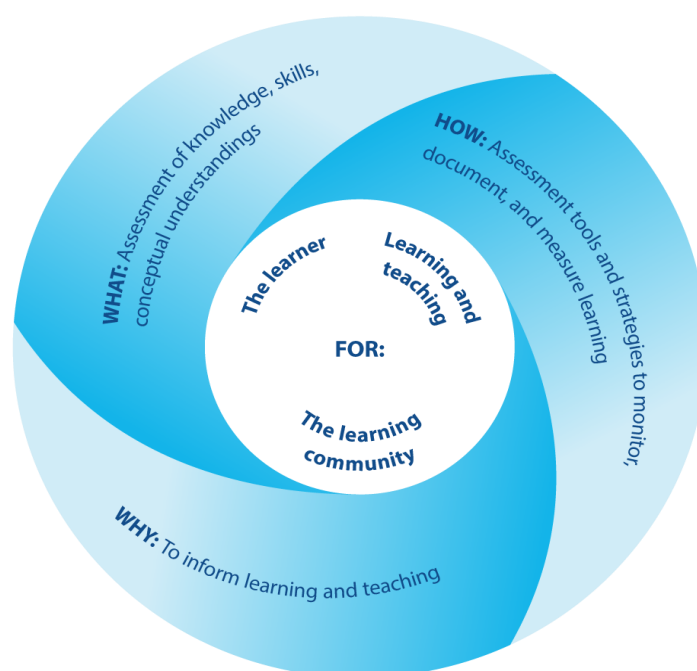




Assessment Policy

Purpose

This policy outlines the beliefs, understandings and responsibilities relating to assessment and reporting at St Columba's Primary School.



Why do we assess?

Assessment at St Columba's informs all learning and teaching. We continuously gather and analyse evidence of what students know, understand, and can do to inform and adjust teaching practice. Effective assessment that achieves this purpose provides valuable information to understand what constitutes learning and how to support it and is meaningful to all members of the learning community. Assessment is a shared responsibility between all members of staff.

What is assessment?

Assessment can be broadly grouped into a number of categories. These include:

Diagnostic assessment / Assessment for learning

Assessment for learning allows the teacher and student to discover what is already known. It is critical to recognise prior knowledge to enable students to engage in questioning, thinking and theorising to construct new knowledge appropriate to developmental stages.



Formative Assessment / Assessment as learning

Interwoven with daily instruction and used to assist the teacher in planning for the next stage of learning. It provides regular and frequent feedback to the teachers and students. It also gives students an opportunity to improve their understanding and cultivate enthusiasm for learning. Teachers use various assessment tools to keep a record of student progress.

Summative Assessment / Assessment of learning

Takes place at the end of the teaching and learning process and provides students with the opportunity to show what they have learnt. We acknowledge, however, that true summative assessments that fit this description are rare. In most cases, even assessments that happen at the 'end' of a teaching and learning period inform future planning and therefore become formative in nature.

Self-Assessment/ Assessment as Learning

Students continually reflect on their own learning as well as themselves as learners. To scaffold and support self-reflection, learning goals and success criteria provide students with guidance in their reflections. We use the approaches to learning to help students reflect on themselves as learners in terms of their thinking, research, communication, social and self-management skills.

Peer Assessment

Students are provided with opportunities to reflect on their peers' learning and performances. As with self-assessment, learning goals, success criteria and approaches to learning, help to scaffold peer assessments.

What does assessment at St. Columba's focus on?

- The processes of learning
- Products of learning
- Eliciting depth and breadth in relation to conceptual understandings
- Understanding how the students make connections and apply their learning
- The approaches to learning
- The acquisition of knowledge
- The mastery of skills
- The development of the learner profile attributes
- The decision to take responsible action

What makes effective assessments?

Effective assessment involves four dimensions - monitoring learning, documenting learning, measuring learning, reporting on learning.

When planning for effective assessment that will inform teaching and learning, teachers consider the following questions:

- What learning goals will be achieved?
- How can I involve students in the assessment design?



- How could students engage in dialogues with teachers about the development of learner profile attributes?
- What data or evidence should be gathered?
- What tools or strategies should be used to gather data?
- How will the evidence be monitored, documented and measured?
- How could students be asked to evidence any additional learning?
- How will the results be shared to feed back to the student?
- How will the results be used to inform next steps in learning and teaching?
- How will the results of the assessment be used to inform the learning community?

At St Columba's we strive to implement and use effective assessment. The characteristics of effective assessment include that it is:

- "Authentic: It supports making connections to the real world to promote student engagement.
- Clear and specific: This includes desired learning goals; success criteria and the process students use to learn.
- Varied: It uses a wider range of tools and strategies that are fit for purpose to build a well-rounded picture of student learning.
- Developmental: It focuses on an individual student's progress rather than their performance in relation to others.
- Collaborative: It engages both teachers and students in the assessment development and evaluation process.
- Interactive: Assessment encompasses ongoing and interactive dialogues about learning.
- Feedback to feedforward: It provides feedback on current learning to inform what is needed to support future learning (Hattie, Timperley 2007) and raises students' motivation. "

(IB, 2020)

In addition to the points above, effective assessment involves transparency. Learners and teachers must be clear on the what, why and how of assessment so that all members of the learning community develop assessment capabilities. This may involve the co-construction of key criteria, exemplars and rubrics.

What assessment strategies and tools do we use?

- Observations: All students are observed regularly; individually, in groups, or in the whole class learning environment. Observations may be recorded by teachers via anecdotal notes or observation checklists.
- Performance Assessments: These assessments are goal-directed tasks. They are authentic and challenging.
- Open-ended tasks: These allow students to show their understanding at a range of different levels.
- Process focused assessments: These assessments look at how students are working and their progress over time rather than simply the final product they produce.



- **Diagnostic Assessments:** These are single occasion exercises such as tests, quizzes or government mandated testing, such as NAPLAN.
- **Student reflections:** Students are provided with many opportunities to reflect on their learning in terms of knowledge, conceptual understanding, skills, themselves as a learner and the action taken.
- **Adaptive Testing:** This type of computer based testing, such as the assessments set on 'Essential Assessment', adapts according to student responses. This means each student faces different questions according to how they are progressing within that domain. Adaptive testing can be useful when assessing skill sets but do not work well in situations where conceptual understandings are being assessed.

When and how do we share assessment with parents?

Seesaw

The learning community at St Columba's uses Seesaw as an ongoing digital learning journey that is shared with parents, teachers and students. This platform allows parents to see the process of learning and is not always about the final product. Both teachers, parents and peers can provide feedback to the students via comments as well as discussions.

Written Formal Report

Teachers will provide a formal written report that assesses against the achievement standards of the Victorian Curriculum and Religious Education Standards. These reports are a summative judgement of the semester's work using an A-E scale. A general comment will provide the learning community with an insight into the child as a learner in relation to areas of the Victorian Curriculum.

Parent Teacher Exchange

Term 1: This is a relationship building conference with the parents and teachers. The purpose of this conference is for the parents and caregivers to share and identify social, emotional and academic strengths or areas for improvement.

Term 3: This is a conference between the parent and teacher that reviews the progress reported on in Semester 1; in addition to sharing social, emotional and academic information.

Student led Conferences

St Columba's will introduce student-led conferences in 2023. Student led conferences will be a celebration of learning; encouraging students to reflect on their learning and consider how to best communicate this with their parents. Student learning will be discussed using learning artefacts from the student's perspective and provide an opportunity for further feedback from the adults present.

Open Learning Mornings

Throughout the year, parents are invited into classrooms to observe and take part in their child's learning. The open learning mornings will have different focuses over the year.



On a needs basis

Student/parent/teacher meetings are arranged throughout the year on a needs basis, using assessment to inform and direct the focus of the meeting. Within these meetings, learning achievements and goals will be discussed for the learning community to best support the student. Program Support Groups (PSGs) will be held termly for those students who have individual learning plans.

How do students know how they are going?

Students are provided with multiple opportunities to understand how they are progressing on their learning journey. At St Columba's, frequent feedback from teachers to students enables reflection and further refinement of skills and understandings, supporting student learning and teacher planning. Feedback is provided in both formal and informal learning conferences with the student. Feedback is often structured around what the student's strengths are and their identified learning goal. Feedback may be verbal, visual or written depending on the situation.

As stated above students are also taught the skills needed for self-assessment and reflection which assists students in understanding how they are tracking in terms of their learning and development. As these skills mature, students are better able to monitor their growth and progress.

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