

Homework and Assessment Policy

Ratified: Mr Michael Gilbert, School Manager

Date: April 2005

Homework

Introduction

The purpose of homework is to consolidate the learning of taught classroom material, to provide the opportunity for learners to express their understanding, to promote dialogue between learner and teacher, to be relevant to the learning aims, to provide the opportunity for focused feedback, to involve students in assessing their own learning and to allow teaching to be adjusted to take account of learning. Homework assignments may be assessed by marking, correcting or commented-only marking.

Homework Practices

Students are issued with a Stratford College Homework Journal at the beginning of the academic year and are asked to record each homework assignment.

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Students are encouraged to commit to two hours per evening for personal study. This is an opportunity for students to review material covered in class and to complete written assignments.

Homework is set at the discretion of subject teachers and will vary to meet curriculum demands.

Currently, students who fail to satisfy homework requirements will incur a negative comment that is recorded in their homework journal; three negative comments will incur a demerit. Most homework is corrected in class and students are encouraged to assess their own learning in this context. Teachers keep a record of each student's homework assignments and monitor homework regularly.

The active involvement of parents in the education process is highly valued. Their ongoing interest in students' homework assignments ensures the authenticity of work. Parents are asked to monitor their child's homework tasks and sign the comment sheet, found in the student's journal, to indicate that this has taken place. Teachers have noted that a significant number of students are copying homework assignments in the morning before school begins. At present all members of staff are asked to monitor and dissuade students from doing this.

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Assessments

Formative Assessment Practices

In line with the demands of each curriculum area, subject teachers currently set and grade students' work and, where appropriate, set class tests every 6-8 weeks. This assessment practice lends itself to assessing a student's knowledge of a particular chapter or topic covered. In line with current good practice pedagogy a student's work and assessment is differentiated to suit an individual's needs and abilities. Results are recorded in the subject teacher's mark book and the information/ data is generally used to inform parent teacher meetings and progress reports. *Examination scripts are returned to students and analysed in class following marking.*

The reporting to parents/ guardians of a student's formative progress takes place twice during the academic year in the form of a written 'Progress Report'. The focus of this report can be a student's application in class, academic progress, behavior, attitude, participation etc.

Summative Assessment Practices for all Non-State Examination Classes

Two formal in-house examinations take place during the academic year for all non-state exam students; the first takes place in January and the second in May. *These may*

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consist of written examinations, practicals, aural, and/or oral work. Subject teachers are asked, based on work covered, to set an examination paper for each of their classes. And, although tailored to topics covered by the academic year's work these are generally expected to follow a similar format to that of state examinations. A marking scheme is clearly identified.

Subject teachers correct student exam papers and these results form part of a student's academic report, which is issued to parents and students during the course of the year.

It is usual that the examination paper is common to all students however, the grading/ marking of papers is differentiated to accommodate students with special education needs.

Transition Year and Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) assessments may involve the following: external certification; portfolio; interview; oral presentations; continuous assessment; role-playing; multi-media; self and peer evaluation; external evaluation etc.

All summative assessments are co-ordinated by a school designated examinations officer.

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Summative Assessment Practices for all State Examination Classes

Summative assessment of Junior & Leaving Certificate students take place during January and are contracted out to an independent examination company where they are set and corrected. Students can choose to sit a *foundation*, ordinary, higher or *common* level paper, as is appropriate to their ability and needs. Results from these examinations inform student academic reports; these are sent to parents and students in February.

The report template allows teachers to distinguish between students taking a subject at *higher*, *ordinary*, *foundation* or *common* level. A grade is awarded and an appropriate comment accompanies this to highlight aspects of performance, application, etc.

Summative assessments are co-ordinated by a school designated Examination Officer.

Supervised Study

Supervised study is offered to all students and is facilitated in the hall/ a designated classroom from 4pm – 6pm Monday through to Thursday. It is operated as a private arrangement and separate financial costs are incurred.

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Assessment of Incoming First Year Students at Stratford College

Formal

- PARENTS OF INCOMING FIRST YEAR STUDENTS ARE ASKED TO SUBMIT THE MOST RECENT PRIMARY SCHOOL REPORT ALONG WITH THEIR APPLICATION FORM.
- Incoming first year students take standardised tests in Stratford in March. The test results are held in the Guidance councillor's office and seen by the resource teacher and principal.

Informal

- First year class tutor rings the primary school teacher of incoming first years and is given information relating to the students academic, inter and intra personal abilities. This information is disseminated to staff only if the student has a SEN.

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Assessment of Students with SEN

Formal

- Psychological Assessment given by parents to the Resource Teacher – held by RT – information will contain students IQ scores and other test results – information confidential and only given where deemed appropriate to subject teachers.
- Neale Analysis – given by RT - standardised reading and comprehension test which establishes students ability to read and gives diagnostic information to help teach students
- France Test – Given by RT - standardised maths test which establishes what the student can and cannot do with basic mathematical operations.
- Group Reading Test – given by RT – standardised reading and comprehension test which establishes students reading age and comprehension and ranks in relation to other students of a similar age
- House exams - given at Christmas and mid – year in all subjects.

Informal

- Observation of students in the classroom – readiness to learn, focus, concentration levels, organisation, posture etc.

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- Students homework
- Homework journal
- Written samples of work
- Oral language ability – expressive – can they describe a sequence of events in a logical manner etc
- Receptive language ability – can they follow series of instructions etc

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ASSESSMENT

Most subjects are taught to mixed ability classes but every subject is offered at Higher and Ordinary level with some i.e. Maths and Irish offered at the lower Foundation level. House exams are held twice a year, January and May. The grading system is as follows:

Junior Certificate:

Levels: Higher (H); Ordinary (O); Foundation (F)

A	85 – 100%
B	70 – 84%
C	55 – 69%
D	40 – 54%
E	25 – 39%
F	10 – 24%
NG	0 – 9%

TRANSITION YEAR

A number of main strands can be identified:-

1. EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Modules such as First Aid, Road Safety, Sailing, Outdoor Pursuits and E.C.D.L. are assessed by the relevant governing bodies.

2. HOUSE EXAMS

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Core subjects – English, Irish, Maths and French and some other subjects are assessed by the setting of formal mid-year and end of year exams along with homework.

3. CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT

A combination of project work and exams are used to assess other subject areas and are identified on the Transition Year Report.

4. PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT

Portfolio assessment takes place at the end of the school year and identifies students' own sense of personal achievement. The portfolio is assessed at the end of term three by way of interview with an external examiner.

5. PROGRESS REPORT

Regular contact is maintained with parents and guardians through progress reports, bi-annual reports, parent teacher meetings and the Form Teacher.

Leaving Certificate:

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Levels: Higher (H); Ordinary (O) Foundation (F)

A1	90 – 100%	D1	50 – 54%
A2	85 – 89%	D2	45 – 49%
B1	80 – 84%	D3	40 – 44%
B2	75 – 79%	E	25 – 39%
B3	70 – 74%	F	10 – 24%
C1	65 – 69%	NG	0 – 9%
C2	60 – 64%		
C3	55 – 59%		

A pass grade is 40% or higher; an honours grade is 55% or higher.

'A' grade results are the highest possible at a particular level. Higher **'A'** grade results are achieved by an average of 5% of the national peer group in specific subjects.

THIRD LEVEL ENTRANCE

Entry to third level is achieved through a points system awarded to a maximum of **six grades** in Leaving Certificate subjects and satisfaction of a third level college's matriculation and subject requirements. Candidates with the highest points who satisfy these requirements are offered places. For more information cf. www.cao.ie

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For Further Information:

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