

CEIST

Catholic Education
An Irish Schools Trust



Assessment & Academic Support Policy

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[1.0: Link to Mission Statement](#)

Presentation, Wexford, is a Catholic Secondary School for girls only, guided by the ideals of Nano Nagle, foundress of the Presentation Congregation.

The school is committed to the pursuit of excellence in a caring environment.

“Inspired by the vision of Nano Nagle, our school is committed to the pursuit of excellence in a caring, respectful and inclusive community.”

We are an inclusive school both in our intake and in the curriculum which we provide. We aim to provide the highest standard of education for all our students.

We endeavour to fulfil our mission in partnership with parents/guardians, staff, students, patron and the local community.

2.0: Rationale for Assessment and Academic Support

"Our Best, always."

The Education Act (1998) requires schools to regularly evaluate students and periodically report the evaluation results to students and their parents.

The term "Assessment" refers to the gathering and interpreting of information related to a student's learning abilities, learning attainments, learning strengths, and learning needs. Assessment is an integral part of good teaching and learning and takes place for the following reasons:

- To monitor a student's progress and to provide the teacher with information to make decisions about what and how the student is learning. This information allows the teacher to identify the next steps in progressing the students' learning and adapt their teaching strategies and learning activities as appropriate.
- To provide the students and parents with feedback regarding progress.
- To establish baseline data concerning a student's attainment in certain subjects, which will, in turn, assist in determining their suitability to studying that subject.
- To assess a student's eligibility for additional support through our AEN Department and to inform consultation(s) with the NEPS psychologist where necessary.
- To assist in identifying students who may need to be referred to an outside professional or agency for further assessment or direct intervention.

It is our practice to track students' attainment throughout their time in the school.

To facilitate and support this work, the school has taken 6 significant steps:

- ✓ An electronic copy of the results will be made available to all parents through VSware and is accessible at any stage.
- ✓ We have developed our leadership and management team to enable the appointment of a post holder (Academic Support & Tracking) with special responsibility for coordinating academic attainment and tracking as part of their duties.

- ✓ We have a dedicated Academic Council who track students academically and monitor student exam level, our aim is that all students attain their full potential. The decision about changing levels in an academic subject is a serious matter. Parents and students need to consider both the immediate and the long-term implications of such a decision on academic progress and subject/career choices. The school wishes to ensure that good and well-informed decisions are made by students in this regard.
- ✓ Accordingly, the school has put in place a policy regarding Change of Level. All applications for Change of Level must be made to the Academic Council.
- ✓ The Senior Leadership team meets with and tracks senior students in both 5th & 6th year
- ✓ Progress Reports are held in 1st year, 2nd year & 5th Year.

3.0: Role of the Academic Support Teacher & Academic Council

- ✓ Monitor the academic needs and progress of the assigned year groups in conjunction with the Year Head.
- ✓ Meet with the Year Head for the group(s) as required to discuss and review students at risk of falling behind.
- ✓ Monitor exam results and discuss outcomes with underperforming students and their parents, where necessary.
- ✓ Liaise with the subject teachers of underperforming students.
- ✓ In so far as possible, establish the reasons for lack of academic progress and advise Year Head of the same.
- ✓ Agree on targets to be reached with the at-risk student through good planning and good study skills.
- ✓ Keep, maintain, and make available to management and Year Heads good records on work completed with students.

4.0: Identifying Students Requiring Academic Support

Our approach to academic support is made holistically. This approach considers all aspects of each learner in a particular context, looking at both their academic performance in conjunction with their pastoral care that we call Learner Support.

Academic tracking is captured through two assessment lenses which can be identified as continuous and summative (or progress and attainment). Teachers in the classroom carry out ongoing assessments throughout the year, examples of this include Two Progress Reports for 2nd & 5th years, and one Progress Report for 1st years. Summative assessments are carried out

twice a year for students during two sets of House Assessments where all teachers assess at the same time across all subjects. This is recorded on VSware.

Our Vsware system can analyse screening test data carried out by the school, such as CAT4 (Cognitive Ability Test 4). The CAT4 test is usually carried out just after learners enter their first year in school. Data from these additional screening tests can be used in the context of each learner to identify areas where support may be required.

5.0: Formative Assessment

Formative assessment involves a range of formal and informal assessment procedures and strategies carried out by teachers during the learning process to:

- ✓ Make necessary modifications to their teaching and learning activities to improve student attainment.
- ✓ Provide students, teachers, and parents with feedback about students' understanding of what they have learned.

Our focus for School Self Evaluation is practical 'Assessment for Learning' as our approach to formative assessment is to provide essential and valuable feedback to students on how to improve their learning. The fundamental principles underlying this approach are:

- ✓ Sharing learning outcomes and intentions with the student
- ✓ Helping students to recognise the success criteria they are aiming at.
- ✓ Involving students in assessing their learning
- ✓ Providing feedback which helps students to recognise what they must do to close any gaps in their knowledge or understanding.
- ✓ Communicating confidence that every student can improve.
- ✓ Adjusting teaching to take account of assessment.
- ✓ Using differentiated classroom strategies to support different levels of learning abilities.

Homework is an essential element in the assessment process. Teachers are encouraged to set regular and appropriate levels of homework for all their classes following each lesson. The school homework policy is used to guide teachers in teaching and learning.

6.0: Summative Assessment Events

6.1: Continuous Assessment Events

Teachers perform continuous assessments such as class tests, homework assignments, and other assessment forms throughout the academic year. The number of assessments, the type of assessment and the intervals will vary from subject to subject.

Continuous assessments can be entered directly onto Vsware across all subject areas. This gives the teacher a real-time analysis of the class and individual learners immediately and enables them to delve into this data for further research. It also gives the school a lens by which we can monitor and track each learner's progress across their subject areas.

6.2: Assessment Cycle Summative Assessment Events

The school carries out summative assessments at specific points throughout the academic year.

Two Progress Reports for 2nd & 5th years, and one Progress Report for 1st years. Summative assessments are carried out twice a year for students during two sets of House Assessments where all teachers assess at the same time across all subjects. This is recorded on VSware.

These give a "snapshot" of a learner's attainment. Summative assessments results are entered into VSware shortly after each assessment. We use this data for academic tracking.

7.0: State Examinations:

We ensure that all 3rd and 6th Year students participate in the many assessments that make up the Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate examinations, as directed by the State Exams Commission. These assessments, which may include orals, course work, practical work, class bases assessments, and portfolio work, will be operated according to the regulations set down by the State Examinations Commission.

8.0: Assessment Marking

The purpose of assessment is to improve standards. Teachers have a professional responsibility to ensure students are making progress and are clear about what they need to improve. Effective marking of assessment cycle examinations should inform teachers' planning to ensure pupils achieve the expected learning outcomes and intentions.

When marking assessments and if the assessment is to yield progress in learning, teachers should:

- ✓ Initially recognise positive features of a student's work before signposting areas of development.
- ✓ Correct work positively and ensure that it is drafted in a way which improves their learning; where errors are identified, for example, by circling spelling mistakes teachers should check for improvement in students subsequent work.
- ✓ Marking and feedback should be consistent with the success criteria/marking scheme.

- ✓ Teachers must use the reflection sheet for applicable years to provide opportunities to reflect upon their learning and to practise critical skills by redrafting and improving their work.
- ✓ Provide regular opportunities for students to give themselves feedback through self-assessment and work with others to support peer review for students within their class environment with the following caveats attached:
 - the teacher has marked their work, particularly their assessment cycle events, as this critical data has been used for accredited grades in the past.
 - They have the oral consent of the students and written consent of their parents, which is required dependent on the age of the student.
- ✓ Ensure students who provide 'perfect' work are challenged further with feedback, so the student's thought processes are pushed forwarded.
- ✓ Students need to be clear on the following:
 - The success criteria of a piece of work and the criteria against which the feedback will be given.
 - Be provided with opportunities to reflect, consider, and understand the feedback given. Students should be given such opportunities in the lesson time itself.
 - Be provided with opportunities to act upon the feedback and, if necessary, and where applicable, revisit work, amend it and set themselves their own targets. There is an expectation that dialogue should take place between the teacher and students, for example, if the teacher has posed a question, as part of the feedback, they should aim to provide an answer, either verbally or written.

9.0: Assessment Reporting

Depending on the form of assessment being used, the results of these assessments will be communicated to students and parents in different ways:

- Directly to the students individually or in small groups.
- Direct face to face meetings on appointment.
- Parent-Teacher Meetings.
- Termly reporting, as indicated above, through VSware.

With teacher and student reflections, written reports are available to parents/guardians following the significant assessment cycle examinations. The grade contained on this report reflects where they are currently and is not a predicted final grade for their education.

9.1 Assessment Feedback and Reflection Sheet



Assessment, Feedback & Reflection Sheet

Student Name	% achieved
Subject	Grade

To be completed by the Student

How did you prepare for the assessment	What grade did you expect to achieve

Teacher Feedback

<p style="text-align: center;">To be completed by student once assessment is returned.</p>
What went well
Where I lost marks
To improve I need to
Parent/Guardian Signature

10.0: How Academic Tracking is Performed?

10.1: CAT4 (Academic Potential)

Academic tracking is carried out in the particular context of each learner analysing their specific data. We use both the results from the CAT4 screening test and each summative assessment. The CAT4 is used as a baseline for each learner's ability or potential. This screening test measures their ability in four key areas. These are verbal, non-verbal, quantitative, and spatial. The LMS analyses this data and creates what we call an "Academic Potential" value.

10.2: Summative Assessment (Attainment)

Vsware analyses each summative assessment to create an "Attainment" value. Grades from each subject are analysed to output this value.

10.3: Comparison (Academic Ratio)

Vsware then compares each learners' academic potential with their attainment to generate an "Academic Ratio." This academic ratio is then used to help the school analyse learner academic performance in several different ways. It also allows the school to highlight any concerns and can be trended over time.

10.4: Analysis

One of the ways Vsware analyses the data is by using a traffic light system. This is done for each summative assessment imported into the platform. The indicators show that learners in the red zone did not perform to their ability benchmark, those in the amber zone did, and those in the green zone performed above their ability benchmark. This enables the school to quickly identify those learners that may need additional help or interventions. We can also see this information over several assessments to spot trends.

10.6: How the data is used with Pastoral Care

Learner Support is about the holistic view of each learner from their academic performance and pastoral care. This includes learners with specific learning support or AEN needs. The use of academic tracking performance data is always used in combination with a learner's pastoral care. Other factors that can directly impact or influence academic performance are just as important as the performance data.

11.0: Academic Support in Practice

Academic tracking is a core function of the school Academic Support Programme and the procedure recommended is as follows:

- Regularly (at least twice per year) monitor the examination grades of the students in the year group.
- Review of grades using Vsware, which uses the Cognitive Abilities Test 4 (CAT4) to evaluate each student's academic performance based on their profile. The Academic Council will meet with students to discuss their progress at various stages throughout the year.
- Begin with the most severe cases and arrange meetings with these students to identify where the issues are. Feedback from the class teacher would also be helpful in advance of this meeting.
- Discuss issues with the student:
 - ✓ The issues they are experiencing.
 - ✓ Are they finding difficulties with the work?
 - ✓ Are they simply not putting the effort in
 - ✓ Are there issues with study and homework?
- Discuss solutions with the student and set manageable targets for them to aim at for the next assessment.
- Discuss findings and suggestions with the class teacher.
- Pass on severe cases to the Year Head who will take further action, including contact with parents, meeting with the student etc.
- Make a point of meeting with those students who are exceeding their targets to give them the necessary recognition and encouragement.
- Keep a record of all meetings with students, actions taken, and suggestions made.

12.0: Differentiated Academic Support

Use the following differentiated support to ensure the right kind of encouragement is being given to effectively support the pupils.

1. Short-term support for isolated underachievement in one assessment event.
2. Intensive support for underachievement in two or more assessment cycle events.

12.1: Short-term Support:

Underachievement was identified as red on Vsware. Those pupils identified as red in an isolated assessment cycle should need little effort and slight support to get back on track. Usually, an interview with the pupil, the relevant teacher, and possibly the parents should be enough to ensure the pupil gets back on track with a clear steer of direction in underperforming subjects.

12.2: Intensive Support

Continues underachievement in two or more assessment cycle events. Those pupils underachieving, identified on Vsware as having a red status on more than two assessment cycle events, will need sustained and determined effort and support to get back on track. An interview with the pupil, relevant teachers, and the parents will be needed, and a support plan agreed for a term to ensure the pupil gets back on track with a clear and focused steer in these subjects. There will be several issues that will all need addressing. The main danger here is that the pupil does not have the resilience/self-belief and gives up. Having frequent meetings to help get them back on track will work well in supporting and growing the pupil's self-esteem.

12.3: Subject Teacher Responsibilities

Teachers and Year Heads need to have an awareness of the stated interventions and support such measures. Where a teacher has several pupil(s) who are not achieving as much as they should be, organise a minuted meeting with them to discuss the issues and agree on strategies and support to address these issues effectively. Set a review date to monitor progress.

13.0: Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 5th October 2023 following consultation with all stakeholders.

Chairperson: Mary Culleton

Date 5th October 2023

Principal: Billy Ryan

Date: 5th October 2023

14.0: Appendix 1: Short Term - Student Assessment Improvement Target

Setting

SMART GOALS


- ✓ Students set 'SMART' goals for achievements in their subjects
- ✓ New section in the Student Journal
- ✓ Printed on whiteboard
- ✓ Students fill in and photograph for each subject, topic
- ✓ Insert into OneNote for relevant subject / topic
- ✓ Refer to regularly
- ✓ Review at end of topic, after homework or test

SMART goals

Specific	Is this goal worth working hard? Will it help me with my <u>long term</u> goals?	<i>I want to learn how to draw a graph accurately and label correctly.</i>
Measurable	How will I know that I have completed the task?	<i>I have included all the elements needed and plotted points accurately.</i>
Attainable	Is it possible to achieve this goal within the set deadlines?	<i>I am <u>practising</u> in class and for homework.</i>
Relevant	How will this goal help me to achieve?	<i>I will be able to read graphs and solve problems on graphs.</i>
Timely	What is the deadline for this goal?	<i>4 classes</i>

15.0: Appendix 2: Preparing for Assessment

Assessment



Exam Cycle

- Teachers should have a precise aim at the beginning of each exam cycle that students are aware of and engaged with.
- Through a mixture of formative and summative learning, students should be mindful of how one aspect links to the next.

Uniformity

- There should be common assessment within each year group with a collective marking scheme.
- Preparation in advance is advised to provide a guide towards learning objectives and success criteria.

Past Papers

- The use of previous SEC exam questions is best practice. Variations are likely to appear on future state exams.
- It also provides a focus and practice for your students on the style of questions they are likely to face.

Differentiation

- There must be a range of difficulty within each exam paper, with lower and higher-order questions, recall and analysis etc.
- It is essential that the paper and marking are fair enough to encourage, yet rigorous enough to challenge.

Collaboration

- Subject department meetings are opportunities to discuss grade breakdown and should lead to valuable debate on the marking process.
- This should help strike a balance, ensuring students are encouraged by fair awarding of marks.

Feedback

- Effective feedback has been shown to improve student performance.
- Timely corrections and feedback increases benefits.
- Awareness of learning intentions leads to meaningful feedback.
- Students should be given time to reflect to maximise performance.

16.0: Appendix 3 - Intensive Support Plan – Improving Achievement

NAME: _____

TUTOR CLASS: _____

	DATE	REVIEW DATE	STAFF INVOLVED
MEETING 1			
MEETING 2			
MEETING 3			

REASONS FOR POOR ACHIEVEMENT	TARGETS TO IMPROVE ACHIEVEMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • •
AGREED TIMETABLE / SUBJECTS	STUDENT STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE ACHIEVEMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • •

SCHOOL STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE ACHIEVEMENT	PARENT STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE ACHIEVEMENT
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SIGNED (STUDENT):

DATE:

SIGNED (GUARDIAN):

DATE:

SIGNED (SCHOOL):

DATE:
