Borrisokane Community College
ASSESSMENT POLICY

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Assessment Policy

Borrisokane Community College

Mission Statement

We seek to promote a caring and committed school community which will facilitate the education of our students and where each individual is valued as a unique human being.

"Is ar scáth a chéile a mhairimid"

At Borrisokane Community College we are mindful that teaching, learning and assessment are all connected.

1. 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.

2. Why Assess?
- to monitor a student's progress and to provide the teacher with information to make decisions about what and how the student is learning.
- to provide students and parents with information regarding progress and meeting targets.
- 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.

3. Types of Assessment
- **Formative** – Questioning, Observation, AFL
- **Summative** - Exams, Class Tests
- **Screening** – CAT 4, NGRT, WIAT-T-III-T, PTM, Johnson & WoodcockIV

4. 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.

5. Assessments
5.1 Formative Assessment

Definition:
Formative assessment involves a range of strategies designed to give both students, teachers and parents feedback about students' understanding of elements of their learning in courses. The aim is to improve learning.

Borrisokane Community College has adopted the Assessment for Learning (AFL) approach to formative assessment. Assessment is formative when either formal or informal procedures are used to gather evidence of learning during the learning process. Its purpose is to use the whole process of assessment to adapt teaching to meet student needs and help learners improve their learning. It is formative because its intention is to form, shape or guide the next steps in learning. The process permits teachers and students to collect information about student progress, and to suggest adjustments to the teacher's approach to instruction and the student's approach to learning. Assessment for Learning covers all of the aspects of formative assessment but has a particular focus on the student having an active role in his/her learning. It is about 'learning to learn'. We recognise, however, that not all aspects of this approach are of benefit in all curriculum areas and the discretion of the teacher is advised to adapt the theory to suit the particular demands of the subject. The use of Assessment for Learning strategies allows the teacher to continuously assess their students and ensure that learning is at the optimum level.

An example of AFL used here in Borrisokane Community College; the class teacher gives students the opportunities to self/peer assess their own work or their peer's work. This allows students to identify gaps in their own learning and give and receive positive feedback to and from their peers.
Other examples of Assessment for Learning strategies which can be used are:

- Learning Intentions and Homework given at the beginning of lessons
- Criteria for success - co-creation with students
- Questioning techniques
- Wait time after asking questions
- Summarising/Reflection at the end of the lesson
- Comment only marking
- Beginning the next lesson with a recap
- Pair/Group Work
- Setting targets
- In-class Peer Assessment
- Use of Microsoft Teams to upload class notes, assignments, success criteria, exemplars and solutions/mark schemes
- The use of Bi-Monthly Assessments for every year group (excl. TYs). These Bi-Monthly Assessment Results are entered on VSWare. Written formative feedback is given to students on their piece of work, test etc. Verbal feedback is also regularly given to students. We encourage students to record this oral feedback on their work.
- Formative Feedback is recorded on VSWare for parents to engage in their child's learning at the following times during the school year:

5.2. Summary of when Formative Feedback is recorded on VSWare

Year	Feedback 1	Feedback 2	Feedback 3
1st Year (feedback also given at PT meeting)	November (core subjects)	Easter	June
2nd & 5th Year (feedback also given at PT meeting)	November	February	June
3rd & 6th Year	October	December	March

(feedback also given at PT meeting)			
5th LCA (feedback also given at PT meeting)	November		June
6th LCA (feedback also given at PT meeting)	November	March	

5.3 Teachers Professional Development

Borrisokane Community College continues to encourage teacher's professional development to develop assessment processes. Cohorts of teachers engage in Instructional Leadership and Evaluation Leadership training. This learning is shared with staff through staff meetings, subject department meetings and teach meets. These professional development hours can be put towards Croke Park hours.

5.4. Summative Assessment: (Summary of House Exams)

Definition:
Summative Assessment refers to the assessment of learning and aims to provide a summary of the achievements of the learner.

Assessment is summative when it is used to evaluate student learning at the end of the instructional process or of a period of learning. The purpose is to summarise the students' achievements and to determine whether, and to what degree the students have demonstrated understanding of that learning by comparing it against agreed success criteria or features of quality

5.5 House Exams & Duration

Year	In addition to House Exams	Exams	Time of Year	Duration	Location
1st	Bi-Monthly Assessment	House Exams	Summer	1 hour	Classroom
2nd	Bi-Monthly Assessments/CBA	CBAs	Throughout the year*	In line with SEC spec	Classroom
		House Exams	Summer (not all subjects examined due to CBA timescale)	1 – 2 hours	Official Exam Centre
3rd	Bi-Monthly Assessments/CBA	CBAs	Throughout the year*	In line with SEC spec	Classroom
		House Exams	Pre-Mocks October	1 – 2 hours	Official Exam Centre
		Mocks	February	2 hours - In line with State exam times	Official Exam Centre
		Junior Cycle	Summer	2 hours - In line with State exam times	As per State exam locations
TYs		Complete assignments/modules/projects during each session. These contribute towards the credits awarded for each session. The year is broken into two sessions ending in December and May			
5th	Bi-Monthly Assessments	House Exams	November	2 hours	Official Exam Centre
		House Exams	Summer	2 hours	Official Exam Centre

5 LCA	1 Task Session 1	House Exams	November	2 hours	Official Exam Centre
	2 Tasks Session 2	Irish/Modern Foreign Language Assessment	Summer- end of year 1	As per State exam times	Official Exam Centre
	Personal Reflection Task Key Assignment	Tasks			
6th	Bi-Monthly Assessments	House Exams	Pre-Mocks Oct	1 – 2 hours	Official Exam Centre
		Mocks Mock Practicals Mocks Orals	February	In line with State exam times	Official Exam Centre
		LCVP	First Wednesday in May	As per State exam times	As per assigned State exam locations
		Practical & Oral State Exams	As per State exam timetable	As per State exam times	As per assigned State exam locations
		Leaving Certificate	Summer	As per State exam	As per assigned State exam locations
6 LCA	3 Tasks Session 3	House Exams	Pre-Mocks Oct	1- 2 hours	Official Exam Centre
	Personal Reflection Task	Mocks 6 subjects assessed	February	In line with State exam times	Official Exam Centre
	Key Assignments	Tasks	Summer- end of year 2	As per State exam times	
		Leaving Certificate Applied Exam	Summer- end of year 2	As per State exam times	As per assigned State exam locations

* Over the two-year period Junior Cycle students complete 1 or 2 CBAs depending on the subject requirements. These form part of results inputted for Bi-Monthly Assessments (requirements regarding CBAs / Assessment Task may change as directed by DE & SEC)

In the event of missing house exams:
In line with SEC Deferred Exam Circular S21/24 – missing a house exam/mock oral/mock practical will be treated under the same premise of this circular. Exams missed due to close family bereavement or certified serious medical condition, whether through accident, injury or illness can be deferred and sat at a later date. Deferred dates for exams missed for any other reason will not be accommodated.

In the event of missing class bi-monthly assessment:
Bi-monthly class tests are scheduled in advance where possible. Should a student who was absent wish to complete the test at a later date, it is up to the discretion of the class teacher.

5.6 Assessment of Non-written aspects of Subjects

An increasing number of subjects have elements which are examined at certificate level by non-written methods e.g., Practical Subjects, Language subjects, History and Geography at Leaving Certificate level. Students will be given a percentage of marks in their house exams in relation to these non-written elements. Teachers will assess students by project work or class questioning during the term or the submission of a project at the end of term.

6. Framework for Junior Cycle (2015)

The Framework for Junior Cycle (2015) emphasises the importance of valuing, acknowledging and affirming all students' learning opportunities and experiences during the three years of Junior Cycle. The new assessment procedures at Junior Cycle value the different aspects of students' learning and the range of approaches, both formative and summative, that generate evidence of this learning by students.

6.1 Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA)

Student achievements are now reported to students and parents/guardians on the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA). The JCPA will capture the different assessment elements undertaken over the three years of Junior Cycle, including the grades which are issued by the State Examinations Commission (SEC). The JCPA captures any combination of the following: CBA's, Short Courses, State Certified Examination (including the Assessment Task), L2LP, L1LP, Wellbeing and Other Areas of Learning.

6.2 Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs)

- They contribute to and build on the use of formative assessment in the classroom happen during normal class time.
- They resemble the learning that happens on a daily basis
- They capture the knowledge and skills that are not easily assessed in a timed pen and paper type examination.
- The class teacher assesses them at a common level.
- There are two CBAs for each subject; the first one in 2nd year and a second one in 3rd year (changes have been made in line with Circular Number: 0076/2020)
- They are assessed through pen and paper assessment, self-peer assessment, portfolios, journals, observations, exhibitions, oral presentations, experiments, interviews and projects.

Achievement in CBA's are reported on using the following descriptors:
- Exceptional
- Above expectations
- In line with expectations
- Yet to meet expectations

6.3 SLAR (Subject Learning and Assessment Review Meeting)

A SLAR (Subject Learning and Assessment Review Meeting) meeting takes place after each CBA. Teachers share and discuss samples of their assessments of student work and build a common understanding about the quality of student learning. Each SLAR will be subject specific, last 2 hours and will be facilitated by a teacher of the subject.

The purpose of the SLAR is to:
- Develop a collegial professional culture
- Ensure consistency and fairness
- Build confidence about the judgements that teachers make

6.4 Assessment Task (not currently completed due to Covid 19 subject amendments, may change as directed by DE/SEC)

The Assessment Task will be completed during class time under the supervision of the teacher and will take place over two lesson periods. The Assessment Task script is sent, along with the final assessment at the end of third year, to the State Examinations Commission (SEC) to be marked. It accounts for up to 10% of the State-Certified Examination and is incorporated into the grade that a student receives for their final SEC examination.

6.5 Level 1 and Level 2

The Level 1 and 2 Learning Programmes cover learning, teaching and assessment for students with General Learning disabilities in first, second and third years in post primary school.
 A portfolio of evidence created of students' work Assessment of portfolio is school based The JCPA will reflect on all learning achieved in the PLUs after 3 years Level 1 - Achievement in PLUs is based on one of the following descriptors: Successfully Completed or Progress Achieved. Level 2 – Achievement in PLUs is based on the descriptor: Achieved

6.6 Final Examination

The final examinations take place in June.
The key points to note are:
- All exams are no longer than two hours in duration
- Students take a maximum of ten subjects
- All subjects available at a common level apart from English, Mathematics and Irish where there will be two levels (Higher and Ordinary)
- Exams assessed by SEC using the following set of grades:

    o Distinction
    o Higher Merit
    o Merit
    o Achieved
    o Partially achieved
    o Not achieved

7. Transition Year Assessment

7.1 Transition Year Grading System

Transition Year in Borrisokane Community College is graded on a Pass, Merit or Distinction basis. The grading is determined by the awarding of credits. These credits are awarded at the end of two sessions, January and May. A report will be issued at the end of each session showing the credits for each subject and a teachers comment.

10 Credits	per core subject
10 Credits	attendance and punctuality
20 Credits	overall participation and interview

At the end of TY students will receive a certificate awarding

60-70%	Pass
70-85%	Merit
85-100%	Distinction

7.2 TY Exams

Transition Year Students can be assessed through class assessments/assignments throughout the year. These exams can be used in the awarding of credits at the teacher's discretion.

8. Leaving Certificate Applied Assessment

8.1 Leaving Certificate Applied Grading System

Leaving Certificate Applied is graded on a Pass, Merit or Distinction basis. Students who achieve less than 120 or leave the program early will receive a record of experience. The grading is determined by the awarding of credits in subjects.

The **credit breakdown** is as follows:

Pass	120 - 139 Credits.
Merit	140 - 169 Credits.
Distinction	170 - 200 Credits.

8.2 LCA Modes of Assessment

The LCA assessment is based on:

a. Satisfactory completion of modules
- Evidence of completion of 4 key assignments for each module
- One credit per course module in which there is a final exam
- Two credits per course module in which there is no final exam

b. 90% attendance   **worth 62 Credits (31%)**

This section is recorded in school by subject teachers who submit records for each session to the LCA coordinator who uploads them to the SEC online entry system. All evidence and records are kept in house.

c. LCA tasks   **worth 70 Credits (35%)**

LCA students undertake 7 tasks which are assessed through an interview by an external examiner. These tasks account for 10 credits each, totalling 70 Credits (35%)

- o   Vocational Preparation
- o   Vocational Education (x2)
- o   General Education
- o   Contemporary Issue
- o   Personal Reflection
- o   Practical Achievement

d. Final Examinations   **worth 68 credits (34%)**
- o   English & Communication
- o   Vocational Specialisms 1- Graphics and Construction
- o   Vocational Specialisms 2 - Hotel Catering and Tourism
- o   Language Year 1 Irish
- o   Language Year 2 French/German/Spanish
- o   Social Education
- o   Mathematical Applications

State Exams: Exams are run by the SEC in June of each year. LCA 1 will have a language assessment at the end of year one and the remaining exams are accessed at the end of year 2.

LCA Mocks: Assessments take place in February each year. LCA 1 are assessed in the language and LCA 2 are assessed in 6 subjects which are organised to exactly replicate the final exams.

9. Leaving Certificate Assessment Breakdown

Subject	Breakdown	%
English	Written Exam 2 papers	100%
Irish	Oral	40%
	Aural	10%
	Written Exam	50%
Maths	Written Exam - 2 papers	100%
Accounting	Written Exam	100%
Agricultural Science	Project Work	25%
	Written Exam	75%
Art, History & Appreciation (new course starting Sept 2021)	Project	50%
	Practical day Exam	20%
	Written Exam	30%
Biology	Written Exam	100%
Business	Written Exam	100%
Chemistry	Written Exam	100%

Computer Science	Project	30%
	Written Exam	70%
Construction Studies	Project	10%
	Portfolio	10%
	Experiments	15%
	Practical Day Exam	25%
	Written Exam	50%
Design & Communication Graphics	Project	40%
	Written Exam	60%
Engineering	Higher:	
	Project	25%
	Practical Exam	25%
	Written Theory Exam	50%
	Ordinary:	
	Project	30%
	Practical Exam	30%
	Written Theory Exam	40%
French	Higher:	
	Oral	25%
	Aural	20%
	Ordinary:	
	Oral	20%
	Aural	25%
	Written Exam	55% (both levels)
Geography	Project	20%
	Written Exam	80%
German	Oral	25%
	Aural	25%
	Written Exam	50%
History	Research Study Report	20%
	Written Exam	80%
Home Economics	Food Studies Coursework	20%
	Written Exam	80%
Link Modules	Portfolio [due March of 6th year]	60%
	Written Exam [first Wednesday in May]	40%
Music	Listening	25%
	Composing	25%
	Performance	25%
	Remaining 25% is chosen by student in either listening, composing or performing.	25%
Physics	Written Exam	100%
Physical Education	Physical Activity Project (PAP)	20%
	Performance Assessment	30%
	Written Exam	50%

*Assessment breakdown will be updated on an annual basis in line with SEC Senior Cycle Reform

10. Other forms of testing

Within Borrisokane Community College formal and informal assessments take place throughout the academic year.

10.1 Screening Tests

The following tests are administered to 1st Year students by the Guidance Counsellor and Special Needs Teachers at the beginning of October each year.

The Guidance Counsellor and Special Needs Teachers administer the following tests:

CAT 4 (1st Yr & TY)
The Cognitive Abilities Test (CAT4) is a diagnostic assessment that is designed to help students, and their teachers understand how they learn and what their academic potential might be. It assesses how students think in areas that are known to make a difference to learning.
While many tests focus on a child's attainment in core subjects, CAT4 is designed to give schools a much broader, more rounded view of each child, their potential and how they learn. Results help teachers decide about the pace of learning that is right for a student and whether additional support or challenge is needed.

Tasks involve thinking about shapes and patterns (Non-Verbal Reasoning), words (Verbal Reasoning), numbers (Quantitative Reasoning) and some questions are answered by mentally generating and transforming visual images (Spatial Ability).

NGRT (1st Yr)

The New Group Reading Test (NGRT) enables you to assess students' reading and comprehension skills in a single test – helping to identify those students who may need further support. Results of these assessments are reported back to parents after the assessments are complete using a specific template explaining the results. The New Group Reading Test (NGRT) is a standardised, assessment that reliably measures reading skills. The NGRT provides information about sentence completion and comprehension skills helping to identify where difficulties lie. The assessment is adaptive - questions are automatically presented based on a pupil's ability as they complete them, so more able pupils can be challenged while weaker readers are kept engaged. Analysis of the results of NGRT can assist to identify strengths that can be further developed as well as areas that require improvement.

PTM
The Progress Test in Maths provides practical, reliable and independent snapshots in maths attainment. The PTM assesses two dimensions of maths learning:

1. Mathematical content knowledge (curriculum category)
2. Understanding and applying mathematical processes (process category)

Analysis of the results of PTM can assist to identify strengths that can be further developed as well as areas that require improvement.

When the results of the tests become available:
- The SEN team meets to identify students in need of extra support.
- Students who score below the 10th percentile in one of the above tests are offered a class of support during RE.

- Students identified as having possible needs requiring further investigation are referred to the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) Psychologist or outside agencies as appropriate. Parents are involved in this referral and subsequent assessment if assessment is recommended.
- Students may also be referred to the Community OT if needed.

10.2 Assessments and Students with SEN

While standardised group assessments such as the CAT4, NGRT, PTM may be used to screen and identify students' performance in reading and mathematics and those students performing below the 10th percentile will be prioritised for support in literacy and numeracy. Further Individualised assessments may be carried out by SE teachers in the planning of targets and interventions and the setting up of a student support plan in line with the NEPS Continuum of Support. They are also used in the investigation and identification of student accommodations for house and reasonable accommodations for certified exams (RACE).

If an application is made to the Department of Education and Skills with regard to accommodations for the Junior Certificate, Leaving Certificate and Leaving Certificate Applied exams based on the SEC criteria for RACE Along with reading records and writing samples, the following tests may be used:

- **WIAT III Teacher's edition:** The WIAT-III Third UK edition for Teachers (WIAT-III UK-T) is a UK-normed battery of five subtests to test key aspects of literacy, dentifying academic strengths and weaknesses of a student, informing decisions regarding eligibility for RACE

- **Johnson and Woodcock IV:** can be used for screening, diagnosing, and monitoring progress in reading, writing, and maths achievement areas. Examiners can choose to administer all 11 subtests or can select individual subtests for isolated use. The WJ IV will allow examiners to gain an in-depth understanding of a person's academic strengths and weaknesses enabling targeted interventions to be put in place where needed. It can also be used for RACE and DARE

- **DASH (Detailed Assessment of Speed of Handwriting) 9 years to 16 years 11 months**, is used to assess handwriting speed is also used for students who need an application made for the use of a Word Processor, Voice Recorder or a Scribe.

- **DASH (Detailed Assessment of Speed of Handwriting) 17+ years**, is used to assess handwriting speed is also used for students who need an application made for the use of a Word Processor, Voice Recorder or a Scribe.

If a student meets the criteria for RACE and are awaiting or have been granted RACE, every effort will be made to provide these accommodations in house exams. Accommodations for class tests will be at the discretion of the teacher. Accommodations provided by the SEC:

1. Individual Reader
2. Shared Reader
3. Reading Pen
4. Individual Special Centre
5. Shared Special Centre
6. Use of word processor, Tape recorder or scribe
7. Spelling and Grammar Waiver
8. Provision of electronic booklets for written projects.

9. Use of a dictionary (except in languages) for EAL students

NB provision of accommodations before they have been officially granted by the SEC is not a guarantee they will subsequently be granted if a student no longer meets the relevant criteria.

10.3 Psychological/Medical Reports

All class teachers are aware of students who have Psychological/Medical reports and implement the recommendations in assessing students.

10.4 Outside Agencies

Throughout the year, the SEN Coordinator/AS coordinator or relevant SE teachers may meet to assist with investigations and assessments with National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), Visiting Teacher Service for the Visually Impaired Visiting Teacher Service for the hearing Impaired Hearing impairments, Occupational Therapists (O.T), Speech and Language Therapist (SLT), Physiotherapist, Psychologists from Childrens Services, CAHMS, Family Support Centres, School Completions Officer . From time-to-time outside professionals and or agencies may visit the school to carry out relevant assessments on a student.

10.5 Assistive Technology

Students who have been granted AT by the NCSE and meet the criteria for RACE may use AT for assessments.

Types of AT typically granted to students
1. Reader pen
2. Laptop
3. Voice Recorder
4. Ipad and keyboard –may not be used in state exams
5. Speech to text

11. Assessment of EAL students
EAL Post-Primary Assessment Kit:
The PPAK - English language proficiency tests for post-primary teachers to assess the language abilities of their students. The tests are based on the first three levels of the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages which correspond to the three proficiency levels (1, 2 and 3) used by the Department of Education.

12. Our Partners
It is well known that the student's progress in school is best achieved when all partners – student, teacher and parents/guardians are working together. The following are the responsibilities of each partner:

- **Student:** Prepare well for exam. Follow guidelines for study at home as outlined in the school journal. Students are encouraged to self-assess and peer assess with guidance from their teacher.

Keep up to date with results on VSWare and set targets for future results. Attend Parent/Student/Teacher Meetings and Information Evenings.

- **Class Teacher:** Prepare student, set targets and upload to VSWare, give students the criteria for assessment, set exam, correct exam (following AFL guidelines), assign projects, meet CBA deadlines, participate in SLARs, give formative feedback to student, fill in results and reports on VSWare bi-monthly, organise aural and oral assessments outside of timetabled exams as well as completing forms for the SEN coordinator to facilitate in SEN and student assessment.

- **Parent:** Show interest in student's schoolwork, exam preparation, exam performance as well as to encourage, motivate and act on recommendations and feedback.
  - o Attend Parent/Student/Teacher Meeting and Information Evenings.
  - o Check VSWare regularly.
  - o Provide a quiet place to study.

- **Year Head:** Input Year Head comment onto VSWare student reports, speak to students regarding performance, if necessary, comment on progress. Work with Mentor teacher to monitor and track academic progress of student in year group.

- **Class Mentor:** Mentor will have access to a copy of each students' report to see how they are performing across all classes. Work with Year Head to monitor and track academic progress of student in year group.

- **Subject Department:** Discuss assessment at subject department meetings. Use common assessments and follow the same marking scheme, ideally the same test should be given to classes in the year group, share ideas and compare results of assessments with national averages.

To gain the insights of all our partners we use Microsoft Forms Surveys which are compiled by the review committee and sent to staff, parents and students. Staff are given time at staff meetings to fill out the forms and give their feedback through discussion, students are given downtime in a class and reminded & guided by teachers to fill out the form at that time and parents are sent the form through email and reminded at parent information evenings and through VSWare text messaging service. Presentations/Surveys also given to PA & BOM regarding assessments.

13. Communication with Parents/Guardians

Communication with Parents /Guardians about assessments happens through the following:

Parent/Student/Teacher Meetings
- First year parents/student/teacher meetings take place twice a year. All other year groups have one parent/student/teacher meeting each year.
- Year group information meetings take place online at the start of the year where assessment procedures are outlined to parents/guardians.
- All parents/guardians are reminded to pay attention to the school calendar for meeting dates.
- Students are invited and encouraged to attend the parent/teacher meetings.
- Parents have access to results on VSWare.
- Parents and Students encouraged to use VSWare and school website.

School Examination Reports

Following each house exam Parents/Guardians can view on VSWare reports on their child's progress. These reports contain formative and summative information and constructive comments by teacher and Year Head and signed by the Principal.

14. Athena Academic Tracking

The Athena Tracker uses all available past results and external aptitude scores (CAT4) to create a student's baseline in each subject. This allows the school to constantly track where a student is in relation to this baseline to highlight if a student is drifting below their own unique potential and may need additional support. This ensures no student gets missed in a very busy school system.

Some features of the Athena Tracker:

- Easily track students' academic attainment in real-time
- Objective feedback
- Gradebook for teachers
- Real time alerts
- Real data
- Student recognition
- Student motivation
- Target setting

15. Policy Adoption and Review

This policy was adopted by Borrisokane Community College Board of Management on 5 December 2024 and will be due for review during the school year 2026.

This policy was noted by Tipperary ETB on 10 December 2024.

16. Dissemination and Publication

This policy will be made available to school personnel and published on the school website.