

Meánscoil Iognáid Rís,
Nás na Rí,
Co. Chill Dara.



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ASSESSMENT POLICY

Due to Covid-19 please make reference to Appendix 2 'COVID-19 Assessment Policy Addendum - Meánscoil Iognáid Rís'

School Name: Meánscoil Iognáid Rís

School Address: Corban's Lane, Naas

School Details: Meánscoil Iognáid Rís is an all-boys Catholic voluntary secondary school under the Trusteeship of the *Edmund Rice Schools Trust*, formerly the Irish Christian Brothers. The school is named after the founder of the Order, Edmund Rice.

School Management: The Board of Management of Meánscoil Iognáid Rís is a statutory Board appointed pursuant to the provisions of the Education Act 1998.

MISSION STATEMENT

Inspired by its founder, Meánscoil Iognáid Rís aims to provide Catholic education in the Edmund Rice tradition. The school endeavours to be a caring Christian Community which promotes to the best of its ability the personal, spiritual, physical and intellectual development of its students

ETHOS

As an Edmund Rice School, Meánscoil Iognáid Rís seeks to promote the five key elements of an Edmund Rice School as espoused by the ERST Charter:

- Nurturing faith, Christian spirituality and Gospel-based values
- Promoting partnership in the school community
- Excelling in teaching and learning
- Creating a caring school community
- Inspiring transformational leadership.

Meánscoil Iognáid Rís - Assessment Policy

Assessment Policy Statement:

The Education Act (1998) requires schools to regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to students and their parents. In fulfilling this requirement, schools develop assessment procedures, which provide an accurate account of a student's progress and achievement. This Assessment Policy outlines the importance of assessment and the key role students, parents and teaching staff play in supporting this policy document.

Aims of the Policy: This Assessment Policy aims to

1. Explain the rationale and importance of assessments
2. List the different types of assessments
3. Detail the annual schedule of assessments
4. Detail the reporting procedures post assessments

Rationale - Why Assess?

The term "Assessment" refers generally to the gathering and interpretation of information related to a student's learning abilities, learning attainments, learning strengths and learning needs. Assessment is 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 about what and how the student is learning. This information allows the teacher to identify the next steps in progressing the student's learning and to adapt teaching strategies and/or learning activities as appropriate.
- to provide the student and his parents with information regarding his progress.
- to establish baseline data in relation to a student's attainments in certain subjects
- to help students to choose appropriate levels at Junior and Senior Cycle.
- to assess a student's eligibility for additional support and services and to inform consultations with the NEPS psychologist where necessary.
- to assist in the identification of students who may need to be referred to an outside professional or agency for assessment or direct intervention.
- To teach students to assess their own work

Types of Assessment

Assessment arrangements for Junior Cycle subjects

A new dual approach to assessment has been introduced that supports student learning over the three years of junior cycle. This new approach measures and reports achievement at the end of those three years. This dual approach reduces the focus on one externally assessed examination as a means of assessing students and increases the prominence given to **classroom-based assessment** and **formative assessment**. This change of emphasis arises from an acknowledgement that students learn best when teachers provide feedback that helps students to understand how their learning can be improved.

All assessment for certification purposes remains external (State Examinations Commission).

Formative Assessment: (Assessment for Learning)

Formative assessment is ongoing and involves teachers and students reflecting on how learning is progressing and deciding on the next steps to ensure successful outcomes. It involves a shift from focusing mainly on summative judgements to engaging in ongoing activities that can be used to support next stages of learning. A vital part of formative assessment is the feedback that teachers provide to their students and students' feedback to teachers. Through a range of assessment for learning strategies the teacher helps the student to identify what has been achieved and where there is room for further learning and development.

Classroom-Based Assessments in subjects and short courses

Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) have been introduced to allow students to demonstrate their understanding of concepts and skills and their ability to apply them in ways that may not be possible in an externally assessed examination. They will be used in the assessment of learning in subjects and in short courses.

Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) will be assessed by the students' teachers and reported on to students and parents/guardians during junior cycle and in the JCPA. Students will undertake two Classroom-Based Assessments facilitated by their teacher, one in second year and one in third year. Classroom-Based Assessments in all subjects will be specified at a common level.

Assessment Task

The written Assessment Task for each subject will be specified and published by the NCCA. It will relate to the learning outcomes of the second Classroom-Based Assessment. Students must complete their second CBA in order to undertake the associated Assessment Task.

The Assessment Task will be completed in class under the supervision of the teacher in accordance with a timeframe and guidance from the NCCA. The Assessment Task will be returned to the SEC for marking and will be marked as part of the Final Examination. Marks for the Assessment Task in each subject will be incorporated into the calculation of the grade for that subject by the SEC. The value to be assigned to the Assessment Task will be included in the assessment guidelines for each subject.

A separate Assessment Task will not be required in those practical subjects where the second CBA will continue to be assessed by the SEC (Art, Craft and Design, Music, and the Technology subjects – Wood Technology and Graphics).

Subjects in Junior Cycle with new specifications will be assessed through:

- Two **Classroom Based Assessments** (one in second year and one in third year – with the exception of Gaeilge where both CBA1 and CBA2 take place in 3rd Year) reported on to parents/guardians by the school
- An **Assessment Task** (marked by the SEC) in each subject
- A **Final Examination** set, held and marked by the SEC.

The combination of the Assessment Task and the Final Examination will generate a final grade, certified by the SEC.

Summative Assessment: (*Assessment of Learning*)

The goal of **summative assessment** is to evaluate student learning at the end of an instructional unit. It aims to provide a summary of the achievements of the learner.

- All students undertake in-house exams before the Christmas and summer breaks
- Third and sixth year students undertake 'Mock' exams in the week before and after the midterm, in the second term. Examination papers are usually sourced externally.
- Subject Departments may decide to lessen the length of a mock examination by (a) cutting back on the number of questions to be answered or (b) requiring students to sit one paper where two papers are normally set.
- The total number of days required for Leaving Cert mock exams will be kept under review.
- Tests are normally 90 minutes in duration. The minimum time for a test at Christmas or summer should be 1 hour.
- Marked scripts will be handed back to students in all cases.
- All Summative Assessments are coordinated by the Exams Committee. The formality of Christmas, summer and Mock examinations is highly regarded by students, staff and parents.
- For in-house exams a common assessment takes place in all subjects in first year and this is also encouraged through second and third year. This will provide for increased cooperation and a common benchmark across each subject area.
- While the setting and correction of tests at Christmas is onerous, the practice of Junior Cert and Leaving Cert students sitting both Christmas and mock exams in February will continue.
- Monthly/End of Topic/Chapter Tests - These forms of assessments will be conducted at the discretion of the teacher on a monthly, end of chapter or end of topic basis. These formal tests are a vital component in providing feedback to teachers, students and parents, on the level of each students attainment and learning in that specific subject area. Constructive feedback will be given by teachers to students who complete these tests.
- Transition Years:
 - 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.
 - Portfolio assessments take place in December and May.
 - Transition Year assessments involves the following: external certification, portfolio work, oral presentation and interview.

Schedule of Assessments

As indicated by *Circular Letter 0024/2016* - There is a need to avoid 'over-assessment' and the cumulative burden on students and teachers of multiple assessments across the full range of subjects.

Acknowledging the DES's directive to avoid 'over-assessing', subject departments and management, in consideration of scheduled exam dates, will review the balance between CBA's, Assessment Tasks and in-house exams as they arise. A schedule of CBA's will be made available to staff at the start of the school term and will be created in collaboration with JCT facilitator, staff and management.

State Exams

The school will support students in preparation for the State Exams. We will ensure that students are fully informed of the practices and procedures necessary for these exams.

The Junior and Leaving Certificate Examinations begin the first Wednesday after the June Bank Holiday Monday each year. The exact timetable of examinations is usually available from the previous January.

Reporting Procedures

- As Christmas tests are held immediately preceding the Christmas break, adequate time will be given for correction of these tests after term resumes in January. An agreed date will be set for the input of these results to VSWare.
- Reports are made available to parents in January and in June through VSWare on our school App. In the case of mock examinations, reports are available to parents as soon as possible following the examinations.
- Subject Departments or individuals are free to incorporate results of continuous assessment with the results of the formal Christmas and/or summer tests.

There are many different methods whereby the results of CBA's, formal and informal assessments will be reported to students and parents (Non Standardised Reports):

- Student Journal – the teacher may communicate the outcome of any assessment to the parents/guardian of a student by writing the result or a note in the student journal. The parent/guardian is expected to acknowledge receipt of this note by countersigning it.
- Direct Contact - the teacher may decide as they see fit to contact the parent/guardian directly with respect to the outcome of any assessment undertaken by a student.
- Parents are welcome to arrange a meeting by appointment.
- Signature of Parent on Assessment – the teacher may send the corrected assessment itself home with the student to be viewed and signed by the parent/guardian.
- Parents may access their child's academic records through the VSWare system.
- 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.

Continuous Professional Development:

Staff CPD is an integral component of the ethos and philosophy of Meánscoil Iognáid Rís. Teaching & learning courses support formative assessment and this is embedded through initiatives such as TL21, NAPD workshops 'Graham Powell' and 'Mike Hughes' and our own staff-driven 'Teaching & Learning' workshops which take place each term.

In line with the demands of the syllabus in each curriculum area, teachers set regular homework (**Appendix 1**), comment on the merits of work and make suggestions for improvement. Positive comments, student peer assessment and 'comment only feedback' are encouraged when suitable. Assessment work may be differentiated to suit the needs and abilities of the individual.

Standardised Tests:

The following tests are administered by the Learning Support Team & Guidance Counsellors:

- Cognitive Ability Test (CAT4) – this is administered prior to entry in first year (January)
- Online English assessments are administered to all first and second year students (NGRT)
- Differential Aptitude Tests (DATS) are administered to all Third Year students.

When the results of the tests become available:

- Students with particular needs are identified.
- A programme is devised by the learning support coordinator/resource teacher depending on timetabling and availability of learning support staff.
- Individual Plans are drawn up by the Learning Support Team in conjunction with parents and school management.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on:

Date: November 2019

Colman Campbell

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Ben Travers

Principal

This policy will be due for review in November 2020

Appendix 1 (Homework)

1. The setting, completion and correction of homework remain an integral part of school life.
2. When setting homework, staff will give clear instructions and will be mindful of the amount of homework given, when the work will be due, the age of the class involved, etc. Pupils will be required to write details of homework into their Journals.
3. All assigned homework will be checked/corrected as soon as possible.
4. Dealing with incomplete/unsatisfactory homework is a matter in the first instance for the subject teacher to deal with. The teacher may, for instance, demand it for the next day and/or give a punishment exercise etc. The teacher may also write a note in the student's Journal. This will be countersigned by the parents for the following day. A section entitled "*No Homework or Homework Incomplete*" will be printed in the Students Journal.
5. If, on the following day, the work is still not done it will be open to the teacher to deal with the problem as he/she thinks appropriate and in the case of persistent refusal to complete homework, the incident should be put in writing to the Year Head (see *disciplinary procedures*).
6. In exceptional circumstances, and only following *repeated failure* to do an item of homework, the matter may be brought to the attention of the Principal or a Deputy Principal at the end of the class period.
7. If the pupil is brought to the Principal or to a Deputy Principal, the teacher's authority will be affirmed and the pupil will be told that he cannot come to school the following day without completion of the work.
8. On the following morning, the pupil will report with the work to the Principal or to a Deputy Principal. The work will be checked by the subject teacher in due course.
9. Written punishment work should not take more than 20 minutes to complete.
10. It is agreed that all corrected tests will be given back to students

Appendix 2 (Assessment Policy Covid-19 Addendum)

This addendum to the Naas CBS Assessment policy for the school year 2020/21 is in response to a specific challenge presented by Covid-19.

Rationale

The rationale and intention of assessment remains unchanged. Monitoring progress, informing students and parents about progress, identifying students with additional needs, helping students choose appropriate levels for state exams and students being able to assess their own work continue to be central objectives.

Types of Assessment

Classroom based assessment will continue. Formative assessment of classwork, homework and class assignments will still provide teachers with opportunities to provide individual and group feedback that helps students to understand how their learning can be improved. The correction of homework and assignments will be done in class and through the Google Classroom platform. School tablets were provided to all staff to facilitate blended learning.

Classroom Based Assessment

Classroom Based Assessments introduced as part of the new Junior Cycle will be completed in line with the NCCA update issued in September 2020.

https://ncca.ie/media/4817/ncca_cbas_for_student_cohort_2018-2021.pdf

The requirement related to CBA completion for this cohort of students (third years 2020 - 2021) has been changed. In the exceptional circumstances arising from school closures, each student must complete only one CBA in each subject rather than the usual two in each subject and one CBA in each short course. This cohort of students will not be required to complete Assessment Tasks.

School management and its teachers, in discussion where feasible with students, will choose which CBA to complete for each subject. However, there will be some exceptions to this choice:

- to ensure assessment of oral communications skills, students must complete CBA 2: Communicative Task in Irish and CBA 1: Oral Communication in Modern Foreign Languages.
- Visual Art and Music must complete CBA 2 as this is linked in each case with the final examination in each subject.

The final examination will generate a final grade certified by S.E.C

Summative Assessment

Regular classroom based summative assessment will continue at the discretion of the teacher. As following our covid-19 response plan, where student transcripts are collected teachers may choose to wait three days before handling or correcting the tests and a further three days before returning them to the class.

The specific arrangements for the 2020 in-house Christmas exams (outlined below) are a response to a specific challenge posed by Covid-19; potential school closures or disruption to the completion of in-house exams.

In the event of school closure or cancellation of Christmas exams a system of continued assessment would be necessary for Christmas reporting.

75% of the mark awarded at Christmas would be an average of three class assessments conducted during the term. The remaining 25% will be awarded at the discretion of the class teacher as a reflection of on-line and class engagement.

In the eventuality of no school closure these proportions will be reversed with 75% awarded on the strength of the Christmas exam and 25% awarded as a reflection of continued assessment during the term. This would use the same data of three results.

The option of a 100% exam for 6th Year students has been agreed between management and subject departments.

A google sheet will be provided on the shared drive that will perform calculations.

The Christmas Exam week will continue as normal and be coordinated by the exam committee. Staggered start times and lunchtimes will be coordinated to reduce crowding on corridors and at assembly.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, additional time will be allowed after Christmas for corrections and reports to be completed.

Transition Year 2020/21

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.

Portfolio assessments take place in December and May. Students will be given constructive feedback throughout the year to ensure they are prepared for their portfolio assessments.

Transition Year assessments involves the following: external certification, portfolio work & development, oral presentation and interview.

Students will compile a digital portfolio through the use of a suitable website creator. Google Sites is the preferred option.

Digital portfolios will include a wide variety of both curricular and extra-curricular aspects showcasing a broad spectrum of students work and engagement in TY.

Student's portfolios should provide examples of work in core subject areas, sample subject areas, school specific subject options and calendar specific aspects (Work experience etc.)

Other considerations given towards the assessment of students include their school record, attendances and individual teacher assessments and feedback. As per our covid-19 response plan, social distancing, the wearing of masks and standard surface sanitising will be practised during the assessment interviews.

Reporting Procedures

While the journal remains an important means of communication from home, teacher communication to home in 2020/21 may be by phone, email or digital platforms including the school app. Incomplete homework or concerns in relation to student progress will be reported to the relevant Year Head.

Reporting on school exams will be shared with parents and teachers through the VSWare system. The date for completion of end of term reports on VSWare will be carefully considered to allow adequate time for correction.

Parent Teacher Meetings

Due to Covid-19 restrictions the structure of Parent teacher meetings must be adapted for the academic year 2020 - 2021 or until further advice from the Department of Education is issued. Teachers have the option to send a written report home via VSWare or phone home.

Continuous Professional Development

Teacher training in the use of blended learning and the Google Suite was provided early in the year and optional weekly support training was offered to all staff. School tablets were provided to all staff to facilitate blended learning. A series of tutorial videos were also made available on the Common Drive. Support materials on approaches to 'blended learning' including assessment were distributed at the September staff meeting.

Standardised Tests

The entrance assessments and maths competencies were successfully completed by the Learning Support team and the Guidance Counsellors. Literacy assessments are pending.

Homework (Appendix 1 of the Assessment Policy)

Teachers are encouraged to share homework assignments with their class on Google Classroom so that work is accessible to students who may not be in attendance for various reasons.

All students have been provided with a school email and username to allow them to engage as required with all of their classes. Instruction in accessing and submitting homework was provided to students as part of their coding/computers class and a weekly computer support class has been offered. All teachers were provided with school tablets to facilitate use of the digital platform.

Homework submitted to the Google Classroom may be corrected digitally or in class.

Dealing with incomplete or unsatisfactory homework remains in the first instance a matter for the teacher to deal with. Teachers can communicate with the Year Head if required.