Assessment and Reporting Policy

ASSESSMENT

RATIONALE
Assessment is the process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about students’ learning. At St Joseph’s School the central purpose of assessment is to improve the learning outcomes of all students. A good assessment system provides information about whether the learning goals of the teaching program have been achieved and assists with making decisions about subsequent teaching and learning. Its focus is not only on what has been achieved by students, but also on how they have gone about their learning.

BELIEF STATEMENTS
We believe that Assessment should:

- Be based on goals and the work students must do to meet those goals.
- Provide feedback to students, parents and teachers.
- Be linked to the overall evaluation of school programs.
- Form an Integral part of the process of learning and teaching – identifying strengths and weaknesses and providing the basis for further teaching.
- Enhance student motivation, commitment to learning and application to work.
- Be an ongoing, informative and regular part of classroom practice.
- Be a means of monitoring and evaluating student progress and program effectiveness.
- Take place in many contexts and use a variety of strategies.
- Typically involve the student being required to bring together some important, expected outcomes of the learning.
- Enable our students to form realistic expectations of their own ability and of their longer-term prospects.

IMPLEMENTATION

At St Joseph’s School:

- Assessments will be used to identify future learning directions for individuals and groups of students.
- Teachers will include a variety of assessment strategies in teaching programs to provide multiple sources of information about student achievement.
- Teachers will develop a manageable system of keeping records that can provide a rich mix of evidence pertaining to student learning.
- Teachers will use the data they collect (from NAPLAN and other sources) to make judgements about, and report on, student achievement in relation to the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS).
- Through undertaking moderation of student work samples in team meetings, teachers at each level will have a common interpretation of the VELS Standards & Progression points.
- Teachers will progressively develop & assess in accordance with students’ Individual Learning Plans (ILPs), in consultation with parents and, where appropriate, other agencies with specific expertise.
- Students will participate in the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) at Year 3 and 5 so as to gain information for staff, parents, students and System Authorities on students’ progress in relation to VELS.
- Teachers will assess the achievements of students with disabilities and impairments in the context of the VELS and other indicators developed through the LNSLN Program. Program Support Groups will help develop Individual Learning Plans containing appropriate learning goals in key learning areas for each student. Progress towards learning goals will be assessed and reported by the Program Support Group.
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STRATEGIES
At St. Joseph’s we use a variety of assessment strategies. These include:

- The compilation of student profiles, journals and student work-files.
- Use of cumulative anecdotal records by teacher.
- Teacher observation of students at work
- Verbal responses by students to teacher questioning
- Written responses by students to directed activities.
- Qualitative & quantitative assessment of individual & group project work
- Checklists of skills taught, indicating level of achievement.
- Observation of research skills used with written material, the Internet and CD Roms.
- Teacher designed testing instruments.
- Involving children in assessment tasks which form part of their normal learning through our integrated curriculum.
- The use of the VELS Standards and Progression Points to plot the progress of individual students VELS Domains.
- Sensitive teacher interaction with students during lessons – not always resulting in written records.
- Formal testing using combinations of the following instruments:
  - NAPLAN
  - Observation Survey.
  - Running Records
  - TORCH
  - PAT Reading (Trial 2008)
  - SINE Assessment Materials.
  - PAT Maths (Trial 2008)
  - I Can Do Maths (Trial 2008)

REPORTING
Reporting is the process of communicating information about student achievement and progress gained from the assessment process. At St Joseph’s School the purpose of reporting is to support teaching and learning by providing feedback to students, parents and teachers. Students’ learning achievements and progress are also reported System Authorities. This information about students’ achievements is valuable for school and system wide planning and reporting.

BELIEF STATEMENTS
We believe that Reporting should:

- Use a variety of procedures which are clear and concise and in a language which the parents can understand.
- Take place both formally and informally on a regular basis.
- Be a private communication between a parent, student and teacher.
- Provide information to parents about the Curriculum, giving them information about the work which has been done in the classroom.
- Indicate what has been achieved by the student in the reporting period in relation to learning outcomes.
- Be developed from a sound information base – profiles, work samples, student self-assessment etc.
- State clearly what is still to be done by the student, what the strengths and weaknesses are, what action is to be taken by the teacher and what opportunities there are for parents to influence the learning.
- Use constructive language and avoid statements about a student which could be to his/her detriment.
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- Be written in language which is clear, specific and appropriate.
- Provide opportunities for student input and parent feedback.

PRINCIPLES OF REPORTING

- The key purpose of reporting is to support student learning by providing information to students and parents about student achievement and progress, and to indicate areas for further development.
- Reporting should foster partnerships between parents and teachers to support a student’s learning and progress.
- A student’s report provides a formal record at a point in time on the student’s progress and achievement.
- Reporting student achievement provides a measure of school accountability for student learning and outcomes.
- Schools have a responsibility to provide regular, accurate and comprehensive information about a child’s intellectual, social and personal development.
- Effective reporting procedures should:
  - reflect the integrated nature of assessment and reporting
  - be based on valid and reliable assessment
  - be efficient and manageable
  - support student learning and enhance student motivation and commitment to learning
  - enable schools and parents to develop effective partnerships to support the learning of students
  - enable students to participate in the reporting process and hence encourage them to take responsibility for their learning
  - provide detailed, explicit and comprehensible information about what students have achieved to date
  - allow planning for each student’s or students’ future learning development
- reflect student achievement in relation to the curriculum, both academic and non-academic
- utilise a range of reporting strategies, to suit the needs of the school community
- be inclusive and provide reasonable accommodations to ensure students and parents with special needs have access to appropriate reporting strategies
- protect the privacy of individuals.

STRATEGIES

As St. Joseph’s we use a variety of Reporting strategies. These include:

- Twice yearly written reports (A-E) through which student achievement progress can be reported by comparing:
  - the students’ work against a Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS)
  - the students’ prior and current learning achievements
  - the students’ achievements with those of other students.
- Formal and informal parent/teacher discussions which allow opportunities for student participation where necessary.
- Our Annual Report to the Community.
- A weekly Award program which recognises the achievements of students in academic and other areas.
- The use of the Assertive Discipline Program which requires making contact with parents not only when behaviour difficulties arise, but also when exemplary behaviour is noted.
- The sending home of student work samples which include teacher comment and which invite parent feedback.
- The development of a Parent Handbook which gives information about our school procedures and curriculum.
- The development of a Prep Handbook which provides specific information for Prep parents.
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- Giving parents the opportunity to participate and assist in classrooms to observe the curriculum in practice.
- Classroom observation morning followed by morning tea with the classroom teacher, Principal and Student Wellbeing Coordinator.
- Making sure that parents feel welcome and that they are encouraged to maintain contact with the teachers.
- Parent Forums are used as a means of informing parents about curriculum issues or changes. These provide a forum for parent input.
- The Parish Education Team is the formal means by which we report to the community.
- A bilingual teacher aide assists us to communicate with our Vietnamese parents.
- A program of Parent Education, supported by our involvement in the Schools As Core Social Centres program, brings our parents together with parents from three neighbouring schools to learn about and discuss curriculum, social and other interesting topics and issues.

EVALUATION
This policy will be evaluated on a three year cycle.