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**Presentation Secondary School**

Church Street, Castleisland, Co. Kerry

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## **Assessment Policy**

**2024 – 2025**

This Policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2024



*Our vision is to prepare accomplished, confident and independent young adults, who follow their passions, develop a love of learning and become positive role models in society.*

## 1. Introduction

At Presentation Secondary School, Castleisland, assessment is integral to the teaching and learning process. Our Assessment Policy aims to promote student learning, guide instructional decisions, and provide accurate reporting of student progress. This policy aligns with the principles of the Irish education system, particularly in relation to the Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle, and emphasises the importance of Assessment for Learning (AFL), Assessment of Learning (AOL) and Assessment as Learning (AAL). A key focus of our school is fostering a growth mindset through AAL, encouraging students to take ownership of their learning journey.

## 2. Aims of the Assessment Policy

- To enhance student learning by providing meaningful feedback.
- To inform teachers instructional planning.
- To support students in becoming independent, self-regulated learners with a growth mindset.
- To ensure that assessments are fair, consistent and transparent.
- To differentiate assessments where appropriate.
- To provide accurate information on student achievement and progress to students, parents/guardians and other stakeholders.

## 3. Categories Assessments

### 3.1. Formative Assessments

Formative assessments are conducted throughout the learning process to monitor student progress and inform teaching strategies. They are primarily used for feedback rather than grading.

- **Examples of Formative Assessments:**
  - In-class activities and exercises
  - Oral presentations
  - Draft submissions of essays or projects
  - Group/pair work and collaborative tasks

In the **Junior Cycle**, formative assessments are embedded into the CBA's and are critical for continuous feedback. In the **Senior Cycle**, these assessments help students prepare for the summative Leaving Certificate exams.

### 3.2. Summative Assessments

Summative assessments are typically used to evaluate student learning at the end of an instructional period. They contribute to the overall grade and are used to assess the extent to which learning outcomes have been achieved.

- **Examples of Summative Assessments:**
  - House exams and mock examinations
  - Comprehensive essays or research papers
  - Completed projects and portfolios
  - Standardised tests and class tests
  - State examinations

### **Minimum Requirement for Summative Assessment:**

- There must be a minimum of one classroom assessment per term for each year group.

- In the **Junior Cycle**, this may include a Classroom-Based Assessment (CBA), class test or examination, oral, aural or any other form of summative assessment.
- In the **Senior Cycle**, this may include class tests or examinations, orals or aurals, project work or any class-based assessment.

These assessments provide key insights into student learning and contribute to both the JCPA in Junior Cycle and the overall preparation for the Leaving Certificate in Senior Cycle.

## 4. Types of Assessments

### 4.1. Assessment for Learning (AFL)

Assessment for Learning involves ongoing assessment practices that help teachers understand student progress and guide future instruction. It is formative in nature and focuses on identifying student needs and providing immediate feedback.

- **Examples of AFL:**
  - Classroom discussions and questioning
  - Observations of student work and participation
  - Peer and self-assessment activities
  - Quick quizzes to gauge understanding

In the **Junior Cycle**, AFL plays a crucial role in the classroom-based assessments (CBA's), which form an integral part of student learning and are key components of the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA).

### 4.2. Assessment of Learning (AOL)

Assessment of Learning refers to summative assessments that measure what students have learned at the end of an instructional period. These assessments are used to make judgments about student achievement and to report these outcomes.

- **Examples of AOL:**
  - Christmas, Mocks and Summer Examinations
  - Class tests
  - Final projects or portfolios
  - Formal written assessments and class tests

In the **Junior Cycle**, AOL is reflected in the State Examinations Commission (SEC) exams that contribute to the JCPA. In the **Senior Cycle**, AOL includes the Leaving Certificate exams, which are critical in determining students' future educational and career pathways.

### 4.3. Assessment as Learning (AAL)

Assessment as Learning emphasizes the role of the student in self-assessment and reflection. At Presentation Secondary School, Castleisland, we particularly focus on fostering a growth mindset, encouraging students to view challenges as opportunities for development and to take ownership of their learning.

- **Examples of AAL:**
  - Reflective journals
  - Goal-setting activities and progress tracking
  - Peer assessment with reflective feedback
  - Student-led presentations
  - Reflection on learning intentions

AAL is especially important during the **Senior Cycle**, where students are encouraged to engage deeply with their learning, set personal goals and continuously reflect on their progress in preparation for the Leaving Certificate and life beyond school. This approach helps them develop resilience and a positive attitude toward challenges.

## 5. Correction and Feedback of Homework

Homework is an essential part of the learning process, providing opportunities for independent practice and reinforcement of skills taught in the classroom. The correction and feedback of homework are critical in helping students improve and succeed.

- **Correction:**
  - Homework should be corrected, with teachers providing clear and constructive feedback.
  - Corrections should highlight areas of strength and areas for improvement, guiding students on how to enhance their work.
  - Teachers should use a variety of correction methods, including whole-class feedback, individual comments and peer-review sessions.
- **Feedback:**
  - Feedback should be specific and actionable to help students understand their progress and next steps.
  - It should encourage self-reflection and self-correction, fostering a growth mindset.
  - Teachers should provide feedback that is balanced, highlighting both successes and areas for development.

In both the **Junior and Senior Cycles**, feedback is essential for helping students identify their learning needs, develop critical thinking skills and take control of their educational outcomes.

## 6. Academic Tracking

At Presentation Secondary School, Castleisland, academic tracking is vital to supporting student learning and ensuring that all students receive the necessary resources to succeed.

- **First-Year CAT4 Assessment:**
  - All students will be assessed in the first few weeks of first year using the CAT4 (Cognitive Abilities Test). This assessment provides a comprehensive profile of each student's cognitive abilities and potential areas of strength and need.
- **GRT3 Assessment:**
  - Reading age for 1<sup>st</sup> Years is assessed each year with the GRT3.
- **WRAT & WIAT Assessment:**
  - All students do the WRAT or the WIAT every second year for reading, spelling and maths.
- **Support for Special Educational Needs (SEN):**
  - Based on the results of the CAT4, GRT3, WRAT and WIAT assessment, students identified as needing additional support will be provided with the necessary resources and interventions. This support will continue from first year through to sixth year, ensuring that all students have the opportunity to achieve their full potential.
- **Reasonable Accommodations for Examination Candidates (RACE):**
  - As students progress through their academic journey, any additional help needed for state examinations will be identified and arranged. Reasonable accommodations will be put in place for students requiring them for their Junior Cycle exams and Senior Cycle exams, ensuring they are assessed in a way that accurately reflects their learning. If RACE applications have

been granted by November of the academic year, these accommodations will be applied to Christmas House exams and mock examinations.

## 7. Reporting and Communication

- Regular communication with parents and guardians is essential for supporting student progress. This will primarily be carried out by the relevant year head and where necessary, by individual subject teachers.
- Formal reports will be issued for each year group following the Christmas House exams and for 1st, 2nd, TY and 5th year students following the Summer House exams.
- An additional formal report will be issued to 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Junior Cycle students and 6<sup>th</sup> Year Leaving Certificate students following their Mock examinations.
- Parent-teacher meetings will be held to discuss student progress and areas for improvement, offering a platform for parents and guardians to engage directly with the educational process.

## 8. Review and Monitoring

The Assessment Policy will be reviewed annually by the staff and the school management team to ensure its effectiveness and alignment with the latest educational standards and practices. Adjustments will be made based on feedback from students, parents and teachers to continuously improve the assessment process.

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This policy provides a comprehensive framework for assessment and academic tracking at Presentation Secondary School, Castleisland ensuring that all students have the opportunity to achieve their full potential. The emphasis on a growth mindset through Assessment as Learning (AAL) helps foster resilient, reflective learners ready to meet the challenges of their future academic and personal lives.

Signed: Mary O'Keefe

**Chairperson of the Board of Management**

Date: 16/12/24

Signed: Piera Pargan

**Principal & Secretary to the Board of Management**

Date: 16/12/24