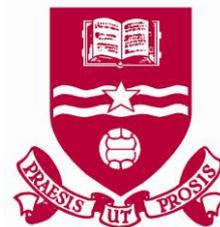


Assessment Policy for De La Salle College, Waterford



Mission Statement of De La Salle College, Waterford

De La Salle College Waterford is a Catholic school. It is a learning community where all students are valued and educated in preparation for a meaningful life.

College Profile

De La Salle College Waterford is an all-boys Catholic School under the trusteeship of Le Chéile. The college is managed by a Board of Management, is funded by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and operates within the regulations and guidelines set down from time to time by that Department. The College follows the curricular programmes prescribed by the Department of Education and Skills, which may be amended from time to time, in accordance with sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act 1998. Within the context and parameters of Department of Education and Skills regulations and resources, as well as the La Sallian ethos, De La Salle College Waterford supports the principles of inclusiveness. Also, it supports equality of access and participation, parental choice in respect of enrolment and a respect for diversity of traditions, values, beliefs, languages and ways of life.

Ethos

De La Salle College Waterford was founded in 1891 by the De La Salle Brothers and serves as a Catholic school for boys. De La Salle College Waterford seeks to promote an atmosphere of friendliness, discipline and co-operation where everyone can experience respect, encouragement and support. While every school is a community in which adults and young people live and work together, the La Sallian school is inspired by the vision of St. John Baptist De La Salle that Gospel values must permeate the life of a Catholic school in such a way that students internalise those values and reflect them in their behaviour.

All who work in the College constantly strive to make De La Salle College Waterford a welcoming institution. Our behaviour management strategies and pastoral care structures are built on the principles of justice and fairness. We endeavour to fulfil our mission in partnership with the De La Salle Brothers, parents/guardians, teachers and all staff, students, trustees and the local community.

Definition of Assessment:

The term “Assessment” refers generally to the gathering and interpretation of information related to a student’s learning abilities, learning attainment, learning strengths and learning needs.

Assessment generates important information about how a learner is progressing. This information can be shared with the learner in the form of feedback which should help the learner to become more aware of his own strengths and weaknesses, and identify next steps and strategies for improvement.

Why Assess?

Aims of Assessment

Assessment should enable pupils:

- To improve their achievement
- To be involved in their own learning
- To be motivated to achieve to their full potential

Assessment should enable teachers:

- To assess progress and adapt planning as required
- To evaluate their pupils’ learning needs
- To ensure that pupils know how to improve the standard of their work
- To evaluate teaching and learning styles and outcomes

- To review and change practice
- To meet statutory requirements
- To monitor a student's progress and to provide the teacher with information to make decisions about what and how the student is learning. This information allows the teacher to identify the next steps in progressing the students learning and adapt his/her teaching strategies and/or learning activities as appropriate.
- To provide the students and parents with information regarding progress
- To establish baseline data in relation to a student's attainments in certain subjects
- To identify students for levels in Maths and Irish in Junior Cycle and in Maths, Irish and English at Senior Cycle
- To assess a student's eligibility for additional support and services and to inform consultations with NEPS Psychologist 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.

Assessment should enable parents:

- To be involved in their child's learning
- To understand and encourage the progress their child is making
- To check their child's progress throughout their time in Secondary School

Legislation:

The Education Act (1998) requires schools to regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to students and their parents. In fulfilling this requirement, schools develop assessment procedures, which provide an accurate account of a student's progress and achievement.

Formative Assessment

Definition:

Formative assessment involves a range of strategies designed to give students, teachers and parents' feedback about students' understanding of elements of their learning in courses.

Assessment For Learning (AFL)

De La Salle College supports the Assessment for Learning (AFL) approach to formative assessment. Its purpose is to use the whole process of assessment to help learners improve their learning. It is formative because its intention is to form, shape or guide the next steps in learning. It is about "learning to learn".

Key Principles of AFL

Assessment for learning is about using assessment in the classroom as a tool to improve students' learning, and is characterised by

- sharing learning goals with students
- helping students to recognise the standards they are aiming for
- 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
- communicating confidence that every student can improve
- adjusting teaching to take account of the results of assessment

Summative Assessment

Definition:

Summative assessments are used to evaluate student learning, skill acquisition, and academic achievement at the conclusion of a defined instructional period – typically at the end of a project, unit, course or school year. Generally speaking, summative assessments are defined by three major criteria:

1. The tests, assignments, or projects are used to determine whether students have learned what they were expected to learn.
2. Summative assessments are given at the conclusion of a specific instructional period, and therefore they are generally evaluative, rather than diagnostic.
3. Summative assessment results are often recorded as grades that are factored into a student's permanent academic record.

Assessment Of Learning (AOL)

Summative assessment refers to the Assessment Of Learning (AOL) and aims to provide a summary of the achievements of the learner. The mode of assessment may include: written examinations, practicals, aural and/or oral work.

First Years

- Homework (written and non-written) is assessed regularly
- Continuous Assessment
- Formal exams take place in early May
- Referred to NEPS for: review if needed or assessment if concerns arise from incoming First Year assessment
- The Career Guidance Counsellor and Year Head provide a First Year Study Skills Seminar to develop study skills, a good homework routine, organisation skills and time management skills to prepare students for summative and formative assessments.

Second Years

- Homework (written and non-written) is assessed regularly
- Continuous Assessment
- Formal exams take place at the end of May
- Referred to NEPS for: review or assessment if required

Third Years

- Homework (written and non-written) is assessed regularly
- Continuous Assessment
- Formal exams in December
- Referral to NEPS for : review or assessment if required
- Complete “Interest Assessments” in class groups or individually on a needs basis to support subject choice decision making
- Project work for Junior Certificate subjects
- WRAT4 and CAT4 are completed to support RACE applications where required (The WRAT4 is a norm referenced test that measures the basic academic skills of word reading, sentence comprehension, spelling and math computation.)
- Pre-Junior Certificate Exams prior to February midterm
- Junior Certificate Exam in June

TY students

- Homework and participation in TY events and activities is continuously assessed
- Focus on portfolio assessments, reflective journaling, learning logs, oral presentation, multi-media, self and peer evaluation.
- Complete “Interest Assessments” in class groups or individually on a needs basis to support subject choice decision making
- Transition Years and their parents/guardians receive an overview of the students progress during a “Parent and Student Feedback Evening” which is held in January at the end of the first session. TY students receive a written report bi-annually. This is filled in on e-portal.

Fifth Years

- Homework (written and non-written) is assessed regularly
- Continuous Assessment
- Formal exams take place at the end of May

- Project work for Leaving Certificate subjects
- Referred to NEPS for: review or assessment if required
- WRAT-IV and CAT-IV for RACE applications where required

Sixth Years

- Homework (written and non-written) is assessed regularly
- Continuous Assessment
- Formal exams take place in December
- Complete interest and aptitude assessments individually on a needs basis
- Project work for Leaving Certificate subjects
- Referred to NEPS for: review or assessment if required
- Pre-Leaving Certificate Exams prior to February midterm
- Leaving Certificate Exam in June

Reporting to Parents

All parents/guardians will receive a Christmas Report for their son. Parents of Third and Sixth Year students will receive a Midterm report as a result of the Mock Exams sat by their son prior to the February midterm. First, Second, TY and Fifth Year students will receive a Summer Report outlining the progress made by their son during the course of the academic year.

The report template is computerised and allows teachers to distinguish levels. A mark and grade are awarded and a comment can be generated from a menu. Alternatively, an original comment can be given. All reports are signed off by the Year Head and the Principal and a general comment may be made on progress to date.

Initial Screening Process in De La Salle College, Waterford

The initial screening processes that take place in De La Salle College are:

1. Information provided by parents/guardians on the School Open Night
2. Entrance Assessment
3. Information from Primary Schools (Education Passport)

Entrance Assessment

The purpose of the entrance assessment is to identify learning needs and to facilitate the organising of mixed ability classes in first year and the formation of a JCSP class where viable. As a follow on from the initial screening process, Guidance Counsellors and relevant staff meet with parents/guardians, where appropriate, to discuss the specific learning needs of their son.

Psychometric Tests:

The following tests are administered to students prior to entry to First Year by the Guidance Counsellor:

- NRIT
- AH2 (Verbal, Numerical, Perceptual)
- RA Cloze Test 3

The Guidance Counsellors are responsible for the maintenance of professional standards in the administration, interpretation and dissemination of tests and their results.

The remit of the Guidance Counsellor in relation to testing is as follows:

- **Performance tests and school reports:** In order to engage in effective guidance and counselling of students the Guidance Counsellor has access to school reports and results of performance tests. Student files are stored securely in the Main Office and on the e-portal system.
- **Individual and group tests of general ability:** These are standardised tests and are administered to incoming first year students by the Guidance Counsellor. Testing usually takes place in late February/early March, in the year of entry to the school. Students and parents are briefed on this assessment at the School Open Night and the guidance counsellor also visits feeder primary schools in advance of the assessment. Incoming First Years complete a range of assessments prior to entry in order to facilitate mixed ability groupings.

- **Aptitude tests:** These tests are administered by the Guidance Counsellor on a needs basis to students in advance of Fifth Year subject choice. Best practice is ensured by administering the DATs (Differential Aptitude Tests) to students age 16+ as these tests are normed for age 16+.
- **Interest Assessments:** These assessments may also be conducted on a group basis, usually during careers classes with TY students. It may be necessary to conduct interest inventories on a one to one with some students, often in advance of subject choice or as part of career choice.

The role of the Curriculum and Assessment Facilitator (Assistant Principal Post)

The Curriculum Development and Assessment Facilitator in De La Salle College liaises with the Principal, Deputy Principals, Board of Studies, Literacy Link Teacher, Numeracy Link Teacher, Subject Co-ordinators and Subject teachers. Duties include the following:

- To facilitate leadership and professional development for all staff in curricular, pedagogical (teaching and learning) and assessment matters
- To facilitate the implementation, evaluation and development of the school assessment policy, AFL and other associated policies e.g. Homework policy
- To devise an agreed approach to all school assessment procedures.

Other relevant policies:

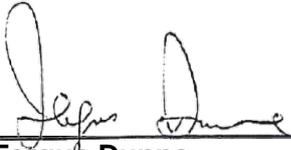
- Homework Policy
- SEN Policy

Assessment Policy Team

This draft policy was drawn up by Catherine Fogarty (Curriculum Development and Assessment Facilitator) in consultation with Margaret Betts (Principal), Julieann Cantwell (Programme Co-ordinator), Donna Grant (SEN Co-ordinator) and Sinead Murphy (Career Guidance Counsellor).

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This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 2nd March 2016

Signed: 

Fergus Dunne
Chairperson BOM

Signed: 

Margaret Betts
Principal