

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.

Board of Management	Ratified October 15th 2024	To be reviewed October 2025
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Review Dates: This policy will be reviewed annually

1. Introduction

Looking at Our Schools (2022) refers to assessment as a process that progresses students' learning. The Education Act (1998) requires schools to regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to students and their parents/ guardians. This policy will outline how Meánscoil Iognáid Rís aims to fulfil these requirements.

This whole-school policy developed in consultation with students, teachers and management provides an overview of formative and summative assessment practices including homework that is appropriate to the curriculum and our students.

2. Relationship to Ethos

The primary link between assessment and our school ethos is through the element of excelling in teaching and learning. Meánscoil Iognáid Rís always strives for students to do their best and gain the best possible experience from their education. Assessment is one method to help progress students' learning by demonstrating to students what they are doing well and what they can do to improve in order to achieve their full academic potential.

3. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is:

- To facilitate improved teaching and student learning.
- To explain the rationale for assessment and its importance to student progression.
- To outline the different types of assessment and the schedule for assessment during the school year.
- To coordinate assessment procedures within departments on a whole school basis.
- To develop a whole school approach to assessing students' work and recording/ reporting of same.
- To establish the expectations for students' homework across the different year groups in the school (Appendix One).

4. Rationale for Assessment

Assessment is the process of gathering, recording, interpreting, using, and reporting information over time about a student's progress and achievement in developing knowledge, skills and attitudes (NIPT, 2014).

Assessment 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 with information about what he needs to do to improve his learning and an opportunity for self reflection on a learning/ assessment experience.
- to provide the student and his parents/ guardians 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 provide the student and his parents/ guardians with information that may help with subject choice, career guidance and progression to further/ higher education, apprenticeships or work.
- to assist in identifying students who may need additional support.

5. Types of Assessment

5.1 Summative/ Formative Assessment

Assessment typically takes one of two forms: Formative or Summative Assessment.

- Formative assessment refers to a wide variety of methods that teachers use to conduct in-process evaluations of student comprehension, learning needs, and academic progress during a lesson or over the course of several lessons. The goal of formative assessment is to collect detailed information that can be used to improve instruction and student learning.
- Summative assessment is used to evaluate student learning, skill acquisition, and academic achievement at the conclusion of a defined instructional period. This instructional period might be at the end of a unit of learning during a term, at the end of a term in the form of a Christmas/ summer exam, or at the end of the Junior/ Senior Cycle in the form of the state exams.

Both forms of assessment are valued and essential. It is important to note that many assessments provide both formative and summative functions.

5.2 In-Class Assessment

The primary purpose of in-class assessment is formative. This formative assessment may take many forms including but not limited to: questioning during class (verbal/ written), viewing students' class/ homework, and grading class tests. Feedback (verbal and/or written) will be provided to the student where appropriate. In-class assessment allows the teacher to help the student identify what has been achieved and where there is room for further learning and development. The information collected from formative assessment can be used by the teacher to inform their teaching. Self or peer assessment can also be used as in-class assessment. This allows students to critically reflect on their own work or the work of others. Self assessment can prompt an increased responsibility for students' own learning. Peer assessment also helps students develop important skills about assessing and providing feedback to others.

5.3 In-House Exams

Christmas/ summer/ mock exams are viewed as both formative and summative assessments since a grade is given and communicated to parents/ guardians while the teacher also provides a personalised comment explaining how the student can improve their learning.

All students sit in-house exams during the week preceding the Christmas and summer break. The duration of Christmas/ summer exams will typically be 90 minutes and no less than one hour. The exam scripts will be graded by the subject teacher and returned to students following the Christmas/ summer break. Teachers may choose to assign a certain percentage of a student's overall grade to continuous assessment. In-house exams are common for a year group across a subject area whenever possible, however it is recognised that this may not always be feasible. When this is not possible, alternative arrangements will be put in place. Grades and feedback comments will be communicated to parents/ guardians through VS Ware on the school app.

Third and Sixth Year students also sit mock exams during the week prior to and directly after the February midterm break. Exam papers are sourced from external companies. Scripts are sent to external examiners for correction but a teacher may choose to correct their own class group(s). All scripts will be returned to students. Subject departments may choose to vary the length of a mock paper if necessary 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. Grades and feedback comments will be communicated to parents/ guardians through VS Ware on the school app.

Christmas and summer exams take place over four and a half days each. Junior Cycle Mock Exams take place over five and a half days. Leaving Certificate Mock Exams take place over seven days. All Christmas, summer and mock exams are coordinated by the exam committee. Students sit their exams in school according to an exam timetable that will be distributed by the exam committee prior to the exams. The formality of the exam process is highly regarded by staff/ students.

5.4 Classroom Based Assessments and Assessment Tasks at Junior Cycle

Assessment for Junior Cycle includes two structured Classroom-Based Assessments (CBA) during Second Year and Third Year. The structure of these CBAs is specified by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). Each assessment will be drawn from a variety of types of assessment, which might include project tasks, oral language tasks, investigations, practical tasks, field studies, and artistic performance.

The CBAs are graded by the classroom teacher in conjunction with other teachers from the subject department during a Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR meeting). The grades of both CBAs will be communicated to parents/ guardians through VS Ware. They are also specified on the student's Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) alongside their grades from their final examinations.

After the second of the Classroom-Based Assessments, students will complete a written Assessment Task on what they have learned and the skills/ competences that they have developed during that CBA. The Assessment Task and the final examination at the end of Third Year will be marked by the State Examinations Commission (SEC). 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 the 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 on the NCCA website and may differ between subjects. A separate Assessment Task will not be required in those practical subjects where the second CBA will be assessed by the SEC (Art, Craft and Design, Music, Wood Technology, and Graphics).

5.5 Assessment during Transition Year

It is recognised that assessment during Transition Year (TY) needs to be different to the assessment of other year groups to encompass the assessment of the different types of learning that take place during TY. Learning is often experiential and personal development is central to the goal of TY. It is acknowledged that it is often difficult to assess and quantify such processes.

Assessment in TY is based on four areas as described below.

A. Quality of project work and assessment

Students will complete a variety of different forms of assessment across subject areas depending on the preference of the subject teacher. Forms of subject assessment may include: completing a research project, presenting in front of classmates, completing a pen and paper or online test, designing a poster, creating a piece of art, reflecting on an experience through the use of journaling, etc. These assessments will be graded and teachers will input the grade and comment prior to the in-house exam week at Christmas/ summer.

B. School record

A student's school record based on their engagement and a lack of unexplained absences also contributes to their overall grade.

C. Familiarity with project work

Students will be interviewed by two teachers before Christmas and summer. Students will create a digital portfolio using Google Sites to present their project and assessment work for the interview. From a sustainability point of view, minimal printing of projects is required. During the interview, the interviewing teachers will ask the students questions about their project and assessment work displayed in their digital portfolio. They will then assign a grade based on students' familiarity with the assessments.

D. Interview

Interviewing teachers at Christmas/ summer will also assign a grade based on the overall proficiency of students during the interview. This is to recognise that progression and maturity may be expressed in a variety of ways. Students will be asked questions to prompt reflection about their TY experience and allow students to speak about their experiences inside and outside the classroom during the year.

5.6 State Exams

State exams provide an entirely summative function. They act as assessment for certification and are therefore assessed externally by the SEC. 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. Leaving Certificate orals/ practicals will be held in the school and coordinated according to the SEC timetable/ guidelines. The Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate Examinations begin the first Wednesday after the June Bank Holiday Monday each year. The exact timetable of examinations will be made available from the SEC a number of months prior to the exams.

6. Reporting Procedures

6.1 In-class assessment

Teachers may sometimes choose to share the results of in-class assessments with parents/ guardians in an informal way. This may occur through the following methods:

- Communication through a note in the school journal. The parent/ guardian may be required to countersign this note.
- Signing of the graded assessment piece.
- Direct contact by phone or email with the parent/ guardian.
- Sharing grades during a parent-teacher meeting

6.2 Christmas/ summer exams and Transition Year Assessments

The results of all Christmas/ summer assessments, CBAs and Transition Year assessments will be communicated to parents/ guardians via VS Ware on the school app.

Christmas exams/ TY interviews take place immediately prior to the Christmas break. Adequate grading time will be allocated following the resumption of school to allow tests to be graded and results/ comments inputted. The results of the Christmas exams/ TY assessments will be reported to parents/ guardians through VS Ware at a date agreed with staff. Reports will be available during the month of January.

Summer exams/ TY interviews take place immediately prior to the summer break. Adequate grading time will be allocated to allow tests to be graded and results/ comments inputted. The results of the summer exams/ TY assessments will be reported to parents/ guardians through VS Ware at a date agreed with staff. Reports will be available during the month of June.

Mock exams for Third and Sixth Year students take place immediately before and after the February midterm. Many of the scripts are sent for correction externally. The results will be made available to parents/ guardians through VS Ware as soon as possible when the scripts have been returned.

6.3 Classroom Based Assessments and Assessment Tasks at Junior Cycle

The results of CBAs completed in Second Year will be reported to parents/ guardians at the same time as the Second Year summer exams. The results of CBAs completed in Third Year will be reported to parents/ guardians at the same time as the Third Year Christmas exams.

Assessment tasks are graded by the SEC and incorporated into a student's final grade and are therefore not available to the school for reporting purposes.

6.4 State Exams

All reporting of the state exams is completed by the SEC.

7. Schedule of Assessments

1st Year	
Ongoing throughout the year	In-class formative assessment and class tests
Week preceding the Christmas break	In-house exams
Week preceding the summer break	In-house exams

2nd Year	
Ongoing throughout the year	In-class formative assessment and class tests
Week preceding the Christmas break	In-house exams
January - May	CBA 1 in most subjects (subjects will be distributed as evenly as possible throughout the term and a timetable will be made available)
Week preceding the summer break	In-house exams

3rd Year	
Ongoing throughout the year	In-class formative assessment, class tests, and submission of project work for state exams
September - December	CBA 2 in most subjects (subjects will be distributed as evenly as possible throughout the term and a timetable will be made available) Assessment tasks are conducted following the completion of CBA 2
Week preceding the Christmas break	In-house exams
Week preceding and week following February midterm	Mock exams
First Wednesday after the June Bank Holiday	Start of Junior Cycle exams

4th Year	
Ongoing throughout the year	In-class formative assessment and project work
Week preceding the Christmas break	Portfolio assessment and interviews
Week preceding the summer break	Portfolio assessment and interviews

5th Year	
Ongoing throughout the year	In-class formative assessment and class tests
Week preceding the Christmas break	In-house exams
Week preceding the summer break	In-house exams

6th Year	
Ongoing throughout the year	In-class formative assessment, class tests and submission of project work for state exams
Week preceding the Christmas break	In-house exams
Week preceding and week following February midterm	Mock exams
First Wednesday after the June Bank Holiday	Start of Leaving Certificate exams

8. Links to School Self Evaluation Improvement Areas

8.1 Literacy

Literacy may be formatively or summatively assessed across all year groups through various methods such as verbally questioning the definitions of keywords and the inclusion of reading comprehension questions in summative assessments. Correct mechanics will be encouraged across all subject areas.

8.2 Numeracy

Numeracy may be formatively or summatively assessed across all year groups through various methods such as including questions relating to graphs/ processing of data sets/ infographics on assessments or asking students to complete simple calculations in class. Numerical results on assessments may also be returned as fractions and students will be asked to calculate their own percentages.

8.3 Communication

Reporting procedures for assessments are described in Section Six. In addition to these procedures, written comments will accompany the grades reported through VS Ware. All verbal/ written feedback of assessments will include how the student can improve his learning and/ or recognition of what he has done well. Communication also occurs between subject departments to create and share common assessments where possible.

8.4 Independent Learning

Teachers may encourage student reflection after an assessment if appropriate. This might be done by encouraging students to write a short reflective piece or reflect on prompt questions. This will allow students to analyse how they prepared for the exam, what they did well during the assessment, and how they can work independently to improve for future assessments. Students will also be encouraged to reflect on any feedback provided by the teacher. Choice may be afforded within tests if appropriate.

8.5 Impact of Covid on students

This is the improvement area that is being analysed in the school for the year 2022/ 2023. Adjustments were made to assessment in the school during the Covid pandemic including but not limited to: completing more assessments digitally where possible, submitting homework through Google Classroom, and adjustments to in-house exams. These adjustments have since been reflected on by teachers and any aspects they deem useful will be retained.

9. Whole School Testing

The following tests are administered by qualified staff from the Additional Educational Needs (AEN) Department and the Guidance Department:

- Cognitive Ability Test (CAT4) – this is administered prior to entry in First Year (January).
- Literacy Assessment - this is administered to all First and Second Year students.
- Differential Aptitude Tests (DATs) - these are administered to all Third Year students.

The Maths Department administer the following test:

- Maths Competency Test - this is administered to all First Year students.

When the results of the tests become available, they assist in the identification process of students with additional needs. Both the AEN and the Guidance Team use the assessments to identify how the learning of students identified should be altered to suit their needs.

The Maths Competency Test is used by the AEN and Maths Department to identify students with additional needs in Maths.

The Guidance Team uses the DATs results to assist students with their decision making regarding subject choice, career guidance, and progression to further/ higher education, apprenticeships, or work.

10. Conclusion

Signed:

Colman Campbell
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed:

Ben Travers
Principal

1. Introduction

Excelling in teaching and learning is an integral element of our school's ethos. Homework is viewed as an intrinsic part of teaching and learning within the school.

2. Rationale

The purpose of homework is varied and depends on the specific task assigned by the teacher. The importance of homework includes but is not limited to the following:

- Homework acts as an integral method of formative assessment. It informs the teacher what a student knows/ doesn't know.
- Homework reinforces what was taught that day and allows students to practise skills they have acquired in school.
- Homework is an important routine to encourage independent learning and confidence amongst students.
- Homework assists in the development of students' time management skills.
- Homework builds a habit of self-study and encourages students to use their own initiative to problem-solve when they face a challenge in their learning.

3. Nature of Homework

Teachers give clear instructions to students about homework including what the student needs to do and when the homework task is due.

The year group, level of study, when the homework will be due, etc. will be considered by the teacher when setting homework.

Assigned homework tasks will vary depending on the subject, year group and topic of study. They may involve some of the following tasks:

- Written assignments
- Learning assignments in preparation for an upcoming lesson
- Revision work such as note making or creating mind maps
- Reading, listening or watching subject related material
- Collecting or researching information
- Practical work
- Model making
- Creating a project (individual/ group)

The assigned task will be consistent with the ability of the students. Where appropriate, for differentiation purposes, teachers may ask students to complete different tasks. Teachers may also provide a variety of tasks and allow students to exercise choice around their homework to be completed.

Assigned homework will be discussed/ checked/ corrected as soon as possible by the classroom teacher.

4. Non-Completion of Homework

Dealing with incomplete/unsatisfactory homework is a matter in the first instance for the subject teacher. The teacher may, for instance, request it for the next day and/or give an additional exercise etc. Written additional work should not take more than 20 minutes to complete and should be a meaningful exercise. The teacher may also write a note in the student's journal. This will be countersigned by a parent/ guardian for the following day. A section entitled "No Homework or Homework Incomplete" is printed in the school journal.

If, on the following day, the work is still not completed 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.

5. How the school helps students to organise their homework

Teachers will ensure that instructions concerning homework are clear to everyone in the class and that all students have time to record what is expected. Teachers may also choose to allow students to start the homework task at the end of the lesson to guide the students in how to complete the homework.

Students should take any advice from their teachers to plan their homework so that assignments do not accumulate. This is of particular importance for subjects that students do not have every day or for larger pieces of work such as projects.

6. How parents/guardians can support students with homework

Parents/ guardians can help by encouraging a positive attitude towards homework. Resilience and valuable learning often arises from attempting and persevering with a difficult task. Parents/ guardians can help with this by encouraging students to persist with a challenging task and give it their best effort. Parents/ guardians are encouraged to explore what environment is most suitable for their child to complete his homework. Homework can also act as a tool of communication between school and home by giving parents/ guardians an understanding of any challenges their son may be facing in a subject/ topic.

7. How students can approach homework

Students are encouraged to approach homework with a spirit of academic integrity based on the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage. This means that students should try their best with every homework assignment, produce their own original work and acknowledge the work of others where appropriate.

Students are expected to write all homework into their school journal. They must record homework on the page assigned to the day when it was set and also should note the day when the homework is due. Students should ask questions when the homework is set in class if they require any clarification. Students should ensure they bring all materials required for their homework home at the end of the school day. Students should strive to make all homework neat, tidy and presented as the teacher has requested. If students are absent for school activities, students should obtain the homework from a student who was present where possible. A lesson about study skills is delivered to all students during the year. Students should try to implement these study skills practices to benefit their homework and learning.

Appendix Two - Arrangements for Year 2022/ 2023 due to Covid

All in-house exams will return to normal procedures unless any restrictions are reintroduced.

Third Year students are not obliged to carry out two CBAs in most subjects but departments can choose to conduct the CBA if they so wish. CBAs will be conducted in the subject areas in which they remain obligatory. Students will not complete Assessment Tasks.

Adjustments will be made to all Leaving Certificate papers due to the disruption due to Covid in previous years. Full details of the adjustments for each subject can be found on examinations.ie