

HFCS Assessment Policy

24th October, 2017

Holy Family Community School

Draft Assessment Policy

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is

- to explain the rationale for assessment in Holy Family Community School
- to describe the kinds of assessment currently in use in the school detailing the methods, instruments and strategies employed in assessment
- to outline the systems in place in the school for collecting, storing and using assessment information to inform and improve teaching and learning
- to detail the formal assessment timetable currently in use
- to provide a framework for planning the continuous review and improvement of assessment practice in the school

Rationale for assessment

Assessment is an essential part of the teaching and learning process. It has a twofold purpose:

- as a tool to facilitate, engage and inform teaching and learning
- as a method of measurement of target gains; to encourage, acknowledge and reward effort; to lead to the formulation of new targets and school development planning
- as a means to identify students with difficulties who may not have been diagnosed previously
- to provide evidence to facilitate the provision of additional support

Methods of assessment

Informal assessment happens every day in every class as part of the best teaching and learning practices evident throughout the school. Frequent and regular informal assessment is a vital element of assessment for learning.

Activities associated with informal assessment may take oral or written form and include:

- Self-assessment by the students scaffolded by the teacher
- Peer assessment in pairs or groups
- Differentiated questioning by the teacher
- Feedback regarding performance of a task or activity by the teacher to individuals or groups of students – this may be feedback concerning classroom based work or homework

Formal assessment happens regularly throughout the school year providing opportunities for assessment of learning and assessment as learning. Formal school examinations take place at the end of the Christmas and Summer Terms. All students, with the exception of a tiny minority, sit the public examinations, Junior Certificate, Leaving Certificate and Leaving Certificate Applied.

Instruments and strategies associated with formal assessment include:

At entry: CAT 4 Ability Test; New Group Reading Test

In classroom at regular intervals: classroom based activities; school generated tests

End of Term Examinations at Christmas and Summer:

School generated examinations which are common papers across subjects with some differentiation if necessary and as appropriate for students with low incidence disabilities

For access to additional supports:

WRAT 4 Spelling Test; WRAT 4 Word Reading Test; Diagnostic Reading Assessment;

Neale's Analysis of Reading Assessment; PATOSS Handwriting Speed Test;

Hedderly Handwriting Test; Connor's Behaviour Assessment Scales;

Checklists from the NEPS SEN Continuum of Support Document

Collecting, storing and using assessment information

Informal assessment: Information from informal testing is communicated to students directly either in oral or written form by the teacher. Such information informs the teacher's report to the student and parent in the end of term reports at Christmas and Summer and at the Parent Teacher Meetings held annually for each year group.

This information also informs the conferences between the teachers, the Tutors and the Year Heads held twice yearly at Christmas and Summer. When deemed appropriate and necessary, written communication arising from informal assessment may be communicated to the parent.

Year Heads maintain files on each student recording details from teachers and Tutors as required.

Teachers may also record information on the school's eportal system regarding progress noted from informal assessment.

Formal assessment: Information from formal testing is compiled on the school's eportal system and also informs the teacher's report to the student and parent in the end of term reports at Christmas and Summer and at the Parent Teacher Meetings. Similarly it is the basis of the conversations at the conferences between the teachers, the Tutors and the Year Heads held twice yearly at Christmas and Summer after which formal written reports are collated and posted to parents.

Formal assessments, carried out with the intention of assessing the eligibility of students for additional supports, take place with the consent of the parents and the parents are notified afterwards by phone call or in writing. Very frequently, the results of such formal assessment are discussed in a separate meeting with the parents. Written formal information about such testing is held confidentially in the SEN office.

Information concerning formal assessment held on eportal is available to all staff enabled to access the information with passwords. Information is only passed on to outside agencies with the written consent of the parents.

The use of assessment information

Information gathered from formal assessment in the school is used to:

- give feedback to students and teachers about targets achieved and not achieved
- enable the organisation of students into appropriate mixed ability class groups
- facilitate the planning for appropriate learning support and special educational provision
- clarify eligibility of students to access additional supports from outside agencies such as NEPS, CAMHS, HSE
- clarify eligibility of students to access additional supports in formal state examinations
- assist in the formulation of new objectives and targets at all levels of the school: in the classroom, at subject department level, by Year Heads, for the School Self Evaluation Process

Assessment Timetable

Time	Testing
February	CAT 4
February	Mock examinations for Junior Cert and Leaving Cert students
March - May	Testing for LC and LCA RACE
May	End of year subject tests
September	NGRT
September - October	Testing for JC RACE
December	End of term subject tests
Ongoing	Informal assessment in class

Framework for assessment review

The school is very aware of the changing assessment landscape which is being created by the new subject descriptors and the need to be flexible and creative in developing assessment. It will remain an issue of priority on the agenda of

- subject department meetings
- the school development plan.

Areas for development include: modes of assessment; assessment criteria; the need for differentiation of assessment in the mixed ability environment; communication of results data; opportunities for collaborative work between teachers in the area of assessment; maximizing the value and use of assessment data.