SACRED HEART CENTRAL SCHOOL

SECONDARY ASSESSMENT POLICY

PURPOSE
To give teachers, students and parents/guardians clear guidelines about the processes involved in assessment.

POLICY
This policy has been developed to ensure there is alignment of practices across the secondary section of the school to improve students’ learning outcomes.

DEFINITIONS
Assessment is the ongoing process of gathering, analysing and reflecting on evidence to make informed and consistent judgements to improve student learning and report on current competence.

Assessment for improved student learning and deep understanding requires a range of assessment practices to be used with three overarching purposes:

- Assessment FOR learning - occurs when teachers use inferences about student progress to inform their teaching
- Assessment AS learning - occurs when students reflect on and monitor their progress to inform their future learning goals
- Assessment OF learning - occurs when teachers use evidence of student learning to make judgements on student achievement against goals and standards.

PROCEDURES
Designing Assessment Tasks
Secondary assessment tasks at Sacred Heart are:

- directly linked to and reflect the syllabus outcomes; the outcomes being addressed are clearly stated on the task
- derived from well-structured teaching and learning activities; they are not to be isolated tasks, non-related to the student’s learning
- drawn from a variety of assessment strategies that give students multiple opportunities, in varying contexts to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do in relation to the syllabus
- fair by ensuring equal opportunities for success regardless of student’s age, gender, disability, culture or socioeconomic status. This is an important consideration if access to technology is part of the requirements of a task
- time efficient, wherever possible addressing several outcomes in one assessment task
- number of tasks
Notification of Assessment Tasks

- Expectations for assessment tasks are to be made clear so students know what is required of them to succeed.
- Teachers will explain the requirements of the task and the details listed below. Students will have the opportunity to reflect on the task requirements and ask questions to clarify issues. Tasks are to be uploaded to App4Students on the date they are given out.
- To allow for procedural fairness, time management and appropriate expectations for study, preparation, etc., approximate weeks for assessment tasks will be noted on Unit Outlines. Confirmation of due dates and expectations are to be given to students at least:
  a) 1 week prior for in class tests
  b) 1 week prior for in class assignment tasks
  c) 2 weeks prior for an out of class assignment
  d) 2 weeks prior for a semester examination

The Assessment Task Notification will include (as applicable):
- Subject
- Unit
- Topic
- Weighting of Task (relative to unit outline and if applicable)
- The date and timing of the task
- Length/duration of task (eg. reading time, etc)
- Type/nature of task (eg. hand-up, exam, etc)
- Outcomes to be assessed
- Description of Task Requirements
- Marking guidelines and/or marking criteria
- Task Rubric (dependant on task)
- Task References (if applicable)

Unit Outlines
Unit outlines provide an overview for students and are important to enable students to be clear of the direction and learning outcomes. Providing approximate dates and types of assessment encourage students to plan ahead, develop time management and organisational skills. At the beginning of each unit, students receive a Unit Outline for the unit being studied. The unit outline includes:
- Big ideas
- Essential questions
- Outcomes
- Assessment tasks/approximate due dates/weighting or value of each assessment task (eg Assignment, Week 4, 20%; Topic Test, Week 8, 25%)

An example of a unit Outline is available on:
T drive/Curriculum/2015/Secondary/Program templates

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. In this way they are given opportunities to improve and further develop their knowledge, understanding and skills.
Teachers are to mark and return student work within a reasonable period (within two weeks recommended).

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:
- oral discussion with class, groups or individual students
- rubrics
- 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

Rubrics
Well-designed rubrics can assist in the process of teaching and learning as they improve the quality of direct instruction by providing focus, emphasis, and attention to particular details as a model for students. Students also receive explicit quality criteria and can use the rubrics to gain feedback about their learning.

The following guidelines are aimed at attaining consistency in assessment practices for students.

Rubrics are to follow these guidelines:
1. Use 4 columns for achievement levels.
2. Show the lowest achievement on the left and highest on the right. (Beginning, Developing, Established and Advanced).
3. Descriptors should be specific to the task.
4. Language for descriptors for ‘lower’ columns should describe what the students can do rather than what they cannot, where possible e.g. ideas constructed into sentences, uses one or two resources, attempts correct spelling.
5. Link the rubric to unit outcomes (but descriptors may not necessarily be the outcomes.)

Teachers may use different styles of criteria sheets for different tasks, i.e. ‘open’ rubric, without descriptors but with room for comments which are useful for minor tasks, oral presentations and assessment of practical skills, however explicit quality criteria is to be provided to students.

Requirements for the Award of a Record of School Achievement RoSA

To meet academic requirements students in year 10 and year 9 electives must have:
- Followed the course developed or endorsed by the Board; and
- Applied themselves with diligence and sustained effort to the set course work tasks and experiences provided in the course by the school including homework
- Achieved some or all of the course outcomes as demonstrated in assessment tasks, practical requirements and assigned work.
- Maintain a satisfactory level of class attendance. A student whose attendance affects the ability to demonstrate understanding of course outcomes is at risk of an N-determination. Where a student has been able to maintain or make up work that was
missed during absences, teachers will use their professional judgment in determining whether the student is still at risk. Students are responsible for explaining their absences to each teacher. If they do not do this, the absence will be viewed as unexplained.

In cases of extended leave (which have been approved by the Principal) the student is required to maintain a satisfactory level of course work and to negotiate with teachers, in regard to formal assessment.

If attendance is less than 90% of available school time then a student would have difficulties achieving a reasonable range of outcomes for each course being studies.

Where a student’s attendance and/or effort are in question or obviously unsatisfactory, parents will be notified by letter.

THE GENERAL PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTORS

NOTE: No predetermined percentage of students will be allocated to any grade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADE</th>
<th>GENERAL PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTORS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>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 process and skills and can apply these skills to new situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>The student has a basic knowledge and understanding of the content and has achieved a limited level of competence in the processes and skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>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.</td>
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THE “N” AWARD

With the introduction of the Record of School Achievement, the ‘N’ determination process remains unchanged. Sacred Heart will continue to issue warning letters to students who are in danger of not meeting course completion criteria, giving the student time for the problem to be corrected.

Teachers can recommend an ‘N’ Award when a student has failed to meet ONE or MORE of the following requirements:

(a) attendance
(b) participation in the required descriptor tasks
(c) meeting requirements in terms of **effort** and **achievement**
(d) reaching at least some of the course goals.
It is expected students complete **ALL** class work and specified descriptor tasks to a standard matching with their ability.

If a student has been given an ‘N’ determination in a mandatory course (English, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography) they will not be eligible for a Record of School Achievement. If they leave school, they will receive a Transcript of Study, which will list the mandatory course(s) for which an ‘N’ determination was given. The words ‘Not completed’ will appear next to each ‘N’ determined course.

The following words will appear at the bottom of the Transcript of Study – **Not eligible for the Record of School Achievement.**

If a student is given an ‘N’ determination in a non-mandatory course, the course will not appear on their Record of School Achievement or Transcript of Study.

If it appears a student will not meet assessment requirements in a course, an ‘N’ warning will be given. Parents/guardians will be advised in writing so that the problem may be corrected. A written acknowledgement from the parent/guardian of the warning will be filed at school.

**Recording Assessment Data**
Teachers record student assessment marks and grades in their curriculum folders on the T drive. The Secondary Curriculum Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that this data is ready and accessible for reporting purposes. The Secondary Curriculum Coordinator is also responsible for ensuring that copies of spreadsheets are kept for the assessment period (and a further 7 years after a student has left the school or reached the age of 25, whichever comes first). The retention of student assessment records needs to be taken into consideration in succession planning when a Secondary Curriculum Coordinator leaves his or her role.

**Plagiarism**
Students must acknowledge the use of all sources used in their assessment. Plagiarism is a form of cheating and is a serious offence. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that they do not commit this breach of discipline whether intentionally or otherwise.

- The most direct form of plagiarism is copying, word for word, without acknowledgment. A more indirect form is obtaining and changing material from a source without acknowledgment.
- If quoting directly or obtaining material from a source the student must acknowledge the source with correct referencing.
- Students should be particularly aware of the dangers of plagiarism from the Internet – a source of information so freely available to all students and staff. Copying and pasting the work of others from the Internet is a form of plagiarism.
- Students should not allow other students to use or copy their assessment material and information to complete assessment tasks. When it is suspected that students have shared information for assessment (if it is not directly allowed in the assessment task criteria) both students will be deemed to have plagiarised.
Plagiarism Consequences: Years 7 to 10
Most cases of plagiarism can be avoided by citing sources. Simply acknowledging that certain material has been borrowed, and providing your audience with the information necessary to find the source, is usually enough to prevent plagiarism. The following table outlines the consequences for students who plagiarise.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Consequence</th>
<th>Procedure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. First minor incident of plagiarism</td>
<td>• student spoke to by teacher and given a reprimand and warning about consequences for future breaches</td>
<td>• recorded by class room teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• marks reduced by an amount appropriate to the extent of the plagiarism</td>
<td>• notify the PCA</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. First major incident of plagiarism*</td>
<td>One of the following consequences:</td>
<td>• recorded by class room teacher and reported to Secondary Curriculum Coordinator and PCA</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• all plagiarised material will be ignored in determining the final mark. That is, if the entire task is plagiarised, the mark awarded will be zero</td>
<td>• parents notified of incident</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• student to redo assessment task</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Repeated Offence</td>
<td>• cancellation of any score, mark or grade for the assessment item concerned. Item treated as if it was not submitted</td>
<td>• student referred to Secondary Curriculum Coordinator for counselling and discussion about consequences</td>
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<tr>
<td>(NB Repeat of Category 1 or Category 2</td>
<td>• student to redo assessment task in a Homework Study Session</td>
<td>• letter (with return slip) sent to parents/ guardians to inform them of plagiarism incident by Secondary Curriculum Coordinator</td>
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<td>automatically becomes a Category 3 offence)</td>
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Deadlines

Extension Procedures
If a student requires an extension of time to complete an assignment, a note from a parent/guardian requesting an extension must be presented and discussion between the student and teacher at least two days before the assignment is due. Extensions may be granted with the approval of the Secondary Curriculum Coordinator.

Late Penalties
If an assessment is not handed in and there is a legitimate reason:
- The student’s parent/guardian is requested to make contact with the school by phone on the day that an assessment is due.
- A note will need to be written confirming this reason and the school will determine if further clarification is required.
If an assessment is not handed in and there is no legitimate reason:
- The student will lose 20% of the potential overall mark for each day the task is late.
- This process will continue until the assessment is submitted OR when 80% of all available marks are lost.
- The completed task will still need to be submitted.

Non-Submission of Tasks

Students are expected to perform and submit, by the stipulated date, the tasks that are part of the assessment program. In the event that a student misses an assessment task then the following may apply. Depending on the circumstances:
I. A zero mark will be awarded.
II. An extension of time may be granted.
III. An alternative task may be set.

Students with Special Education Needs

Curriculum adjustments are measures or actions taken in relation to teaching, learning and assessment that enable a student with special education needs to access curriculum outcomes and content. These adjustments will vary according to the needs of the individual student. Possible curriculum adjustments for students with special education needs include:

- adjustments to the assessment process such as additional time, rest breaks, quieter conditions, the use of a reader and/or scribe or specific technology
- adjustments to assessment tasks such as rephrasing questions, using simplified language, fewer questions or alternative formats for questions
- alternative formats for responses, e.g. written point form instead of essays, scaffolded structured responses, short objective questions and multimedia presentations.

Except for those students with an intellectual disability, who follow an Individual Education Plan (IP), all students with special education needs should receive a mark and grade using the A-E scale.

REFERENCES
BOSTES [http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/]

RELATED POLICIES
Stage 5 Handbook
Secondary Homework Policy
Secondary Programming Policy
Life Skills Agreed Practice
Inclusive Education Policy

Approved by: School Board
Issuing Group: Executive
Implementation Date: 2015
Supersedes Policy Dated: 2010
Revision Date: 2020
Contact Officer: Principal