Causeway Comprehensive School

Academic Council Policy

Overview

This framework outlines a structured, student-centred approach to academic tracking and intervention in Causeway Comprehensive School. It integrates national education policy with practical strategies for monitoring student progress, setting achievable targets, and providing timely support. Central to this process is the use of the Athena Tracker system, which enables data-informed decision-making and fosters collaboration among school leaders, teachers, and students to enhance academic outcomes.

Parents also have access to the Athena Tracker, allowing them to view their child's results and predicted grades, promoting transparency and engagement in the learning process. Additionally, all teaching staff are required to upload class test results to the system. While these results contribute to ongoing monitoring, they do not influence the predicted grades, ensuring that predictions remain based on formal assessments and standardised test score results (CAT4, PTM, NGRT).

Purpose

To enhance academic outcomes by facilitating structured, data-informed meetings between Academic Council and students in key examination years. These meetings aim to:

- Monitor individual student progress using relevant academic data.

- Identify and address barriers to learning.

- Provide targeted support and guidance.

- Foster student ownership of learning and goal setting.

- Promote collaboration between subject teachers, year heads, and senior leadership.

Academic Council members:

- Academic Council co-ordinator

- Principal /Deputy Principals

- Year Heads

- Guidance Counsellor (as needed)

Academic Council Target Year Groups:

- 3rd Year (Junior Cycle)

- 6th Year (Leaving Certificate)

Meeting Schedule:

- **Initial Meeting (Term 1):**

    o Review of baseline data (CAT4, PTM, NGRT, previous results, Athena Tracker)

    o Students set target grades for each subject

    o Discussion of study habits, supports, and goals

- **Review Meeting (Term 2 or 3):**

    o Compare actual results to targets

    o Identify areas for improvement

    o Adjust targets or supports as needed

Athena Tracker

Athena Tracker is a data-driven academic monitoring system designed specifically for Irish secondary schools. It uses past exam data and standardised test scores to establish a baseline academic potential for each student across subjects, allowing schools to track performance against this benchmark. The platform provides real-time alerts when students fall below or exceed expectations, enabling timely interventions and support. It replaces manual gradebooks with a unified digital system, offering teachers, students, and parents' clear insights into academic progress. Athena Tracker promotes student ownership through goal setting and progress tracking, supports targeted interventions for all learners—including the often-overlooked middle cohort—and fosters collaborative, data-informed conversations among staff, students, and families.

Functionality:

- Tracks student performance against baseline potential

- Highlights underperformance or overachievement

- Allows parents to log in and reflect on progress

- Supports CAO points tracking and subject-specific analysis

Year Head Interventions

Timing:

- After Assessment 1 (typically late Term 1)

Focus Groups:

- Top-performing students (recognition and encouragement)

- Underperforming students (early intervention)

Actions:

- One-on-one meetings

- Referral to guidance or learning support

- Study plan or mentoring assignment

Summary

This framework ensures that academic tracking is proactive, student-centered, and aligned with whole-school policies on teaching, learning, and assessment. By integrating Athena Tracker, our school benefits from enhanced transparency, as student progress is monitored against clear, data-informed benchmarks. The system fosters accountability among students, encouraging ownership of learning and timely responses to emerging academic needs. Structured meetings—supported by real-time insights—enable targeted interventions that are responsive to individual student profiles, ensuring that all learners, regardless of ability level, receive the support they need to thrive. This approach strengthens collaboration between teachers, year heads, and senior leadership, and reinforces a culture of continuous improvement across the school community.