PRIMARY ASSESSMENT POLICY

PURPOSE
This policy describes the principles and expectations for assessing student achievement. The purpose of assessment is to provide information on student achievement and progress and to set directions for subsequent teaching and learning.

POLICY
Assessment is a vital part of any teaching and learning cycle. Planning, teaching and learning, assessing and reporting are closely linked, and the goal of these processes is promoting student learning and achievement.

NSW syllabuses and support materials promote an integrated approach to teaching, learning and assessment. Assessment for learning, assessment as learning and assessment of learning are approaches that can be used individually or together, formally or informally, to gather evidence about student achievement and to improve student learning.

The principles of assessment for learning and assessment as learning strategies have some common elements. Assessment for learning and assessment as learning incorporate:

- self-assessment and peer assessment
- strategies for students to actively monitor and evaluate their own learning
- feedback, together with evidence, to help teachers and students decide whether students are ready for the next phase of learning or whether they need further learning experiences to consolidate their knowledge, understanding and skills.

Assessment for learning and assessment as learning approaches, in particular, help teachers and students to know if current understanding is a suitable basis for future learning. Teachers, using their professional judgement in a standards-referenced framework, are able to extend the process of assessment for learning into the assessment of learning.

DEFINITIONS
Assessment for learning involves teachers using evidence about students' knowledge, understanding and skills to inform their teaching. Sometimes referred to as 'formative assessment', it usually occurs throughout the teaching and learning process to clarify student learning and understanding.

Assessment for learning:
- reflects a view of learning in which assessment helps students learn better, rather than just achieve a better mark
- involves formal and informal assessment activities as part of learning and to inform the planning of future learning
- includes clear goals for the learning activity
- provides effective feedback that motivates the learner and can lead to improvement
- reflects a belief that all students can improve
- encourages self-assessment and peer assessment as part of the regular classroom routines
- involves teachers, students and parents reflecting on evidence
- is inclusive of all learners.
Assessment as learning occurs when students are their own assessors. Students monitor their own learning, ask questions and use a range of strategies to decide what they know and can do, and how to use assessment for new learning.

Assessment as learning:
- encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning
- requires students to ask questions about their learning
- involves teachers and students creating learning goals to encourage growth and development
- provides ways for students to use formal and informal feedback and self-assessment to help them understand the next steps in learning
- encourages peer assessment, self-assessment and reflection.

Assessment of learning assists teachers in using evidence of student learning to assess achievement against outcomes and standards. Sometimes referred to as ‘summative assessment’, it usually occurs at defined key points during a unit of work or at the end of a unit, term or semester, and may be used to rank or grade students. The effectiveness of assessment of learning for grading or ranking depends on the validity and reliability of activities. Its effectiveness as an opportunity for learning depends on the nature and quality of the feedback.

Assessment of learning:
- is used to plan future learning goals and pathways for students
- provides evidence of achievement to the wider community, including parents, educators, the students themselves and outside groups
- provides a transparent interpretation across all audiences.

Common Grade Scale
The Common Grade Scale (A–E) is used by teachers to report student levels of achievement from Stages 1 to 5 and can be applied to all students, regardless of whether or not adjustments have been made to assessment opportunities.

A The student has an extensive knowledge and understanding of the content and can readily apply this knowledge. In addition, the student has achieved a very high level of competence in the processes and skills and can apply these skills to new situations.

B The student has a thorough knowledge and understanding of the content and a high level of competence in the processes and skills. In addition, the student is able to apply this knowledge and these skills to most situations.

C The student has a sound knowledge and understanding of the main areas of content and has achieved an adequate level of competence in the processes and skills.

D The student has a basic knowledge and understanding of the content and has achieved a limited level of competence in the processes and skills.

E The student has an elementary knowledge and understanding in few areas of the content and has achieved very limited competence in some of the processes and skills.

PROCEDURES
Teachers on each stage must work collaboratively to design assessment tasks and rubrics. A range of assessment may be used e.g. observations, tests, conferences, work samples, self and peer evaluations. All assessment must be clearly recorded on each program.

Major tasks and tests, as well as criteria and assessment rubrics which will to be sent home after feedback is provided are to be submitted to the Primary Curriculum Coordinator two weeks prior to students receiving them. After the Primary Curriculum Coordinator has reviewed the task,
feedback will be provided for staff before being given out to students. All tasks in Primary will be completed in class time.

Assessments must be scaffolded and clearly state, using dot points or numbered steps, what the students are required to do. If possible, the task description should be on a separate sheet to the rubric. The rubric or marking criteria must be handed out with the task.

**GRASPS:** Constructing a performance task using GRASPS is to be provided on a separate sheet (as appropriate) and must include:
- Goal
- Role
- Audience
- Situation
- Product Performance and Purpose
- Standards and Criteria for Success

**Rubric:** A Rubric must include:
- Stage
- KLA
- Due Date
- Outcomes
- Assessment Criteria
- Suggestions for improvements
- Student comment or reflection

✓ *Rubrics must provide information to the students regarding the quality of each element in a task that will be assessed.*
✓ *Rubrics are to be written in past tense and left justification within the boxes.*
✓ *A rubric should be no longer than one A4 page.*

**Assessment Criteria:**

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**Teacher Feedback:**
The aim of feedback is to communicate to students how well their knowledge, understanding and skills are developing in relation to the outcomes. Feedback enables students to recognise their strengths and areas for development and to plan with teachers the next steps in their learning. Teachers should mark and return student work within 2 weeks.

Teacher feedback should:
- focus on the activity and what was expected
- be constructive, providing meaningful information to students about their learning
- correct misunderstandings
- identify and reinforce the student’s strengths
- state clearly how students can improve
Forms of feedback might include:
- rubrics
- oral discussion with class, groups or individual students
- written annotations
- general comments to the class about those aspects of the activity in which students excelled and those aspects that still need addressing
- examples of good responses

Tasks and rubrics are to be sent home to parents after students feedback has occurred. This is to be done within two weeks.

Assessment Folder:
All classes are required to keep records on all types of student assessments for Religious Education, English, Mathematics, History (HSIE), Science & Technology, Creative Arts and PD/H/PE.

Each assessment will include the following:
- task description
- copy of the rubric or criteria
- three graded samples (top, middle and lower)
- class assessment record sheet for each subject (per Term)

Reporting A to E:
Stage teachers collaborate to create and discuss common assessment tasks to ensure that the criteria matches syllabus outcomes, what is being taught and each grade level is moderated.

The criteria may be different for each grade level within the stage. For example, the Year 3 and Year 4 class are working on the same outcome/s but they may be focusing on different criteria to assess the outcomes. Teachers assess separate Year level assessments and grades are given for each Year cohort based on the A to E reporting scale.

REFERENCES
CEO Assessment Policy
UbD Understanding by Design (McTighe & Wiggins, 2006)

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