

Boherbue Comprehensive School 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.

Definition of Assessment

Assessment is integral to teaching and can be defined as *"the process of gathering, recording, interpreting, using and reporting information about a students' progress and achievement in developing knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes."*

Assessment involves gathering information in order to understand how each student is progressing and using that information to further student learning. Assessment and feedback help students to improve and progress to the best of their abilities.

Rationale for Assessment:

Assessment is an essential part of good teaching and learning for the following reasons:

1. It tracks individual student progress and attainment providing teachers, students and parents with information regarding student ability and progress.
2. It enables teachers to identify the next steps in advancing teaching and learning.
3. It helps to identify appropriate subject levels at Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate level.
4. It helps identify students who have additional educational needs eg. Students with exceptional ability or students who may need additional support.
5. It helps inform consultations with relevant professionals eg. SENO, NEPS, OT services etc. where necessary.
6. It assists students in relation to subject choice, career guidance and progression to third level and further education.

Aims of our Assessment Procedures

- To monitor the teaching and learning process.
- To inform students and parents / guardians of the progress in learning.
- To generate baseline data to measure student achievement.
- To assist teachers in short and long term planning.
- To motivate students to take responsibility for their own learning.

Range of Assessment Methods used throughout the School

Entrance Assessments:

- Incoming first years undertake The CAT 4 test which is used as a basis to form mixed ability first year classes. This assessment will offer an early indicator to the school of a student's ability, allowing the school to put additional supports in place as appropriate.
- All students in 1st year are tested to assess their reading age using the NGRT Reading Age Tests in September and again in May.
- Primary Schools are required to provide an Educational Passport on incoming First Years

Learning Support Assessments:

The CAT 4 and the NGRT tests are used in conjunction with information provided by the Primary schools, parents etc to identify First year students who may benefit from Resource/Learning Support. Students identified will be provided with additional supports, based on their needs and delivered under a continuum of support.

Further standardised attainment and diagnostic testing using assessment instruments approved by the DES may be carried out as appropriate.

Where an individual student or a group of students are withdrawn for learning support their resource teacher is responsible for monitoring individual student progress and keeping records of the assessments carried out.

Following referral by school management the NEPS psychologist may carry out further educational assessments.

Informal Assessment

Informal assessment is what teachers use every day to evaluate the progress of their students. It takes place in the classroom at the discretion of individual teachers. Timely feedback and constructive advice are vital components in this process.

All teachers are encouraged to use "Blooms Taxonomy" in the classroom as part of their teaching pedagogy.

Informal Assessment methods include –

- Worksheets & written classwork
- Questions and answers in class
- Essays, projects & assignments
- Reading & writing in Class
- Sample exam questions
- Homework – written or learned
- Presentations
- Self and Peer Assessment
- Practical Work

ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING:

Boherbue Comprehensive School has adopted Assessment for Learning (AFL). AFL style comments are used in school reports.

Assessment for Learning (AFL) strategies used in the school are:

- Sharing the learning intentions and devising success criteria eg. WALT (We Are Learning Today) and WILF (What I Am Looking For)
- Teacher observation and written feedback
- Portfolios and Project Work.
- Success and Improvement Strategies e.g. *'two stars and a wish'*.
- Effective teacher questioning including *"wait time, think pair share"* etc
- Blooms Taxonomy for higher order questioning.
- Teachers use the following strategies to aid peer and self-assessment as appropriate;
 - KWL charts
 - Evaluation sheets
 - Self-evaluation
 - Questions to facilitate reflection
 - Graphic Organisers
 - Checklists
 - Rubrics etc.
- An emphasis on redraft work and correcting mistakes before the student moves on.

Formal/Summative Assessment

There are many types of formal assessments that take place in the school. The results of these generally form the basis for the reports issued to parents. These include –

- Monthly/End of Topic/Chapter Tests
- House Examinations
- Mock Examinations Aural/Oral Tests
- Reading Age Tests
- Aptitude Tests
- Entrance Assessment
- CBA's will be carried out in accordance with DES Guidelines
- Leaving and Junior Certificate Examinations

Schedule of Assessments

1. Monthly/End of Topic/Practical Assessments. These will be conducted at the discretion of the teacher. A minimum of three pre-Christmas and three post-Christmas results from these assessments will be recorded by the class teacher for each individual student in first, second and fourth year.
2. House Examinations. The purpose of these exams is to measure student learning and attainment in each subject area, and to give students experience in a formal exam situation, similar to the state exams.

1st, 2nd and 4th year students;

Undertake Christmas class tests in early December. The summer exams are completed at the end of May. The duration of these exams is as follows:

| | |
|-----------|---------------|
| 1st Years | 1 - 1.5 hours |
| 2nd Years | 1 - 2 hours |
| 4th Years | 1.5 - 2 hours |

3rd and 5th year students

Formal house exams are undertaken in November and the Pre-Junior and Pre-Leaving Certificate Exams in February each year in preparation for the state examinations in June. The Pre-Examinations are set and corrected externally. These examinations are very beneficial to the students in measuring their progress prior to the State Certificate examinations.

Transition Year students

Christmas and Summer Reports are based on continuous assessments in the classroom, as determined by their individual subject teacher in collaboration with the TY Co-Ordinator. The grade awarded is based on a credit system, implemented by the class teachers and administered by the TY Co-ordinator. As Transition Year is focused on experiential learning and personal development, the forms of assessment used may vary and may involve the following: external certification, portfolio, project, oral presentation, multi-media, self and peer evaluation.

Aptitude Tests:

TY and 4th year students complete a Differential Ability Test (DATs). This test focuses on areas where students do best and try to capitalise on these as far possible in their future education, career choice, training and job hunting.

State Examinations

The school will strive to ensure that all State Examinations will be conducted in accordance with the regulations set down by the State Examinations Commission. 3rd and 5th Year students undertake the many assessments that make up the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate Examinations. These include orals, course work, practical work, portfolio, C.B.A.'s etc.

The timetable of State Examinations is made available to staff and students upon publication by the State Examinations Commission.

Current Policies Related to Assessment include:

- SEN Policy
- Homework Policy
- School Improvement Plans re Literacy, Numeracy, AFL
- Data Protection

The Assessment Policy should be read in conjunction with the above policies.

Review, Assessment and Evaluation

The Assessment Policy will be reviewed within two years of ratification.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 16 April 2018

Signed: P. Javier Date: 16 April 2018
Chairperson