

St. Lawrence College

Senior School Assessment Policy



Our school is one community, united in our respect for each other, tolerant of differences and proud of our diversity, honest and positive about our learning and behaviour every day.

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PURPOSE OF POLICY AND REASONS FOR ASSESSMENT

The purpose of this policy is to support school improvement and the raising of standards of achievement and attainment for all our pupils. Assessment is an essential part of the educational process at St. Lawrence College and a key component of effective learning. At St. Lawrence College, we aim to give grades which are accurate and consistent but above all meaningful and conducive to further progress.

Successful assessment:

- allows educators to see how well concepts taught in class have been understood
- determines the effectiveness of teaching methods
- helps teachers to monitor the progress of individual pupils
- allows pupils to consolidate their knowledge by applying it in a variety of ways
- prepares pupils for external assessment both in school and beyond
- enables pupils to be guided more accurately in terms of choosing subject options and further education courses

TYPES OF ASSESSMENT

At St. Lawrence College, assessment is a continuous process and is achieved using a variety of methods which help to create a more complete portrait of each child's progress and potential. These methods fall broadly into four categories.

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Formative assessment is an essential part of the learning process in which pupils are given the chance to demonstrate what they have learnt. This helps a teacher to understand whether a taught concept has been understood by a pupil. The teacher is then able to adjust lesson plans accordingly to meet the needs of the class. Formative assessment provides both the teacher and pupil with continuous feedback that can be used to identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses and guide the teacher to specific areas which are problematic, giving them the ability to address difficulties immediately. Work which is formatively assessed is not usually given a final grade as the emphasis is on building on and improving what has been done and allowing pupils the opportunity to make managed errors which they will then learn from.

There are many activities which can be considered part of formative assessment such as:

- Class discussions and activities
- Group work
- Presentations
- Teacher observation
- Self-evaluation and peer evaluation

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Summative assessment focuses on testing what a pupil has learnt and is used to evaluate the content and the skills that have been acquired during a taught topic. Summative assessment tasks are graded and the marks are used to calculate Electronic Progress Marks and report grades. On summative assessment tasks, as well as a grade, teachers will also include constructive criticism which guides a pupil and presents feedback on the positives and the areas where improvements could be made.

Types of summative assessment include:

- Project work
- Essays/Writing tasks
- End of topic tests

ASSESSMENT THROUGH EXAMINATIONS

Each year group is examined on a regular basis with examinations which are tailored to meet their individual needs. There are three different types of examination:

- **Internal examinations**

Internal examinations span five days and take place in June for Years 7-10. Pupils are examined in all of their subjects and their marks are recorded in the report which follows it. The class average is also recorded in the report.

- **Mock examinations**

All public examination candidates take specifically scheduled mock examinations in which they have the opportunity to practise each paper in every subject they will take as a public examination. Mock examinations are held in February/March for Year 11 and April for Years 12 and 13. In this way pupils do a complete rehearsal for their public examinations, gain first-hand experience of the importance of timing and the detailed feedback they receive in the weeks after clearly indicates areas that need further focus. Mock examination results along with the class average are recorded in the report which is issued in April (Year 11) and June (Years 12 and 13).

Year 11 pupils who, with the consent of their parent, decide not to take a subject at IGCSE level will not take a mock examination in that subject, instead taking a specifically tailored internal examination in order to complete the course.

- **Public examinations**

Year 11, 12 and 13 pupils take public examinations during May and June in order to gain internationally recognised qualifications from examination boards Cambridge International Examinations (CIE), Edexcel and Pearson.

Year 11 pupils take Cambridge IGCSEs (International General Certificate of Secondary Education) which are a culmination of work done in Years 10 and 11. If necessary, it is possible to re-take English Language and/or Mathematics IGCSEs the following year.

Year 12 and 13 pupils on two-year A-Level courses are assessed at the end of each year. Year 12 pupils take Advanced Subsidiary (AS) Level examinations and Year 13 take Advanced (A) Level examinations often referred to as A2 examinations. In some subjects, Year 13 pupils are also able to retake the previous year's papers.

Results of all public examinations taken are available in August.

STANDARDISED ASSESSMENT FOR EVALUATION AND MONITORING

In October each year, Year 7-10 pupils take online assessments produced by the University of Durham Centre of Evaluation and Monitoring. These assessments (MidYis for Year 7-9 and Yellis for Year 10) measure knowledge in areas such as vocabulary and Mathematics and provide a snapshot of each pupil's capability. The results are used for evaluation purposes only and enable the school to measure and track each pupil's progress and potential. Parents receive feedback on their child's performance, which shows how each child compares to pupils from schools around the world who have also taken the assessments and indicates where further attention needs to be paid.

This data is used in several ways. It allows the school to evaluate the effectiveness of its assessment and teaching practices in direct comparison with global pupil performance and, therefore, set viable targets for the future on an individual level as well as per cohort. It also enables the school to compare teacher and pupil performance over the years and ultimately improve teaching and learning at St. Lawrence College.

REPORTING ASSESSMENT: WRITTEN FEEDBACK

Within each school year, from September to June, a pupil will receive 4 pieces of summative assessment feedback. This feedback is sent electronically to the parents or guardians of a child and parents are encouraged to discuss this feedback with their child and teachers if necessary.

ELECTRONIC PROGRESS MARKS (EPMS)

Electronic Progress Marks are issued in November and March. Each subject teacher gives a mark out of 20 which is based mainly on summative assessment tasks, although the presentation of work, behaviour and/or class contribution may also be factored in. Underneath each pupil's mark, the average of the class is also given to provide a point of reference.

For more specific information on how an EPM is calculated and what the mark represents, please see individual departmental assessment policies in which grade boundaries are clearly explained according to the demands of each subject and each Key Stage.

REPORTS

Reports are issued in December to all year groups and in June to all year groups except Year 11 pupils who receive them in April before their public examinations begin. The second report of the year contains examination results and averages from the summer or mock examination session. They also include a term grade for each subject ranging from A-F as well as an effort grade ranging from E (Excellent) to P (Poor).

TERM GRADE BAND DESCRIPTORS

Term grades are calculated based on summative assessment tasks set over the course of the school year.

Term Grade	Summative Assessment Total	Description
A	80%-100%	Produces work of consistently excellent quality which demonstrates a clear and extensive understanding of concepts taught. Is frequently able to apply this understanding to a wide variety of situations both in the classroom and the real world.
B	65%-79%	Produces work of consistently good quality which demonstrates a solid understanding of concepts taught. Is often able to apply this understanding to a variety of situations both in the classroom and the real world.
C	50%-64%	Produces work of a satisfactory quality and has an understanding of concepts taught but not consistently so. Is occasionally able to apply this understanding to situations both in the classroom and the real world.
D	40%-49%	Produces work which demonstrates a superficial understanding but lacks depth and detail. Finds it difficult to retain what has been learnt or apply it to other situations.
E	30%-39%	Produces work which demonstrates limited understanding and significant gaps in knowledge. Infrequently applies understanding to situations in the classroom or the real world.
F	0%-29%	Produces work of very limited quality which shows significant misunderstandings or which is extremely simplistic and undeveloped. Very rarely applies understanding to situations in the classroom or the real world.

EFFORT GRADE BAND DESCRIPTORS

Term Grade	Description
E (Excellent)	Always fully engaged in the lesson and always prepared in every way necessary. Exhibits a positive, respectful attitude towards classroom rules and teacher expectations. Is motivated and seeks out extra-learning opportunities.
G (Good)	Almost always engaged in the lesson and usually prepared. Almost always exhibits a positive, respectful attitude towards classroom rules and teacher expectations. Is generally motivated and will occasionally seek out extra-learning opportunities.
S (Satisfactory)	Generally engaged in the lesson and prepared to some extent. Usually exhibits a positive, respectful attitude towards classroom rules and teacher expectations. Can be motivated but not consistently so and needs monitoring to be kept focused.
N.I. (Needs Improving)	Inconsistently engaged in the lesson and sometimes unprepared. At times exhibits a positive, respectful attitude towards classroom rules and teacher expectations but not often enough. Often lacks motivation which makes constant monitoring necessary.
P (Poor)	Rarely engaged in the lesson and frequently unprepared. Rarely exhibits a positive, respectful attitude towards classroom rules and teacher expectations. Lacks motivation and rarely stays focused on the task despite frequent intervention from the teacher.

As well as term grades and effort grades, pupils' reports also include constructive comments from the subject teacher, the pupil's form teacher and the Head or one of the Deputy Heads of the school.

REPORTING ASSESSMENT: VERBAL FEEDBACK

There are frequent opportunities for parents to meet subject teachers, Heads of Department and senior leaders over the course of the school year to discuss their child's progress and other matters of concern. In addition to regular communication through emails, telephone calls and the use of platforms such as Teams, Skype and Zoom, there are also scheduled times within the school year for the giving of feedback; Covid-19 restrictions permitting.

PARENT-TEACHER MEETINGS

Parent-teacher meetings take place twice a year for each year group in the Autumn and Spring terms. These meetings take place after school and enable parents to discuss their child's progress with all subject teachers.

WEEKLY TEACHER MEETING TIMES

Every teacher has an assigned period per week in which he/she is available to meet or communicate with parents to give detailed feedback or discuss particular issues affecting a child's progress.

ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

St Lawrence College strongly believes that pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) should have a full range of options at their disposal to ensure they are not at a disadvantage when being assessed. Such options include:

- Modified internal examinations
- 25% additional time
- Use of a reader or scribe
- Use of a laptop

Documentation which clearly outlines specific learning difficulties must be supplied to the school's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) in order for these provisions to be made. An appropriate course of action will then be decided on by the SENCO and Examinations Officer in consultation with the pupil and parents. However, the school can only make special provision in public examinations if the request is approved by the relevant examining body.

Please see the St. Lawrence College Special Educational Needs policy for more information on this topic.

DEPARTMENTAL ASSESSMENT POLICIES

Each department has a policy, available upon request, which clearly outlines methods and types of assessments assigned over the course of the year as well as grade boundaries explained according to the demands of each subject and each Key Stage. To ensure complete understanding, pupils are issued with guidelines for each subject at the beginning of the academic year.

FACILITATING ASSESSMENT: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

For assessment to be both constructive and accurate, pupils, teachers and parents/guardians all have an important role to play.

IT IS THE HEAD TEACHER'S RESPONSIBILITY TO:

- plan and organise meetings where common objectives can be agreed and the development and implementation of the assessment policy can be discussed
- support and monitor the work of the school in relation to raising standards and ensuring good pupil progress
- ensure that the school staff are aware of the most recent assessment developments
- organise staff training ensuring development of practice

IT IS THE DEPUTY HEAD TEACHER'S RESPONSIBILITY TO:

- lead the development of the Senior School Assessment Policy
- keep up to date with current assessment thinking and practice
- ensure that assessment priorities are addressed in the school development plan
- liaise with Heads of Departments and class teachers
- co-ordinate interventions and monitor their effectiveness
- assist the Head with setting whole school targets
- ensure that agreed implementation procedures are happening school-wide
- ensure that tests are carried out to agreed timetables
- oversee the preparation for and running of public examinations

IT IS THE SENCO'S RESPONSIBILITY TO:

- co-ordinate the identification and assessment of children with SEN
- monitor effectiveness of interventions
- lead interventions where professional teaching skills are necessary

IT IS THE TEACHER'S RESPONSIBILITY TO:

- explain and give guidelines for each assessment so that every pupil has a clear idea of how to approach a specific task
- set an appropriate deadline which gives pupils of all levels adequate time to complete the assignment
- ensure that task-specific instructions and deadlines have been recorded in each pupil's homework diary
- mark and return homework tasks promptly
- provide detailed formative feedback which explicitly explains how each pupil can improve further
- adjust the pace and/or content of each lesson to reflect the needs of the pupils
- show an awareness of the diversity of learning styles within a class by using a variety of teaching and assessment strategies
- record all marks in order to be able to produce an accurate record of pupil progress

IT IS THE PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO:

- monitor regular homework and revision
- inform the school if anything occurs which might affect their child's progress
- consider assessment deadlines and examination dates before scheduling other activities
- re-enforce the importance of meeting deadlines and the consequences of failing to do so
- encourage their child to complete homework tasks independently and to the best of their ability
- inform the school if there has been a change in telephone number or e-mail address in order to facilitate communication
- ensure that the pupil meets the school's attendance requirements

IT IS THE PUPIL'S RESPONSIBILITY TO:

- be fully prepared for every lesson with the necessary equipment and homework completed
- record test dates and homework assignments along with relevant deadlines in homework diaries
- meet all assessment deadlines
- ask the teacher for clarification if necessary, before an assignment is due
- prepare effectively and in a timely manner for all tests and exams
- ensure that the work they submit is their own
- present work which is neat, organised and complies with the given instructions

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ASSESSMENT POLICY

Senior managers and Heads of Department are responsible for ensuring that the types and methods of assessment as outlined in this policy are put into practice in the classroom. Self-evaluation amongst the teaching staff is encouraged and observations followed by constructive feedback are a regular occurrence. All staff attend regular training sessions, both online and on-site seminars, to ensure that they are kept abreast of changes to assessment and different educational philosophies. New teachers are introduced to the school's assessment policy and are given the opportunity to take part in subject-specific workshops to become more familiar with Key Stage targets.