



## **Maryfield College Assessment Policy *Introduction***

Maryfield College is a voluntary girl's secondary school founded by the Sisters of the Cross and Passion and under the trusteeship of Le Cheile Schools Trust. The Assessment Policy has been developed following consultation between students, staff, parents, Principal and Board of Management. It recognises the requirement of the school to regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to the students and their parents, as set down by the Education Act 1998.

This Assessment Policy will be reviewed regularly, as directed by the Board of Management. In this policy document the term 'parent' is taken to include 'guardian'. The policy will apply to all aspects and forms of assessment, including both summative and formative assessment.

### ***(i) Policy Context***

This policy is informed by:

- The Mission Statement of Maryfield College
- Looking at Our Schools 2022
- DES Circular 0059/2021 and Information Note TC 0011/2022 (Arrangements for the Implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle)
- The Homework Policy
- The Code of Behaviour
- The SEN Policy
- The Guidance Plan.

### ***(ii) Our Mission Statement***

We acknowledge that it is through our relationships with others that we grow to our full potential. Therefore, we aspire to create an educational environment where pupils come to learn and to understand themselves, their abilities, and their world. In this environment they are taught to take responsibility for themselves and for their behaviour.

We, in the school community, are guided by the teaching of Jesus, who urged us to love God and one another as oneself, as a way of life that would bring us to self-fulfilment.

We teach and learn respect for one another and our world, accept our differences and acknowledge our interdependence. In doing so, particular attention is paid to those in most need of our help.

Maryfield College as a teaching and learning community recognises the interdependence of management, teachers, pupils, and parents in the process of forming happy, secure, well-

educated, and productive young people. The school endeavours to ensure that it provides: a healthy balance between academic, social, and spiritual development in an environment that is welcoming and friendly, where a caring relationship is evident between staff, parents, and pupils, where each one is accepted, respected, and appreciated through a value system that embodies the teachings of Christ, based on the Christian ideals of freedom, truth, love, justice and self-discipline.

### **(iii) Definition of Assessment**

Assessment is the process of gathering, recording, interpreting, using, and reporting evidence of learning in individuals, groups or systems, which relies upon a number of instruments, one of which may be a test. Educational assessment provides information about progress in learning. Formative, diagnostic, and summative assessment are undertaken on a regular basis at school level. Emphasis is placed on more formal school-based examinations before the term and mock examinations. Based on these assessments, teachers, and principals report to parents on student progress and give advice on subject options and on the level at which subjects are taken.

### **(iv) The Purposes of Assessment**

- To enhance expectations and standards for all students in an environment which supports the wellbeing of students and staff.
- To act as a motivation and incentive for students in the learning process
- To help students to become independent learners who use feedback from assessment to set goals for improvements.
- To foster student self-reflection on their learning process
- To evaluate what a student has learned in a particular area.
- To provide feedback to students on their learning in a timely and helpful manner
- To provide feedback to teachers on the success of teaching methodologies in the learning process
- To highlight difficulties and shortcomings in the learning process to develop intervention strategies.
- To identify students who may require extension activities such as learning support.
- To encourage and embed the skills of self-assessment and peer-assessment.
- To keep records of attainment that will inform parents through the school's reporting process.
- To track the academic progress of students over time (e.g., CAT 4 Entrance Assessment, NGRT, PPAD-E, DATs, class tests, house exams, mock exams, State Examinations)
- To assist in improving student academic achievement.

### **(v) Our Vision for Assessment**

1. This Assessment Policy will play a key role in ensuring that all students realise their full academic potential in a learning environment that reflects a culture of collaboration between students, teachers, senior management, and parents. Students in Maryfield College are encouraged to become reflective, self-directed learners, to think critically and to aspire to reach their potential academically,

emotionally, socially, and physically. Students' wellbeing is an integral aspect of our shared vision for the support and education of our students. Students are encouraged and expected therefore to engage in various forms of assessment, to continually reflect on their learning and help work towards reaching their potential.

2. We expect students to always try their best – this includes efforts at participation, classwork, homework, tests, and all forms of assessment. We foster positive attitudes towards academic work and effort and expect parents to support the school in this regard. We encourage students who experience successes to work collaboratively with other students in helping to foster learning for all. We encourage students to use any experience of 'failure' for positive learning and improvement, and to seek advice and support from teachers and parents to help them to use the outcomes of assessment for positive improvements.
3. Our Code of Behaviour and Homework Policy strongly promotes attendance and participation and outline the recommended approximate time per night spent on homework. Engagement in attendance, participation in learning and making one's best effort at homework helps students to reach their potential in all forms of assessment, class tests, house exams and day-to-day learning as assessed through oral questioning, group-work, homework etc.
4. As a school community, we recognise and accept the differences in each student, their ability, and gifts. To help foster and support the abilities of all we aim to;
  - Create an atmosphere of care and concern. Provide a supportive environment in which students are enabled to grow to maturity.
  - Enable students to develop a healthy self-esteem.
  - Provide the educational environment and facilities to enable students to reach their full potential, including, but not restricted to, their academic potential.
  - Provide a calm yet stimulating learning atmosphere, which encourages respect for self and others, working with others, emotional wellbeing, self-assessment, peer-assessment, and teacher led assessment where students are enabled to grow in confidence.

We aim to support all students in their learning needs and work in a collaborative manner with parents to help all students experience success in their holistic development. We adopt a target-setting approach assisted using data based academic tracking to make improvements and assist students in formulating self-directed improvement targets and provide a range of supports, within reasonable limits, to help them to achieve those targets. Such supports may include:

- Teacher feedback (oral/written) to students about their work.
- Student Support Team, Guidance Counsellors, SEN team, Class Tutor, Year Head and Senior Management Team Support.

#### **(vi) Aims of the Assessment Policy**

- To facilitate continually improved student learning and teaching in Maryfield College
- Outline the rationale and importance of assessment.
- List the different types of assessment.
- Detail the annual schedule of assessments.
- To create a consistent and standardised assessment procedure for monitoring and reporting achievement in Maryfield College.
- To co-ordinate assessment procedures within subject teams on a school-wide basis
- To help identify appropriate subject levels for students in the Junior and Leaving Certificate
- To help identify students who may need additional support and services and to inform consultations with the NEPS psychologist where necessary.
- To assist school management in identifying students, subjects, classes, and areas of the curriculum that may require further support, subject to allocation.
- To inform subject choice, career guidance and progression to third level and further education.

### **(vii) Forms of Assessment**

Broadly speaking, there are two main types of assessment which take place throughout the academic year, formative assessment, and summative assessment.

**Formative assessment** encompasses all activities undertaken by teachers, and/or their students, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged (Black and William, 1998). Formative Assessment is therefore mainly about improvement. It is ongoing and continuous and used as an aid to future progress. It is used to help learners learn, to identify the learner's needs and to help teachers inform their teaching practice through the provision of timely feedback to the students. Assessment for Learning (AfL) strategies facilitate formative assessment.

Examples of Assessment for Learning Strategies include:

- Sharing the Learning Intentions and Outcomes with students.
- Sharing the Success Criteria with students
- Effective Questioning
- Classroom Practice including the use of traffic lights, exit cards, KWL, scaling etc.
- Comment only feedback
- Homework
- Self-Assessment & Reflective Practice
- Peer Assessment.

This list is not exhaustive.

**Summative Assessment** is mainly about attainment and accountability. It refers to the assessment of learning (AoL) at the conclusion of a specific instructional period. Its goal is to provide a summary of the achievements of the learner.

Assessment of Learning (AoL) includes.

- State Examinations at Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate.

- In - house examinations during the school year including mock examinations for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year students. These assessments are graded and provide the students with the opportunity to practise examination technique. Subject teachers work collaboratively to standardise the approach to in house assessment for all students in all year groups.
- End of topic/chapter tests. These are conducted at the discretion of the teacher and are a vital component in providing feedback about student progress to teachers, students, and their parents.

**(viii) Psychometric Testing (CAT 4 Testing)**

This takes place in February before a student enters first year. The results of these are shared with parents upon request. Students with specific learning needs are identified. The provision of additional resources is explored and allocated using the general allocation model. Results are shared with subject teachers to allow for differentiation. Standardised testing using CAT 4 may take place in 5<sup>th</sup> year to allow for a robust tracking system to ensure students reach their potential. Results of these tests will be shared with students.

Psychometric testing is facilitated by the Guidance and Special Education Departments.

**(ix) Assessments used by Special Education Department**

The Special Education Department utilise the following standardised tests to gather additional information on students' abilities and needs in literacy and numeracy.

- WRAT V (Wide Range Achievement Tests: literacy and numeracy)
- WIAT III (Weshler Individual Achievement Test for Teachers: literacy)
- DASH (Detailed Assessment of Speed of Handwriting) for age range 9-16:11
- DASH (Detailed Assessment of Speed of Handwriting) for age range 17+
- PPAD-E (Post Primary Assessment and Diagnosis: literacy)
- New Group Reading Test
- Single Word Spelling Test

WIAT III/ WRAT V/ DASH are recommended tests for RACE Applicants

WIAT III/ WRAT V/PPAD-E can be used for consideration re: Irish Exemption

Every effort is made to accommodate students who have been approved for Reasonable Accommodation (RA) in the Junior and Leaving Certificate exams. Reasonable Accommodations involve the use of a reader /scribe /assistive technology / tape recorder. The SEN team endeavour to provide appropriate support for students with SEN or RA through appropriate facilitation of the exams process for house and mock exams. Arrangements may be made for students to sit exams individually or in small groups, under the supervision of a member of the SEN team.

**(x) Formal Summative Assessments (In House Examinations 2023-2024)**

The purpose of house exams is to measure students' learning and attainment in each subject area and to give students experience in sitting formal exams similar in nature to the state exams. House exams follow similar operating rules as state exams. Results of all formal in-house examinations will be reported to parents. Reports contain the marks obtained and feedback from teachers. Continuous assessment in each subject area leading up to these exams may also be reported in the Christmas Reports and Summer Reports.

**Absence from exams:** All students are expected to sit house exams, including Mock exams in 3rd / 6th Year. Only in exceptional circumstances may the school make alternate arrangements for a student who is absent for an exam to take a house exam on a different day / time to the general cohort of students, and only where it is deemed not to undermine the integrity of the exams or the exams process. Exceptional circumstances may include illness that has been certified by a medical practitioner (e.g., doctor), participation in school tour, participation at regional/national level in sports competition when representing the school or other exceptional case. Such circumstances will be decided upon by the principal on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with the relevant teacher, student and parent.

Family holidays should not be taken during a period of house exams, causing a student to miss an exam, and the school may not facilitate alternate arrangements in such circumstances. Alternate arrangements for house exams may only apply in exceptional circumstances and may involve a student sitting an exam that is different from the general cohort or sitting the exam at home or in school later. The school cannot take responsibility for students accessing exam questions or answers from other students in advance where such circumstances apply, and parents must be aware that any mark awarded may not therefore represent an accurate reflection of the student's performance or ability.

**Schedule of In- House Examinations for 2023-2024**

<b>Time of Year</b>	<b>Year Group</b>	<b>Duration of Examination</b>	<b>Reporting Procedures</b>
October prior to midterm break	3 <sup>rd</sup> & 6 <sup>th</sup>	1.5 hrs	To all parents via VS Ware
December	1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup> , 5 <sup>th</sup>	1 hr to 1.5 hrs	To all parents via VS Ware
January/February prior to midterm break	3 <sup>rd</sup> & 6 <sup>th</sup> Mock Examinations *	As per paper	To all parents via VS Ware
May prior to end of year	1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 5 <sup>th</sup>	1.5 hrs	To all parents via VS Ware

**\*Note re mock examination papers and provision of corrections:**

Mock examinations provide students with valuable experience in time management and examination techniques. In addition, they provide students with an opportunity to obtain an overview of their progress to date in their chosen subjects.

External examination papers are sourced from external companies. If a suitable mock examination paper cannot be sourced class teachers will design their own paper.

The correction of the mock examination papers in both 3<sup>rd</sup> year and 6<sup>th</sup> year must be arranged by the subject department.

A subject department can choose to correct their student's examination papers or use external correctors available through the mock examination companies. Where a suitable examination paper cannot be sourced externally, the class teacher must correct the mock examination paper.

Each subject department should collectively decide on mock paper corrections and inform the school's senior management team of the decision no later than September 30<sup>th</sup> each year. When a subject department decides to have mock examination papers corrected externally, the school will inform parents in early October and create a payment on VS ware for the correction fees for each relevant subject, payable before 30<sup>th</sup> January.

#### **(xi) Reporting Procedures**

There are many different methods adopted in reporting the results of formative and summative assessments to students and parents.

#### **Non-standardised reports include:**

Student Journal - the subject teacher may communicate the outcome of any assessment to parents by writing the result or a note in the student journal.

Direct Contact - the teacher may decide to contact the parent directly regarding the progress of any student. A year head may also contact a parent or parents of a student to discuss progress.

Parent/Teacher Meetings - these take place for all year groups (except for 4<sup>th</sup> year) throughout the academic year. They provide an opportunity for both parents and teachers to discuss the progress of the student. The schedule for Parent/Teacher meetings is provide on the school calendar.

#### **Standardised Written Reports**

Formal written reports are made available to parents online through VS Ware on two occasions during the academic year.

- For 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year following midterm assessment and mock examinations.
- For 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year following December assessment and May assessment.

These reports will contain a grade (senior cycle) or descriptor (junior cycle) and level and a formative comment on the progress of the student in each subject area from the subject teacher and an overall comment from the Year Head. CBA descriptors are provided upon the completion of SLAR meetings on VS Ware.

### **(xii) State Examinations**

Teachers strive to ensure that all 3rd and 6th year students participate - as directed by the State Examinations Commission - in the many assessments that make up the Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate examinations. These assessments which may include orals, course work, practical work, portfolio work amongst others, will be operated in accordance with the regulations set down by the State Examinations Commission. It is the student's individual responsibility to ensure that all such work is submitted to their best standard possible and in advance of any deadlines.

### **(xiii) Junior Cycle Classroom Based Assessments (CBA) & Assessment Task**

Classroom-Based Assessments in subjects and short courses provide students with opportunities to demonstrate their understanding and skills in ways not possible in a formal examination. Classroom-Based Assessments, facilitated by the classroom teacher, are undertaken by students in a defined period, within class contact time and to a national timetable.

Junior Cycle Classroom Based Assessments (CBA) take place in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year for all Junior Cycle subjects except for wellbeing subjects which require the completion of 1 CBA to be completed in either 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> year. CBAs are classroom based and are generally completed within a 3 week window within the school term. Class teachers will provide all students with the Features of Quality and the success criteria for each CBA in advance. A calendar of these assessments will be provided at the beginning of each academic year following the provision of the windows for completion by the DE. The CBA calendar will be shared with students and their parents when complete. Following Subject Learning Assessment and Review (SLAR) meetings held by each subject department the descriptors awarded to students are recorded on VS Ware and made available to parents. CBA results for all students are provided to the DES for reporting on the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA).

The Assessment Task is a written task completed by students during class time and is sent to the State Examinations Commission for marking. The Assessment Task is specified by the NCCA and is related to the learning outcomes of the second CBA.

Note: The DE issue a circular each year on the implementation of Junior Cycle for the following school year which the school follows.

### **(xiv) Transition Year Assessment**

The ethos of TY is towards a different kind of learning – one where students are guided towards self-motivation in their application and participation in the different and widely varied curriculum offered to them. Due to the variety of subjects and modules presented to students' assessment may take many forms, for example:

- Written exercises aimed at practising new skills and/or applying new concepts.
- Completing oral and aural tasks/assessments.
- Projects
- Posters
- Presentations



- Research topics
- Organising work experience & community action placements.
- Completing documents and diary entries for work experience & community action placements
- Completing personal reflections from learning environments e.g., S.P.A.D journal, guest speakers, workshops.

Students are required to have three reflective journals that are completed throughout the year: a Social Personal Academic Development Journal, a Community Action Journal, and a Work Experience Journal. These journals are assessed regularly and contribute to the end of year assessment for Transition Year.

Students are assessed in core subjects, Maths, English, Irish and Modern Foreign Language formally in December during In-House examinations. Class teachers may also use summative assessment in their classes at the end of a topic.

Completion of and participation in Transition Year in Maryfield College is acknowledged at the end of the year during and End of Year Presentation to Parents involving the Transition Year students and their teachers. Based on specific assessment criteria which is shared with the students during the year the students are awarded a certificate of completion at Distinction, Upper Merit, Merit and Pass levels.

#### **(xv) Academic Monitoring**

The school strives to ensure that all students reach their full potential in a supportive and caring environment, including their academic potential. All students complete CAT 4 Assessment in February before 1st Year, giving the school baseline data for each student. In addition, 1st year students complete PPADE Assessments at Christmas of 1st Year. Combined with formal examinations in October (3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year) December (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> year) and May (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> year), mock examinations in February of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year and continuous in class assessments, data is continually gathered on each student. The school inputs all this data into a commercial software package to monitor student academic performance. The software package is an academic tracking tool that creates a student's baseline potential in each subject in each exam. This baseline is based on a statistical model using the exam results of all students' previous results on the software. The software aims to highlight when a student falls below this potential and may need further support. Teachers and their year heads can investigate the reasons for the students not reaching their potential and determine whether additional support or intervention is required, thus, ensuring no student gets overlooked in a very busy school system.

#### **(xvi) Homework Policy**

Maryfield College has a specific homework policy. This policy should be read in conjunction with this assessment policy.

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually with the first review due in June 2025.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 07/06/2023.

