**Sacred Heart School, Tullamore**

**Assessment Policy**

**We the management and staff of the Sacred Heart School (S.H.S.) recognise that each member of the school community is unique and we strive to engender in our students a respect for every person. We see our school as a partnership, the central purpose of which is the spiritual, moral, intellectual, aesthetic, physical and social development of our students. We seek to ensure that, through the academic and vocational training they have received, young people leave the Sacred Heart School with a healthy self-image, enhanced by the life skills and abilities necessary to make a positive contribution to society.**

1. **Definition:**

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

1. **Why Assess?**

Assessment is part of good teaching and learning and takes place for

the following reasons:

* 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 her / his teaching strategies and / or learning activities as appropriate.
* to provide the students and parents with information regarding academic progress.
* to establish baseline data in relation to a student’s attainments in certain subjects and comparative results to CAT and DAT.
* 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 the 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.
* To evaluate students eligibility for examination accommodations. (RACE)
* To enable students to have realistic aspirations relative to their ability and expected performance which will in turn inform choices and decisions about their career focus.
* To identify students who would benefit from a modified timetable.

**3. 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.

**4. Formative Assessment:**

(1) Definition:

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

(2) Sacred Heart School, Tullamore has adopted 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.’ An outline of this approach is given in the Staff Handbook. We recognise, however, that not all aspects of this approach are of benefit in all curriculum areas and the discretion of the teacher is advised to adapt the theory to suit the particular demands of the subject.

(3) In line with the demands of the syllabus in each curriculum area, teachers set regular homework and comment on the merits of work and make suggestions for improvement. Grades / marks are avoided wherever possible, when returning the initial work but may be given at a later date.

(4) Assessment work may be differentiated to suit the needs and abilities of the individual.

**5. Summative Assessment:**

(1) **Definition:**

Summative Assessment refers to the assessment of learning and aims to provide a summary of the achievements of the learner.

(2)

* Third and Sixth Years have examinations in February of the exam year, (Mock examinations in early February) and the State Examinations in June.
* Fifth Years have continuous assessment until December and formal examinations in May. First and Second Years are regularly assessed throughout the first term and this will inform the grade in December. They sit formal examinations in May and decisions in relation to common papers and Marking schemes are made in advance.
* Transition Years have written examinations in Irish, English, Maths and Languages in early February.

(3)

* The mode of assessment may include: written examinations, practicals, aurals and/or oral work, interviews, presentations.
* Transition Year assessments may involve the following: External certification, portfolio, oral presentation, multi media, self and peer evaluation.

(4) Examinations generally follow a similar format to the Junior and Leaving Certificate Examinations and a marking scheme is clearly identified.

(5) Mock Examinations are set and corrected externally according to our procedure set down in Mock Procedures.

(6) All Summative Assessments are co-ordinated by an Assistant Principal.

(7)

* Reports are forwarded to Parents/ Guardians of First, Second, Fourth and Fifth Years in December, and in June and in December and February for Third and Sixth Year students.
* The report template for non exam classes is computerised and allows teachers to distinguish levels. A mark and grade are awarded and a comment can be generated from a menu.
* Transition Years parents receive a copy of a student self assessment and an overview of progress from the co-ordinator.
* All reports are signed off by the Year Head and the Principal and a general comment may be made on progress to date.

**6. Psychometric Tests:**

The following tests are administered toincoming 1st Year students in January of the enrolling year by the Guidance Counsellors.

CAT 3 Level E

CAT (Cognitive Abilities Test NEFER NELSON Reading Test

WRAT IV  
When the results of the tests become available:

* Guidance Counsellors meet with the Learning Support teachers.
* Students with particular needs are identified.
* Letters are sent to parents/guardians of students stating the extra resources available for those students.
* When replies are received re extra help and parental permission obtained, a programme is devised by the learning support/resource teacher depending on timetable and availability of learning support staff.
* IEPs (Individual Educational Plans) re drawn up by the Learning Support Team in conjunction with parents and school management.

**Differential Aptitude Tests** (DATS) are administered to all Transition Year students.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

This policy will be reviewed on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_