Dominican College
Assessment & Reporting Policy

ASSESSMENT

Introduction

"Dedicated to Truth and Respect. Committed to realising the potential of all"

The development of each individual is the central aim of education in Dominican College. Assessment is an opportunity for supporting learning, evaluating teaching and enabling the realisation of potential.

The results of assessment need to be communicated in ways that are readily understandable to the pupils; to the parents; to other teachers; and agencies outside the school community.

To fulfil its function assessment needs to be simple yet comprehensive, carried out at frequent intervals, recorded and communicated effectively and evaluated promptly.

General Principles

"Where am I going? How am I going? Where to next?" (Hattie & Timperley, 2007)

1. Assessment is an integral part of the learning and teaching processes; it represents a valuable formative tool in supporting learning, measuring progress and evaluating provision.

2. For the **LEARNER** Assessment:-
    o recognises achievement;
    o promotes understanding of goals and criteria (directing their own learning);
    o helps learners know how to improve;
    o develops the capacity for self (and peer) evaluation;
    o is rich in timely formal and informal feedback;
    o is sensitive and constructive and fosters motivation;
    o is an on-going process.

3. For the **TEACHER** Assessment:-
    o is a key professional skill and part of effective planning and evaluation;
    o focuses on how pupils learn;
    o is rich in timely formal and informal feedback;
    o is a confidence building opportunity and practice;
    o is an on-going process.

4. A common marking framework is used which is fully understood by all the teachers within each department.

5. Assessment gradually builds up into a profile for each pupil over their school career.

6. Assessment has a common procedure and should:
    a. Provide teacher judgements which are as valid and reliable as possible;
    b. Be consistent within the School, with NI Revised Curriculum standards and with the standards of requirements of KS4 and Post 16 specifications;

c. Promote a common interpretation of the NI Revised Curriculum and KS4 and Post 16 specification assessment requirements;

d. Give teachers confidence in their professional judgement and skill;

e. Be fair to pupils.

7. Assessment records should:
   a. Be based on an agreed set of principles and purposes;
   b. Assess pupil progress against criteria as defined in the KS3, Revised Curriculum, KS4 and Post-16 specifications;
   c. Not be administratively burdensome.

8. Results of assessment are reported in a way useful for pupils, teachers, parents and other interested parties.

9. Recognition will be given by management for the time and resource implications of good assessment and due allowance made for this in the construction of the teachers' working day.

10. Departments should be proactive in celebrating pupils' achievement and success.

Teacher Assessment

Assessment has <u>FOUR</u> key aspects. It must be: *diagnostic; formative; evaluative*; and *summative* (see Figure 1).
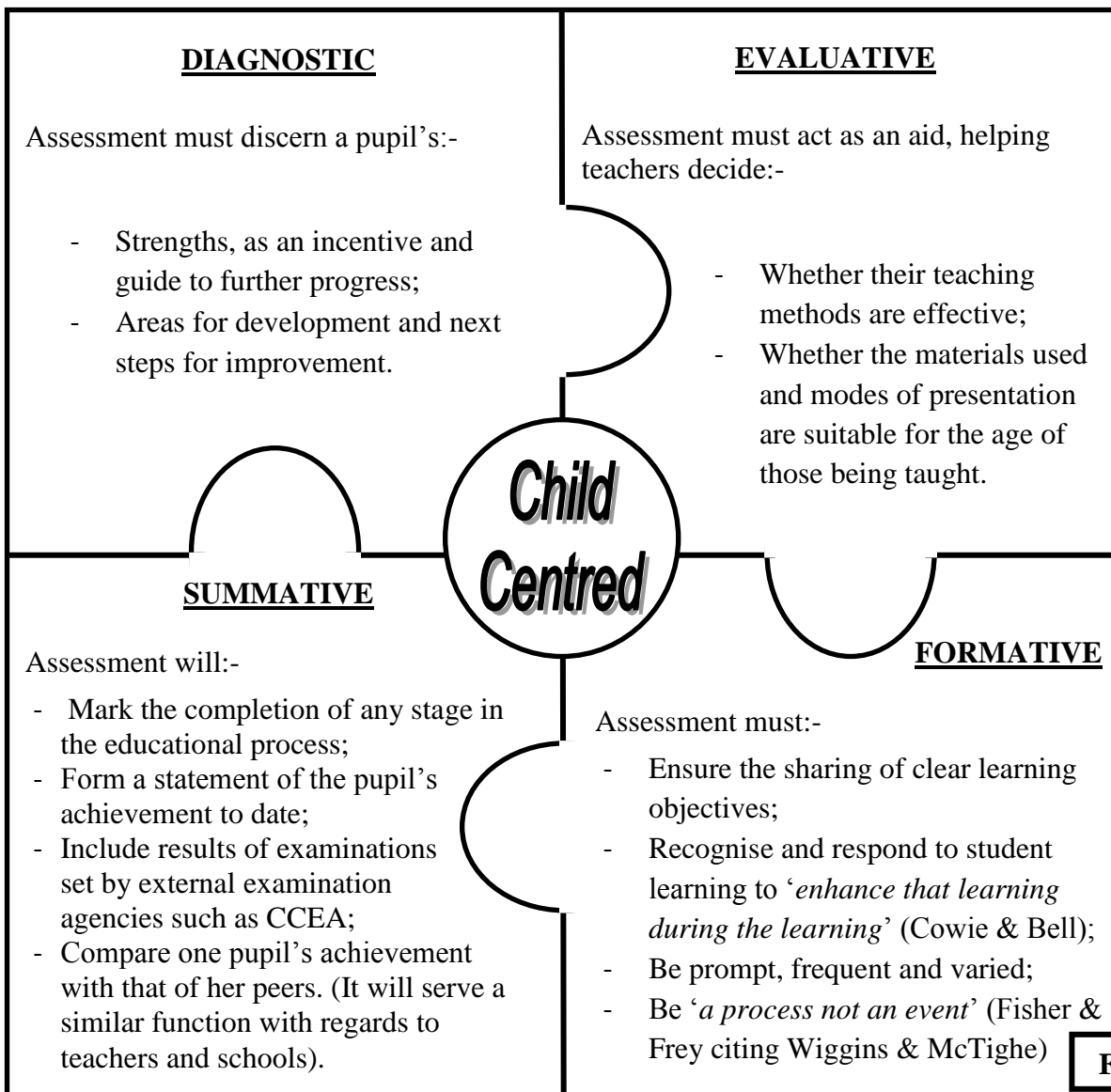

DIAGNOSTIC

Assessment must discern a pupil's:-

- Strengths, as an incentive and guide to further progress;
- Areas for development and next steps for improvement.

EVALUATIVE

Assessment must act as an aid, helping teachers decide:-

- Whether their teaching methods are effective;
- Whether the materials used and modes of presentation are suitable for the age of those being taught.

Child Centred

SUMMATIVE

Assessment will:-

- Mark the completion of any stage in the educational process;
- Form a statement of the pupil's achievement to date;
- Include results of examinations set by external examination agencies such as CCEA;
- Compare one pupil's achievement with that of her peers. (It will serve a similar function with regards to teachers and schools).

FORMATIVE

Assessment must:-

- Ensure the sharing of clear learning objectives;
- Recognise and respond to student learning to '*enhance that learning during the learning*' (Cowie & Bell);
- Be prompt, frequent and varied;
- Be '*a process not an event*' (Fisher & Frey citing Wiggins & McTighe)

FIGURE 1

Assessment for Learning

"*Assessment for learning is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go next, and how best to get there*". (Assessment for learning: 10 Principles (The Assessment Reform Group, 2002))

Each department will outline in detail its policy on 'Assessment for Learning' and the strategies to be employed in respect to each of the following:

a) **Planning**
b) **Sharing Learning Intentions and Success Criteria**
c) **Questioning**
d) **Peer and Self Evaluation**
e) **Feedback**
f) **Feed-forward / individual target setting and teacher evaluation**
g) **Celebrating achievement**

See Figure 2

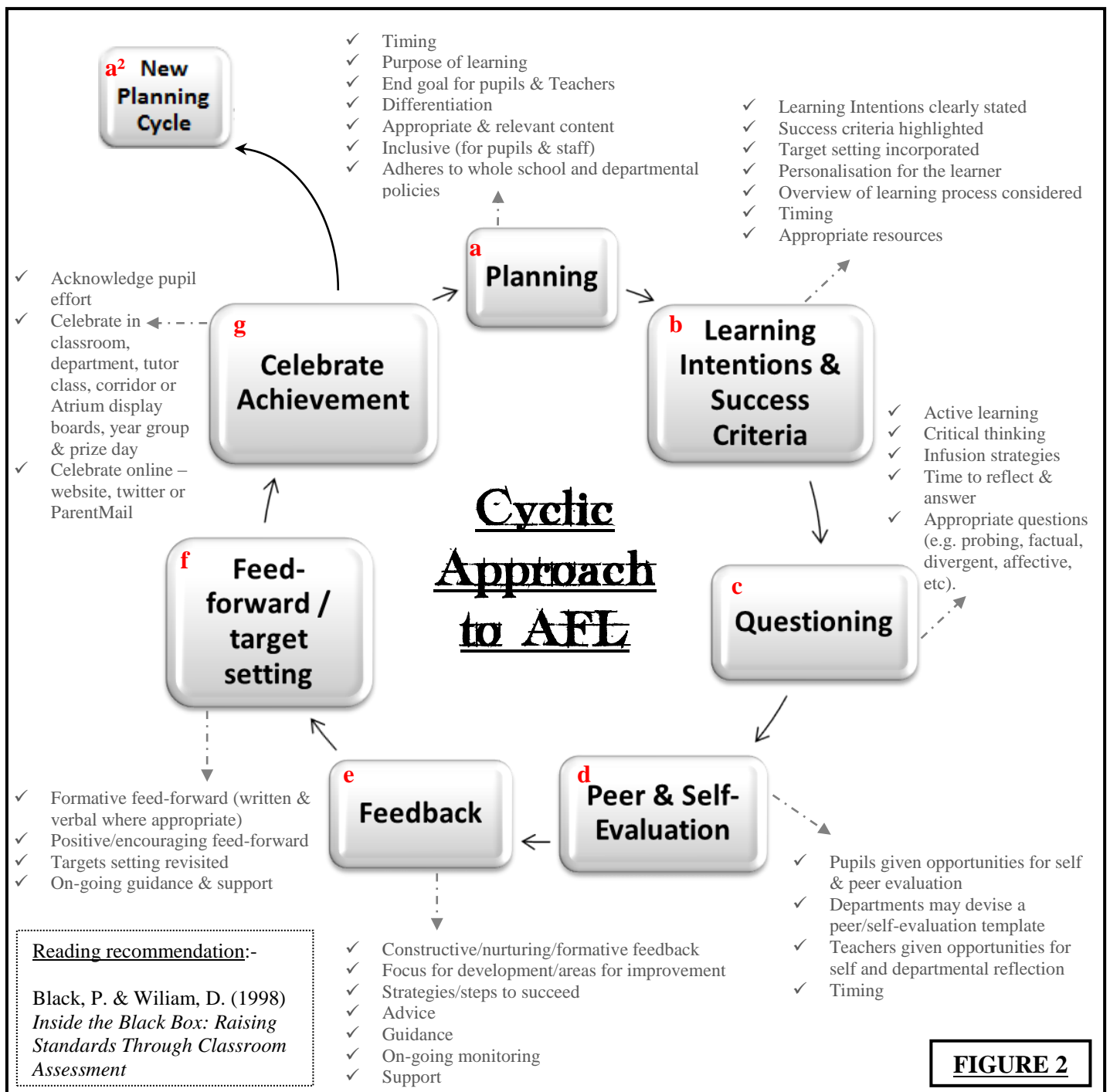
a² New Planning Cycle

✓ Timing
✓ Purpose of learning
✓ End goal for pupils & Teachers
✓ Differentiation
✓ Appropriate & relevant content
✓ Inclusive (for pupils & staff)
✓ Adheres to whole school and departmental policies

a Planning

✓ Learning Intentions clearly stated
✓ Success criteria highlighted
✓ Target setting incorporated
✓ Personalisation for the learner
✓ Overview of learning process considered
✓ Timing
✓ Appropriate resources

b Learning Intentions & Success Criteria

✓ Acknowledge pupil effort
✓ Celebrate in classroom, department, tutor class, corridor or Atrium display boards, year group & prize day
✓ Celebrate online – website, twitter or ParentMail

g Celebrate Achievement

Cyclic Approach to AFL

✓ Active learning
✓ Critical thinking
✓ Infusion strategies
✓ Time to reflect & answer
✓ Appropriate questions (e.g. probing, factual, divergent, affective, etc).

c Questioning

f Feed-forward / target setting

e Feedback

d Peer & Self-Evaluation

✓ Formative feed-forward (written & verbal where appropriate)
✓ Positive/encouraging feed-forward
✓ Targets setting revisited
✓ On-going guidance & support

✓ Pupils given opportunities for self & peer evaluation
✓ Departments may devise a peer/self-evaluation template
✓ Teachers given opportunities for self and departmental reflection
✓ Timing

Reading recommendation:-

Black, P. & Wiliam, D. (1998) *Inside the Black Box: Raising Standards Through Classroom Assessment*

✓ Constructive/nurturing/formative feedback
✓ Focus for development/areas for improvement
✓ Strategies/steps to succeed
✓ Advice
✓ Guidance
✓ On-going monitoring
✓ Support

FIGURE 2

Core Assessment Policy Principles: Applicable to every Department

1. Each department should agree and set out in detail <u>using a calendar based-approach</u>:-
   a. The number of occasions on which pupils' work will be assessed during each term (*giving specific dates or assessment windows, where appropriate*);
   b. The form and focus each assessment will take;
   c. The process(es) and feedback approach(es)for returning assessments to pupils;
   d. Assessment evaluation strategies (pupils and staff). Evaluation should be meaningful, structured and present pupils with an opportunity to reflect on their strengths and areas for improvement along with identifying appropriate strategies for development. A departmentally agreed format/template is recommended;
   e. The method(s) for recording assessment information.

2. Modes of assessment should be varied to reflect the range and competencies associated with different subjects. Assessments can be:
   a. Written or ICT based;
   b. Coursework/Controlled Assessment;
   c. Project work or Portfolio-based work;
   d. Oral presentation or visual/dramatic presentation;
   e. Extended homework; etc.

3. KS3 Cross Curricular Skills and Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities – Each department will outline in detail its policy on the delivery and assessment of:-
   a. Cross Curricular Skills (CCSs)
   b. Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities (TSPCs)

   ALL teachers are required to help pupils acquire and develop the CCSs and TSPCs. Nominated departments will be required to report on the CCSs and TSPCs (see the 'Reporting' section of this policy)

4. All assessments do not necessarily all have to be **common assessments** and the number may vary for each department. However, HODs should ensure that the number of assessments is not excessive and keep in mind that assessment is primarily to assist learning not simply to generate and record marks.

5. With respect to **common assessments** within departments:-
   a. Within departments teachers, particularly those who will be using the assessment with their pupils, should **agree** on assessment content and marking format;
   b. Staff should have the chance to **review** a draft of the assessment;
   c. There should be departmental agreement about when to deliver the assessment to pupils and how to store the assessments;
   d. Departments should sample common assessments for **Moderation** purposes, across each year group;
   e. Detailed **mark schemes** should be provided;
   f. The format for returning assessments, feeding back to pupils and evaluating (staff and pupils) should be agreed.

6. Marking of pupils work – each department will outline in detail, within its assessment policy, the agreed setting and marking procedures for assessing pupils' work.

7. **<u>Tracking and target setting</u>** – each department should have an agreed target setting plan for each pupil, which uses internal assessment data and benchmarking data. Pupils should be involved in this process and target setting must be tailored to each pupil, with specific strategies in place. See the '**Target Setting Policy**' for more information.

8. Each departmental Assessment Policy must include a detailed description of all assessment arrangements for that department.

Whole School Common Assessments

1. Figure 3 below provides a break down on departmental requirements for common assessments.

Months		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Assessments to be completed by & marks entered into SIMS
Common Assessments	1											*10th October*
	2											*26th October*
	3											*Before Winter Reports are due to Tutor*
	4											*End of February*
	5											*30th April*
	6											*Before Summer Reports are due to Tutor*

NB: All assessments can be stand alone or a combination of previous common assessments

Category	Subjects		Timeline of Assessments and when Marks should be entered into SIMS	Total Assessments	
				Sep-Dec	*Jan-Jun*
A	English	Y8-11	- Assessment Marks will be added for Assessments 1-6 - Existing arrangements for English Language and Literature Y11 will remain	3	3
		Y12-14	- Assessment Marks will be added for Assessments 1-5 - Existing arrangements for English Language and Literature Y12 will remain	3	2
	Maths	Y8-11	- Assessment Marks will be added for Assessments 1-6	3	3
		Y12-14	- Assessment Marks will be added for Assessments 1-5	3	2
B	All Other Subjects	Y8-11	- Assessment Marks will be added for Assessments 2-6	2	3
		Y12-14	- Assessment Marks will be added for Assessments 2-5 - BTEC PE will use Pass, Merit or Distinction instead of grades	2	2
C	Exceptions to the rule	Y8 ICT	- Assessments 2 & 3 will be used and…. · Assessments 5 & 6 will also be used	2	2
		Y8 HE	- Assessments 5 & 6 will used	0	2
		Y8 Music	- Assessments 5 & 6 will used		
		Y11-12 DA	- The DA Science teachers (Biology, Chemistry & Physics) will agree the distribution and number of assessments with the HoD	4	6

FIGURE 3

2. The **median average** for the whole year group must be used for reporting purposes and should fall within the range 50% - 80% (see point 5 on Differentiation). HoDs will enter this value into the 'Winter' and 'Summer' Marksheets where appropriate.

3. Each common assessment mark **must** reflect a **rigorous assessment** of the pupils' progress. This can be obtained using a single comprehensive written assessment or a compilation of appropriate shorter written assessments.

4. **Differentiation in assessments**:-
   a. Assessments must take into consideration the age of the pupils, teaching methods and ability range of the groups being taught;
   b. Assessments should provide an opportunity for pupils of all abilities to demonstrate an appropriate level of achievement.
      i. Approximately 25% of each assessment should be accessible to ALL pupils;
      ii. Approximately 50% of each assessment should be accessible to the majority of pupils;
      iii. Approximately 25% of each assessment should be designed to stretch and challenge all pupils.
   c. It is recommended that ALL common assessment should have an 'extension' element that will challenge more able (gifted) pupils.

5. Regarding Assessment **Mark 3** (**Christmas Assessment**) and **Mark 6 (Summer Assessment)**:-
   a. They must be a summative assessment of each pupil's progress to date.
   b. They will appear on Progress Reports issued to parents in January and June respectively.
   c. At least 80% of the Christmas and Summer marks should come from one assessment (e.g. Assessment 1 and/or 2 may contribute up to 20% of the total for assessment mark 3 if appropriate and assessment marks 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 (or a combination) may contribute up to 20% of the total for assessment mark 6 if appropriate), except for:-
      i. Those subjects with a **significant** practical/coursework element. The Christmas and Summer Assessments must make up at least 50% of Assessment Mark 3 and Assessment Mark 6 respectively.
      ii. Those subjects with only practical/coursework elements. The Christmas and/or Summer Assessments marks should be reflective of the pupil's over all performance.

6. Common assessments **must** be formally marked by the teacher and returned to the pupils. **Pupils must be informed of all Common Assessment outcomes**.

7. **Pupil Absence**:-
   a. In the event that a pupil is absent for an assessment which contributes to a **common assessment mark** (except assessment marks 3 and 6), the pupil will be afforded one opportunity to take the same assessment or a similar assessment at a later date.
   b. In the event that a pupil is absent for an end of term summative assessment, pupils should be recorded as absent on the report to be issued to parents. Pupils who are absent for an end of term summative assessment will be afforded the opportunity to complete the test at home but the mark will not be recorded on Assessment Manager.

8. For your GCSE and GCE pupils two **interim reports** will be sent to parents based on the Common Assessment Marks entered into SIMS.
   a. The first will be given to parents in **early November** (*it will include all common assessment marks entered onto tracker Marksheet up to October 26th*).
   b. The second will be given to Parents in **March** each Year (*it will include all common assessment marks entered onto tracker Marksheet up to the end of February*).

9. Departments that enter pupils for **external modular examinations** in May/June of **Year 11** must provide a summative mark for these pupils to be entered on their summer report. The recommendation is that this summative assessment mark encompasses **all or some** of the previous common assessment marks (the weighting of each assessment should be carefully considered by each department).

Homework
Each department will outline in detail its policy on the setting and marking of homework. This will be contained in a separate '**Homework Policy**'.

REPORTING

Introduction

Parents and pupils are key stakeholders in education and as such they require meaningful information about each pupil's progress and achievement in relation to learning entitlements of the curriculum. Parents have a valuable role to play in supporting their children's learning at and beyond school. Clear and informative reports allow for effective communication between home and school and enable parents to contribute constructively to their child's learning. Therefore reports have <u>TWO</u> main purposes:-

> *Firstly, it (reporting) provides clear, positive and constructive feedback about children's and young people's learning and progress, looking back on what has been achieved against standards and expectations. Secondly, it creates an agenda for discussions between learners and those teaching and supporting them about their next steps in learning.* (BtC5 p13).

Key Elements of the Report Procedure

1. **Frequency & Scheduling** of Reporting to Parents – see Figure 4.

Years Group	Short Report Subject/Tutor comments are **NOT** required	Long Report Subject/Tutor comments **ARE** required	Interim Report Will be generated automatically from data inputted into Sims	PTM (Term)	Total	FIGURE 4
8	Winter	Summer	/	Third	3	
9	Winter	Summer	/	Third	3	
10	Summer	Winter	/	First	3	
11	Winter	Summer	Nov & Mar	Second	5	
12	/	Winter	Nov & Mar	First	4	
13	/	Winter	Nov & Mar	Second	4	
14	/	Winter	Nov & Mar	First	4	

2. Written reports will be generated using SIMS.net and forwarded to parents by post.

3. Common Assessment **Mark 3** will be used for Winter Reporting and Common Assessment **Mark 6** for Summer Reporting.

4. All assessment marks on the pupil's report **must** be a percentage rounded to the nearest whole number, except for BTEC Sports Studies that will use pass, merit or distinction.

5. Year Heads may arrange more frequent reporting, either in writing or in person, should the need arise, in line with the school's Behaviour Management Policy.

6. Comments on **LLW ARE** required on Year 8, 9 and 10 Summer Reports.

7. **Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities** – see Figure 5.

FIGURE 5

TS & PCs	8		9		10	
	When	**Subject**	**When**	**Subject**	**When**	**Subject**
Managing Information	*Summer*	History	*Summer*	Geography	*Winter*	French
Thinking, Problem-solving & Decision Making	*Summer*	Science	*Summer*	ICT	*Winter*	History
Being Creative	*Summer*	Art	*Summer*	Music	*Winter*	Music
Working with Others	*Summer*	Spanish/ Irish	*Summer*	Drama	*Winter*	PE
Self-Management	*Summer*	French	*Summer*	RE	*Winter*	RE

8. **Median, behaviour, effort, homework** and **classes missed** must be included in ALL Winter and Summer Reports. The median average for the whole year group must be used for reporting purposes.

9. **Subject comments** should begin with a positive statement and **MUST** conclude with a '*Focus for Development'*. Teachers are asked to ensure that a fair but honest comment is written about each pupil.

    a. <u>Years 8, 9 & 10:</u>   Comments should have between 200-400 characters (including spaces).
    b. <u>Years 11 & 12:</u>   Comments should have between 250-450 characters (including spaces).
    c. <u>Years 13 & 14:</u>   Comments should have between 400-600 characters (including spaces).

10. **Tutor comments** should make reference to pupils *Interests and Strengths* and to pupils' *Personal Attributes* (e.g. overall academic performance, attendance, punctuality along with extra-curricular participation – sport, music, clubs/societies). Tutors must also record *Days Late*.

    a. <u>Years 8, 9, 10:</u>   Comments should have between 250-400 characters (including spaces).
    b. <u>Years 11 & 12:</u>   Comments should have between 300-450 characters (including spaces).
    c. <u>Years 13 & 14:</u>   Comments should have between 400-600 characters (including spaces).

11. Please consult the updated '**Guide to Report Writing'** in conjunction with this policy.

12. Prior to the Winter and Summer Reports further guidance/information will be communicated to staff, e.g. reporting deadlines and a reminder of general guidelines.

REFERENCES

Black, P & Wiliam, D (1998) *Inside the Black Box: Raising Standards Through Classroom Assessment*

Cowie, B. & Bell, B. (1999) A model of formative assessment in science education. *Assessment in Education: Principles Policy and Practice, 6*(1), 32-42.

Scottish Government (2010) *Curriculum for Excellence Building the Curriculum 5 Framework for Assessment and Reporting*

Hattie, J. & Timperley, H. (2007) *The Power of Feedback*, Review of Educational Research 77: 81

The Assessment Reform Group (2002) *Assessment for Learning: 10 Principles*

Wiggins, G. P. & McTighe, J. (2005) *Understanding by Design* cited in Fisher, D. & Frey, N. (2007) *Checking For Understanding: Formative Assessment Techniques For Your Classroom,* ASCD