

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



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## ASSESSMENT POLICY

**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 – MTW and T.G).

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

- Two **Classroom Based Assessments** (one in second year and one in third 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, unless substituting an in-house exam with a CBA (as outlined in the '*Schedule of Assessments*' section)
- 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 0055/2019* - 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. In this context, the Classroom-Based Assessments will substitute other assessments currently undertaken in the school such as in-house examinations, etc. as appropriate.

Acknowledging the DES's directive to avoid 'over-assessing', subject departments and management, in consideration of scheduled CBA's and DES dates, will review the need for in-house examinations going forward.

## **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.

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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 i (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