



Coláiste Pobail Acla

Assessment Policy

Coláiste Pobail Acla,
Polranny,
Achill,
Co. Mayo.

Roll No.: 76150V
Phone: 09845139
Email: info@cpacla.ie
www.colaiSTEPobailacla.ie

Contents

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Relationship to Mission Statement**
- 3. Aims and Objectives of this Policy**
- 4. Assessment for Learning & Assessment of Learning**
- 5. The Purposes of Assessment**
- 6. Forms of Assessment**
 - 6.1. Informal Assessment
 - 6.2. Formal Assessment
- 7. General Guidelines**
- 8. Assessment and Reporting**
- 9. Links with Other Policies**
- 10. Declaration**
- 11. Appendix 1 - Acronyms**

1. Introduction

This Assessment Policy was developed in partnership with all members of the Coláiste Pobail Acla community – students, teachers, parents/guardians, management. It recognises the requirement of the school to regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to the students and their parents/guardians, as set down by the Education Act 1998. This Assessment Policy will be reviewed regularly, as directed by the Board of Management.

2. Relationship to Mission Statement

Coláiste Pobail Acla is a co-educational community college committed to the holistic education of all students, to ensure that individually, they each realise their full potential in a social and physical environment that is caring, supportive and joyful. We work in partnership with students, staff, parents/guardians and the community, and welcome all students from our multicultural society. This Assessment Policy will play a key role in striving to ensure that each student realises his/her full academic potential in a learning environment that reflects a culture of partnership between teachers, parents/guardians and students.

3. Aims and Objectives of this Policy

The primary aims and objectives of the policy are:

- To facilitate improved teaching and pupil learning.
- To create a consistent and standardised assessment procedure for monitoring and reporting achievement in the school.
- To co-ordinate assessment procedures within departments on a whole school basis.

4. Assessment for Learning & Assessment of Learning

Our policy covers both assessment of learning (summative assessment) and assessment for learning (formative assessment). Assessment of learning is assessment for accountability purposes, to determine a student's level of performance on a specific task or at the conclusion of a unit of teaching and learning. The information gained from this kind of assessment will be used in reporting. Assessment for learning, on the other hand, is a continuous process which combines a grade with advice/feedback to the student towards further improvement. Both forms of assessment are invaluable and will be used equally by teachers in this school.

5. The Purposes of Assessment

- To evaluate what a student has learned in a particular area.
- To provide feedback to students in a timely and constructive manner.
- To provide feedback to teachers on the success of particular teaching methodologies in the learning process.
- To highlight difficulties and shortcomings in the learning process in order to develop intervention strategies.
- To identify students who require extension activities such as learning support.
- To encourage and increase the skills of self-assessment.
- To keep records of attainment that will inform parents/guardians through the school's reporting process.
- To measure the progress of students over time.
- To raise expectations and standards.
- To act as an incentive for students in the learning process.
- To help in ascertaining whether it is appropriate for a student to continue studying in any given area.
- To allow staff to plan for Teaching & Learning, and to engage in effective School Self-Evaluation.

6. Forms of Assessment

6.1. Informal Assessment

The most common forms of assessment used in the school are of an informal nature, and these take place regularly in the classroom. These informal assessments are at the discretion of individual teachers who will use them constructively for learning to take place. Timely feedback and constructive advice are vital components in this process. Where appropriate, teachers will keep records of these assessments to provide an insight into a student's progress over time and to fully inform the learning process. Informal Assessment methods include:

- Worksheets & written classwork
- Questions and answers in class
- Essays & assignments
- Reading & writing in Class
- Sample exam questions
- Projects
- Oral Presentations

- Homework – written or learned
- Informal conversations with individual students about their learning and their progress

6.2. Formal Assessment

These are some of the many types of formal assessments that take place in the school environment:

I. Monthly/End of Topic Test

These assessments may be conducted either on a monthly or end of chapter basis if it is deemed necessary by the subject teacher. These formal tests are a vital component in providing feedback to teachers, students and parents/guardians, on the level of each student's attainment and learning in that specific subject area. Constructive feedback will be given by teachers to students who take part in these tests, and the results of these tests will be used in the school's formal reporting structure where appropriate.

II. House Exams

All years 1st-6th will sit their Christmas Exams in early December and 1st, 2nd, TY and 5th will sit their Summer Exams at the end of May. The purpose of these exams is to measure student learning and attainment in each subject area, and to give students experience in sitting formal exams similar in nature to the state exams. All house exams will follow the same operating rules as state exams. The results of these Christmas Exams and Summer Exams will be reported in the Christmas Reports and Summer Reports respectively. Continuous assessment in some subject areas leading up to these exams will also be taken into consideration in the Christmas Reports and Summer Reports. This continuous assessment will be based on a minimum of three assessments as determined by the individual teacher.

III. Mock Exams

3rd and 6th Year students will undertake Pre-Junior and Pre-Leaving Cert Mock Exams in late January – early February each year to prepare them for their state exams in June. These mock exams are seen as being very beneficial to the students in measuring their progress in their Junior Cert and Leaving Cert years. Students will gain valuable experience in time management and answering technique through sitting these mock exams. The results of these mock exams will form the basis for the Pre-Junior Cert and Pre-Leaving Cert Reports sent out in March of that year. Mock results may be used in

guiding students and their teachers in relation to level options for State Exams. 3rd Year and 6th Year students do not sit any formal house exams at the end of May, and do not receive a Summer Report. Transition Year students do sit house exams in the school. Their Christmas and Summer Reports may also be based on continuous assessments in the classroom as determined by their individual subject teacher. As Transition Year is focused on experiential learning and personal development, the forms of assessment used may vary from the standard practices used in other years.

IV. State Exams

3rd and 6th Year students are expected to participate - as directed by the State Exams Commission - in the many assessments that make up the Junior Cert and Leaving Cert exams. These assessments which may include orals, course work, practical work, portfolio work amongst others, will be operated in accordance with the regulations set down by the State Examinations Commission.

V. Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs)

The new Junior Cycle spreads assessment across 2nd and 3rd Year of Junior Cycle, giving students the opportunity to demonstrate their learning away from the exam hall. The CBAs take place towards the end of second year and from November to February of Third Year. Each CBA is different, but they focus around project work, presentations and experiments. They are a form of continuous assessment. The results of CBAs will be recognised on each student's official Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA). Subject teachers will explain the Classroom – Based Assessment procedures in more detail to students in class. The CBAs will allow each student to work over a period of time supported by the feedback from their teachers and others, ensuring that they can produce their best work. The CBAs are reported on using the following descriptors:

- Exceptional
- Above Expectations
- In-Line with Expectations
- Yet to meet Expectations

It is important that both teachers and parents/guardians affirm to each student that it is not only the grade that matters but also what they have learned about themselves throughout the CBA experience. In particular, they should reflect on how their project work or experiments have helped them engage with their subjects and how the feedback they have received will enable them to progress further in the future.

VI. Assessment Task

Students will complete a formal written Assessment Task to be submitted to the SEC for marking along with the final Junior Cycle examination. The Assessment Task links to the priorities of the Presentation, which offers students the opportunity to apply their knowledge, skills and understanding to different real-life settings and to develop their communication skills. The knowledge and skills developed by students during this Classroom-Based Assessment emerge from their growing awareness of the dynamics of the business environment.

The Assessment Task will assess the students in aspects of their learning including:

- their ability to evaluate new knowledge or understanding that has emerged through their experience of the Presentation.
- their capacity to reflect on the skills they have developed, and to apply them to unfamiliar situations.
- their ability to reflect on how their value system has been influenced through the experience of the Presentation.

VII. Other Assessments

The school may engage in other forms of assessment from time to time. Incoming 1st Years will undertake a CAT assessment which will be used as a basis to form mixed ability 1st Year classes. This assessment will offer an early indicator to the school of a student's potential. All 5th years will undertake a DATS assessment to assist in their investigation of possible college and career choices, when they proceed to 5th Year. The school's NEPS psychologist, in consultation with school management and parents/guardians, may carry out psychological assessments and other assessments on students at different times throughout the year. Students engage in assessments for the purposes of school planning or school self-evaluation (SSE). At times, the school is invited to involve student groups in assessment for national or international studies, e.g. PISA, etc. Participation in such studies is in line with best practice and is a means, for the school, of accessing useful data that informs planning and practice.

7. General Guidelines

The form that these informal and formal assessments will take are dependent on the subject area being assessed and will vary from subject to subject. Certain forms of assessment may often times be peculiar to a particular subject. 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, laptop use, 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. Students are expected to treat all of the above forms of assessment with respect. Any student who willingly fails to participate fully, or who acts in a disrespectful way towards any form of assessment in the school will be dealt with through the school's Code of Behaviour.

8. Assessment and Reporting

There are different methods whereby the results of formal and informal assessments will be reported to parents/guardians.

- Student Journal – The teacher may communicate the outcome of any assessment to the parents/guardian of a student by writing a note in the student's journal. The parent/guardian is expected to acknowledge receipt of this note by countersigning it.
- Direct Contact - the teacher may decide as he/she sees fit to contact the parent/guardian directly with respect to the outcome of any assessment undertaken by a student
- Signature of Parents/Guardians on Assessment – the teacher may send the corrected assessment itself home with the student to be viewed and signed by the parent/guardian.
- Parent Teacher Meetings – there are Parent Teacher Meetings for all Year Groups throughout the academic year. At these meetings it will be possible for teachers to relay the outcomes of varying assessments to parents/guardians of individual students that generate an accurate picture of the student's progress.
- Written reports – Formal written reports are posted to the parents/guardians of students on two occasions during the academic year. 1st, 2nd, Transition Year and 5th Year parents/guardians will receive their Christmas Report in December before the Christmas holidays, and their Summer Report during the Summer holidays. Parents/Guardians of 3rd and 6th will also receive a Christmas Report in December but will then receive another report in March with the results

of their Pre Junior and Pre Leaving Cert Exams supplemented with a second Parent Teacher Meeting. 3rd and 6th Year parents/guardians do not receive a Summer Report.

Assessments undertaken for the purposes of planning and school self-evaluation will not be formally reported on an individual basis.

9. Links with Other Policies

- Subject Department Policy on Assessment
- Code of Behaviour
- Policy on Data Protection
- Homework Policy
- Guidance Plan
- DEIS Plan
- SSE Plan
- Transition Year Policy

10. Declaration

This Coláiste Pobail Acla Policy was formed following consultation with all staff, members of the Board of Management, Parents/Guardians and the Student Council. It is recommended that this policy be reviewed every three years or whenever it is deemed necessary by School Management. It was adopted by the Board of Management of Coláiste Pobail Acla on:

Signed: _____

Mr. Pat Kilbane

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Date: _____

Signed: _____

Mr. Paul Fahy

Board Secretary & School Principal (Acting)

Date: _____

Appendix 1 - Acronyms

Below is a list of acronyms used in this Coláiste Pobail Acla policy.

CATs	Cognitive Abilities Tests
CBA	Classroom Based Assessment
DATs	Differential Aptitude Tests
JCPA	Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement
NEPS	National Educational Psychological Service
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
SEC	State Exams Commission
SSE	School Self-Evaluation
TY	Transition Year