

# **Columba College**

## **ASSESSMENT POLICY**

### **Rationale**

The Education Act (1998) requires the Principal and teachers to ‘regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to the students and their parents’ (s22(2)(b))

Assessment in education is about gathering, interpreting and using information about the processes and outcomes of learning. It takes different forms and can be used in a variety of ways, such as to test and certify achievement (e.g. Junior and Leaving Certificate), to determine the appropriate route for students to take through a differentiated curriculum or to identify specific areas of difficulty (or strength) for a given student.

### **Aims of Assessment**

1. To monitor students’ progress
2. To provide information to the teacher about what and how the student is learning
3. To provide parents and students with information regarding progress
4. To help identify whether a student should take Ordinary or Higher Level
5. To assess a student’s eligibility for additional support
6. To assist in the identification of students who may need to be referred for external intervention
7. To motivate the student to make greater progress and therefore to enhance the learning experience

### **Assessment of Learning (4 per year)**

#### **Formal Examinations:**

#### **Progress Report – October (All Years)**

All tests are given within the class time. While a week is set aside during which the exams should be given a teacher may include previous assessment and take an average of the examinations. These examinations are given to provide an early assessment of student progress. A formal report is posted home to parents.

#### **Christmas Examinations (All Years)**

All classes have formal examinations which take place in late November/early December. The examinations are in the assembly hall to provide students with the experience of examinations in a formal setting. Timing for these examination are generally longer than one class period. A formal timetable is produced and given to students in advance of the examinations. SNA support is available in the assembly hall throughout the examinations.

#### **Mock Examinations (3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Years)**

All 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> years have full mock examinations during the week prior to the February midterm. This provides students with the experience of a full examination paper prior to the certificate examinations in June. Students are charged a flat fee for their mock examination corrections and a decision was made to make parents aware of the cost in August. Payment for the mock examinations is due prior to the Christmas holidays. The examinations are subsidised by the parents council and fees can be paid in installments. Papers are purchased from selected Examining Boards. Teachers are encouraged where possible to correct their own papers.

### **Progress Report – March (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Years)**

All tests are given within the class time. While a week is set aside during which the exams should be given a teacher may include previous assessment and take an average of the examinations. These examinations are given to provide an early assessment of student progress. A formal report is posted home to parents

### **Summer Examinations (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Years)**

All classes have formal examinations which take place for the last 3 days of the school term. The examinations are in the assembly hall to provide students with the experience of examinations in a formal setting. Timing for these examination are generally longer than one class period. A formal timetable is produced and given to students in advance of the examinations. SNA support is available in the assembly hall throughout the examinations.

### **Informal Examinations:**

Teachers give regular examinations throughout the year usually at the end of a chapter/topic. Teachers record these results in their diary and are encouraged to record results in the student journal to ensure parents are kept informed of student progress.

### **Reporting of Results**

- Results of all formal examinations are recorded on the Facility Administration system and are posted home. A copy is also kept on the students file.
- Teachers are encouraged to record results of informal examinations in student journals
- One parent teacher meeting per year is held for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year students where the results of examinations are discussed.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> years have 2 parent teacher meetings per year (early in first term and approximately 6 weeks after mock examinations) to facilitate early intervention in student achievement where necessary and also to provide an appropriate forum for the discussion of student mock results.

It is recommended that teachers return all examinations, both formal and informal to the students to provide feedback and show where improvements can be made.

### **Assessment for Learning**

Columba College is in the process of introducing Assessment for Learning (AfL) formally across the school. This process is based on the following principles:

- sharing learning goals with students at the beginning of each lesson
- helping students to recognise the standards they are aiming for. This involves telling students what criteria will be used to determine how successful he/she is in carrying out specific tasks
- involving students in assessing their own learning
- providing feedback, which helps students to recognise what they must do to close any gaps in their knowledge or understanding, in particular focusing on;

- What the student has done well
- What gaps, shortcomings or errors there are
- How the student can improve his/her work
- communicating confidence that every student can improve
- adjusting teaching to take account of the results of assessment

In accordance with the School Homework Policy, teachers set regular homework, comment on the merits of the work done and make suggestions for improvement. 'Comment only marking' is encouraged.

**Psychometric Tests:** Various psychometric tests are administered to 1st year students in the 1<sup>st</sup> term each year. In addition students are tested where necessary for example WRAT 4 when applying for Reasonable Accommodations.