



LORETO HIGH SCHOOL BEAUFORT ASSESSMENT POLICY

INTRODUCTION

In Loreto High School Beaufort, our assessment methods are designed to encourage independent, self-led learning so that our students become critical thinkers who develop positive life-long learning habits. We encourage our students to become confident in their capacity to learn and to become resilient enough to face the challenges of the 21st century.

We also wish our students to view themselves not just as agents activating their own learning, but as powerful tools in activating each other's learning; working collaboratively towards common learning goals. We wish to foster an atmosphere where students' spirit of inquiry is not just expected; it is actively encouraged so that students learn from an early age to be responsible for their own learning for now and for life.

We encourage a growth mind-set approach whereby students understand that learning demands an openness and persistent effort so that we learn not just how to achieve personal excellence, but that we find out what we need to do in order to improve. Through the Assessment of Learning and Assessment for Learning Methodologies outlined below, we encourage our students to manage their own learning and to demonstrate personal effectiveness at Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle level.

MISSION STATEMENT

We, in Loreto Beaufort, endeavour to provide a caring and supportive community which encourages each student to develop her full spiritual, intellectual, moral, creative, physical and social potential in an environment which recognises the primacy of social justice. The aim of this policy is to create a consistent, coordinated assessment approach that encourages, supports, monitors and reports on student progress and achievement within our school. In line with our school's mission statement, this policy aims to facilitate the holistic development of each student and in doing so help each student to reach their full potential as active leaders of their own learning.

RATIONALE

Schools are obliged to assess students regularly in accordance with the Education Act (1998) and to report student progress on a regular basis. Assessment in Loreto Beaufort is an integral part of our teaching and learning process as it provides valuable information to the student, teacher and parent. Our school community acknowledges that all forms of assessment should have a positive impact on students' attitudes, motivation and self-esteem. The aim of this policy is to create a consistent, coordinated assessment approach that encourages, supports, monitors and reports on student progress and achievement within our school. In line with our school's mission statement, this policy aims to facilitate the holistic development of each student and in doing so help each student to reach their full potential.

DEFINITION OF ASSESSMENT

The definition of assessment is the process by which evidence of learning is generated, collected, recorded, interpreted, used and reported. Assessment helps to evaluate progress, skill development, knowledge, behaviours and outlooks. A variety of assessment methods support the learning and well-being of the student.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF ASSESSMENT IN LORETO BEAUFORT

- The purpose of assessment in our school community is to:
- Monitor student progress
- Motivate students to activate their own learning
- Encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning
- Evaluate teaching and learning practices
- Facilitate the improvement of teaching and learning practices
- Support consistency across all subject departments
- Identify areas of strength and areas for improvement in student learning
- Provide valuable feedback to students, teachers and parents on how to progress learning
- Plan intervention strategies for students who may require further support
- Inform the allocation of learning support resources
- Establish baseline data which may be used for school self-evaluation and school improvement purposes

METHODS OF ASSESSMENT

At Loreto Beaufort we use a variety of assessment methods in order to raise the level of student achievement and to encourage students to be agents of their own learning. Assessment encompasses **formative assessment and summative assessment**.

Formative assessment is ongoing Assessment for Learning (AFL). It provides evidence *of and for* progression of learning. It supports learning through identifying difficulties, providing feedback and diagnosing future learning priorities. Formative assessment embeds assessment processes throughout the teaching and learning process and so involves the constant adjustment of instructional strategies. Formative assessment also places a strong emphasis on the active role of the student in their own learning. Various pedagogic strategies and methodologies are used in formative assessment to enrich the learning experience for our students.

Sharing of Learning Intentions: As part of best practice, we routinely share with students what the intended learning outcomes are in a particular lesson. The learning intentions will be referenced throughout the lesson and again at the end of the lesson. In line with our SSE focus on effective questioning, learning intentions may be formed through the use of questions.

Sharing of Success Criteria: To enable students to achieve to the best of their ability, we provide guidance regarding what constitutes best practice. Features of quality are shared with the students so that they understand what success looks like in a particular area.

The list below is neither exhaustive nor prescriptive but aims to give a sense of some of the methodologies which a staff member might choose to use:

Effective questioning	Flipped Classroom	Homework Assignment
KWL	Show-me Boards	Traffic Lights
Differentiation	Research	Entry/Exit Cards
Class discussion	Kahoot/Quizlet/Blooket	CBAs
Peer Collaboration	Student Peer Assessment	Multi-modal Texts
Think/Pair/Share	Student Self-Assessment	Graphic Organisers
Presentations	Project Work	Comment-only marking

Summative Assessment of Learning aims to provide a summary of the achievements of the learner. It identifies a standard of pupil attainment and is generally carried out at the end of a significant period of learning. As a school community we understand the importance of knowledge and skill acquisition in preparation for examinations in our education system.

Summative assessments include:

Written Class Assessments	Assessment Tasks (JC)	SEC Examinations
Aural/Oral Assessments	SLARS (JC)	Homework
Practical Assessments	Projects/Portfolios for State Examination	Class Quizzes

Summative Assessments also include the following **In-house Assessments**:

ASSESSMENT	TIMING
Winter Assessments for all students	November
Mock Examinations for 3 rd & 6 th Years	Late January/Early February
Easter Progress Reports for 1 st , 2 nd & 5 th Years	Before Easter
Summer Assessments for 1 st , 2 nd , 4 th & 5 th Years	May

Where deemed appropriate, summative assessments may be substituted for other forms of assessment such as a classroom-based assessment, project work etc.

In the event that a student is absent for an In-house Assessment, the parent/guardian of the student must make contact with the school in order to ascertain if it is possible for the student to sit the exam at an alternative time and/or at home. The correction of this assessment will depend on the availability of the subject teacher at this time.

REPORTING

Reporting ensures regular and relevant communication on progress to students, teachers, parents and other appropriate parties.

Free-comment reporting is provided to all students and parents via Compass, our online school database platform. The feedback provided in the reports is addressed directly to the student and is specific to each student. The teacher comments identify areas of strength and areas for improvement for a student based on their performance in the assessment and their progress in the subject.

Reporting on summative assessments throughout the year in Loreto Beaufort occurs as follows:

YEAR GROUP	REPORT
All Year groups - 1st, 2nd, 3rd, TY, 5th & 6th Year	Winter Assessments Report
3 rd and 6 th Year Mock Examinations	Mock Examinations Report
1 st , 2 nd & 5 th Year	Easter Progress Report
1 st , 2 nd , TY & 5 th Year	Summer Assessments Report

The subjects that are reported on for each year group are set out below:

1st Year	2nd Year	3rd Year
English	English	English
Irish	Irish	Irish
Maths	Maths	Maths
Science	Science	Science
Spanish	Spanish	Spanish
French	French	French
German	German	German
History	History	History
Geography	Geography	Geography
Business Studies	Business Studies	Business Studies
SPHE	SPHE	SPHE
Art	Art	Art
RE	RE	RE
PE	PE	PE
Music	Music	Music
Home Economics	Home Economics	Home Economics
CSPE	CSPE	CPSE

TY Core Subjects	TY Choice Subjects
Maths	Art
English	Classics
Irish	Home Economics
Science	Music
Business	Theatre Studies
Spanish	Year Book
French	Geography
German	History
RE	LC PE
PE	

5th Year	6th Year
English	English
Irish	Irish
Maths	Maths
Chemistry	Chemistry

Biology	Biology
Physics	Physics
Applied Maths	Applied Maths
Business	Business
Accounting	Accounting
Economics	Economics
Spanish	Spanish
French	French
German	German
Classical Studies	Classical Studies
LCVP	LCVP
Music	Music
Home Economics	Home Economics
Leaving Cert Exam PE	Leaving Exam PE
PE	PE
LC Exam Religion	LC Exam Religion
Non exam Religion	Non exam Religion
Art	Art
History	History
Geography	Geography

Guidelines are provided for the completion of the reports. In order to give effective written feedback to the students, all teachers:

- Address the report to the student directly. For example, write “you” instead of “she/they”. For example:

Sophie, well done on an excellent paper. Your poetry essay was well- developed, and you made excellent use of quotes and supporting evidence. You lost most marks in the Comparative Section. Try to alternate between the texts more frequently. Please keep your points relevant to the question at all times.

- Use the correct name of the student
- Give positive and personalised comments. Each comment should be personal to that student
- Include a learning target explaining how they can improve and move forward in their learning
- Don't use standardised and repetitive comments
- Don't copy and paste comments
- Check spelling, punctuation and spacing carefully after completing the reports and correct if necessary
- Check their comment reads correctly
- When sharing a class with a PME teacher, arrange in advance who will do the reports for the class
- When a student is absent for the exam, write “N/A” in the grade box, “absent for exam” in the comment section and add a learning target to work towards as well.
- Fill in the appropriate level on each report. For Senior Cycle/TY – Higher or Ordinary and for Junior Cycle – Common for all apart from Irish/Maths/English where it is Higher or Ordinary Level.

Once the reports have been issued students are encouraged to reflect on the feedback provided during a designated Reflection Week which takes place in an extended Form time of 50 minutes in duration. Students analyse their reports in order to affirm their progress to date and to set future goals. Parents are encouraged to discuss the student reflection with their child and to acknowledge that they have done so by signing the Student Report Evaluation Form.

OTHER FORMS OF REPORTING

- Student Journal- teachers may communicate with the parents/guardians of a student by writing a note in the student journal.
- One-to-one feedback on individual assessments, orally and/or in writing is provided to students by subject teachers.
- Reporting of assessment/homework/behavioural issues is facilitated by Compass
- Parent-Teacher Meetings provide a forum for students, teachers and parents to discuss a student's progress.

CLASSROOM-BASED ASSESSMENTS

Classroom-based Assessments (CBAs) are now a mandatory form of assessment for students in 2nd and 3rd Year under the Junior Cycle Framework. CBAs provide students with opportunities to demonstrate aspects of their learning and skills such as verbal communication, project and investigative skills. They offer students the opportunity to explore and research and to communicate their findings through a range of communication formats.

CBAs are facilitated by the class teacher. They are scheduled on designated dates for each subject and the CBA calendar is communicated to students and parents in advance. The CBAs are undertaken in normal class contact time following a preparatory period. Students usually complete one CBA in 2nd Year and one in 3rd Year in most subjects. CBAs are followed by Subject Learning and Assessment Review Meetings (SLARs), wherein discussion moderation and grading take place.

CBAs are reported upon using the following descriptors:

Exceptional
Above Expectations
In line with Expectations
Yet to Meet Expectations

3rd Year students also complete an Assessment Task based on what they have learned and the skills and competencies that they have developed in that assessment. This task, set by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), is undertaken during normal class time and is sent to the State Examinations Commission for marking. This Assessment task counts for 10% of the overall mark for the final examination.

TRANSITION YEAR

In line with the DES guidelines for Transition Year, our aim at Loreto Beaufort is to promote the personal, social, educational and vocational development of TY students and to prepare them for their role as autonomous, participative and responsible members of society.

Assessment in Transition Year takes several forms including:

- Class assessment
- Project based
- Team based
- Winter and Summer Assessments
- TY Folder
- TY Interview

SENIOR CYCLE

Using both formative and summative assessment methods listed above, our 5th and 6th Year students are afforded every opportunity possible to progress their learning and support their wellbeing. In addition to the leadership, teaching and guidance provided by their subject teachers, the expertise of external examiners and the experience of educational field-trips is also integral to student learning. All 6th Year students sit the Leaving Certificate Established Programme.

PSYCHOMETRIC TESTING

The following tests are administered to students by the school Guidance Counsellors:

CAT4: Cognitive Ability Test 4 for Incoming 1st Years

The Cognitive Abilities Test (CAT4) is an assessment that is designed to help students and their teachers understand how they learn and what their academic potential might be. It assesses how students think in areas that are known to make a difference to learning.

CAT4 is designed to give schools a much broader, more rounded view of each child, their potential and how they learn. Results help teachers decide about the pace of learning that is right for a student and whether additional support or challenge is needed.

Tasks involve thinking about shapes and patterns (Non-Verbal Reasoning), words (Verbal Reasoning), numbers (Quantitative Reasoning) and some questions are answered by mentally generating and transforming visual images (Spatial Ability).

DATS (Differential Aptitude Tests) Testing

The Differential Aptitude Tests (DATs) are taken by Transition Year students and are used as a supplementary tool in helping them make their subject choices for Senior Cycle. The rationale behind these tests is that since different kinds of abilities are useful in different jobs and in different school subjects, a compliment of tests giving measures of several abilities is likely to be more useful than a test giving a single general ability score. Scores on these tests can be used to produce a profile showing a student's strengths and areas for development. This information can be used, alongside other available information, when making decisions about subject choice selection, course, and career choice.

The DATs consist of seven subtests:

Verbal Reasoning
Numerical Reasoning
Abstract Reasoning
Mechanical Reasoning
Perceptual Speed and Accuracy
Spelling
Language Usage

It is important to note that whilst the DATs measure a wide variety of skills and abilities, they are not exhaustive and do not provide information on areas such as emotional intelligence and musical, sporting or inter-personal aptitudes.

ASSESSMENT IN ADDITIONAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The AEN department use a variety of methods of assessment as indicators for additional support in line with the National Framework's Continuum of Support. These include standardised tests such as **the CAT4 Test, DOTS Assessment, WIAT IV** and **DASH**. Emerging needs can be identified by parents, subject teachers, teachers, form tutors or Year Heads. This is done through a compass referral to the Care Team. Where necessary after investigation further testing may be carried out to identify students with additional educational needs or general learning needs.

The DOTs Assessments are administered to all 2nd years as a 'screener':

The Drumcondra Post-Primary Reading Test is a curriculum-based assessment of reading achievement. It is targeted at students in the final term of 2nd year in post-primary school. It is based on current curricula and draws on international best practice in reading assessment to provide tests tailored to the Irish context and to students in Ireland.

Test Features include:

- 80 multiple choice questions
- Four comprehension texts
- 40 vocabulary questions
- Informational and literary texts featured
- Focus on real-life, relevant contexts
- Each question linked to a reading process

WIAT IV

The WIAT stands for the Wechsler Individual Achievement Test. An achievement test measures how an individual is doing in areas of academic school work. The AEN will use the sub-tests for spelling and word reading from the WIAT at intervals to review student progress and to ascertain eligibility for exam supports and accommodations. This generates standardised scores and percentiles which may indicate a need for further support or testing. They will also use the WIAT as an exploratory measure when there is a learning need concern before ascertaining further assessments.

The school's AEN team will, where necessary suggest that parent's should arrange for additional individualised diagnostic assessment and may seek to obtain reports from other professionals such as educational psychologists, psychologists, occupational therapists, speech therapists and social workers.

Results of psychological assessments are a key factor in the drafting of Student Support Plans (SSPs). In the event of private consultation, parents are asked to supply the school with a copy of the report in order to facilitate the preparation of the SSP.

Because the range of tests available to the school is restricted in accordance with professional practice, Loreto High School Beaufort cannot guarantee that it will be able to identify all case of additional educational need. It is for this reason that it is vital that parents would bring any outside professional assessments to the earliest attention of the school.

With the use of Compass, the AEN Department keep subject teachers informed of individual student diagnoses and assessment recommendations so that appropriate accommodations/modifications such as differentiation methods can be incorporated into their teaching to suit the needs of the student.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Students:

- Ensure that they understand what knowledge and skills are being assessed.
- Ensure they have access to their reports and to read their reports thoroughly
- Engage in self-reflection as guided by the school, and in doing so, to identify areas of strength and areas for improvement in specific subjects
- Make themselves aware of any classwork /homework or upcoming assessments and the relevant deadline or date
- Take responsibility for any class time they may have missed and actively seek out the material they may have missed
- Be active in their own learning and take on board the feedback that is provided
- Have a growth mindset and make the best possible effort
- Liaise with subject teachers and other relevant school personnel when they encounter challenges regarding subject material and assessments

Teachers:

- Measure student progress and adjust learning plans accordingly
- Provide success criteria for students to ensure they are clear about what is expected of them
- Advise and give direction to students about assessments and preparation for assessments
- Assess students both formatively and summatively to measure the educational needs and educational outcomes of the students
- Provide regular feedback to students on how to improve their learning
- Maintain a record of student homework, test and examination results

- Set common examinations in conjunction with their subject departments at all levels and in all years
- Make contact with parents/guardians regarding student progress when necessary, including phone calls, emails, in-person meetings and communication of progress at scheduled parent-teacher meetings
- Liaise with relevant school personnel where concerns arise about student progress i.e. Form Tutor, Year Head, Care Team, AEN Team, Guidance Team, Deputy Principal, Principal
- Reflect on their own teaching methodologies and on how their students learn
- Engage in continuous professional development opportunities in order to enhance student progress

Parents/Guardians:

- Are actively involved in their child's learning journey
- Familiarise themselves with the rhythms of their child's school day/week/month/year
- Regularly check their child's school journal, school materials and encourage their organisational skills
- Read any information issued by the school in relation to teaching and learning and assessment practices
- Ensure their child is present and punctual for assessments
- Support student adherence to deadlines for submission of work
- Provide an appropriate space for their child's homework, study and exam preparation
- Access and read their child's reports on Compass
- Support their child's self-reflection practices and be familiar with their goal-setting
- Inform the school in advance of their child's absence from a scheduled assessment

Year Heads:

- Liaise with students, parents, subject teachers and the AEN team regarding students' progress
- Oversee the reports pertaining to their year group and add comments that provide an overview of the students' progress

Assistant Principal Roles:

Two AP2 positions involve that of **Internal Exam Co-ordinator, Monitor of Student Progress & Reports and Mocks & State Examination Co-ordinator**. The responsibilities are as follows:

- Managing the school's human and physical resources to maintain an orderly, secure and healthy learning environment and to foster inclusion and equality of opportunity for each student
- Internal Exam Co-ordination, the organisation of Winter & Summer assessments (scheduling, supervision, admin) and Mock exams for 3rd & 6th Year students
- Supporting with all aspects of exams including orals, practicals etc.

- Liaising with tutors, Year Heads and Student Progress & Support Post-holder on student progression
- Involved in administration & logistics around school reports including the creation of a schedule of reports which is shared with all stakeholders. Supports SMT in review of reports and ensuring highly effective feedback for students and parents through our reporting system
- Leading, managing and co-ordinating contact with the State Examinations Commission on all aspects of examination applications and appeals
- Liaising with school staff, candidates and parents on matters of examination administration and procedures
- Overseeing state exam registration
- Assisting in appointment of State Exams Supervisor and liaising where appropriate

One AP2 position is that of **Student Progress & Support Officer** and the responsibilities are as follows:

- Ensuring a robust system to record and monitor student progress data (which includes incoming 1st Year information, CAT scores, DAT scores, reading tests, school assessments, State exam results (including CBAs))
- Creating & reviewing homework policy & monitors school homework structures & mechanisms
- Monitoring the correlation between student ability, capacity, potential and effort
- Liaising with the relevant support personnel where appropriate (eg AEN, Care Team, Attendance Officer, Tutors, Year Heads)
- Liaising with students, parents and staff on student progress
- Ensuring appropriate measures to maximise student progress
- Monitoring, reviewing and following up on attendance issues by liaising with e.g Year Heads, students, parents & outside organisations such as Tusla
- Supporting (through both internal & external mechanisms) emotional based school avoidance and liaising with relevant staff on same (eg tutors, Year Heads, Deputy, Principal, Care Team members)

Deputy Principal & Principal:

- Organising training and support for staff in areas related to assessment when required
- Reviewing assessment modes with staff to support teaching, learning and attainment
- Supporting subject departments to ensure assessment forms an integral part of subject department planning
- Liaising with the post-holders and administration staff to ensure the smooth and timely running of assessments and issuing of reports

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 21st March 2024 and has been shared with all stakeholders.

