

Edmund Rice Secondary Assessment Policy 2023'24



School Details: ERSS Carrick-on-Suir is a Voluntary Roman Catholic Secondary School under the trusteeship and the patronage of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust. The school is grant aided by the Department of Education & Skills and is a single sex (boys) school.

School Management: The Board of Management of ERSS Carrick-on-Suir is a statutory Board appointed pursuant to the provisions of the Education Act 1998.

Mission Statement:

Inspired by its founder, ERSS Carrick-on-Suir's mission is to *"To provide a caring Christian community which celebrates effort and talent in an environment of hope and happiness"*, with a vision to *"Learn together, succeed together in a respectful environment."*

Ethos:

As an Edmund Rice School ERSS Carrick-on-Suir seeks to promote the five key elements of an Edmund Rice School as espoused by the ERST Charter:

- Nurturing faith, Christian spirituality and Gospel-based values
- Promoting partnership in the school community
- Excelling in teaching and learning
- Creating a caring school community
- Inspiring transformational leadership

Please Note:

Personal data collected about prospective students/students and their parents/guardians will be retained and used strictly in accordance with the provisions of GDPR legislation as introduced 25th May 2018. Further details on data protection are set out in the school's Data Protection Policy.

LEGISLATION

The Education Act (1998) requires schools to regularly evaluate students and to periodically report the results of the evaluation to students and their parents/guardians. In fulfilling this requirement schools develop assessment procedures which provide an accurate account of a student's progress and achievement. This Assessment Policy plays a key role in striving to ensure that each student realises his full academic potential in a learning environment that reflects a culture of partnership between teachers, parents / guardians and students.

ASSESSMENT

As our mission statement is to *"To provide a caring Christian community which celebrates effort and talent in an environment of hope and happiness"*, with a vision to *"Learn together, succeed together in a respectful environment."* it is important therefore to reflect on all our activities, practices, procedures, facilities and attitudes with a view to continuous improvement.

Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process as it provides valuable information to the student, the teacher and the parent. Learning at Edmund Rice Secondary School is very well supported: students are aware of what they are trying to achieve and through effective assessment they can gain a clearer insight into what they have achieved and where they can improve

Through both its formative and summative facets, it is the catalyst which shapes the learning experience in ERSS Carrick-on-Suir. Assessment in its widest sense includes all evaluations of student achievements in curricular and co-curricular activities in order to improve learning and teaching and to develop a culture of lifelong learning. The consistent utilisation of a broad and differentiated range of formative assessment practices empowers the students to take ownership of their own learning journey. The application of regular summative assessments facilitates teachers / students in measuring the quality of learning taking place, honing pedagogical practices and informing educational interventions. These assessment forms work best in tandem, helping to enrich the teaching / learning relationships and to further highly effective practice in ERSS Carrick-on-Suir where a blended approach to assessment is adopted.

This policy has been reviewed in line with GDPR, Child Protection and Safeguarding and student Wellbeing policies and procedures.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THIS POLICY

The primary aims and objectives of the policy are:

- To use formative assessment in the planning and practice of teachers in the classroom, to facilitate and further highly effective teaching and learning practices

- To use summative assessment to provide information to students, parents and teachers of what progress has been made in the learning process.
- To equip students with the skills necessary to improve the quality of their learning
- To empower students to manage their own learning journeys
- To embed, foster and develop revised Junior Cycle practices and to assist in their successful implementation
- To create a consistent and standardised assessment procedure for monitoring and reporting achievement in the school
- To assist in co-ordinating assessment procedures within subject departments
- To develop meaningful learning conversations between the educational partners in our school (teachers / students / parents / guardians)
- To ensure that the actions and targets of the School Improvement Plans are addressed.

THE PURPOSES OF ASSESSMENT:

- To continuously strengthen the quality of teaching and learning
- To inculcate in our students a positive attitude towards learning
- To develop in our students a culture of lifelong learning
- To equip students with the skills necessary to manage their own learning journeys
- To measure and evaluate the progress of a student in a particular area of learning over time
- To provide feedback to students in a timely and constructive manner
- To provide feedback to teachers on the success of particular teaching methodologies
- To highlight difficulties and shortcomings in the learning process which will inform intervention strategies
- To strengthen the relationships with parents / guardians
- To identify students who require additional supports and services such as learning support
- To keep records of attainment that will inform parents/guardians of progress through the school's reporting process
- To identify students' academic levels for state examinations and act as an incentive for students in the learning process
- Plays an important role in subject choice, career guidance and progression to third level and future education.

FORMS OF ASSESSMENT

- 1. FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT** Formative assessment is integral to the process of creating a culture of lifelong learning for our students. It empowers students to take ownership of their own learning journeys through identifying purpose and process, articulating success criteria, adopting reflective practices and goal setting. It reinforces highly effective teaching / learning through fostering learning relationships and deepening reflective practice among teachers and students.

The selection of formative assessment methodologies in classroom practice across all year groups (see below) is at the discretion of individual teachers and should: represent highly effective practice in teaching and learning, further the key skills of Junior Cycle and provide consistency in students' learning journeys through Transition Year and Senior Cycle.

Examples (not exhaustive)

- Observations
- Worksheets
- Essays/Assignments
- Homework – written work includes learning
- Oral and Aural Work
- Presentations
- Graphic Organisers
- Self-Assessment
- Class discussions
- Think-Pair-Share
- Entry/Exit Tickets
- Individual Whiteboards
- Learning Logs
- Peer/Self Assessments
- Traffic Lights/ Using the whiteboard at the back of school diary
- Online Quizzes – e.g. Kahoot etc

2. Summative Assessment (Assessment of Learning)

Assessment is summative when it is used to evaluate student learning at the end of the instructional process or of a period of learning. The purpose is to summarise the students' achievement and to determine whether and to what degree the students have demonstrated understanding of that learning by comparing it against agreed success criteria or features of quality.

Examples (not exhaustive)

- Class Tests
- Classroom Based Assessments
- Assessments Tasks
- House Assessments
- State Exams including Practical Examinations
- Portfolios The form of assessments used may vary from subject to subject and depends on the subject area being assessed. Common assessments across a year group are used as much as possible to provide a common standard across individual classes in a subject area

There are many types of summative assessment that take place in the school environment.

● Assessment On Entry - Incoming First Year students sit a number of standardised tests prior to their entry to the school. These standardised tests are used to identify students' cognitive abilities such as verbal, quantitative, non-verbal and spatial. Tests are used to identify reading ages and students' abilities in Irish. Their results are collated and analysed. This assessment offers an early indicator to the school of a student's potential. This information is available to the Principal, the Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor and other teachers as appropriate. Learning difficulties are discussed confidentially with parents/guardians, disclosed to the relevant teachers, and an appropriate programme of learning support is put in place.

● Topic / Unit Assessment - These forms of assessment are conducted at the discretion of the teacher on a periodic 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. It is intended that these assessments inform and deepen the learning conversations arising out of formative assessment practices and place emphasis on learning outcomes at Junior cycle.

● House Exams – All students (1st, 2nd & 5th Year) will sit house examinations at Christmas and in Summer. In Second (and Third) Year, students are also involved in CBAs, these are shorter examinations and are reflective of the blended approach to assessment. The completion of Subject Learning Assessment Review (SLAR) meetings is fundamental to the assessment process at this point.

● Third Year – Third Year students also sit Pre-Junior Cycle examinations in Spring each year to prepare them for their state examinations in June. These Pre-exams are seen as being very beneficial to students in measuring their progress in their Junior Cycle years. Students gain valuable experience in time management and answering technique by sitting these examinations which use external papers and are corrected both internally and externally. The results of these form the Pre-Junior Cycle Reports sent out in March/April. The results of these exams are also used to decide on the levels the students will take in the state exams in June. Third Year students do not sit formal inhouse exams at the end of May and do not receive Summer Reports.

● Other Areas of Learning - The Other Areas of Learning (OALs) which comprise an important part of Junior Cycle provide an important opportunity for students' achievements in extra-curricular and cocurricular areas to be recognised and celebrated. At ERSS Carrick on Suir all students are encouraged to partake in the myriad of activities and opportunities which are provided and which contribute to their social, mental, emotional and physical wellbeing. These are collated during Third Year and reported on in the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA).

● Transition Year (TY) Transition Year is designed to act as a bridge between a structured examination orientated learning environment and a more autonomous self-directed one where students are responsible for managing their own learning. Transition Year focuses on students' learning about their own strengths, competencies and skills. Christmas and Summer Reports are based on continuous assessments and formal class tests (particularly in the core subjects) conducted by their individual subject teacher.

TY assessments may involve the following: external certifications, portfolios of work, individual and group projects, multimedia, oral presentations and discussions, self and peer assessments. A summary of TY Work Experience reports from employers is included on the Christmas and Summer Reports. In Transition Year, standardised testing is mandatory to assist students in subject choice. The scores identify aptitudes in a range of areas which may assist students to rule in or rule out certain subject areas. Students do not sit timetabled exams. Students will participate in a DAT test to inform their suitability for career choices. The terminal examination will be in the form of an interview conducted by external agencies.

● State Exams ERSS Carrick-on-Suir strives to ensure that all Third- and Sixth-Year students participate, as directed by the State Exams Commission, in the many assessments that make up the Junior Cycle and Leaving Cert exams. These assessments which include CBAs, Assessment Tasks (AT – worth 10%), oral and aural examination, course work, practical work, portfolio work, etc. are operated in accordance with the regulations set down by the State Exams Commission. The timing of these is coordinated through a shared calendar which aims to strike the right balance, avoid over testing and ensure best practice in teaching and learning. Level 2 Learning Programs (L2LPs) may be completed by a small cohort of students at Junior Cycle where appropriate.

● Other Assessments ERSS Carrick-on-Suir engages in other forms of assessment also. Standardised testing is completed at various intervals throughout students' time in the school. In some cases, students are screened for dyslexia using the WIAT 2 and WRAT4 which gives a standardised score in spelling and word reading. The continuum of support is used to gather information on the student and should all of this information point towards a need for formal assessment then a referral can be made. All students from.

Standardised testing required for Junior Cycle Reasonable Accommodation in Certificate Examinations (RACE) are completed if a need is identified and/or where students have a diagnosed specific learning difficulty. Test results, even within the criteria, are not sufficient on their own to confer reasonable accommodations. Other criteria must be adhered to.

Students whose applications give rise to RACE have their applications reactivated for Leaving Certificate. Standardised testing must be completed for Leaving Certificate students who are not covered by reactivation. The criteria for RACE must be met. All assessment methods will progress in line with best practice and will be reviewed in line with any changes made by the Department of Education and Skills (DES). Should national standardised testing be introduced by the DES then ERSS Carrick-on-Suir will comply with the guidelines.

1 st Year	2 nd Year	3 rd Year	Transition Year	5 th Year	6 th Year
Christmas Tests/Assessment (Generally 1 hour each December)	Christmas Tests/Assessment (Generally 1.5 – 2 hours each December)	November Tests/Assessments 40 minute test	Christmas Class Tests/Assessment (Generally 40 minutes each December) to be reviewed	Christmas Tests/Assessment (Generally 2 hours each December)	November Tests/Assessments 40 minute test
May (end of year) Tests/Assessments (Generally 1 hour)	May (end of year) Tests/Assessments (Generally 1.5 – 2 hours)	Late January/early February Pre-Exams	May (end of year) Tests/Assessment (Generally 40 minutes)	May (end of year) Tests/Assessments (Generally 2 hours)	Late January/early February Pre-Exams

These House Assessments are formal in nature and play a significant role in providing feedback to teachers, students and parents/guardians on the level of each student's attainment and learning in that specific subject area.

A detailed timetable will be provided in advance of house assessments by the Assistant Principal II with responsibility for exams. Parents/guardians will be informed of timetable arrangements via email.

In 2nd Year/3rd Year, all Junior Cycle subjects require the completion of a CBA as such to avoid "over- assessment" as per arrangements detailed in Circular 0059/2021. A calendar outlining CBA arrangements for both 2nd and 3rd year students will be provided by the Assistant Principal I with this responsibility. This will be issued to students and shared via email with parents/guardians.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

The forms that these summative and formative assessments take are dependent on the subject area being assessed and vary from subject to subject.

Certain forms of assessment may often be specific to a particular subject. Classroom strategies such as differentiated assessment, visual aids, hearing aids, spelling waivers, increased wait time and dictionaries, etc. may be used from time to time, as determined by the individual subject teacher.

Where feasible, and as determined by each department plan, common assessments across a year group are used in each subject area. This provides for increased cooperation and a common benchmark across each subject area.

3. Psychometric Tests

The following are administered to 1st year students by the Guidance/SEN Departments

- CAT 4 level E -verbal, numerical, non-verbal, spatial
- NGRT-new group reading test 3A/3B
- PPAD-E (NEPS)-spelling, reading comprehension, writing samples, reading speed, word reading.
- These are carried out early in first year with all students to help screen for students who might potentially have some issues in these areas. When the results become available appropriate action is taken in line with the Guidance/AEN policy.
- Results can be used for the following purposes - Guide AEN Teachers - Identify students with particular needs - Enable learning/support to devise a suitable programme of support - Develop student support files by the learning support team
- The following assessment is used to support screening for RACE, DARE and Irish exemptions. - WIAT III Teachers
- Guidelines for the use of results is taken from Reasonable accommodations at certificate exams (instructions for schools), circular 0053/2019 (Irish exemptions) and DARE instructions for schools.
- Testing undertaken by the Guidance Department is carried out to inform students in their personal, educational and social choices to support students in transitioning from primary through secondary towards post-secondary life choices. Junior Cycle CAT4 (in association with SEN Department).

4. Effective Feedback Procedures

In ERSS Carrick-on-Suir we recognise the critical role feedback plays in learning as such. Teachers will endeavour to provide feedback which is as effective as possible to improve student learning and student achievement.

- Focuses on the quality of the student work.
- Related to agreed success criteria (where applicable), sharing State Examination Marking Schemes with students.
- Identifies success and achievement.
- Indicates suggestions for improvement.
- Prompts student thinking.
- Allows time for improvement to take place.

REPORTING

There are different methods whereby the results of summative and formative assessments are communicated to students and parents/guardians. Informal:

- Student Diary - students record continuous assessment results in their journals for all subjects. The teacher may communicate the outcome of any assessment to the parent/guardian of a student by writing a result or a note in the student's journal. The parent/guardian is expected to acknowledge receipt of this note by countersigning it.
- Direct Contact - the teacher may decide following consultation with and advice from Year Head / Senior Management to ask the Year Head to contact the parent/guardian directly with respect to the outcome of an assessment undertaken by a student. If a teacher, tutor or Year Head has concerns regarding the student's progress, an Interim Report may be completed with a result/comment from each teacher.
- Signature of Parent/Guardian on Assessment - the teacher may send the corrected assessment itself home with the student to be viewed and signed by the parent/guardian.
- Parent Teacher Meeting (PTM) - a PTM is held for each year group throughout the academic year. At these meetings it is possible for teachers to relay the outcomes of varying assessments to parents/guardians of individual students, providing an accurate picture of the student's progress.
- VS Ware - Results are recorded onto a database for each individual student and parents/guardians can access their child's academic records through the VS Ware system. In general, these results will be published two to three weeks after the completion of the examinations. School reports will not be posted out unless parents/guardians specifically request them.

- Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) - Upon completion of the Junior Cycle programme the school issues a JCPA certificate highlighting the totality of the students learning across both curricular and non - curricular activities.

J.C. GRADE DESCRIPTORS:

Junior Cycle:

Percentage	Grade Descriptor
≥ 90 to 100	Distinction
≥ 75 and < 90	Higher Merit
≥ 55 and < 75	Merit
≥ 40 and < 55	Achieved
≥ 20 and < 40	Partially Achieved
≥ 0 and < 20	Not graded

Classroom Based Assessments

Junior Cycle Classroom Based Assessment (CBA) Descriptors	
Descriptor	
Exceptional	
Above Expectations	
In line with Expectations	
Yet to meet Expectations	

Other Learning Experiences

Students will have the opportunity to engage with a range of other learning experiences as part of their junior cycle programme and these can be recorded on the JCPA. Other learning experiences play a critical role in ensuring that students are provided with a broad and balanced educational experience. These learning experiences could include student engagement in a science fair, a musical performance or a debating competition.

They could also include extracurricular activities, such as:

- membership of the school student council or school clubs and societies
- participation in school sporting activities etc
- representation at school competition (enterprise, science etc).


Senior Cycle:

Percentage	Grades
90% - 100%	H1/O1
80% - 89%	H2/O2
70% - 79%	H3/O3
60% - 69%	H4/O4
50% - 59%	H5/O5
40% - 49%	H6/O6
30% - 39%	H7/O7
0 - 29%	H8/O8

Approval:

This policy has been distributed to staff, parents and students for their approval. Amendments have been made after consultation with these stakeholders.

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management of ERSS Carrick-on-Suir;

Chairperson: 

Date: 27/9/2020

This policy will be due for review on:

Date: Sept 2025