



# DOMINICAN COLLEGE

## ASSESSMENT POLICY

### 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Dominican College, Taylor's Hill, is a Catholic voluntary secondary school under the trusteeship Le Chéile. The school is committed to the provision of high quality education in an environment which is conducive to effective learning, teaching and discipline. Dominican College has as its objective the development of the personal, spiritual, physical and academic potential of each student in its care. The uniqueness and dignity of each individual are values enshrined in the Dominican philosophy of education

1.2 Dominican College is committed to educating the whole person to her full potential in a caring, supportive and happy environment. In accordance with the Vision and Mission Statements of the school, each student is directed and helped to become the best person she is capable of becoming.

1.3 The term "Assessment" refers generally to the gathering and interpretation of information related to a student's learning abilities, learning attainments, learning strengths and learning needs.

1.4 The Board of Management, staff, students and parents of Dominican 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.

1.5 We recognise that assessment should motivate pupils and enable and encourage 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.

### 1.6 Assessment for Learning & Assessment of Learning

- a) This policy recognises the importance of both *assessment of learning* and *assessment for learning*.
  - i. *Assessment of Learning* involves assessment for accountability purposes and is used to determine a student's level of performance on a specific task or at the conclusion of a unit of teaching and learning.

- ii. Assessment for Learning (AfL) is a continuous process which occurs as a regular activity with teaching and learning which combines correcting the relevant work along with advice to the student for further improvement. The information gained from such assessment activities will be used to shape the teaching and learning process.
- b) Effective AfL enables students to understand how to improve their work by:
- i. Helping them to understand the assessment criteria before they begin an assignment.
  - ii. Providing feedback on what they have done well and how they can improve.
  - iii. Comparing their work with examples of work that meet criteria for success.
  - iv. Recognising all the students' educational achievements.
  - v. Helping them develop as independent learners with the capacity to identify how they themselves can further improve their learning.

## **2. OBJECTIVES OF ASSESSMENT**

2.1 To give positive feedback to the learner.

2.2 To allow the student to be closer to her own learning resulting in her experiencing a greater sense of purpose leading to empowerment and self-motivation.

2.3 To develop each student's ability to self-monitor and judge her own performance.

2.4 To facilitate improved teaching and pupil learning.

2.5 To keep records of attainment which can be used to provide students and parents with information regarding progress.

2.6 To ensure consistency and the standardised agreement of levels of work within each subject area.

2.7 To identify areas of difficulties for students in order to provide them with additional support.

2.8 To assess each student's eligibility for additional support and services and to inform consultations with educational psychologists where necessary.

2.9 To assist in the identification of students who may need to be referred to an outside professional or agency for assessment or direct intervention.

2.10 To identify gifted and talented pupils.

2.11 To co-ordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis.

2.12 To establish baseline data which may be used for school self-evaluation purposes.

### **3. POLICY CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Informal Assessment**

a) 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 results of these assessments to provide an insight into a student's progress over time and to fully inform the learning process.

b) Informal assessments methods include:

- Worksheets & written classwork
- Questions and answers in class
- Essays & assignments
- Reading & writing in class
- Sample exam questions
- Homework – written or learned
- Teacher observation
- Practical work
- Project work
- Student presentation
- Oral work
- Student self-assessment
- Peer assessment

c) Both assessment *for* and *of* learning techniques are used in such informal assessments.

#### **3.2 In-School Formal Tests**

- a) Monthly/End of Topic Assessments: These forms of assessments will be conducted at the discretion of the teacher on a monthly or end of topic 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 who take these tests.
- b) End of Term Exams: Students in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Year take formal end of term exams twice a year - at Christmas and summer - to monitor their academic performance. Common tests are set in each subject and marking schemes/guidelines are clearly identified. These examinations follow the SEC procedures for the running of public exams.

Reports containing results of the end of term exams are sent home. The report template is computerised and allows teachers to distinguish levels as well as enter the mark achieved. A comment is also entered either from a pre-determined list of comments or, alternatively, an original comment from the teacher can be written. All reports are signed by the Principal and records of the results are kept in the school.

- c) Mock Examinations: These are held for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Year students during the second term. The purpose of these is to further prepare students for the Junior and Leaving Cert examinations. The mock exams are both supplied and corrected externally in order to more accurately replicate the final state exams.

### 3.3 Entrance Assessments

- a) In February or March prior to their entry, incoming 1<sup>st</sup> Year students who have already accepted a place in Dominican College take a Cognitive Ability Test (CAT4 Level E). This test is based on Irish norms. The results of these tests:
  - i. enable the organisation of mixed ability classes
  - ii. identify students who may be in need of additional support when they join the school
  - iii. identify gifted students.
- b) In addition to the CAT4 tests, the 1<sup>st</sup> Year students in September complete a New Group Reading Test (NGRT). This is used to identify the reading ages of each of the students and to determine which if any students require additional help and support with reading and comprehension. This information is also given to class teachers so that they can take this into account when teaching these students.

The NGRTs are also given to a selection of 1<sup>st</sup> Year students at the end of 1<sup>st</sup> Year in order to monitor their progress.

### 3.4 Career Guidance Assessment

The Career Guidance and Learning Support team administer the Cognitive Abilities Test, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (CAT) Level 4 to all 3<sup>rd</sup> Year students who opt to take the test. This assessment is composed of a series of short tests which assess each student's reasoning abilities in key areas that support educational development and academic attainment. The battery of tests comprises:

- Verbal Reasoning
- Quantitative Reasoning
- Non-verbal Reasoning
- Spatial Ability.

No preparation or pre-learning is required for the tests and clear examples and sample questions will be provided before each test. The tests are administered over a period of three weeks in February and March of the school year. In addition the students also complete the Career Interest Profiler on [careersportal.ie](http://careersportal.ie) and the Career Interest Inventory Profile Sheet which helps students to focus on their own aptitudes and in this way select subjects for Leaving Certificate. These assessments also focus attention on each student's strengths and suitability for different careers.

### 3.5 Transition Year Assessments

a) Assessment in TY is on a continuous basis and takes many forms:

- students complete assignments which are graded by the class teacher
- students reflect on their performance and what they have achieved from different experiences, events and activities throughout the year (self-assessment)
- students get feedback from other TY students on their work (peer-assessment)
- students are assessed by members of the community outside of the school during mock interviews, work experience (employers) and other outside agencies e.g. YSI judges, Build a Bank competition etc.
- weekly assessments during their tutor time, e.g. is their journal up to date etc.

b) Outside of this ongoing assessment there are two other more formal assessment during the year for TY students:

- i. *Mid-Year Review*: Teachers award credits out of 5 to each student based on their effort, the quality of their work to date, their participation in class, attendance and overall impression. These credits are included in a report sent out to parents.

- ii. *Portfolio Display*: This is worth up to 20 credits and involves:
- 5 pieces of work being selected by each student to display. The students present their work to their assessing teacher highlighting why they selected those pieces and answering questions put to them.
  - TY student journal: students must display their journal and it must be up to date in the following areas: i) homework section ii) weekly reflections iii) thorough evaluations and reflections for all the relevant events/outings/activities during the year to date.
  - Review of each student's goals set for the year.
  - Credits are also assigned for the overall impression given by the student during her presentation.
- iii. *End of Year Assessment*: Teachers award student credits out of 5. This end of year assessment also includes an interview during which each student presents a folder containing 10 pieces of work and her TY journal for inspection.

All credits gained throughout the year are collated and an overall grade is determined. Students are awarded either a Distinction, Merit, Pass or Fail.

## **4 ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

4.1 Class Teachers are responsible for:

- a) Monitoring and assessing student learning on an ongoing basis
- b) Setting and marking in-class assessments
- c) Setting and marking end-of-term examinations
- d) Filling in reports
- e) Providing clear feedback to students in relation to how they can improve their performance
- f) Ensuring that the correct number of mock exam papers are ordered for students in their classes
- g) Liaising with other teachers in the department to coordinate assessments where appropriate.

4.2 Subject Coordinators are responsible for:

- a) Coordinating the review of departmental procedures and criteria used for assessment throughout the year.

4.3 The Principal is responsible for:

- a) Overseeing the completion of school reports
- b) Organising training and support for staff in areas related to assessment when required

4.4 The Deputy Principal is responsible for:

- a) Organising the timetable and logistics for the end of term and mock examinations
- b) Setting up the school reports on the computer system

4.5 The School Guidance Counsellor is responsible for:

- a) Organising the entrance exams for incoming 1<sup>st</sup> Year students
- b) Working with the SEN Coordinator to organise the CAT4 tests 3<sup>rd</sup> Year students
- c) Administering and collating the results of the Career Guidance Assessments.

4.6 The SEN Coordinator is responsible for:

- a) Organising the entrance exams for incoming 1<sup>st</sup> Year students with the Guidance Counsellor
- b) Working with the Guidance Counsellor to organise the CAT4 tests 3<sup>rd</sup> Year students
- c) Organising and administering the NGRTs for 1<sup>st</sup> Year students.

4.7 Parents/Guardians have a responsibility to:

- a) To engage in active and positive communication with teachers when necessary and appropriate
- b) To support teachers in their work to help students achieve their full potential
- c) To be actively involved in their daughter's education
- d) To ensure that their daughter completes all work assigned
- e) To monitor their daughter's progress.

4.8 Students have a responsibility to:

- a) Put in the effort required for their studies
- b) Complete all work assigned by their teachers in the time designated
- c) Learn and revise course content on an ongoing basis
- d) Follow the advice and guidance of teachers as to how best achieve their potential

## 5. REPORTING

There are different methods whereby the results of formal and informal assessments will be reported to parents:

- a) Student Journal – the teacher 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.
- b) 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.
- c) Signature of Parent on Assessment – the teacher may send the corrected assessment home with the student to be viewed and signed by the parent/guardian.
- d) Parent-Teacher Meetings – there are Parent Teacher Meetings for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Year students throughout the academic year. At these meetings it will be possible for teachers to relay the outcomes of varying assessments to parents/guardians of individual students.
- e) Written Reports – formal written reports are posted to the parents/guardians of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Year students on two occasions during the academic year – Christmas and summer. Parents/guardians of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Year students receive a report at Christmas and following their mock exams but do not receive a summer report. Transition Year students receive one formal report each year.

## 6 SUCCESS CRITERIA

6.1 The Policy is considered successful if procedures are clear and are followed and the goals set out are achieved.

## 7 REVIEW PROCEDURES

7.1 The Policy is reviewed periodically.

**This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Dominican College on 21<sup>st</sup>  
November 2016**