**Coláiste Nano Nagle**

2016

**Assessment Policy**

ASSESSMENT POLICY

# Introduction

This policy applies to Coláiste Nano Nagle but not to Central College Limerick our Post Leaving Certificate College. It is for implementation by the Board of Management, senior management team, teaching staff, students and their parents/guardians. The policy strives to set out the basic principles upon which school assessment is to be implemented, sustained and evaluated in our school. The policy itself has been reviewed by a working committee drawn from our teaching staff and including the Deputy Principal in consultation with the principal, the entire teaching staff, the Parent’s Council and the Board of Management (BOM).

# Rationale

In this school education is seen as our primary goal. Notwithstanding the fact we are a DEIS school, we strive towards achieving the highest possible standards in in-school assessment and finally the state examinations. Education is the foundation stone upon which a child’s development for later life is built. Parents/Guardians are the primary educators and as such are primarily responsible for ensuring that their children receive the best possible education, which they have a right to and deserve. The school is here to support and enhance this education.

# Assessment

*"Assessment is the process of gathering and discussing information from multiple and diverse sources in order to develop a deep understanding of what students know, understand, and can do with their knowledge as a result of their educational experiences; the process culminates when assessment results are used to improve subsequent learning."*

(Huba, M. E. and Freed, J. E., 2000).

It is therefore central to enable students to improve their achievement in all subject areas, to be involved in their learning and to be motivated to achieve their unique potential at school. In this school we are committed to embracing a range of strategies related to formative and summative assessment to maximize student achievement.

# Assessment Policy Statement

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

This Assessment Policy aims to:

1. Establish the responsibility of the school.
2. Establish the responsibility of the teachers.
3. Establish the responsibility of students.
4. Establish the responsibility of parents/guardians.
5. Implement screen tests at various stages in the life of students. These tests will help in diagnosing the strengths and weaknesses, the aptitudes and the talents of the students.
6. Monitor the students’ academic success regularly; record the results and use these to further the students’ progress on their educational journey.
7. Give feedback to parents/guardians at certain times of the school year.
8. Maintain good communication between the school and parents/guardians at all times.
9. Maintain a record keeping system for student assessment.
10. Fulfill the requirements with the Department of Education and Science in regard to notifying the Examinations Commission regarding the subject levels for the Junior and Leaving Certificate examinations.

# Responsibility of the School

*Student Testing*

All students who transfer from primary school must first sit an assessment, which addresses literacy and numeracy, before the end of sixth class. This assessment will be used to ascertain the ability of the student.

The results are used:

* As an indicator as to the programme best suited for the student i.e. traditional Junior Certificate or the Junior Certificate Schools Programme (JCSP).
* In the formation of the proposed first year classes.
* To establish if the student needs learning and/or EAL support. The learning support teacher/EAL teacher will set further tests for the new students within a few weeks of entering the school. The learning support teachers/EAL teachers retain the results of the assessment. These form part of the student profiles.
* To monitor progress on DEIS and SSE targets regarding literacy and numeracy.

Note: Please see Special Educational Needs Policy

The guidance counsellor gives the fifth year students a standardised test e.g. the Differential Ability Test (DATS) in the second term. The purpose of this test is to help them to focus on themselves and their abilities and enables them choose from the range of subjects on offer for the leaving certificate.

# *Types of Assessment*

In the school the two main types of assessment are formative and summative.

*Formative Assessment*

Formative assessment involves a range of strategies designed to give students, teachers and parents’/guardians’ feedback about students’ understanding of elements of their learning in courses.

Coláiste Nano Nagle has adopted the Assessment for Learning (AFL) approach to formative assessment. Its purpose is to use the whole process of assessment to help learners improve their learning. It is formative because its intention is to form, shape or guide the next steps in learning. It is about ‘learning to learn.’ An outline of this approach is given in the student journal and the staff journal.

*Assessment for Learning*

Assessment should support learning as well as measure the outcomes. Effective assessment for learning enables students to understand how to improve their work by helping them answer the following questions:

* What are my strengths and weaknesses?
* Am I learning in the best way for me?
* How am I doing?
* What is really making me think?
* How will I know my work is good?
* What do I need to do to improve?
* How am I going to make this improvement?
* What are my targets?
* Where do I have to focus my revision?
* What can I remember and understand?

*Examples of AFL Strategies in Use*

* Sharing Learning Outcomes and Success Criteria
* Traffic Lights
* Two Stars and a Wish
* Waiting Time
* Question Maker
* 3-2-1

*Summative Assessment*

Summative Assessment refers to the assessment of learning and aims to provide a summary of the achievements of the learner.

Subjects should use key assessment tasks to measure pupil progress. These may take the form of formal tests but may also be longer pieces of work completed over a period of time. All first and second year students undertake a 20% group project for Christmas and Summer Exams with marking criteria guidelines provided to all teachers. The aims of these assessments are to:

* Assess students achievements against clear objectives i.e. success criteria.
* Develop key transferrable skills among students.
* Raise students’ awareness for their progress towards their optimum grade.
* Ensure that students understand how they can improve their work by using assessment for learning techniques.

# Responsibility of Teachers

* To explain the importance of homework to students.
* To give a clear instruction on the homework before the end of class.
* To keep an account of the homework given to the students.
* To check that the homework is completed.
* To correct the homework.
* To record lack of homework in student journal.
* Homework correction by a teacher should include constructive criticism and encouragement, and written feedback where appropriate.
* To record any test results in the student journal.

*See Attendance Policy re Absences from school, holidays and medical and other appointments and Homework Policy.*

# Responsibility of Students

* Students are expected to write homework and test results into their school journals.
* Assigned homework is to be done.
* The school expects all students registered in the school to attend all timetabled classes every day.
* Students are expected to make every possible effort to present themselves for all school assessments, tests or exams. Should they be absent from these they are to give their teachers written statements from their parents/guardians explaining their absence.

# Responsibility of Parents/Guardians

* Parents are expected to become familiar with the student journals in particular the section that relates to the daily record of homework.
* To sign the school journal at the end of each school week, ensuring that assigned homework is completed.
* In the event of non-completion of homework, a written signed note in the school journal is required.
* To monitor notes written by teachers in school journal regarding student's progress and sign/respond if required.
* To express an interest in student's progress thorough attendance at parent/teacher meetings.
* To limit after school activities to allow for proper completion of homework.

# Responsibility of Year Tutors

Year tutors check the student journals for signature of parents/guardians at the weekly assemblies.

*Tests, Assessment and Exams*

* The non-examination classes sit Christmas and Summer exams. These are set up in a formal manner.
* The third and sixth year students are assessed in every subject during the first school term. These are sent home in the Christmas reports.
* The third and sixth year students sit pre Junior and Leaving Cert exams respectively in the second term. The date for these exams is decided at a staff meeting. The Pre exams are a prototype of the state exams and are organised in a very formal manner. A roll call is taken before/during every exam. These exams are seen as a very valuable experience in the whole learning process of the student.
* Teachers enter the results of the student assessments, Christmas and Summer exams and the pre Junior and Leaving Certificate along with a comment into the Facility programme that is designed for this purpose. These are printed off as report along with the attendance record of each student as soon as the results are available. The reports are posted to the parents/guardians on the date set by the principal and staff.

# Responsibility to the Department of education & Science (DES)

The school fulfils its duty with the DES in regard to notifying the Examinations Commission re the subject levels for the Junior and Leaving Certificate results act as a guide as to the levels a student is capable of taking in the state examinations in June. Every effort is made by the teachers to encourage students to take the highest level achievable in their subjects for the state examinations.

# Parent/teacher meetings

* The third, fifth and sixth year's parent/teacher meetings are normally held in November. The first, second and fourth years are normally held in January.
* These meetings offer a very valuable opportunity to parents/guardians to gain a deeper understanding of their children's academic and behavioural standards. All parents are expected to attend these meetings.
* If a parent is unable to attend the parent/teacher meeting for whatever reason it is made clear that the teacher/s will be available at a mutually convenient time.

# The School Curriculum

The school has a long tradition of curriculum development. A broad range of subjects is on offer in the school for Junior and Leaving Certificate. In keeping with the spirit of the mission statement the curriculum is evaluated on an on-going basis so as to meet the needs of the students in this changing world.

The alternative programmes available at present are:

* The Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP) and the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) are offered at junior and senior levels respectively.
* These programmes along with the Junior and Leaving Certificate traditional play a big role in enabling all students achieve their potential and complete the entire five-year programme in the secondary school.
* The emphasis on short-term goals, student centred curriculum and the use of IT skills in the JCSP and LCA engage the students and encourage them to remain in full-time education.
* A record is kept by the programme co-ordinator of the results of the continuous assessment in JCSP and the LCA. These are safely filed away until they are required by the DES.
* The school also offers a Transition Year Programme which enhances the students’ skills sets and their knowledge of the world of work and lays a solid foundation for the senior cycle.

# External Assessment

The term external assessment in this policy refers to psychological, medical or other such that is administrated by professionals outside the school teaching staff.

Records of external assessments are kept in the principal's office. For reasons of confidentiality these may not be photocopied. They are available to the learning support, resource, career guidance teachers, and to any other relevant teachers who may request information pertaining to the education or behaviour etc. of a student.

# Monitoring Procedures

* Teachers of the various programmes e.g. JCSP, LCA, TY meet at the beginning of the new school year to engage in forward planning.
* Subject teachers meet at the beginning of the new school year and engage in forward planning.
* The principal gives a national statistical indication as to the position of our school re the state examination results and all subject departments must compare their results to the national average in their subject area.
* Teachers are welcome to offer suggestions for the agenda for staff meetings. This is a useful forum for discussion and evaluation of the type of tests, assessments etc. done in the school.

*Review Procedures*

By a sub group of staff and eventually by the entire staff at staff meeting.

# Ratification:

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Chairperson

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Next Review: December 2019