



**Whole – School Policy for
Assessment, Monitoring, Reporting,
Homework, and Attendance**

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1. Rationale

This policy

1. sets out to clarify the purpose and practice of assessment in Loreto Secondary School, Wexford,
2. supports both Assessment for Learning (AfL) and Assessment of Learning (AoL) across all class levels and year groups,
 - a. In essence, AfL helps teachers and students to focus on three key questions:

where are students now in their learning?
where are students going in their learning?
how will students get to the next point in their learning?
 - b. Providing feedback to students is therefore central to 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 and celebrate 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 students' 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 usually takes place in the day-to-day, minute-by-minute interactions between teachers and students.
 - c. 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. A grade or a score is often the only feedback a student receives.

3. identifies a range of assessment methods used to gather information about student progress and achievement,
4. supports consistency on what information is recorded about student learning progress and how this information is shared with parents, teachers and other professionals,
5. adheres to legislative requirements enshrined in:
 - a. the Education Act (1998) which requires schools to regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to the students and their parents.
 - b. the Data Protection (Amendment) Act (2003)
 - c. the Equal Status Act (2000)
 - d. the Education (Welfare) Act (2000)
 - e. the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004)
 - f. The National Strategy for Literacy and Numeracy (2011) *Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life 2011- 2020*.
 - g. Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (2019)
6. adheres to guidelines set out in:
 - a. The Framework for Junior Cycle (2015)
 - b. Circular Letters (as applicable)
7. supports other school policies such as Inclusion for Students with Special Educational Needs, Whole School Guidance, Homework, Literacy and Numeracy and Attendance.

2. Definition of Assessment

Assessment is integral to teaching and learning and is concerned with students' progress and achievement. It involves gathering information to understand how each student is progressing at school and using that information to further a student's learning.

Classroom assessment involves gathering, recording, interpreting, using and reporting information about a student's progress and achievement in developing knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes.

Assessment, therefore, involves much more than testing. It is an ongoing process that concerns the daily interactions between the teacher and the student that include moment-by-moment conversations, observations and actions.

3. Purposes of Assessment

1. To inform planning for all areas of the curriculum
2. To gather and interpret data at class/whole school level and in relation to national norms
3. To identify the particular learning needs of students/groups of students including the exceptionally able
4. To enable teachers to modify their programmes and their teaching methodologies in order to ensure that the particular needs of individual students/groups are being addressed
5. To compile records of individual student's progress and attainment
6. To facilitate communication between parents and teachers about students' development, progress and learning needs
7. To facilitate the active involvement of students in the assessment of their own work

4. Aims of this policy

The main aims of this assessment policy are:

1. To benefit student learning
2. To monitor student progress and attainment
3. To monitor student wellbeing and provide support where appropriate
4. To monitor learning processes
5. To gather and interpret data at class/whole school level and in relation to national norms
6. To compile records of individual student's progress and attainment
7. To generate baseline data that can be used to monitor achievement over time
8. To involve parents and students in identifying and managing learning strengths or difficulties
9. To facilitate communication between parents and teachers about students' development, progress and learning needs
10. To facilitate the involvement of students in assessment of their own work
11. To identify the particular learning needs of students/groups of students
12. To enable teachers to modify their plans/ approaches/ methodologies in order to ensure that the particular learning needs of individual students/groups are being addressed
13. To assist teachers' long and short term planning. Subject Department Plans are influenced by the information yielded from assessments and support teacher judgment by specifying what is to be learned by most of the students at the end of each year level.
14. To coordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis

5. Types of Assessment used in this school

<u>Type of Assessment</u>	<u>Name Of Assessment</u>	<u>When Administered</u>	<u>Administered By Whom</u>	<u>Reporting Procedures</u>
Standardised	Cognitive Ability Tests, CAT 4. measures three principal forms of reasoning – verbal, nonverbal and numerical – as well as an element of spatial ability.	First term of 1 st year and in Transition Year	SET and Guidance Departments	Over- arching Profiling System - Athena 1 st Year students – report sent home TY students – student and parent report e-mailed
Standardised	New Group Reading Test (NGRT) measuring reading age.	First Term of 1 st year	Learning Support Department	Teachers and parents are informed where there is a considerable gap between reading age and actual age. Interventions are then put in place.

Formative (AfL)	November Exams	November of each year to 1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd , 5 th and 6 th Year students	Subject Teacher	Results entered on Vs ware for parents and over-arching profile system and returned to students afterwards.
Summative (AoL)	Summer Exams	End of May of each year (except 3 rd and 6 th year)	Subject Teacher	Results entered on Vs ware for parents and for over-arching profiling system, exam scripts available to students in September.
Formative (AfL)	Classroom-Based Assessments	Throughout 2 nd and 3 rd year, set to a national timetable	Subject Teacher	Results, in the form of descriptors, and feedback communicated to the student and entered on Vs ware. Results may also be used at Parent-Teacher Meetings
Summative (AoL)	Mock Exams	February of 3 rd and 6 th year	Subject Teachers (exam papers sourced from outside company, marked by external personnel)	Results entered on Vs ware for parents and for over-arching profiling system and returned to students afterwards.
Summative (AoL)/ Formative (AfL) (depending on how the teacher decides to correct it)	End of chapter test/ periodic test throughout a chapter/ test at end of a few chapters or a topic	Any time throughout the year, at the discretion of the subject teacher	Subject Teacher	Results recorded in teachers' journals or Vs ware for use at Parent- Teacher Meetings and assessment returned to students
Formative (AfL)	Sharing of Learning outcomes with Students	At the beginning of each class or topic. Done at the discretion of the teacher	Subject Teacher	Teacher observation notes kept privately in teachers' journals
Formative (AfL)	Comment-Only Marking	Periodically at the end of a piece of work/ test/ project. At the discretion of the teacher.	Subject Teacher	Private notes kept by teacher for use at Parent- Teacher Meetings

Formative (AfL)	Peer or Student Self-Assessment	Periodically at the discretion of the teacher.	Subject Teacher	Teacher observation notes kept privately in teachers' journals
Formative (AfL)	In-class questioning and homework tasks	In every/ most classes at the discretion of the teacher	Subject Teacher	Private notes kept by teacher for use at Parent-Teacher Meetings.

Outside of the above, students will carry out work connected with state exams. In some subjects, this will take the form of key assignments, project work (completed in class time), oral examinations, aural examinations and interviews.

6. Over-Archiving Profiling System

Loreto Secondary School, Wexford uses a software programme to produce a file on the assessment results of each individual student.

This data is used in analysing examination results over time, thus allowing the identification of regression or progression. Judgments may then be made about possible interventions needed based on concrete evidence.

The school's Academic Council oversees this over-arching profiling system under the co-ordination of a member of the in-school management team. This involves using the following information:

- the standardised test results for each student carried out in primary school, which are sent to this school in accordance with DES Circular 0056/2011. Standardised tests are used to establish a standardised measurement of student achievement in English reading and maths compared to other children throughout the country at the same class level/ age.
- the standardised test results she carried out in 1st year and her Aptitude Tests (CAT 4 tests) in Transition Year
- the November and Summer exam results of each year (excluding Summer of 3rd and 6th years)
- the Mock Exam results in 3rd and 6th years
- Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate/Leaving Certificate Applied results

The individual file will be made available to parents on request.

7. Homework as a means of assessment

Key points:

1. Homework is 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.
2. 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.

3. 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 daily by all students in their School Diary.
4. The school will use Vs ware to note the non-completion of homework, thereby alerting parents/guardians to this fact also.
5. Students are encouraged to spread their homework evenly through the week to minimise the risk of overload on any given night.
6. 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. 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.
7. 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. It is the responsibility of each student to ensure they catch-up on work missed.
8. The School Diary of students in 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th years is to be signed on a weekly basis by both the Class Teacher and a parent/guardian.
9. 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 daily on homework and revision by each individual student. However, the following general guidelines are offered:

Year	Hours per school day on homework and revision
1st	1.5
2nd	2
3rd	2.5
TY	Variable in accordance with amount of project work
5 th	3 (including key assignments in LCA)
6 th	3+ (including key assignments in LCA)

10. In line with these guidelines, the following is the suggested amount of homework to be set per subject (on the basis of a single class period) per day:

1st Year	10 to 15 minutes
2nd Year	15 minutes
3rd Year	15 to 25 minutes
5th Year	20 to 25 minutes

11. In addition to the completion of homework, students are also expected to follow a revision programme drawn up in accordance with guidelines issued at study skills talks facilitated by the school. Revision is the key to ensuring that a student develops and retains a knowledge of material covered in class in earlier weeks, months or years.
12. Parents/guardians are asked to ensure, where possible, that students are afforded a suitable room at home in which to study i.e. quiet, adequately ventilated/heated and equipped with a proper table and chair.
13. Parents/guardians are strongly recommended to take an active interest in their daughter's academic and overall progress. They should familiarise themselves with this policy and feel free to discuss any concerns about homework with their daughters and/or teachers.
14. When completing homework, students should only access their mobile phone/device if it is required for the completion of work. Students are not being honest with themselves if they allow their phones/devices to distract them from their work.
15. Parents/guardians and students should also ensure that any part-time jobs held by students do not interfere with the full and proper completion of homework and revision. The school strongly recommends that 6th year students do not engage in any part-time work in term time as their commitments to study are already considerable.
16. Homework will not be set for students at mid-term breaks or Christmas, Easter and Summer holidays. Students, particularly at senior cycle, may use such periods for revision at their discretion.
17. Class tests will not be scheduled for immediately after mid-term breaks or Christmas, Easter and Summer holidays.
18. Mock examinations for 3rd and 6th year students will take place in the two-week period immediately prior to the February mid-term break.

10. Attendance and Assessment

The schools' official roll call for the day is generated from the 08.45 class period. Vs ware is used to record students' attendance and punctuality throughout the day and attendance is registered in every class. Students must be present in their timetabled class to be fully registered.

Each day, the Deputy Principal will send a text message to a parent's mobile phone stating that his/her daughter has not been marked present in school that morning. An exception to this will be when the school has been informed in advance.

Spot checks of attendance may be carried out at any time by the Principal and Deputy Principal.

All absences must be explained in writing by parents by means of the special forms in the student's school diary. This form must then be placed in the box in the GP Area on the day that she returns to school after an absence. The Deputy Principal will then arrange for the entering of reasons for absences into the Vs ware system.

The Deputy Principal may impose disciplinary sanctions up to and including detention on any student who fails to comply with these procedures.

Each student's overall attendance record may be accessed on the school's VS Ware system.

Recognising and rewarding good attendance

Good Attendance will be recognised at student assemblies throughout the year.

The school will avail of every opportunity e.g. student assemblies, meetings of parents, written communication with home to emphasise in a positive way the benefits to students of regular school attendance.

Monitoring of Attendance:

- When a student is absent for 5 consecutive days the Deputy Principal / Year Head will telephone the student's home in a spirit of pastoral care. The Deputy Principal / Year Head will then record the reason for the absence on Vs ware.
- When a student's cumulative absences in any given school year exceed 10 days, the Deputy Principal / Year Head will write to the student's parents to notify them of this and to seek an opportunity to discuss the matter with parents if required.
- When a student's cumulative absences in any given school year exceed 15 days, the Deputy Principal / Year Head will write to the student's parents to notify them of this and to seek an opportunity to discuss the matter with parents if required.
- When a student's cumulative absences in any given school year exceed 20 days, the Deputy Principal / Year Head will notify the Education Welfare Officer, as required by law, and will continue to liaise with parents and the student in an attempt to encourage more regular attendance.
- Where there is a pattern of regular partial absences, the Deputy Principal/Year Head will follow-up with a phone call home.

Loreto Secondary School, Wexford has the above measures to monitor attendance in place as it believes that there is a strong link between attendance and student attainment. Those with poor attendance records are much more likely to drop out of school before the Leaving Certificate, and, where they remain in school, they tend to do worse in their examinations than other students. Therefore, the school endeavours to monitor attendance carefully in order to assist its monitoring of student performance and attainment.

<h3>11. Assessment in Special Educational Needs (SEN) Cases and Reporting to/ from Outside Agencies</h3>

The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act was passed into law in July 2004. Special educational needs are defined in this act as:

“... a restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability, or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition”.

All 1st year students are given standardised group tests following their admission into the school. This is done during the first term. Combined with various informal methods of assessment e.g. teacher observation, monitoring of homework, observation of social development, it generally becomes possible to identify students with special educational needs or general learning needs.

In identifying students with additional learning needs, the school gives priority to those performing at or below the tenth percentile on standardised tests of literacy and mathematics.

The school's SET (Special Education Teaching) staff will, where necessary and with written parental permission, arrange for individualised diagnostic assessment and may seek to obtain reports from other professionals e.g. educational psychologists, psychologists, occupational therapists, speech therapists and social workers.

Results of psychological assessments are a key factor in the drafting of Student Support Plans (SSP). In the event of private consultation, parents are asked to supply the school with a copy of the report in order to facilitate the preparation of an SSP.

Because the range of tests available to the school is restricted in accordance with professional practice, Loreto, Wexford cannot guarantee that it will be able to identify all cases of additional educational need. It is for this reason that it is vital that parents would bring any outside professional assessments to the earliest attention of the school.

The SET Department endeavours to keep subject teachers informed of individual student learning difficulties so that appropriate accommodations/ modifications such as differentiation methods can be incorporated into their teaching to suit the need of the student. The SET Department use co-teaching, small group support, short term interventions and other strategies to support those who require extra support, including those students identified as being exceptionally able.

12. School Reports and Parent-Teacher Meetings

School Reports

A school report is an official document completed by a student's teachers and signed by the Principal setting out the achievement and progress of a student in all subject areas at particular stages of the academic year. The report is addressed to a student's parents/guardians but will be written in a manner that is easily understood by the individual student. A school report complements the ongoing assessment of a student by her teachers that takes place regularly during the academic year e.g. correction of homework, classroom tests.

School reports will be issued as follows:

- To all students following the November exams
- To 3rd and 6th year students following mock-examinations each Spring
- To 1st, 2nd and 5th year students in mid-June each year
- Certificate of Achievement to 4th year students each May

Every report will be available on V's ware and a paper copy of each student's report will be placed on the student's file. A paper copy can also be requested.

In commenting upon a student's performance and progress on reports, teachers will use as much formative assessment as possible i.e. pointing out areas of strength as well as where and how improvement can be made, where applicable. To facilitate this, the range of pre-set comments on reports will be kept under ongoing review and teachers will be encouraged to use as much free text as possible.

Parents/guardians are strongly advised to monitor a student's progress by also having regard to the more frequent marking and correction undertaken by teachers throughout the full school year e.g. homework, class tests.

Parent-Teacher Meetings

The school arranges a formal parent-teacher meeting for each year group in the course of the academic year. Each meeting takes place between 16.15 and 18.45 on a date that is stated in the annual school calendar.

Given the structure of parent-teacher meetings, it is essential that certain protocols will apply, as follows:

1. Consultations between teachers and parents should be kept as brief as possible in an attempt to minimise delays.
2. These meetings must conclude by 18.45. Parents are asked, therefore, to attend as early as possible at the relevant meeting.

3. It is expected that all meetings between teachers and parents will be conducted in a professional and respectful manner.
4. Because of the relative lack of privacy and time constraints at these meetings, any matters requiring more detailed discussion and sensitivity should be addressed at a separate meeting that can be arranged at a mutually-suitable time.

The Principal and/or Deputy Principal will also be available to meet parents in the course of these meetings.

13. Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) and Whole-School Assessment

Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) are now a feature of life for students and teachers in 2nd and 3rd years under the Framework for the Junior Cycle. They are intended to give students the opportunity to display their understanding of aspects of course specifications in a variety of ways.

After consultation with stakeholders in the school, the following guidelines have been approved by the Board of Management to facilitate the smooth operation of CBAs in the school:

1. The period allowed for each CBA gives sufficient time for all work to be researched, prepared and presented. During this period, all school activities – curricular and extra-curricular - should proceed as normal. Students are expected to catch up on any class work missed when absent at school activities.
2. Students should continue their normal range of out-of-school activities during the periods when CBAs are taking place.
3. It is advised that teachers will not conduct class tests in a subject during the period when that subject has a scheduled 3 to 4 week CBA window. This is intended to reduce stress on students and over-assessment.
4. Teachers will set less homework than normal in a subject during the period when that subject has a scheduled 3 to 4 week CBA window. Such homework will only be related to the CBA in question.
5. CBAs will not be scheduled for the month of May.
6. Teachers will not conduct mock/practice CBAs. However, preparatory work for CBAs is to be encouraged.
7. CBAs will not be discussed in detail with students in 1st year in order to minimise any possible stress.
8. CBAs should be manageable for both students and teachers. They are not to be stress-inducing events. Any problems associated with CBAs that cause stress should be discussed with the Principal or Deputy Principals.

In relation to whole-school assessment, the following points have been agreed:

- a. Reports, issued after the November exams, will be based on the results of these assessments and will issue to 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 5th and 6th year students.
- b. Formal school examinations will be conducted in all subjects each May in 1st, 2nd and 5th years.
- c. Mock examinations will be held for 3rd and 6th year students in the two-week period prior to the February mid-term break.
- d. To reduce associated stress levels and to provide greater flexibility with its completion, teachers will set longer periods of time for the completion of homework, particularly at Leaving Certificate level.

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