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| **Assessment & Change of Level Policy** | Final DRAFT May 5th2015 |
|  Ramsgrange Community School is a welcoming, open and inclusive school. Our aim is to develop each of our students as a whole person by promoting an atmosphere of respect, honesty, and fairness in which all in the school community can achieve their full potential. | **Ramsgrange Community School** |

**Mission Statement**

**“Ramsgrange Community School is a welcoming, open and inclusive school. Our aim is to develop each student as a whole person by promoting an atmosphere of respect, honesty and fairness in which all the school community can achieve their full potential.”**

**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.**

**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 progress.**
* **To establish baseline data in relation to a student’s attainments in certain subjects.**
* **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 agency for assessment or direct intervention.**

**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.**

**Rationale:**

**RCS recognises the importance of assessment across the whole student body, standardised, formative and summative. This policy aims to formalise ‘testing’ across departments and to aid the tracking of student’s attainment as they progress through RCS.**

The following is a list school policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to the Assessment & Change of Level Policy:

* Mission statement
* The School Care Team
* Code of Behaviour
* Special Educational Needs/ Learning Support Policy

The Board has ensured that the necessary policies, protocols or practices as appropriate are in place in respect of each of the above listed items.

**Formative Assessment:**

Definition

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

**RCS Protocol:**

**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 may be awarded at the discretion of the Teacher and may be returned, either with the initial work, or may be given at a later date.**

**Assessment work may be differentiated to suit the needs and abilities of the individual.**

**Summative Assessment:**

**Definition**

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

**RCS Protocol:**

**Third and Sixth years have mock examinations usually in February/ March and the certificate exams in June. They also sit formal school exams in Term 1.**

**Fifth, Second and First years have exams in December and May. They also have regular in-class exams.**

**TY’s and LCA’s are assessed in a variety of ways at varying intervals, student self-assessment, project work, skill development assessment, written exams, oral presentations etc. Please see individual Programme Plans for further details.**

**The mode of assessment may include: written examinations, practicals, aurals and/or oral work and Assessment For Learning (\*AFL)**

**Each Subject Department sets out examinations in the most appropriate format.**

**Mock exams are set and corrected internally- \*review working group established March 2015 to look at correction of mock exams**

**All summative assessments are co-ordinated by a Post Holder.**

**\*Assessment For Learning**

At the heart of assessment for learning is the concept that students who truly understand and are involved in their learning have accelerated rates of achievement. Assessment-capable students know what they need to learn, where they are with that learning and what their next learning steps are. To create the dynamicin theclassroom that enables students to take charge of their learning, teachers need to have, or to develop, a genuine view of both the students and of themselves as learners. They must build their own capacity, and also enable students to build theirs, for learning to learn.

AFL is based on the concepts:

1. Providing effective feedback to students.
2. Students’ active involvement in their own learning.
3. Adjusting teaching to take account of the results of assessment.
4. Recognising the profound influence of assessment on students’ motivation and self-esteem - both crucial influences on learning.
5. Ensuring pupils assess themselves and understand how to improve.

**Reports:**

**Reports for Third and Sixth Year Students are forwarded to Parents/Guardians, following house exams and following the Mock Exams.**

**Reports for Fifth, Second, First Years, TY’s and LCA’s are forwarded to Parents/Guardians in January and June.**

**The reports template is computer generated (except TY & LCA) and allows Teachers to distinguish levels. A mark and grade are awarded and a comment can be generated from a menu. Alternatively, Teachers may compose a unique comment.**

**The school report generates an absence/days missed report.**

**The school report generates a merits/demerit report.**

**Reports are checked by the Principal and Deputy Principal and are signed off on by the Principal.**

**Standardised/ Psychometric Testing\*: Specific tests may vary**

**Student Tracking:**

**Prior to entrance to RCS all incoming First Years sit standardised tests.**

**In February, the following tests are administered to Incoming First Years;**

1. **CAT4\***
2. **‘Reading age’ test – NGRT\***

**In September, the following tests are administered to First Years;**

1. **WRAT4 – Spelling and Mathematical Computation Subtest.**

**In May, the following tests will be administered to Second Years;**

1. **Dictation**

**In Jan/Feb, the following test will be administered to Third Years;**

1. **DATS for Guidance.**

**These tests, along with Teacher-led exams and School Self Evaluation (e.g. TL21) will help the school to determine several things, including;**

* **Those students with Special Educational Needs.**
* **Areas where a student may display a Specific Learning Difficulty.**
* **An area where a student excels.**
* **To help initiate the creation of an IEP (Individual Education Plan) the IEP will be drawn up by the SEN Team in conjunction with parents and school management.**
* **A Students attainment and progression in subject areas.**
* **How Students make informed decisions with regard to subject choice.**
* **Habits and systems with regard to exam performance.**
* **To establish if students need to apply for Reasonable Accommodation (RACE) for state exams.**

**Changing Levels for the Certificate Examinations**

**RCS School Policy**

**All Students will be encouraged to attempt at higher level until the Mock Examinations\* in the year of the Certificate Examination. Students will be informed of this from first year onwards. Levels will be agreed with the students and permission to change levels will only be granted following the procedures below.**

**\*This is with the exception of Students doing practical subjects where the practical element of the exam is completed before the mock exams**

**Procedures to change levels:**

* **Following the Mock Examination the student will first meet with the teacher to discuss changing level for a certificate examination.**
* **The subject teacher will either write a note in the journal or phone call will be made to the parent/guardian or a meeting will be organised with the parent/guardian of the student.**
* **All LC students must meet with the Guidance Counsellor to discuss the implications of changing levels.**
* **A decision will then be made by the student and parents, in consultation with the teacher and school management, as to whether the student should change level.**
* **Students will be discouraged from changing levels on the day of the examination unless it is an exceptional circumstance.**
* **JC examination students may only change level with the written permission of the Deputy Principal/Principal.**
* **JC examination students must have decided on the level that they will sit BEFORE the state examinations. This date is set by the Department of Education and Skills.**
* **RCS recognises the right of LC examination student to change levels on the day of the examination in June.**

**Review and Evaluation:**

This policy has been made available to school personnel and the Parents’ Association and is readily accessible to parents on request.

A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management in 2016 or sooner if deemed necessary.

**Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Trustee Nominee) Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Trustee Nominee)**

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