

St. Brendan's College Assessment Policy

Introduction:

This Assessment Policy was developed in partnership with all members partners of St. Brendan's College –student council, teachers, parents' council and 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.

Relationship to Mission Statement:

Saint Brendan's College is a co-educational school under the auspices of Mayo Sligo Leitrim Education and Training Board and is committed to the holistic education of all students, to ensure that individually, they each realise their full potential in a social and physical environment that is caring, supportive and happy. We work in partnership with students, staff, parents and the community, and welcome all students from society.

This Assessment Policy will play a key role in striving to ensure that each student realises his/her full academic potential in a learning environment that reflects a culture of partnership between teachers, parents and students.

Aims and Objectives of this Policy

This Assessment Policy aims to:

1. Explain the rationale and importance of assessments
2. List the different types of assessments
3. Outline of the annual schedule of assessments and reporting schedule
4. Detail the reporting procedures post assessments
5. Roles and Responsibilities
6. Junior Cycle Assessment
7. Leaving Certificate Assessment
8. Transition Year Assessment

1. Rationale:

Assessment in St. Brendan's College is an integral part of the teaching and learning process as it provides valuable information to the student, the teacher and the parent. The purpose of this policy is to provide students and parents with information regarding our assessment and reporting procedures in line with the Education Act 1998. As a school we recognise that parents, teachers and students need to have an effective learning focused partnership to ensure the best possible outcomes can be achieved for our students. The quality framework in Looking at Our Schools 2022, the School Self-Evaluation (SSE) process and distributed/shared model of leadership support us in our focus on continuous improvement in teaching and learning. Learning at St. Brendan's College is very well supported: students are aware of what they are trying to achieve and through effective assessment they can gain a clearer insight into what they have achieved and where they can improve. All forms of assessment should have a positive impact on students' attitudes, motivation, confidence and wellbeing. Students are afforded the opportunity to respond to guidance they have received. Teachers use assessment to set tasks which are appropriate to the abilities of their students. Students are involved in the process of assessment by taking responsibility for their own learning, developing their ability to be self-critical and setting targets for their subsequent work. Each student is assessed as part of an ongoing process based upon their homework, class tests, assignments, term exams, projects and other forms of schoolwork. A record of these results is kept by the teacher. This Assessment Policy outlines the importance of assessment and the key role students, parents and teaching staff play in supporting this policy document.

2. Assessment:

The term 'assessment' refers generally to the gathering and interpretation of information related to a student's learning: abilities, attainments, strengths and needs. The Board of Management, staff, students and parents of St. Brendan's College recognise that assessment is an important component in achieving the effective educational progress of each student. Such assessment facilitates ongoing learning growth and improvement on the part of the student and teachers. We recognise that assessment is the bridge between teaching and learning and should motivate students, enabling and encouraging them to achieve to the best of their ability. An effective assessment policy will help teachers to identify early and ongoing interventions that need to be put in place to assist students in reaching their potential.

Assessment Objectives:

- To use formative assessment in the planning and practice of teachers in the classroom.
- To use summative assessment to provide information to students, parents and teachers of what progress has been made in the learning process.

- To provide consistency in procedures for setting, marking and supplying feedback to students.
- To facilitate student reflection on their learning journey.
- To incorporate digital literacy into the assessment process.
- To inform the teachers how students learn best and evaluate teaching styles.
- To inform the students of how best to learn and to set individual goals.
- To provide the students and parents with information regarding progress.
- To establish baseline data in relation to a student's attainments in subjects.
- To identify appropriate subject levels for subjects for State Examinations purposes.
- To identify areas of difficulties for students in order to provide them with additional support.
- To identify high achieving, gifted and talented pupils
- To assess a student's eligibility for additional support and services and to inform consultations 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 co-ordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis.
- To establish baseline data which may be used for school self-evaluation purposes.

Formative and Summative Assessment:

This policy recognises the importance of on-going assessment both formative (assessment for learning - AFL) and summative (assessment of learning AOL) that supports student learning.

Formative Assessment:

Formative assessment involves a range of strategies and approaches designed to give students, teachers and parents feedback about students' understanding of elements of their learning. It is an integral part of the learning process where information is shared with the learner on the quality of learning. It is linked to learning intentions and success criteria and looks forward to the next stage of the learning process. The most common forms of assessment used in the school are of a formative nature and take place regularly in the classroom. Formative assessment is at the discretion of individual teachers who will use them constructively for learning to take place. Timely feedback and constructive advice are vital components in this process. Where appropriate, teachers will keep records of these assessments to provide an insight into a student's progress over time and to fully inform the learning process. In line with the Framework for Junior Cycle 2015, 'Most of the assessment activities over the three years of junior cycle will be formative in nature'.

Effective formative assessment enables students to understand how to improve their work by:

- Helping them to understand the assessment criteria before they begin an assignment.
- Providing feedback on what they have done well and how they can improve.

- Comparing their work with examples of work that meet criteria for success.
- Recognising all the students' educational achievements.
- Helping them develop as independent learners with the capacity to identify how they themselves can further improve their learning.

We consider the following to be essential classroom practices and strategies needed for effective formative assessment:

- A positive classroom atmosphere and ethos, which encourages students to think and talk about their learning, and which provides a safe place for open, honest and respectful discussion and teacher-pupil relationship.
- Questioning skills (student to teacher/teacher to student/student to student), which stimulate thinking and reflection on learning and the explicit teaching of how to consciously reflect on what one knows and how to make an evaluative comment on it (Bloom's Taxonomy).
- Frequent identification and review of learning goals through teacher-directed discussion, clearly defining learning objectives and success criteria thereby empowering students and enabling them to take responsibility for their learning.
- A recognition and acknowledgement of the purpose and importance of collaboration between home and school in the student's learning process.

The following key formative assessment strategies are used in the school:

- a) Effective Questioning using Bloom's Taxonomy: Teachers have a knowledge of Bloom's Taxonomy verbs to prompt questions at each level of thinking. Both lower-order and higher-order questions are incorporated to allow success for all students.
- b) Assessment for Learning Strategies: Teachers utilise, where appropriate, varied formative (AFL) strategies in lessons.
- c) Learning Intentions: Lessons are guided by specification/syllabus linked learning intentions that are shared with students. Teachers at their own discretion share the learning intention(s) as appropriate for the lesson either before, during or as a result of learning. Teachers 'check in' with the learning intention(s) at the end of lesson(s) using AFL strategies to move students on in their learning.
- d) Comment- Only Marking: Teachers will also periodically engage in comment-only feedback.
- e) Sharing Criteria for Success: Success criteria are co-created by teachers and students with specific activities in mind. They are discussed and agreed prior to the undertaking of an activity. Success criteria provide a scaffold and focus for students while engaged in the activity and are used as a basis for feedback and peer-/self-assessment.
- f) Peer-Assessment and Self-Assessment: Teachers will, occasionally, supervise students as they assess their own or their peer's work, based on criteria for success. Following such methods, teachers will encourage students to reflect on their work, write down how they can improve and assist them in achieving it.

- g) Feedback: As part of the schools' focus on assessment in planning for school improvement formative feedback is provided based on success criteria. Students are encouraged to use feedback to reflect and make improvements.
- h) Homework: In line with the demands of specifications/ syllabi and our Homework Policy, teachers set regular homework, comment on this homework, and make suggestions for improvement.
- i) Differentiated Learning: Assessment work may be differentiated to suit the needs and abilities of the individual, determined by individual teachers. Students on the continuum of support (all; some and few) are supported with differentiated learning strategies. Student learning is scaffolded throughout the assessment process. In addition, formative assessment activities may offer a choice of tasks for students and optional extension tasks.

Informal Assessment:

The most common forms of assessment used in the school are of an informal nature, and these take place regularly in the classroom. These informal assessments are at the discretion of individual teachers who will use them constructively for learning to take place. Timely feedback and constructive advice are vital components in this process. Where appropriate, teachers will keep records of these assessments to provide an insight into a students' progress and to fully inform them regarding the learning process.

Informal Assessments methods can include:

- Worksheets and written classwork
- Questions and answers in class
- Essays, projects and assignments
- Reading and writing in Class
- Digital platforms for learning
- Sample exam questions
- Homework – written or learned
- Presentations
- Performances
- Observation of peer and group work engagement

Principles of good feedback practice are:

- Clarifies what good performance is (success criteria, expected standards).
- Facilitates the development of self-assessment in learning.
- Provides high-quality information to students about their learning.
- Encourages both teacher and student self-reflection.
- Encourages teacher and peer dialogue around learning.

- Motivates students and encourages growth and development.
- Provides opportunities to close the gap between current and desired performance.
- Informs teachers and can be used to help shape and adapt teaching methodologies.

Summative Assessment:

Summative Assessment is used to determine a student's level of performance on a specific task or at the conclusion of a unit of learning. It refers to the assessment of learning (AOF), looking back on learning and aims to provide a summary of the achievements of the learner. It happens after the learning takes place. Information is gathered by the teacher and information is usually transferred into grade, descriptors or marks. Comparison with performance of others can take place.

- a) **Class Test Assessments:** These forms of assessments will be conducted at the discretion of the teacher on a monthly or end-of-topic/unit basis. These formal tests are a vital component in providing feedback to teachers, students and parents, on the level of each student's attainment and learning in that specific subject area. Constructive feedback will be given by teachers to students. On a case-by-case basis during class tests and where appropriate, a special centre can be organised where and when resources permit.
- b) **End-of-Term Exams:** Students take formal in-house examinations, to monitor their academic performance. Common tests are encouraged. Special Centres are organised for students with SEN during in-house examinations in the Winter and Summer exam periods.
- c) **Mock Examinations:** These are held for Third and Sixth Year students during the second term. The purpose of these is to further prepare students and build their confidence for the Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate examinations. Special Centres are organised for students with SEN during Mock examination periods.
- d) **CBAs and Assessment Tasks: Classroom-Based Assessments:** Students undertake one Classroom-Based Assessments (*revised arrangements*) facilitated by their subject teacher, generally one in Second Year and one in Third Year. Classroom-Based Assessments in all subjects are specified at a common level. The assessments associated with CBAs cover a broad range of activities. CBAs will be undertaken by students within class time to a national timetable. Details of the national timetable along with assessment guidelines for each subject are available on www.ncca.ie and the school also informs students and parents. When students have completed CBAs, the CBAs are assessed by the students' teachers, and the outcomes will be reported to the students and parents/guardians. To support teachers in assessing students' Classroom-Based Assessments, teachers engage in Subject Learning and Assessment Review Meetings (SLARS). At these meetings, teachers share and discuss representative samples of students' work and collaboratively arrive at a fair and just assessment of the students' learning.

- e) **Assessment Task:** The Assessment Task will be completed in class under the supervision of the teacher. 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. A separate Assessment Task will not be required in practical subjects where there will be a practical examination.

Note: The last year that students in Ireland completed an Assessment Task as part of the junior cycle was 2019. From 2020 onwards, the requirement to complete the Assessment Task was suspended due to COVID-19 related adjustments, and assessment was based solely on the written examination.

Overview of Assessment Methods:

- Formative Assessment
- Summative Assessment
- Classroom-Based Assessments (CBA)
- Oral and Aural assessments in languages
- Project Work – Presentations, PowerPoints, visual displays, posters
- Practical Examinations in Home Economics, Art, Engineering, Wood Technology, Graphics and Music
- P.E. tests
- Coursework/Projects – Home Economics, History, Geography, S.P.H.E and C.S.P.E
- Online assessments
- Learning Reflections
- Pre- and Post-Testing in Literacy and Numeracy
- WRAT4 is administered to all Transition students and students who go straight from 3rd year into 5th Year.
- WRAT4 and PPDA-E are administered to all first years

Standardised Tests:

WRAT4 and PPDA-E

Additional Standardised Tests may be used if deemed appropriate.

The results of these assessments are utilised to:

- Guide Resource and Learning Support teachers.
- Identify students with particular needs.
- Enable learning support/resource teachers to devise suitable programmes of support.
- Develop Student Support Files by the Learning Support Team in conjunction with parents and school management.
- Apply for reasonable accommodations (RACE) for the Junior and Leaving Certificate State Examinations where applicable.

- Apply for Disability Access Route to Education (DARE)

3. Schedule for Assessment and Reporting:

Year Group	Exam and Reports	Exam and Reports	SEC Examinations
First Year (two reports per year)	Formal Winter exams with full report for Parent/Guardian Teacher Meeting before the end of the 1st term.	End-of-Year Exams followed by report and Parent/Guardian Teacher meeting	
Second Year (Two reports per year)	Formal Winter exams with full report for Parent/Guardian Teacher meeting	End-of-Year Exams followed by report and Parent/Guardian Teacher meeting	
Third Year (Two reports per year)	Formal Winter exams with full report for Parent/Guardian Teacher meeting	Mock Examinations in early Spring followed by a detailed report plus Parent/Guardian Teacher meeting	Junior Cycle Examinations
Transition Year (2 reports per year)	Detailed Report prepared half-way through the programme based on formative and summative assessment in addition to engagement plus Parent/Guardian Teacher meeting	Detailed Report prepared for the P/G Teacher meeting before the end of the academic year based on formative and summative assessment in addition to engagement throughout the academic year.	
Fifth Year (two reports per year)	Formal Winter Exams with full report which is published before the end of the 1st term plus P/G Teacher meeting	End-of-Year Exams followed by a detailed report plus P/G Teacher meeting	

Sixth Year	Formal Winter Exams with full report which is published before the end of the 1st term plus P/G Teacher meeting	Mock Examinations in early Spring followed by a detailed report plus P/G Teacher meeting	Leaving Certificate Examinations – at Easter, May (LCVP) and in June.
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Recording of Assessments:

- Teachers record both formative and summative assessments
- Summative assessments such as house, mock-examinations, CBA reports will be reported to senior management and recorded on school records
- Students record assessments in the school journal
- Microsoft Office 365 Teams is utilised for digital records of assessment

4. Reporting:

Reporting aims to support ongoing learning and assessment, and to be accessible and effective for the school, teacher, student and parent/guardian.

Ongoing reporting on student progress can take a variety of forms in the school:

- Informal oral and written feedback
- Feedback on areas such as punctuality, behaviour and attendance
- Student Journal
- Parent/Guardian-Teacher meetings
- Discussions with class teacher/year head/SEN Team, Care Team
- Student learning logs, journals, reflections
- End-of-unit assessments in subject areas either formative or summative
- End of term/year reports
- Communication and engagement with parents/guardians via telephone, VsWare, post, Teams and the school newsletter
- Feedback in relation to the student engagement in the school's Wellbeing Programme
- Student participation and achievement in extra-curricular activities
- Other Areas of Learning
- Classroom-Based-Assessments (CBAS) reports

Effective reporting in St. Brendan's College reflects the guiding principles of reporting (in line with the NCCA guidelines 2018)

- Provide opportunities for student feedback to reflect on their learning
- Use the language of learning to provide effective feedback

- Encourages authentic engagement with parents
- Values the professional judgements of teachers
- Uses the language of learning to provide effective feedback
- Is manageable and does not take away from learning and teaching
- Clearly communicates students' progress in learning
- Provides information on a broad range of achievement
- Is sensitive to the self-esteem and general wellbeing of students and take an inclusive approach. (NCCA, 2018)

Reporting of assessment should enable parents:

1. To be involved in their child's learning.
2. To understand and encourage the progress their child is making.
3. To check their child's progress throughout their time in post-primary school.

Methods whereby progress is reported:

- Reports containing results of the end of term/ House exams are sent home using the report template on VsWare. It allows teachers to distinguish levels (where appropriate) as well as enter the mark achieved. A detailed comment is also entered with guidance on how to improve learning. All reports are signed by the Year head and Principal/Deputy Principal and records of the results are kept in the school.
- 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. The Year Head is consulted prior to any contact with parents.
- Direct Contact – the Year Head may decide as they see fit to contact the parent/guardian directly with respect to any feedback about the learning progress received of any student.
- Signature of Parent on Assessment – a teacher may send the corrected assessment home with the student to be viewed and signed by the parent/guardian.
- Parent/Guardian-Teacher Meetings – At these meetings it will be possible for teachers to relay the outcomes of varying assessments to parents/guardians of individual students. An overall report is presented to parents and then parents meet with individual subject teachers to discuss learning progress in those specific contexts.
- Student Journal – the teacher or tutor/year head may communicate the outcome of any assessment to the parent/guardian of a student by writing a note in the student's journal. The parent/guardian is expected to acknowledge receipt of this note by countersigning it.
- Formal reporting on the progress and achievements of students in Junior Cycle will be through the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) which is to issue from the school. This will complement reporting on progress to parents/guardians during parent-teacher meetings and through normal student feedback sessions, including feedback after the completion of each CBA. The JCPA will report student achievement across a range of areas of learning in Junior Cycle, including in: - SEC Final Examinations inclusive of

the Assessment Tasks; Classroom-Based Assessments; The area of Wellbeing and Other Areas of Learning.

- Parents/Guardians of Transition Year students receive regular messages to inform them of important dates and milestones within academic year and are encouraged to check in on their son/daughter's progress with a view to offering support and motivation. Reporting at comprises of a detailed credit report and overall result for Transition Year. A portfolio containing a detailed record of all their achievements and participation in activities, workshops etc are presented at the TY Celebration at the end of the academic year.

Improving Results:

- Subject Department analysis of summative results and state examinations results takes place as appropriate. This provides the basis for discussion and planning within subject departments, with year heads and senior management in addition to allowing comparisons and evaluation with national results.
- Study-skills sessions are held with students to ensure that they are familiar with effective study techniques.
- Supervised study is provided to 3rd, 5th and 6th year students
- Year Heads along with the Career Guidance teacher advise and encourage students to help and support them to reach their full potential.
- Academic Awards are awarded to students at the end of an academic year. This is a very effective way of acknowledging and rewarding students' hard work and commitment while encouraging and motivating others to apply themselves to a greater degree. •
- Reflection on feedback is actively encouraged.
- As part of the TY assessment process, their reflective journals contribute to the overall credits they receive at the end of the academic year.

5. Roles and Responsibilities:

Subject Teachers are responsible for:

- a) Monitoring and formatively assessing student learning on an ongoing basis by setting regular homework, commenting on the merits of work and making suggestions for improvement. Positive comments, student peer assessment and 'comment only feedback' are encouraged when suitable.
- b) Setting and marking assessments. Assessment work may be differentiated to suit the needs and abilities of the individual including Special Education Needs students.
- c) Completing reports.
- d) Providing clear and constructive feedback to students in relation to how they can improve their performance.
- e) Liaising with other teachers in the department to coordinate assessments where appropriate.

The Principal and Deputy Principal are Responsible For:

- Overseeing the completion of school reports for all students.
- Overseeing the implementation of assessment and reporting approaches in school.
- Organising CPD and support for staff in areas related to assessment when required. Staff CPD is an integral component of the ethos and philosophy of St. Brendan's College. Teaching and learning courses support formative assessment and staff are encouraged and supported to engage with these courses through the Education Centres, Third-level institutions and to avail of resources through the OIDE and NCCA.
- Liaising with the State Examinations commission and the school's Exam Aide.
- Working with key staff to facilitate the implementation of certain initiatives to support teaching, learning and assessment.
- Organising the logistics of examinations in consultation with the Exams Co-ordinator.
- Liaising with the State Examinations commission and the school's Exam Aide.
- Preparing and publishing reports on VS Ware.

Exams Co-ordinator

- Overseeing the organisation of in-house exams and the mock examination period.
- Overseeing the ordering of mock examination papers.
- Keeping the channels of communication open in relation to exam matters open with staff and management.

The School Guidance Department and AEN Department are responsible for:

- Organising the assessment of needs of the incoming 1st Year students
- Organising WRAT4 and PPAD=E tests for 1st Years and follow –up assessments for particular year groups
- Administering and collating the results of the Career Guidance Assessments
- Administering WRAT4 tests to all Transition Year students.
- Identifying students with particular needs.
- Identifying exceptionally able students from CAT tests results and recommending to parents/guardians the possibility of engagement with the CTYI programme (Centre for Talented Youth Ireland).
- Testing SEN students and liaising with external agencies.
- Identifying students suited to the variety of programmes/options available in the school, implementing these programmes with SEN students and monitoring and assessing their progress in consultation with year heads.
- Liaising with and assisting Management in the structuring and allocation of educational provision.
- Assisting and guiding learning support/resource teachers to devise a suitable programme of support.

- Guiding and supporting the classroom subject teacher through the setting of individual targets for SEN students.
- Developing individual Student Support Files by the Learning Support Team in conjunction with parents and school management
- Applying for reasonable accommodations for the Junior and Leaving Certificate State Examinations where applicable.
- Applying for DARE with Leaving Certificate students.

Parents/Guardians have a responsibility to:

- To encourage attendance and punctuality.
- To be familiar with key dates relating to assessment.
- To engage in active and positive communication with teachers when necessary and appropriate
- To support teachers in their work to help students achieve their full potential.
- To be actively involved in their child's education.
- To ensure that their child completes all work assigned in the time designated.
- To monitor their child's progress.

Students have a responsibility to:

- Have good attendance and punctuality.
- Be aware of key dates for assessment.
- Complete all work assigned by their teachers in the time designated.
- Put in the effort required for their studies. Learn and revise course content on an ongoing basis Follow the advice and guidance of teachers as to how best achieve their potential.
- Encourage and support each other.
- Ask for help as appropriate.

6. Junior Cycle Assessment:

The assessment of the New Junior Cycle Programme ensures that a range of skills are assessed, placing students at the centre of the learning process.

Students will complete Classroom Based Assessments (CBA) during class time in 2nd / 3rd year, which will be reported on the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA).

Students can achieve one of four grade descriptors (listed below) once teachers have conducted a Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meeting in which students' work is moderated.

Exceptional

In Line with Expectations

Above Expectations

Yet to Meet Expectations

Where a descriptor for a Classroom Based Assessment has not been given to a student, the term 'Not Reported' is used.

There is no appeal to the allocation of a student's grade descriptor. In addition, (prior to 2020) students in 3rd year complete an Assessment Task which accounts for 10% of their final exam result.

There will also be opportunities for students to contribute towards their JCPA by participating in 'Other Areas of Learning'. These are activities which must be school based and are also recorded on their JCPA.

Finally, when the students receive their JCPA, their final grades consist of the following language (in 2025):

Award	%
Distinction	85-100
Higher Merit	70-84
Merit	55-69
Achieved	40-54
Partially Achieved	20-39
Not Graded	0-19

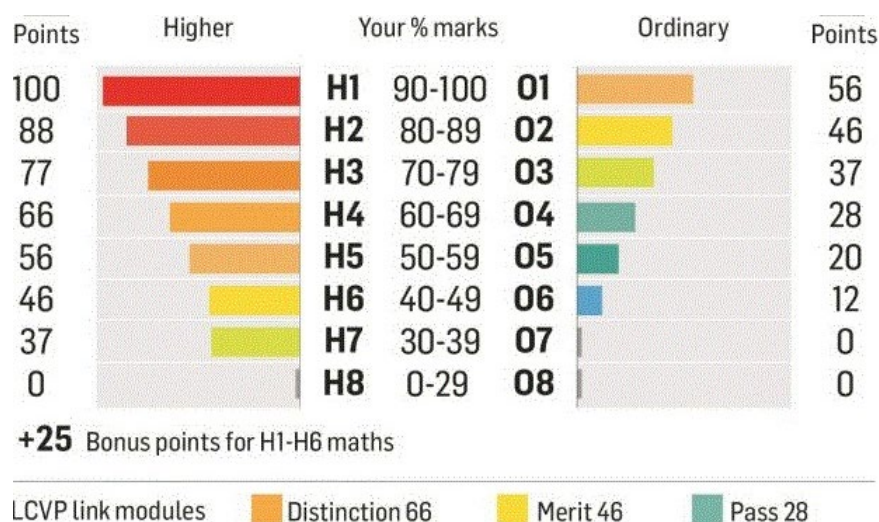
7. Leaving Certificate Assessment:

Formal assessment in senior cycle, as used to test and certify achievement, is managed through the State examinations, administered by the State Examinations Commission. A broad range of assessment methods are used across the range of Leaving Certificate subjects, including oral and aural examinations, coursework and practical examinations.

At the end of senior cycle, students who have followed the Leaving Certificate (Established) take the Leaving Certificate examination. Student achievement in this examination is directly linked to processes of selection for courses of study in further and higher education. In

addition to the examinations taken by other students, students who follow the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme take an examination paper and submit a portfolio in the Link Modules. Further information on the assessment of the various subjects is found in the syllabus of each subject. General assessment information is available on www.examinations.ie

Grading System in Leaving Certificate:



8. Transition Year Assessment

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.

Detailed reporting is provided twice in the academic year in the form of Credit Reports.

Transition Year assessments involves the following: external certification, portfolio work, oral presentations, project work, classroom-based assessments, reflective journal and homework.

This Assessment Policy was developed in partnership and will be presented to the school's Board of Management at its next meeting.

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting of

Date: 13/11/2024

Signed: Tereasa McGuire

Chairperson Board of Management

Signed: Michael Walshe

Principal