**Policy on Assessment and Reporting**

**St. Dominic’s College, Cabra**

*“Assessment is about gathering, interpreting and using information about the processes and outcomes of learning.”*(NCCA. 2003)

**Rationale**

Teaching, assessment, learning and reporting are the four pillars that aim to contribute to the personal and educational development of our students in St. Dominic’s College. As a school we appreciate that in order to ensure the best possible outcomes for our students an effective partnership must be developed between parents, teachers and students.

There is a legal obligation on schools to assess the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process and to report learning outcomes to parents/guardians – “Principal and teachers shall regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to the students and their parents” [*Article 22 (2(b)), Education Act 1998]*

Assessment is an integral part of the teaching process. It is an essential first step, in so far as the teacher’s assessment of the state of knowledge and preparedness of the student will guide the teacher’s methodology. Ongoing assessment will continue to inform the teacher of the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process and will be a continuous guide to the appropriateness and effectiveness of methodology and practice.

Reporting the outcomes of assessment serves as a guide to the student and his/her parents/guardians in relation to learning progress or regression. Reporting of satisfactory progress may serve as a source of encouragement and a spur to greater efforts, while reporting of unsatisfactory progress can act as a salutary warning to effect remedial action in an appropriate way.

Terminal examinations, such as *Junior Certificate*and *Leaving Certificate*and examinations designed to prepare for them are based on national norms and questions may be drawn from the entire syllabus. The syllabus content of each subject is set by the Department of Education and Skills and, by and large, determines the essential material content of lessons. Teaching methodologies are strongly influenced by the structure of the assessment process used in these terminal examinations, e.g. oral work, field work, research project, written and aural comprehension etc.

In St Dominic’s College, as well as focusing on material relevant to terminal examinations, teachers engage in a broad range of teaching strategies and methodologies which provide our students with a deep appreciation of their respective subject areas.  Ongoing in-house assessment blends assessment in the format of terminal examinations with measures of achievement in the broader understanding and appreciation of individual academic and practical disciplines.

**Policy**

It is school policy in St. Dominic’s College to encourage and support ongoing assessment as part of the teaching and learning process. In this regard, there will be a clear calendar of reporting students’ progress to parents/guardians (see below).

As part of ongoing assessment, teachers are expected to keep an account of the progress of students in the variety of tasks which may occur in the teaching/learning process. This variety will take account of the range of skills appropriate to the subject and level in question. Among others, these skills might include oral expression, listening comprehension, textual analysis, research ability, manual dexterity, imaginative composition (written and materials based) numerical ability, computation skills and graphic comprehension. This list is not exhaustive and merely suggests a range of skills which teachers develop and assess through homework, class work, assignments and projects.

Teachers are also encouraged to use the journal, formal and informal meetings with parents, the merit system and other means to report to students and parents on this ongoing assessment process.

The following structure and calendar of events applies to formal assessment and reporting:

**Incoming** **First Years:**

All incoming first years undergo formal assessment of verbal and numerical proficiency during April/May preceding initial enrolment.  Using established assessment instruments, school personnel identify students from this cohort who may lag behind their peer group and make recommendations to the Principal in relation to the provision of Learning Support. The findings from these assessments are strictly confidential and are used for no purpose other than the identification of learning challenges.

All classes in first year are formed on a mixed ability and random basis but streaming does take place in the case of Irish during the first term

**Ongoing Reporting in St. Dominic’s College**

* Informal oral and written feedback
* Student journal
* Parent teacher meetings.
* Discussions with class teachers/ tutors/year head/ SEN specialist
* Student logs and reflection diaries
* Communication and engagement with parents / guardians via telephone, twitter
* Engagement with the learning behaviours and dispositions of students.
* The wellbeing of students
* Student participation and achievement in extra-curricular activities
* The results of classroom-based assessments (CBAs)
* Areas such as punctuality, behaviour and attendance.

**Formal Assessment Calendar**

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| **1st Year** | Christmas Exams -December  Summer Exams – May  Parent Teacher Meeting - March |
| **2nd Year** | Christmas Exam or CBA  Summer exam or CBA  Parent teacher meeting **-** |
| **3rd Year** | Christmas Exam or CBA  Assessment tasks in relevant JC subjects  Parent Teacher Meeting  Mock Exams – February  Practical Exam – State Examinations Commission- March / April  Oral Exam – March / April  Junior Cycle State Exam - June |
| **TY** | **TY Module 1:** 10 weeks. Exams take place during class time and reports must be completed at the end of each module.  **TY Module 2:** 11 weeks. Exams take place during class time and reports must be completed at the end of each module.  **TY Module 3**: 11 weeks. Exams take place during class time and reports must be completed at the end of the module. |
| **5th Year** | Progress Reports in October and February  Christmas Exam – December  Parent Teacher Meeting - February  Summer Exam |
| **6th Year** | Parent Teacher Meeting - November  Christmas Exam - December  Mock Exam - Jan/Feb  State Examinations - June |
| **Results of all of these assessments are recorded and stored in the school’s computerized system and are available to authorized personnel only.** | |

**The Conduct of Examinations:**

In order that school examinations (a) have a validity and integrity and (b) that they serve as a preparation for other more formal occasions, it is essential that in-school examinations be well administered.

**To this end:**

* Proper answer booklets will be provided
* Papers should be properly presented, clearly laid out and well copied.
* The rules for each examination event and each examination  centre will be clearly stated and full compliance expected. This will normally be done by the House Examinations Co-ordinator and/or the Deputy Principal.
* Supervisors should be diligent in their duties. The area to be supervised should be divided among the team of supervisors with each member participating actively.
* To ensure the validity and integrity of the examinations, some elements of cross moderation should be incorporated. This is of particular value when common papers are being assessed. It also gives an opportunity to benefit from the experience of those teachers who correct the *Department of Education & Skills’*examinations.
* Students may not leave the exam centre before the end of the examination.
* A student who has been assigned to an alternative venue for a set of examinations will not be allowed to sit further examinations with his peer group unless he receives permission from the Principal to do so. The student must make a written application to the Principal for this permission, outlining the reasons why he believes the sanction should be lifted. This application will be signed by the student and his parents. The Principal’s decision in this regard will be final.