**St. Ailbe’s School**

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**Assessment, Examinations, and Reporting Policy**

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# 1. Introduction

This policy outlines the procedures for assessment, examinations, and reporting in St. Ailbe’s School. It is designed to ensure that students, teachers, and parents are fully engaged in the learning process and that assessment is used to promote continuous academic improvement. This policy supports the school’s mission of fostering personal excellence and nurturing students' potential.

It is essential that all students are present in school during exam periods unless there are valid medical or unavoidable reasons for their absence. Attendance is critical to ensure students are assessed fairly and consistently. We strongly discourage students from going on holidays during exams, as this disrupts their progress and undermines the importance of their assessments. While we will make every effort to accommodate students who miss exams due to medical reasons, please note that this cannot be guaranteed, and students may need to make alternative arrangements for completing missed assessments.

It is critical that students attend their State Examinations, as these assessments form an essential part of their educational journey and future opportunities. Absences from state exams should only occur in the case of exceptional circumstances, such as serious medical issues, and must be supported by appropriate documentation, such as a medical certificate. While the State Examinations Commission (SEC) may provide options for contingency arrangements in some cases, these are limited and not guaranteed. Parents and students are advised to prioritise exam attendance and communicate promptly with the school and SEC in the event of an unavoidable absence.

# 2. Rationale

Assessment is central to teaching and learning at St. Ailbe’s School. It provides valuable feedback that informs instruction, helps students track their progress, and engages parents in their child's learning journey. By systematically evaluating student performance, we aim to improve educational outcomes and foster personal growth.

KEY SKILLS: Assessment is not focussed solely on assessing student’s knowledge but also to assess understanding and the dispositions they are developing and the skills that they are learning.

**In Junior Cycle the emphasis is on the following Key Skills:**

• Managing Information and Thinking

• Managing Myself

• Communicating

• Working with others

• Being creative

• Being literate

• Being numerate

• Staying well

The JCPA captures student achievements in a number of assessment elements undertaken over the three years of junior cycle, including the grades in the state-certified final examinations at the end of the three years. It will also report on students’ achievement in Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) in subjects and short courses, and in Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LPs) and, in time, achievements in Level 1 Learning Programmes (L1LPs). The JCPA will also provide an opportunity for schools to comment on student achievement, participation or progress in other areas of learning and other areas of wellbeing that may have been included in the school’s junior cycle programme.

**In Senior Cycle the emphasis is on the following Key Skills:**

• Communicating

* Working with Others

• Being Personally Effective

• Critical and Creative Thinking

• Information Processing

**Assessment Breakdown for Leaving Certificate Subjects**

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| **Subject** | **Assessment Breakdown** | **Percentage** |
| **Irish** | **Oral Exam** | **40%** |
|  | **Aural Exam** | **10%** |
|  | **Written Exam (Two Papers)** | **50%** |
| **English** | **Written Exam (Two Papers)** | **100%** |
| **Maths** | **Written Exam (Two Papers)** | **100%** |
| **Geography** | **Geographical Investigation Project** | **20%** |
|  | **Written Exam** | **80%** |
| **History** | **Research Study Report (RSR)** | **20%** |
|  | **Written Exam** | **80%** |
| **Design & Communication Graphics (DCG)** | **Project** | **40%** |
|  | **Written Exam** | **60%** |
| **Home Economics** | **Practical Coursework** | **20%** |
|  | **Written Exam** | **80%** |
| **Art** | **Practical Coursework Portfolio** | **50%** |
|  | **Practical Exam** | **20%** |
|  | **Written Exam** | **30%** |
| **Music** | **Practical Performance** | **50%** |
|  | **Written Exam** | **50%** |
| **French** | **Oral Exam** | **25%** |
|  | **Aural Exam** | **20%** |
|  | **Written Exam** | **55%** |
| **Agricultural Science** | **Practical Coursework Portfolio** | **25%** |
|  | **Written Exam** | **75%** |
| **Construction Studies** | **Practical Project** | **25%** |
|  | **Practical Exam (woodwork)** | **25%** |
|  | **Written Exam** | **50%** |

## Credits in the LCA Program

The Leaving Certificate Applied program is structured around continuous assessment and is designed to reward consistent effort and achievement across the two-year course. Students can earn a **maximum of 200 credits**, which are distributed as follows:

1. **Credits Breakdown**

* **Continuous Assessment (62 Credits)**

Continuous assessment occurs throughout the two years and includes tasks, assignments, and other activities in subjects like English, Social Education, and Vocational Preparation.

* + 31 credits are awarded each year (15.5 per session).
* **Tasks (70 Credits)**

Students complete **seven key tasks**, each of which contributes to their final result. These tasks are linked to key course components, such as practical coursework or projects in areas like Social Education, Vocational Preparation, and specific modules.

* + Each task is worth **10 credits**, and they are assessed externally by the State Examinations Commission (SEC).
* **Final Examinations (68 Credits)**

The final exams take place at the end of the two years and include subjects like English, Irish, Maths, and Vocational Specialisms.

* + Each exam's credits are calculated based on the results achieved (distinction, merit, pass).
* Further information on credits can be found at this link [Information on Credits](https://www.curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/be7c149f-7c67-4866-8f88-6420ff4d67a3/Revised-LCAPS.pdf).

**2. Credit Allocation**

* Students are awarded credits for achieving **90% attendance** in each module.
* Credits for tasks and modules are awarded based on **completion and submission** of work on time and meeting specific performance criteria.
* Credits will be adjusted to accommodate.

**3. Grades and Overall Award**

The overall grades in LCA are based on the total credits accumulated:

* **Distinction**: 170-200 credits (85%-100%)
* **Merit**: 140-169 credits (70%-84%)
* **Pass**: 120-139 credits (60%-69%)

This detailed credit system ensures that students are recognized for both their ongoing efforts and their final performance, emphasizing steady progress over the course of the program. This structure also encourages engagement and rewards a range of skills, not just exam-based performance.

## Submission of Coursework

* All coursework, project work, and practical assignments must be submitted by the deadlines set by the State Examinations Commission (SEC).
* Students will be informed of the submission dates well in advance, and the school will provide support to help students meet the deadlines.
* Extensions or exceptions can only be granted in line with SEC policies and require appropriate documentation.
* The school emphasizes the importance of time management and encourages students to complete drafts well in advance of final submission dates.

## Senior Cycle Reform

As the Senior Cycle undergoes reform, the assessment formats and percentages for various subjects may change. Our school policy will be **updated** to align with the guidelines issued by the Department of Education and the SEC. We will ensure clear communication with students and parents regarding any changes.

## Transition Year Assessment

In Transition Year, assessment focuses on **formative methods** to encourage personal development and skills acquisition. Students are assessed primarily through **project work, presentations, and reflective exercises**, allowing them to explore topics in a creative and self-directed manner. Formative assessment provides ongoing feedback to students, helping them refine their work and build essential skills such as teamwork, communication, and problem-solving.

Key tools include:

* **Project-based assessments** in various subjects to emphasize practical application.
* **Class presentations and reports** to develop communication and research skills.
* **Reflection journals** to encourage self-evaluation and goal-setting.

These approaches align with the ethos of Transition Year, which promotes experiential learning and prepares students for Senior Cycle studies.

# 3. Aims

The objectives of this assessment policy are:

* To enhance student achievement through timely and constructive feedback.
* To engage students in their own learning process, promoting reflection and goal-setting.
* To provide teachers with data to adapt their teaching strategies and address student needs.
* To offer parents meaningful insights into their child’s academic progress.
* To comply with statutory requirements set out in the Education Act (1998).

# 4. Types of Assessment

## 4.1 Formative Assessment

Formative assessment involves regular, ongoing assessment aimed at improving students’ learning during instruction. Examples of formative assessment include:

* **Questioning and discussions** to gauge student understanding.
* **Peer and self-assessment** to encourage reflection and responsibility for learning.
* **Feedback on homework and classwork** to help students understand how they can improve their work​ (St. Ailbe's Homework Policy)​
* **Use of digital tools** such as Examrevision.ie, Microsoft teams to facilitate student collaboration and feedback.
* **Sharing of Learning Intensions**
* **Creating and Co Creating Success Criteria**
* **Effective feedback** which relates to success criteria and suggestions for improvement

## 4.2 Summative Assessment

Summative assessment is used to evaluate students' learning at the end of a unit, term, or academic year. It includes:

* **In-house exams** (Christmas, summer, and pre-exams for state exam years) to assess student knowledge.
* There will be **common assessments** where students are following the same course at the same level.
* **State Examinations** for Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate​
* **Practical and project-based assessments** in subjects like Home Economics and Art, which assess students' practical skills in addition to theoretical knowledge​
* **Classroom based Assessments** will take place for Junior Cycle subjects during second and third year (CBA Policy)
* **Oral/Aural Examinations** in Gaeilge and Modern Foreign Languages usually take place around March/April and are assessed by an external examiner.
* **Project Work/Course Work/Assignments**

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| Junior Cycle | Leaving Cert |
| Engineering  Graphics  Applied Technology  Wood Technology | Agricultural Science, all LC Science from 2025  Art  Construction  Technology  D.C.G  Geography  History  Home Economics  LCVP |

* **Practical Examinations**

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| **Junior Cycle** | **Leaving Cert Applied** | **Leaving Cert Established** |
| Home Economics  Music  Visual Art | Agriculture & Horticulture Graphics & Construction | Art  Construction Studies Engineering  Physical Education  Music  Physical Education |

**Other Assessments – the school may engage in other forms of assessment from time to time.**

1. CAT4 – administered to incoming 1st years. The results of these assessments are used to:

• Identify the potential of students at an early stage

• Guide Resource and Learning Support teachers

• Allow teachers to plan for mixed ability in the classroom

• Identify student needs and devise suitable programme of support

• SEN team to arrange RACE testing and accommodations for SEN students during house and State exams.

• Develop Student Support Files in conjunction with parents, SENCO and school management

• Apply for reasonable accommodations for state exams where applicable

2. Eir Quest, DATS/CAT – administered to all Transition Year and/or 5th Year students to assist in their investigation of possible college and career choices.

3. NEPS -The school’s NEPS psychologist, in consultation with school management, may carry out psychological assessments and other assessments on students at different times throughout the year.

4. Numeracy and Literacy Testing – PPADE.

## 4.3 Informal Assessment

The most common forms of assessment used in the school are of an informal nature, and these take place regularly in the classroom.

Where appropriate, teachers will keep records of these assessments to provide an insight into a student’s progress over time and to fully inform the learning process.

Informal Assessments methods include:

o Effective questioning in class

o Oral and Aural Language Assessment in class

o Anticipation Exercises

o Varied strategies (see appendix 1)

o Brainstorm

o Quizzes: Kahoot

o Essays

o Assignments

o Research

o Reading

o Discussion

o Worksheets

o Written classwork

o Self/Peer Assessment

o Reflection on feedback

o Sample exam questions

o Homework

o Beep test

# 5. Assessment in Junior Cycle

Assessment in the Junior Cycle at St. Ailbe’s includes **Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs)** and **Assessment Tasks**:

* **CBAs** take place in second and third year and cover a range of tasks such as projects, oral presentations, and practical assignments. Teachers assess these using descriptors (e.g., "Exceptional," "Above Expectations," etc.) ​(CBA Policy).
* CBAs are followed by **Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meetings**, where teachers moderate the assessment results to ensure consistency across the department​ (CBA Policy).
* **Assessment Tasks** are completed in third year and are marked by the State Examinations Commission​ (CBA Policy).

# 6. Assessment Methods for L2LP's/L1LP's

Students enrolled in L2LPs/L1LPs are assessed through a variety of methods that allow them to demonstrate their skills and knowledge in a manner that best suits their individual learning needs.

These methods include: Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs), Portfolio of Evidence, Teacher Observation and Feedback, Practical Tasks and Oral Assessments. The L2LPs& L1LP's are built around Priority Learning Units (PLUs), and assessments are structured to evaluate students' progress in these areas.

# 7. Assessment in Senior Cycle

In Senior Cycle, students are assessed through a combination of continuous assessment, in-house exams, and State Examinations:

* **Leaving Certificate students** complete a combination of written, oral, and practical exams as required by the State Examinations Commission. This includes **coursework and projects** for subjects like Geography, History, and Construction Studies​.
* **Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) students** accumulate credits through module completion, task assessments, and final examinations. Attendance and completion of key assignments are crucial in this programme​.

## 7.1 Assessment for AEN Students – Assistive Technology

Students who have qualified for the use of Assistive Technology to support their learning and assessments, upon approval by the State Examinations Commission will be granted the use of Assistive Technology in State Examinations.

These accommodations ensure that students’ abilities are fairly assessed while reducing barriers to participation. Teachers where possible are encouraged to integrate AT into day-to-day learning and internal assessments, so students become proficient and comfortable with the technology they will use during formal examinations.

**Assessment for EAL Students – English Language Proficiency Tests**

For students learning English as an Additional Language (EAL), assessments focus on evaluating and monitoring their English language proficiency to support integration into the curriculum. The school may use standardized **English language proficiency tests** to determine students’ levels in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This helps teachers tailor instruction and assessment methods to meet the needs of EAL students.

Additionally:

* Teachers may modify assessments to ensure accessibility, such as simplifying language or providing key vocabulary in advance.
* Formative assessments, such as oral presentations, reflective journals, and project work, are emphasized to support language development.
* Progress is reviewed regularly to track improvement in proficiency and identify areas requiring additional support.

These approaches ensure that both AEN and EAL students are assessed equitably and given the tools to demonstrate their learning effectively.

# 8. Reporting

## 8.1 Written Reports

Reports are issued four times a year, following the October, Christmas, Easter and Summer exams. These reports provide information on academic performance, attendance, and conduct. Teachers will include formative comments to guide student progress, emphasizing areas of strength and improvement ​(St. Ailbe's Homework Policy)

## 8.2 Parent-Teacher Meetings

Parents are encouraged to attend annual parent-teacher meetings. During these meetings, teachers provide an overview of the student’s academic performance, as well as suggestions for improvement. Parents and students are encouraged to reflect on the feedback provided to set future learning goals​.

## 8.3 CBA Reporting

CBA results are communicated to students and parents following each SLAR meeting. These results are reported using the national descriptors and are included in the **Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA)**​ (CBA Policy).

# 9. Roles of Key Personnel

* **Principal:** Oversees the implementation of the assessment policy and ensures compliance with statutory requirements.
* **Deputy Principal(s)/Year Heads:** Monitor student progress and oversee the reporting process, ensuring that assessment data is used effectively to support student learning​.
* **Subject Teachers:** Plan and conduct assessments, provide feedback, and report results. They also participate in SLAR meetings to ensure consistency in assessment​. Provide feedback on subject choice.
* **Junior Cycle Coordinator:** Facilitates the administration of CBAs and SLAR meetings and ensures that CBA deadlines are met ​(CBA Policy).
* **Exam secretary responsibilities:** Ordering of exam papers, organisation of additional supports under RACE, storage of exam related materials and insuring exam related information is communicated.
* **Guidance Counsellors**: Supporting students on level choice and subject choice

# 10. Use of AI in Assessments

St. Ailbe’s School encourages the ethical use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools in education. AI should support teaching and learning processes by enhancing personalised learning opportunities, improving feedback mechanisms, and fostering collaboration. Teachers and students should use AI transparently and responsibly. St Ailbe’s also use grade prediction software such as ​Athena.

## 10.1 Athena Academic Tracking of Assessment

The **Athena Academic Tracking System** is utilised to gather and analyse data from students’ assessments, aptitude tests, and other academic performance indicators. Its primary purpose is to provide a clear, data-driven overview of each student's progress, helping the school to identify whether students are meeting their potential and to intervene where necessary. By systematically tracking results over time, Athena enables teachers and school leaders to:

* Identify strengths and areas for improvement in student learning.
* Tailor teaching strategies to better meet the needs of individual students.
* Monitor the impact of targeted interventions to support underperforming students.
* Inform parent-teacher discussions with specific data on student progress.

This system not only ensures accountability but also empowers the school to provide students with personalised support, ensuring they achieve their full academic potential. The insights gained through Athena form a key part of the school’s commitment to excellence in education and evidence-based decision-making.

# 11. Support from Teaching and Learning (T&L) Group

The **Teaching and Learning (T&L) group** within the school acts as a vital resource for supporting professional development. This group:

* Organises and facilitates CPD workshops.
* Provides mentoring and coaching to staff members.
* Develops whole-school initiatives aimed at enhancing teaching and learning.
* Encourages the sharing of reflective practices among teachers.
* Share resources and effective teaching strategies.
* Discuss curriculum alignment and common assessment methods.
* Reflect on students’ performance and explore strategies for improvement.

# 12. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years, considering feedback from staff, students, and parents. The review will focus on the effectiveness of the assessment processes in supporting student learning and the extent to which the policy aligns with best practices in education.