



ASSESSMENT POLICY

Rationale

Assessment at Friends' School, Lisburn supports and promotes high quality learning and teaching. The aim of assessment is to enable each pupil to achieve his or her full potential. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for improving their work through self review and targeting areas for future focus. The Assessment Policy in Friends' School is fully integrated with the delivery of the curriculum and reflects the statutory requirements and rationale of the NI Curriculum.

Indicators of Effective Assessment

Assessment should:

- Reflect statutory requirements
- Promote and support Learning and Inform Teaching
- Be both formative and summative – occurring continuously and at the end of a period of learning
- Use appropriate and diverse strategies
- Recognise ALL pupil progress and achievement
- Give regular and constructive feedback and develop the capacity for individual self review and target setting
- Foster a shared involvement and responsibility between School and Home.

Methods of Assessment used

Assessment for Learning

Assessment for Learning is very much integrated into pupils' everyday learning. It is part of the teaching process used to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers use techniques that best suit the nature of the work being assessed and the purpose of the assessment. It may, for example, take the form of; independent or group tasks, class discussion, homework, project work, small class or unit tests and teacher observation of pupil participation as an individual or as part of a group. In keeping with the rationale of the revised NI Curriculum, pupils are also encouraged to be fully involved in their learning and to review their work and set targets for improvement, thereby fostering self responsibility and independence.

Assessment of Learning

Throughout the year, in most subjects, pupils will have summative or end of topic/ end of unit tests, many of which will be standardised across the whole year group.

Additionally, at the end of **January** and again at the end of **May/early June** pupils sit **School Examinations**.

Pupils in **Key Stage 3** are assessed at the end of **Year 10** and given a level to reflect performance in Communication (English), Using Mathematics (Mathematics) and Using ICT. The assessment arrangements are currently under review by the Department of Education. Throughout Key Stage 3 the School reports on the progress pupils are making in each of the five Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities.

Pupils in Years 11 - 14 take GCSE and A level public examinations. The **Controlled Assessment Policy** and the Year 11 and 12 Information Booklets provide detail on Controlled Assessments at GCSE.

Baseline Testing

At the beginning of the Autumn term, all Year 8 and 11 pupils are given the opportunity to take MIDYIS (Year 8) and YELLIS (Year 11) tests. These are aptitude tests administered by the University of Durham. Both tests last one hour and consist of a number of multiple choice questions based on the areas of Vocabulary, Mathematics and Patterns. The purpose of the tests is to help teachers set targets and monitor pupil performance both in the Junior School and at KS4.

Reporting & Communication to parents

- Formal Reports – two per year linked to internal School examinations in January and June
- Years 12-14 - one report per year linked to current and target grades as part of pupil & teacher monitoring and review of progress
- Parents' Meetings – one per year for each year group, with pupils in attendance
- Homework
- Progress Files – Years 12 and 14
- UCAS
- External examinations
- Curriculum Booklets for each year group in Key Stage 3, GCSE Assessment Information Booklets at Key Stage 4 & Sixth Form Information Booklet and Coursework Grids ensure parents and pupils are kept updated on School and Public Examination assessment requirements.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Value – added monitoring system

School uses a value –added monitoring system which is linked to Target Setting/personal review in the learning process.

Subject teachers use the information from YELLIS tests to help pupils set targets. The Minimum Attainment Grades (Predictions) generated by YELLIS are compared with pupils' attainment at key points throughout their GCSE course and allow pupils and teachers to evaluate how much progress is being made. Subject teachers and pastoral staff use this information when reviewing performance in school examinations to help pupils improve their learning.

GCSE results are also compared with YELLIS predictions. It is our aim that pupils achieve at least the grade they have been predicted or that they 'add value' to their YELLIS score by achieving a higher grade than that predicted by the test.

At A level, subject teachers use predictions based on aggregated GCSE scores to help pupils set targets. The Minimum Attainment Grades (Predictions) are generated by C2k and are based on statistics from across Northern Ireland, where total GCSE scores are compared with what pupils have gone on to achieve at A level. These are then compared with pupils' attainment at key points throughout their AS and A2 courses, allowing pupils and teachers to evaluate progress. Subject teachers and pastoral staff use this information when reviewing performance in school examinations to help pupils improve their learning.

Final A level results are also compared with this data and with statistics from across other Northern Ireland Grammar schools. Again, we hope that pupils will achieve grades equal to or above what they have been predicted by this system.

The Assessment Policy and its implementation within and across departments are monitored and evaluated by:

- Vice Principal Curriculum
- Heads of Department
- Curriculum Coordinators
- Heads of Year
- Learning and Teaching Committee

More detail about Roles and Responsibilities is given at the end of the Policy.

Homework

Rationale

Homework seeks to support pupils and give opportunities for them to consolidate and apply their knowledge, skills and understanding beyond the classroom. It takes account of the way pupils are taught and learn in the context of the Northern Ireland Key Stage 3 curriculum and the requirements of new specifications at both GCSE and A level. It recognises that the work pupils complete at home, with access to an ever increasing range of supporting technologies, gives more opportunities for them to develop independent thinking and to connect with and learn from each other.

School Aims for Homework

Homework should:

Develop the core skills of Literacy and Using Mathematics and provide opportunities for the acquisition and practice of other skills.

Encourage reflection, review and revision of work, with opportunities to develop interests through reading and further investigation.

Extend the positive partnership between Home and School.

Be relevant and purposeful.

Guidelines for Completion of Homework

All pupils are expected to complete all homework to the highest standard. Parents are encouraged to support their son/daughter in the completion of their homework by reviewing or discussing work and management of it with them, by providing a suitable environment for study and by prioritising completion of homework in their son/daughter's school routine. It is expected that pupils will become increasingly independent in managing their own work and that, by the Sixth Form, pupils should not only be completing set work at home but also regularly giving time to their own study and wider reading.

- Each subject department provides pupils with subject specific guidelines for the completion of homework and sanctions to be applied in the event of non completion/submission of homework or work of an unsatisfactory standard.
- A homework timetable is given to pupils in KS3 at the start of each year.
- Pupils in all Key Stages are given a Homework Planner with guidelines for the completion of homework appropriate to their level. Pupils must record all homework in their Homework Planner, entering the details on the day the homework is to be submitted and complete it by the date set by the teacher.
- Parents of pupils in KS3 are asked to check the Homework Planner each evening to ensure homework recorded has been completed and to sign it each week and Collect teacher will make periodic checks.
- Pupils must ensure homework set when out of class for sport, music lessons or other activities is completed.
- The subject teacher will make a record on SIMS when work is not submitted and, in Key Stage 3, may also use the Homework Planner to communicate with parents
- If there are other concerns about homework parents should contact the Head of Department, where difficulties are subject related, or Head of Year, if the concern is more a pastoral issue.

Types of Homework

- Homework reflects ongoing class work across the curriculum. It may take the form of:
- Consolidation of classwork
- Research tasks using ICT or other resources
- Reading to extend understanding & develop literacy skills
- Preparation for class tests
- Research, preparation, learning for controlled assessments/coursework
- Project work
- Contribution to VLE discussion forums
- Revision using consolidation activities from VLE

- Essay writing
- Learning of spellings, vocabulary and key terms, including for class tests

Presentation of written work

Good presentation of work encourages pupils to develop their self-management skills, is a key part of functional literacy, and prepares pupils for the world of work beyond school. The School Literacy Policy gives guidelines for the presentation of work completed at home.

Written homework should always be presented neatly, legibly and in line with department expectations.

Marking, Assessment & Recording of homework

Marking pupil work both informs and directs teaching and ensures a supportive and progressive learning environment for the pupil. Each subject department has its own policy detailing the marking and feedback system that is appropriate to their subject and reflecting the nature of homework set across the key stages. The School promotes regular, accurate and positive feedback to pupils. Good practice recognises pupil achievement and highlights both the strengths and areas for improvement in the pupil's work.

Subject teachers are asked to record marks for pupil performance in work completed at home and to use this along with records of class and year performance to evaluate the pupil's overall progress.

Heads of Departments are asked to consult regularly with colleagues in their departments on pupil progress to alert pastoral staff as appropriate.

After School access to ICT Suites and School Library

All pupils have access to the School Library which is open from Monday to Thursday 3.30 – 4.30pm and is supervised to ensure a quiet area for pupil study. Pupils also have access to the ICT Suites, Monday to Thursday, 3.30- 4.30 pm.

VLE

All pupils have access to the School's Learning Platform which provides additional support for learning and revision by way of practice papers for Public Exams, extension exercises, additional reading materials, reinforcement exercises and forums. Parents are encouraged to support pupils in their use of the VLE.

Mentors

These are Sixth Form pupils who, after school or at lunchtime, work with pupils in Key Stages 3 & 4 identified as requiring extra assistance in subject areas or with personal management of

Roles and Responsibilities

- It is the responsibility of the **Vice Principal Curriculum** to review, monitor and evaluate all aspects of the Assessment & Homework Policy within the context of whole School development planning and subject department action planning.
- **The Senior Teachers in charge of SENCO & Sixth Form** are responsible to liaise with Examinations Officer, parents and pupils to ensure implementation of JCQ Instructions for Conducting Controlled Assessment with reference to special access arrangements and with Examinations Officer/HoDs/subject teachers on the possible provision of extra time or special arrangements for candidates with on the Special Needs statement.
- **Heads of Department** have responsibility for a department Assessment & Homework Policy outlining subject specific expectations and guidelines for all aspects of assessment, including the completion of homework; schemes of work showing opportunities for homework; ensuring effective monitoring and support of pupil performance in work at home.
- **Subject teachers** have the responsibility to ensure appropriate and meaningful assessment is carried out in both the classroom and at home and that homework is set, marked, assessed and recorded in accordance with the department's Policy.

- **Collect teachers** –should encourage good practice in the use of Homework Planners and monitor that they being used effectively for organisation and recording of homework deadlines.
- The **Vice Principal Pastoral** has oversight and coordination of the Mentor System
It is the responsibility of **Heads of Year** to work alongside subject teachers and Heads of Department to support pupils in their learning.

Pupils and parents may be asked to contribute to the evaluation of assessment practice in School.

The Assessment & Homework Policy was part of a whole staff review of pupil work at home. Discussions were led and the Homework Policy written by the Learning & Teaching Committee.

Nov 2013

Appendices

- **Controlled Assessment Policy**
- **Appeals Procedure**