.

### **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.

At Kilrush Community School we consider the following to be key classroom practices and strategies needed for AfL:

- 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

- questioning skills (student to teacher/ teacher to student/ student to student), which stimulate thinking and reflecting on learning.
- frequent identification and review of learning goals through teacher-directed discussion, clearly defining learning objectives and success criteria thereby empowering students and enabling them to take responsibility for their learning
- a recognition and acknowledgement of the purpose and importance of collaboration between home and school in the student's learning process.
- In line with the demands of the syllabus in each curriculum area, teachers set regular homework and comment on the merits of work and make suggestions for improvement.
- Assessment work may be differentiated to suit the needs and abilities of the individual.
- Student self-reflection sheet to support ownership of student learning to be added to all term assessments.

In contrast, **Assessment of 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.

#### **Summative assessment:**

Summative Assessment provides a snapshot of student achievement at a particular moment in time and allows teachers to check student progress since the last test or exam. Summative assessment takes place after the learning has taken place and the information is usually transferred as marks, grades or grade descriptors.

In planning assessment at Junior Cycle, the school and subject departments will seek to ensure an appropriate balance between ongoing formative assessment, Classroom Based Assessment (CBA's) and other summative assessments. In accordance with Circular 0028/2023, the school will consider the cumulative assessment burden on students and teachers across the full range of subjects. Where a CBA takes place, it substitutes for other formal assessment events, such as mid-term or end-of-term examination, where relevant.

There are a number of types of formal assessments of a summative nature that take place in Kiltrush Community School. The results of these generally form the basis for the reports issued to parents/guardians. Formal assessment techniques include-

- Monthly/end of topic or unit/chapter tests (conducted at the discretion of the teacher). The mode of assessment may include: written examinations, practical, aural and/or oral work. This list is not exhaustive.
- House examinations (when appropriate, and as determined by each department plan, common assessments across a year group will be used in each subject area).
- Junior Cycle, Leaving Certificate and Leaving Certificate Applied students sit pre-examinations in early February and the State Examinations in June.

### **Learning support Assessments:**

Incoming First year students undertake assessments in English and Mathematics which are used to assess their reading and mathematical ages. These assessments are used to form mixed ability First year groups. These assessments also provide an early indicator to the school of a student's academic attainment and also allows the learning support department to apply for and make provision for additional learning support.

All First-year students are reassessed at the end of First and Second Year to measure progression in English.

On referral from teachers some Students can be tested in Reading, Comprehension and spelling with a view to obtaining reasonable accommodations they are entitled to in the state examinations. Where resources allow, and when possible, these supports are replicated in the in-house examinations.

### **Reporting Procedures:**

- Reports are forwarded to Parents/Guardians of all years in October and in December of the First Term. In Kilrush Community School the October report is an opportunity for formative assessment and positive reinforcement and communicates with parents/guardians on how their son/daughter is settling into 1<sup>st</sup> year or Senior Cycle for example.
- Reports are forwarded to Parents/Guardians of Junior Cycle, Leaving Certificate and Leaving Certificate Applied students in March/April following pre-examinations.
- Reports are forwarded to the Parents/Guardians of First, Second, and Fifth Year students in March/April and again after house examinations in May/ June.
- The report template is electronic and allows teachers to distinguish levels.
- A mark and grade can also be awarded in all subjects and the teacher can comment on the student's overall learning, engagement and their progress in the subject.
- The electronic system also allows teachers to report home the results of Classroom based assessments for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year students as part of the new Junior Cycle framework in all subjects.
  - A school calendar of the subject CBA running order will be communicated to parents via our school website and email or text message home.
  - Parents will be notified at the earliest opportunity of any students who have been identified as being at risk of achieving below expectation in CBA's and interventions put in place to prevent underachievement.

### **Homework as a means of assessment**

Homework is considered to be an important element in reinforcing the student's grasp of material and work covered in class. It allows the teacher to informally assess how well the students have grasped new concepts and allows both the teacher and student to identify the next steps of learning. It consists of both written assignments and the learning of work done in class.

Homework is corrected in a variety of ways at the discretion of the individual teacher. These methods may include the teacher collecting and correcting it and giving a grade or comment only marking. It could also consist of the teacher demonstrating in class how the homework should have been completed and students peer or self-correct. Alternatively, the teacher gives the students the marking scheme or the list of “features of quality” and students peer or self-correct. The teacher ascertains during such activities how well students are progressing.

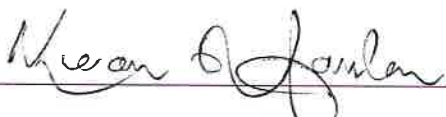
The school expects that all homework will be completed on time and to the best of a student’s ability. All homework – written and learning – is to be recorded by students in their School Diary.

Students are encouraged to spread their homework evenly through the week so as to minimise the risk of overload on any given night. It is important that students feel comfortable enough to mention to their subject teachers if they are under pressure and if they desire a reasonable extension to submitting a homework essay or project or a reduction in the amount of homework. In addition to this, teachers welcome students telling them if they have a number of tests on a particular day so that the teacher can change the date of a test if possible.

Students who miss class due to school matches, medical/dental appointments are expected to find out from their colleagues what homework was set by the teacher and to complete it on time. As students differ so much in terms of their ability and speed of completion of work, it is impossible to be specific as to the amount of time to be spent on a daily basis on homework and revision by each individual student.

### **Conclusion:**

All forms of assessment above will strive to meet the additional needs of students in the classroom when they arise. 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 individual subject teacher. Where feasible, and as determined by each department plan, common assessments across a year group will be used in each subject area. This will provide for increased cooperation and a common benchmark across each subject area.

Signed:   
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date 29/09/26

Signed:   
Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date 29/09/26

Review Date: Sept 27