



Coláiste Mhuire, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath

Teaching, Learning & Assessment Policy



Context & Rationale

Coláiste Mhuire is committed to excellence. We provide a caring and disciplined environment in which all students are challenged to reach their academic and personal potential. In Coláiste Mhuire we aim to continue to provide a caring community and a supportive environment which encourages the development of each student. As such, education in this school is both student centred and holistic.

Coláiste Mhuire Mullingar is a Secondary School operated by a Board of Management under the trusteeship of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust (ERST). The ethos of the school is informed largely by the five pillars of the ERST charter which read as follows:

- Nurturing faith, Christian spirituality and Gospel-based values
- Promoting partnership
- Excelling in teaching and learning
- Creating a caring school community
- Inspiring transformational leadership.

Teaching & Learning is our core function and supports a wide curriculum as supported by the Department of Education. At the centre of our teaching and learning rationale, we acknowledge the important role the school has in facilitating academic and personal development within a wide range of ability levels. Within this context we endeavour to facilitate all our students.

This policy is founded on the ethos, mantra and mission statement of our school, all of which are outlined on our school website www.cbsmullingar.ie.

This policy contains three key sections for ease of use by Students, Parents, Guardians, Teachers & Support Staff:

1. Teaching & Learning
2. Assessment
3. Homework

Teaching & Learning

Introduction

In Coláiste Mhuire, student learning is paramount. The quality of learning is directly proportional to the quality of teaching. Therefore, Coláiste Mhuire is committed to facilitating and promoting the highest standards of both.

It is also important to note that education has evolved in both its aims and practices over time. Traditional aims were largely focused on knowledge while traditional methods were largely restricted to the classroom and rote learning. We are now acutely aware that learning can include knowledge, skills, attitudes and values and can occur in many different environments via various teaching methodologies.

In Coláiste Mhuire we provide a holistic education through a broad variety of learning experiences. This is done with the aim of developing a student who can meet the requirements of assessments while also possessing the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed for wider society.

Both students and teachers should be highly motivated as we pride ourselves on a very high level of teacher and student engagement.

Leadership & Management of Teaching and Learning

The Senior Leadership & Management Team is committed to excellent teaching and learning. Where possible the following will be undertaken annually:

- Students will be given access to the widest possible curriculum
- Continuation of class teacher where possible to ensure consistency
- Commitment to assessments which best prepare students for their state examinations

The Board of Management will:

- Ensure that all students receive a broad and balanced curriculum based on their individual needs and abilities where possible
- Set high expectations for student progress and the quality of teaching
- Establish and implement clear policies, practices and quality assurance procedures for assessing, recording and reporting on student progress
- Set targets for improvement based on evidence, including in-school evidence and best practice targets
- Analyse, interpret and evaluate data on student performance against targets and external comparative data
- Monitor satisfaction through consultation with educational partners
- Arrange developmental, collaborative, teaching practices and procedures to support continual improvement of high-quality teaching
- Develop the capacity of teachers to enable and empower them to lead in these areas so that there is effective devolved leadership throughout the organisation

Teaching and Learning with our Students

In Coláiste Mhuire, we believe that our students learn best when they:

- Achieve academically
- Develop and practice social skills
- Develop and practice independence
- Work co-operatively
- Use their creativity
- Learn leadership skills
- Use their initiative
- Make decisions
- Solve problems
- Work individually, in groups and as a class
- Improve speaking and listening skills
- Develop and discuss their own ideas
- Explore areas they are interested in
- Develop and practice life skills
- Receive adequate support

The active use of the Junior Cycle Key Skills further supports this approach and is widely used within our school planning processes.



The Learning Environment

In Coláiste Mhuire, we recognise that learning is not limited to the classroom and extends to include all areas in which students engage as students of Coláiste Mhuire. We aim to ensure learning takes place in a safe environment which is:

- Challenging and Stimulating
- Inclusive, Respectful & Calm
- Warm & Caring
- Well Organised
- Adequately Resourced
- Supportive of Accessible Learning for All
- Encouraging, Positive & Student Centred

Planning for Teaching and Learning

Our teaching approaches include the most effective teaching and learning methodologies. We believe that all teaching should be of a high quality leading to each student making progress academically, socially and emotionally and in relation to any other specific need or individual target. This is achieved by:

- Nurturing a culture amongst all staff that is focused on continual improvement together, sharing good practice and achieving the best outcomes for every student
- Every member of staff recognising their responsibility to have a detailed understanding of the specific learning needs of their students and planning accordingly to allow each student to make significant progress. This may involve consulting with the Learning Support Co-ordinator about the needs of individual students - using IEPs as working documents to inform planning and resources
- Differentiating appropriately: tasks, resources, and engagement strategies for students
- Regular effective developmental evaluation, including self-evaluation, regarding the quality and effectiveness of teaching
- Effective assessment of student progress
- Monitoring student progress against targets and making timely and effective intervention where students are not making progress; tracking progress and intervention in each subject in a consistent manner to contribute to whole school planning
- Establishing positive behaviour in class, following the Code of Behaviour and ensuring incidences affecting teaching and learning are dealt with according to the Code of Behaviour
- Encouraging students to develop the ability to evaluate and take responsibility for their own learning and behaviour
- Monitoring attendance, punctuality, rewards, sanctions, uniform and where appropriate independent learning tasks homework
- Regular high quality Continual Professional Development (CPD) to support the development of all staff and meet identified training needs in keeping with the school development plan

Lesson Planning

Lesson planning should be student centred and should be informed by the student data such as AEN reports. Planning at subject department level is vitally important to ensure class groups remain on target across the academic year. Schemes of Work (SOW) are to be constructed at the beginning of each academic year.

Although SOW contain week to week subject matter to be covered, the method of delivery within the classroom remains the responsibility of the individual teacher. The School Self Evaluation Team has built a framework which includes a skeleton structure onto which a creative unique lesson can be built. Teachers are advised to tailor lessons in accordance with what best facilitates optimal learning. This may vary from one class group to the next and so it is vital that the teachers, as professionals, retain the freedom to differentiate lessons as they deem appropriate. It is also important to note that it is not necessary that planning is a written document but instead that it is practised. Lessons should be planned with the following in mind:

- Should contain definite Learning Intentions
- Should contain definite Success Criteria
- Ensure students' progress in their learning
- Clearly support learning
- Use the Coláiste Mhuire Lesson Checklist
- Allow students to develop over time and practise higher order thinking skills such as creativity, analysis, problem solving, decision making and application
- Be differentiated for the individual needs of the student by task, resource, and/or outcome
- Use stimulating resources which engage the individual student
- Use ICT or e-learning when appropriate because it will lead to progress
- Provide pace and challenge for each student
- Use effective questioning, feedback and reflection techniques to engage, challenge, encourage and develop students' understanding and progress
- Incorporate numeracy, literacy, ICT skills where possible and appropriate
- Meet any external requirements
- Be informed by prior learning and tracking of progress
- Be enjoyable and interesting
- Effectively use other staff who are involved in the lesson such as Special Needs Assistants and Co-operative Teachers

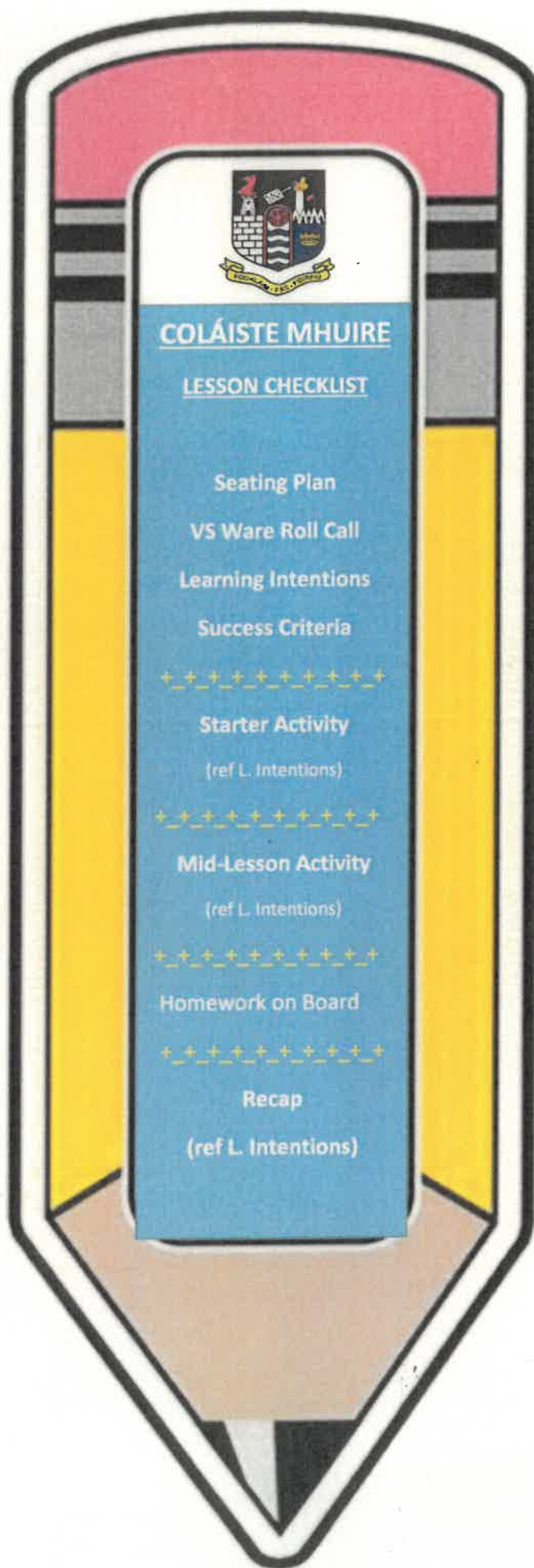
Teachers should monitor the success of their practices and adapt/improve them accordingly.

The Coláiste Mhuire Lesson Checklist

The Coláiste Mhuire Lesson Checklist is a tool that allows teachers, across various subject departments, to build lessons using a structure which students understand. This structure gives clarity of purpose to the student and makes learning more accessible. It is important to note that this tool is not a plan for a lesson in its entirety, but rather it is a structure which ensures key elements are included in more detailed lesson plans. The checklist includes the following:

- Seating Plan-The teacher implements a seating plan that meets the needs of the class group
- VSware Roll Call-The teacher calls the roll using VSware
- Learning Intentions- The teacher outlines and explains the learning intentions for the lesson
- Success Criteria- The teacher outlines and explains the criteria the students must meet in order to reach the learning intentions
- Starter Activity- The teacher introduces a task which engages the student. The learning intentions should be referenced within this task
- Mid-Lesson Activity- The teacher introduces another task to ensure students are engaged. This task should also reference the learning intentions
- Homework on Board- Approximately 10 minutes prior to the end of class the homework task should be displayed clearly on the board. Students should record this task in the school journal
- Recap- Towards the close of the lesson, all learning intentions should be revised briefly by the teacher.

The Coláiste Mhuire Lesson Checklist



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LESSON CHECKLIST

Seating Plan

VS Ware Roll Call

Learning Intentions

Success Criteria

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Starter Activity

(ref L. Intentions)

+ + + + + + + + + +

Mid-Lesson Activity

(ref L. Intentions)

+ + + + + + + + + +

Homework on Board

+ + + + + + + + + +

Recap

(ref L. Intentions)

Teaching Strategies

All teacher and support will utilise teaching strategies which:

- Are student centred, mindful of students with additional educational needs
- Use positive behaviour management and encouragement for students to achieve, including praise and rewards
- Allow students to learn in a variety of styles
- Encourage students to work independently or collaboratively with others
- Nurture students' creativity
- Take account of individual academic and non-academic targets of individual students
- Make use of good practice developed by colleagues within the school
- Aim to develop progress for individual students' targets
- Provide clear feedback to students so that they know what to do to improve
- Include regular opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning and understanding.
- Make learning enjoyable and incorporate fun where it leads to progress
- Make use of the different ICT facilities available in Coláiste Mhuire

Expectations of our Students as Learners

Students at Coláiste Mhuire are expected to:

- Participate positively in all lessons
- Collaborate with their peers and engage productively & respectably with pair group and group work opportunities
- Remain on task and behave in accordance with the Code of Behaviour
- Complete class assignments, homework & coursework tasks as required
- Record assigned homework in their student journal for each lesson.
- Take responsibility for their own learning and work with all teaching and support staff in progressing their academic and personal development.
- Work with their teachers and to the best of their ability.

Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

Continuous Professional Development refers to the commitment and engagement of our school and its staff in the development and improvement of professional practice. Our teachers are professionals with an understanding and passion to continually improve their practice in an effort to further improve the student learning experience. Although School Management will provide many CPD opportunities during a school year, individual teachers and subject department teams are encouraged to identify areas in which they can improve and to engage with relevant CPD opportunities as they arise.

All teachers are encouraged to:

- Update their subject knowledge regularly

- Explore new topics or areas within their subjects that are relevant to the interests of students and could be used to enhance lessons
- Enhance their teaching methodologies with the most up-to-date trends, practices and initiatives
- Actively engage with and share highly effective teaching and learning strategies and engage with peer teaching observation where appropriate
- Proactively participate in effective and relevant CPD
- Actively engage with whole staff training
- Support and develop a collaborative culture of planning and practice

Co-Curricular & Extra-Curricular Activities

Coláiste Mhuire recognises that the holistic learning experience is not limited to the confines of a classroom. Therefore, co-curricular and extra-curricular opportunities are vitally important in the student learning experience.

Sport

Sport is a proud part of the culture of Coláiste Mhuire and provides much opportunity for our students to engage, grow and develop. The wide variety of sporting opportunities on offer can include gaelic football, hurling, rugby, soccer, basketball, tennis, athletics & swimming. Participation enables our students to develop a key understanding and skillset including teamwork, managing emotions around success and disappointment, the value of physical and mental wellbeing, the value of hard work and development of key friendships.

The Dramatic Arts & Public Speaking

Debating, Public Speaking and On-Stage Performance encourages our students to develop independent key skills and student leadership qualities. The school promotes many opportunities within year groups to engage our students in this manner including debating clubs, musical and drama productions.

Leadership Programmes

The school reviews the opportunities it provides its students and explores ways of encouraging greater student voice and leadership opportunities. Many leadership groups are established within the school community such as Student Council, Prefect Teams, New Student Mentor Team, Sports Leadership Team, Ember Team, as well as opportunities for Gaisce, John Paul II Awards and Green Schools Initiatives. At Coláiste Mhuire, we value active student leadership within our school community.

Subject Based Initiatives

Subject Teacher Teams take pride in facilitating subject promoting initiatives in which students can showcase their passion for a given subject area to the wider student cohort. Many events take place annually and are included on the school calendar such as Active Schools Week, Study Skills Week, Seachtain na Gaeilge etc... School Management are highly supportive of our Subject Teachers and Students in the roll out of these initiatives.

Clubs & Groups

Clubs & Groups encourage our students to develop their social skills within an environment where an interest is shared. Many examples of these are evident throughout the school and are promoted and communicated with students in a variety of ways. These clubs provide opportunities in the areas of languages, mathematics, arts, literacy, technology, STEM and chess.

Curriculum Modules & Short Courses

Curriculum Modules & Short Courses are designed to support our students in the development of essential key skills. Most are incorporated into the school timetable to provide a specific focus in the development of knowledge and skills.

School Tours

School Tours allow students to experience learning environments outside of the school grounds. Many of these Tours take place within the local community of Mullingar, while others take place around the country and around the continent. These tours are undertaken with the aim of encouraging the holistic and academic development of our students.

School Self-Evaluation (SSE)

School Self Evaluation (SSE) is a live school self-reflection process, enabling our school to reflect, review and refine practice and policies, with a particular focus on teaching and learning. SSE in Colaiste Mhuire is a collaborative effort between students, teachers, leadership teams and school management and is led by our SSE Leadership Team..

Our SSE Leadership Team focuses on the effectiveness of teaching and learning practices within the context of Colaiste Mhuire, a framework which is guided and supported by the *Looking at Our Schools 2022 (LAOS 2022)* document.

Following consultation with students and teachers, the SSE team implements a series of targets and actions which is to be used to scaffold each lesson to best meet the needs of all learners. This lesson design creates a structure for all lessons across the wide subject range available, creating lessons familiarity and accessibility to lesson content, whilst continuing to provide scope for teachers to build effective and unique lessons which best suit their class groups.

In addition, our SSE focus within Colaiste Mhuire continues to support the development of literacy and numeracy strategies to best our students in their learning.

Information and Communication Technology/Digital Learning

Coláiste Mhuire has been to the forefront of device management and student wellbeing and were amongst the first schools nationally to introduce and maintain a 'Mobile Phone Free Environment'. However, our commitment to digital learning is underpinned by a vision that transcends traditional boundaries. We embrace technology as an integral tool for fostering enriched educational experiences. Our current digital landscape, detailed in our Digital Learning Plan (eLearning Plan), serves as a foundation upon which we aim to cultivate a dynamic, learner-centric environment.

We align our Digital Learning Plan with many internal and external initiatives which are resourced and maintained through the careful management and provision of our school funding model. This aims to promote and recognise the effective use of digital technology in delivering an optimal educational experience for our students.

Subject Departments & Teachers are encouraged to utilise digital technologies to enhance teaching, learning and assessment for their students. As such, all classrooms are adequately resourced, specialist support classrooms made available and the curriculum developed to afford all our students the opportunity to develop their digital knowledge and skills.

A strong culture of extra curricular activities in the STEM areas provides our students with a greater opportunity to excel and further develop their interest in this digital area.

A comprehensive range of G-Suite tools are available to be used to support teaching and learning, with G-Suite providing a centralised internal communication system to support subject collaboration and support.

The school continually reviews its digital strategy to monitor its effectiveness and to ensure it remains relevant and leads best practice within the context of our students.

Additional Educational Needs (AEN)

Our Additional Educational Needs team aims to use all available resources to compliment the learning of those who need assistance. This assistance may include allocation of laptops, application for waivers or extra assistance in class. The further roles of the AEN team will be dealt with later on in this document. All subject lessons include the use of Learning Intentions and Success Criteria, as detailed within our SSE Lesson Planning Framework. Homework Tasks are designed to reaffirm, develop and further build upon the learnings, skills and knowledge of each lesson.

Literacy and Numeracy

Literacy and Numeracy are integral components of the Teaching & Learning Framework within Coláiste Mhuire. Such focus provides for the expansion of a student's ability to comprehend their surroundings and express themselves. All teachers include elements of literacy and numeracy in their lessons as appropriate. Specific programmes and modules to support the development of Literacy & Numeracy Skills are designed to provide greater access to the curriculum as well as the development of life skills. Our Accelerated Reader Programme supports this principle of learning and is well resourced and valued within the school community.

Assessment

Introduction

Looking at Our Schools 2022 refers to assessment as a process that progresses students' learning. The Education Act (1998) places a requirement on schools to regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to students and their Parents & Guardians. At Coláiste Mhuire, we encourage assessment as a vital tool in both excelling and monitoring teaching and learning. As such, we strive to provide the best possible educational experience for our students, supported through effective assessment practices which will in turn lead to increased learning for our students. Throughout this process, the emphasis is on student directed learning and evaluation of that learning, as they strive for continual improvement in their learning journey.

Principles of Assessment

All assessments completed are designed to benefit all our students. With this in mind, it is essential that all assessment practices are fair, with an emphasis on **honesty and integrity** being maintained by students, their teachers and other

school personnel involved. With assessments being used to monitor and direct learning, all assessments are designed to be **valid and reliable** in measuring students' true understanding and knowledge base. A consistent approach is taken by all subject department teachers collectively to ensure consistent reliable practices, in line with national norms. As a school, we develop **authentic assessments** that reflect real-world applications of knowledge and skills, as per the NCCA publications and advice. Subject teachers work collaboratively on the development of such authentic assessments to meet the needs of our student cohort. In advance of all assessments, the criteria and expectations of students are clearly outlined to ensure **maximum transparency** and enable students to achieve their maximum potential. The use of the student journal is key in communicating these expectations and other assessments related information to Students and their Parents/Guardians. A **broad range of formative and summative assessments** are practised to support the learning process of our students and create a variety of opportunities for them to self-reflect and improve. All assessments are relevant to the subject specification outlined in the national curriculum.

Types of Assessment

Assessment at Coláiste Mhuire follows a complimentary model of Formative and Summative Assessment.

Formative Assessment refers to a wide variety of methodologies, used by our teaching staff to evaluate student comprehension, learning needs and academic progress during a lesson and/or over the course of several lessons. The goal of formative assessment is to collect detailed information that can be used to further improve the teaching and learning outcomes for students.

Summative Assessment is used to evaluate student learning, skill acquisition, and academic achievement at the conclusion of a defined teaching period. The teaching period may be at the end of a teaching cycle or term in the form of an exam week (in an effort to prepare and the format of the terminal State Examinations), or at the end of the Junior/Senior Cycle in the form of the State Examinations.

Both Assessment types are valued and essential components to the overall assessment strategy at Coláiste Mhuire. It is important to note that many assessments provide both formative and summative functions with State Examination Assessments including oral presentations and projects which our teachers engage their students with in developing the learning further.

Formative Assessment

The primary purpose of in-class assessment is formative. Our teachers use a wide variety of formative approaches, including but not limited to:

- Higher Order Questioning
- Written Tasks including Class Tests
- Student Directed Tasks

- Student Reflective Work
- Oral presentations
- Aural Comprehensions
- Project work
- Practical Task completion
- Think-Pair-Share Strategies
- Place Mats
- Peer-Teaching
- Exit Tickets
- Differentiated Assessments
- Mind mapping
- Keywords
- Homework

Feedback (verbal and/or written) is provided to the student where appropriate. In-class assessment allows the teacher to help the student identify what has been achieved and where there is room for further learning and development. The information collected through formative assessment, compliments the student data series, and can be used by the teacher to inform their teaching. Self & Peer Assessment is also used as a form of in-class assessment. This allows our students to critically reflect on their own work and the work of others. Self Assessment can prompt an increased responsibility for a students' own learning. Peer Assessment also helps students develop important skills about assessment and in providing feedback to others.

Summative Assessment

To complement this further, a series of summative Term & Mock Examinations take the form of written and practical assessments in an effort to mimic the format of the Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate State Examinations. These summative assessments take place thrice annually following a 10 week teaching and learning period.

These Term & Mock Examinations are regarded as both formative and summative assessments since a grade is given and communicated to Parents/Guardians. Each teacher provides feedback in the form of 'Positive Aspect of this Assessment Period' and 'Area for Improvement' as well as allowing students the opportunity to analyse, reflect and evaluate their own progress.

Term & Mock Examinations Examinations are scheduled in Autumn, Spring & Summer, with the exact dates of these varying from year to year. Advance notice of these dates is provided at the beginning of each academic year and are included in the School Calendar. A member of the Leadership & Management Team takes responsibility for the coordination of these examinations.

In advance of the Term Examinations, teachers will provide their students with an outline of the examinable content as well as knowledge and skills to be included in the form of success criteria. This provides students the opportunity to prepare for the examinations in a meaningful and purposeful manner. These Term Examinations use standardised examination papers and marking schemes, therefore all class groups within each year group are graded using the same metric. Subject Department Schemes of Work ensure that all students have covered the same subject content.

All Term & Mock Examination Results are recorded on the platform VSware. Following the Term & Mock Examinations, teachers and examiners correct students' work and return the examination scripts to their students. Examination scripts feature a compliment of marking and constructive feedback. Together with their class teachers, students are encouraged to identify areas in which they have performed well and further identify possible areas for improvement. Each teacher then contributes to an overall Student Progress Report which is subsequently shared with the Parents & Guardians of each student. This generally happens three times within an academic year. This report includes an overall Assessment Result with its associated level of study and subject teacher feedback (including a positive area for the assessment period and area for improvement) for students to reflect on.

An established Academic Tracking Process takes place following each assessment period and all forms of data are used to analyse, track and evaluate student progression. Each student receives an overall feedback comment from the Head of Year, including constructive feedback from the analysis of the academic tracking process and a comment on the personal and social development of the students.

Annual Parent-Teacher Meetings facilitate further opportunities for discussion regarding the academic, social and personal progression of each student with Parents & Guardians. Senior Students are encouraged to attend these meetings with their Parents & Guardians. Student Support Team Personnel are available to meet with Parents & Guardians at each meeting and include Career Guidance, Counselling, Yearhead, Additional Educational Needs and the Senior Management Team.

In addition, in-class assessments may be given at the discretion of the class teacher. It is recommended that the success criteria for the assessment and assessment date be given to the students in advance to provide them with the best opportunity to adequately prepare and achieve their maximum potential.

Examination Grading Models

Term & Mock Examination Reports will contain both a percentage and its associated Grade Descriptor. The Grade Descriptors are those used by the State Examinations Commission when grading the Junior Cycle and Leaving Cert Examinations and are outlined as follows:

Junior Cycle Grade Descriptors

Percentage Range	Grade Descriptor
90-100	Distinction
75-89	Higher Merit
55-74	Merit
40-54	Achieved
20-39	Partially Achieved
0-19	Not Graded

Senior Cycle Grade Descriptors

Percentage Range	Grade at Higher Level	Grade at Ordinary Level
90-100	H1	O1
80-89	H2	O2
70-79	H3	O3
60-69	H4	O4
50-59	H5	O5
40-49	H6	O6
30-39	H7	O7
0-29	H8	O8

Classroom Based Assessments (CBA)

CBAs are school based assessments that are facilitated in the classroom and are assessed by the subject department teams as part of the Junior Cycle programme. CBA Results are forwarded to the State Examinations Commission and form part of the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement. Each student receives this document on the completion of their Junior Cycle. The grading framework for the CBAs comprises four categories into which the assessment performance is placed. These categories are:

CBA Descriptors

Exceptional
Above expectations
In line with expectations
Yet to meet expectations

All updated arrangements for CBAs are communicated to Parents & Guardians via email with relevant content links for each subject area on the website www.ncca.ie

Student Supports through Reasonable Accommodations

Our Additional Educational Needs Team (AEN team) works with Students and their Parents to establish any additional needs which could be suitably supported through the RACE scheme (Reasonable Accommodations in Certificate Examinations). The AEN team then applies for such entitlements on

behalf of the student directly to the State Examinations Commission. Where school resources allow, such reasonable accommodations will be facilitated in Term & Mock Examinations to best support students and allow them to excel to the best of their ability within the examination context.

Supplementary Testing

All Students attending Coláiste Mhuire complete cognitive ability tests to best support their learning journey within the school. These tests better enable the student support teams in identifying students with possible additional educational needs, gifted learning ability, learning difficulties and assist students with career guidance related decisions such as subject choice and career progression pathways.

The resulting data from these tests also better informs teachers with their lesson preparation and differentiation strategies to ensure inclusivity and access to subject content for all. By sharing the data with students and their Parents & Guardians, students can direct and monitor their own learning and be better informed when setting goals and evaluating their own learning.

The types of testing used includes but is not limited to:

CAT4 Cognitive Ability Testing in 1st Year & 3rd Year

Mathematics Competency Testing in 1st Year & 2nd Year

STAR Testing using the Accelerated Reader Programme in 1st Year & 2nd Year

Homework

Introduction

Coláiste Mhuire promotes homework as a key learning tool in complimenting the knowledge and skill progression of all of its students. Effective homework tasks are deemed to be a suitable tool in reinforcing the learning for a lesson or a series of lessons. This is based on sound educational theory and practice and is central to the fulfilment of the aspirations of our school mantra, ethos and mission statement.

Definition of Homework

Homework is subject based work, which has been assigned by a teacher, to be completed outside of class, by a student. The work may have to be completed on your own or in cooperation with others. Homework is not just written work and students can be assigned work in a variety of ways. These tasks could be; oral, aural, written, reading, practical research, reflections, projects, revision, visits to particular locations, listening to podcasts, watching a documentary/film etc... This list is not exhaustive.

Students should give all the assigned homework the same amount of focus and attention. The time committed to each type of homework is just as important and a student should not prioritise one kind of homework over others. All homework tasks assigned by teachers will be student centred, purposeful and will have a clear objective which is linked to the national curriculum.

Teachers ensure that there is a balance in the formats of homework assigned for their subject and that the time requirements for the completion of are appropriate for year groups. There may be variation in the work set for a subject depending on the time of year or the area of the course being studied.

Rationale for Homework

Homework is an important aspect of ensuring that students succeed in their education. As a student completes homework they continue to learn.

- When working on homework students have the opportunity to revisit, reinforce, reflect on and extend the learning that took place during the school day.
- Regularly completing homework will help a student gain independent learning skills, confidence in their abilities and motivation. It encourages independent thinking and self-directed learning.
- Formative feedback from teachers will help students identify areas of their work that could be improved and areas that they have been successful in learning.
- Work assigned to take place outside of class time requires Parents & Guardians to play a central role in their child's education. They can see what learning has taken place and support their child with the feedback being provided by class teachers.
- Homework can help develop a student's research skills. These skills are crucial for the completion of Classroom Based Assessments in Junior Cycle, as well as the many subject courseworks and projects which are vital components of the curriculum at Senior Cycle.
- Homework also allows for students to use materials and other sources of information that might not be readily accessible in the classroom. This can create a situation where students' work can be more thoughtful and creative.
- Students also learn the valuable skill of working to deadlines, when completing homework.

Homework Methodologies

Completion This is any work assigned during the school day, which was not completed in class. It helps students keep up to date with the subject plan. Of course the subject plan will be adjusted or differentiated if a student is unable to complete classroom work on a regular basis. The teacher will keep the classroom work under observation and check any work that needs to be completed at home. The teacher will also record any cases where students fail to complete work in class period.

Practice Skills and concepts taught in class can be reviewed through practice work. The practice of newly acquired skills or knowledge should help fluency. Teachers will only assign practice work when they are sure that the student can independently perform the skills required. Teachers will view homework to assess understanding and self-management. They will give either oral or written feedback on the practice work.

Preparation Sometimes teachers will set work that aims to prepare students for upcoming lessons or classes. This encourages students to understand background information about the topic in the hope that prior knowledge and understanding might make the classroom work easier. Examples of preparation work would include short preliminary readings, specific vocabulary practice or a review of key ideas from previous topics studied. Progress in completion of these preparation tasks may be assessed by having classroom discussions on the material.

Extension This work aims to extend and integrate learning, when students explore new material. This type of homework helps students to think creatively, problem solve and think critically. Students are asked to deepen their understanding of a topic and to try and relate it to the real world. The work may not directly be related to the curriculum. The teacher will review and correct the work and give the student feedback.

Homework Journal Each student is required to have and to use the official Coláiste Mhuire Homework Journal on a daily basis. All assignments given by a teacher in class should be recorded in the Journal. Each class period should have an entry. Students will have their Journal with them for all classes as teachers, tutor and Yearheads may wish to monitor the Journal. Parents & Guardians are expected to check the Homework Journal regularly so they can monitor student progress and the work being assigned to the child.

Responsibilities of the Teacher

Teachers employed at Coláiste Mhuire will support and guide students through the homework framework, as outlined in the SSE lesson planning targets. There are expected norms which teachers will aim to follow in providing a consistent approach to homework across the school. However, this may vary from time to time, depending on the lesson or subject. The following guidelines provide a basic framework to support this.

- The homework will be written on the whiteboard or displayed in a digital format on a screen for students to peruse.
- Teachers will explain the expectations for any assigned homework task within a lesson.
- It is the responsibility of the student to record all homework in their Student Journal. Teachers will allocate time within a lesson for this to be carried out by students.
- Teachers will ensure assigned homework is relevant to a lesson or a series of lessons and is designed to reinforce learning by being effective and linked to the curriculum.
- Teachers will differentiate homework where appropriate and ensure their students are suitably challenged.
- Teachers will provide students with a variety of homework types over time, to keep students enthused and develop their key skills for lifelong learning.
- Teachers will monitor completed homework tasks and provide feedback to their students to affirm good practice and further develop their understanding, in keeping with the overall aims of excellence in teaching and learning.
- Teachers will communicate with Parents, Guardians and School Management regarding homework assignments as appropriate. A dual communication system is in place - a communication note in the student journal AND on the VSWare platform.
- Teachers will follow up on such communications by checking student journals for a confirmation signature from a Parent or Guardian.
- Teachers will support their students with homework tasks and evaluate their own practices regarding homework on a regular basis, both individually and collaboratively within their subject departments.

Responsibilities of the Student

Student Leadership is strongly encouraged and supported within Coláiste Mhuire. Homework Tasks afford students the opportunity to take responsibility and ownership of their own learning. There are expected norms for our

students which are facilitated and supported by Teachers, Parents & Guardians. The following guidelines provide a framework to support this.

- It is the responsibility of the student to record all homework in their diary.
- Coláiste Mhuire expects that all homework be completed on time, presented on time and to the best of the student's ability in a neat and tidy fashion.
- If a student has been absent due to their participation in a school activity, the onus is on the student to establish what homework has been set and to complete it within the same time frame as others, as outlined by the subject teacher. This timeframe is usually, but is not always, the next lesson.
- If a student has been absent from school, the teacher may require the completion of the assigned homework missed to support the further development of learning and/or contribute to coursework/portfolio work. Students should proactively engage with their teachers and/or fellow students to establish what homework has been set and to complete it within the same time frame as others or as agreed with the subject teacher.
- It is important for a student to alert the teacher if they do not understand the homework that has been assigned before they leave the classroom.
- Meeting homework deadlines may not always be easy for students. Students will not be excused from homework but are encouraged to inform the relevant subject teacher if they need extra support with strategies to manage the difficulty or amount of homework assigned.
- It is the responsibility of the student to keep a copy of all completed written homework for the duration of the academic year. The work may be relevant for study in preparation for summative examinations. In certain subjects, some of the homework may be of use when preparing Classroom Based Assessments and other related courseworks.
- Students are expected to supplement homework with a study plan which should be put in place to revise material recently covered in class and to ensure that they maintain a standard of knowledge and key skills to support their long term memory recall.

The role of Parent(s)/Guardian(s) in supporting students

The role of Parents & Guardians in supporting and encouraging their child with their studies is amplified in relation to homework. Encouraging a positive attitude towards homework and study is most beneficial. Parents & Guardians play an invaluable role in this regard, which will be fully supported by the

school. The following guidelines provide a framework for Parents & Guardians in supporting their child with homework & study.

- Parents & Guardians are encouraged, as far as possible, to provide a peaceful, suitable place in which students can do their homework free of distractions and interruptions.
- A regular routine regarding time should be set aside for homework.
- Parents & Guardians should help the student organise their time so that things are not left to the last minute or forgotten.
- Valuable learning comes from attempting as well as completing work. Students benefit from parental support and encouragement in persevering with difficult assignments.
- It is the responsibility of the Parents & Guardians to inform the relevant subject teacher or Year Head of any reasons why a student was unable to complete a homework assignment - the Student Journal is the primary form of communication for this.
- If Parents & Guardians feel that a student is struggling with the amount of homework or degree of difficulty of same, they should communicate this to the Year Head.
- Digital Devices can be a beneficial support and compliment the educational experience for students. Such devices and internet usage may play a role in homework. This will be specified in the students log of homework in their Student Journal. Parents & Guardians are encouraged to monitor the journal for such information and seek clarification from the subject teacher or Yearhead if required.
- We strongly encourage students to complete their homework without the use and/or distraction of digital devices, unless otherwise directed by a teacher and recorded in the student journal.

Students with Additional Educational Needs

- In setting homework for students with additional educational needs, teachers will balance the right of students to share fully in the work of the class, including homework tasks, with their individual learning needs.
- For students with additional educational needs, the continuing involvement of Parents & Guardian is particularly valuable.
- Subject teachers will collaborate with the Additional Educational Needs team to ensure class and homework tasks are differentiated and manageable.
- Teachers and the Additional Educational Needs team will best guide the gifted student in furthering their learning and research.

Homework Expectations

The expectation is that each student will complete their assigned homework tasks to the best of their ability and that the time needed to complete such tasks is taken into consideration by individual class teachers.

Student Year Group	Recommended Time per Night *	Overall Time per Night
First Year Students	20 -25 minutes per subject	2 hours
Second Year Students	20 -25 minutes per subject	2 hours
Third Year Students	20 -25 minutes per subject + STUDY	3 hours
Transition Year	as the nature of homework tasks requires	-
Fifth Year Students	25 -30 minutes per subject + STUDY	3 hours
Sixth Year Students	25 -30 minutes per subject + STUDY	3.5 hours

* Recommended Times are suggested as a guide and are not prescriptive in nature. Student ability, subject choice and school timetable will affect such guidance. Parents are encouraged to contact the school should they require clarification or further guidance.

Homework is assigned in subjects that are examinable. This allows students to better focus their time and efforts, thus ensuring an appropriate balance is achieved with those non-examinable subjects such as Wellbeing.



Coláiste Mhuire

An Muileann gCearr

Teaching, Learning & Assessment Policy

The Board of Management formally adopted this policy on the 21st March 2024.

Signed:

Moira Mahon,

Chairperson of the Board of Management



Iontuobhlus Scoilteanna Éamainn Rís
Edmund Rice Schools Trust