

# Assessment and Reporting Policy

## Our school Mission Statement

St. Aidan's C.B.S. promotes the Edmund Rice Charter through nurturing *faith*, promoting *partnership*, excelling in *teaching*, creating *community* and inspiring *leadership*.



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# 1. Our school

St. Aidan's C.B.S. is a voluntary secondary school for boys. We are located in north Dublin and we currently have an enrolment of over 700 students. Our school is a Catholic school operating under the patronage of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust (E.R.S.T.). The characteristic spirit of our school is based on the vision and values of the E.R.S.T. Charter as outlined above in our mission statement. This is reflected in the operations of our school and in our school policies.

## 2. Rationale

There is a legal obligation on schools to assess the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process and to report learning outcomes to parents/guardians - "Principal and teachers shall regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to the students and their parents" [*Article 22 (2(b)), Education Act 1998*].

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) reporting booklet 'Ongoing Reporting for Effective Teaching and Learning' states that a *whole-school policy on assessment appropriate to the curriculum and our students has been developed and is implemented consistently and that it ensures the assessment calendar is organised to maximise the manageability and impact of assessment events.*

## 3. Ethos

As an Edmund Rice School, St. Aidan's CBS seeks to promote the five key elements of an Edmund Rice School as adopted by the ERST Charter:

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

## 4. Assessment

The term “Assessment” is defined as the gathering and interpretation of information related to a student’s learning abilities, learning attainment, learning strengths and learning needs.

Assessment is part of effective teaching and learning and it takes place for the following reasons:

- to monitor a student’s progress and to provide the teacher with information to make decisions about what and how the student is learning. This information allows the teacher to identify the next steps in progressing the students learning and adapt his teaching strategies and / or learning activities as appropriate.
- to reinforce the learning carried out in the classroom.
- to provide students and parents with information regarding progress.
- to establish baseline data in relation to a student’s attainments in certain subjects.
- to identify students for levels in Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle.

It is school policy at St Aidan’s CBS to encourage and support ongoing assessment as part of the teaching and learning process.

## 5. Formative Assessment - Assessment for Learning (AfL)

Definition: *“Practice in a classroom is formative to the extent that evidence about student achievement is elicited, interpreted, and used by teachers, learners, or their peers, to make decisions about the next steps in instruction that are likely to be better, or better founded, than the decisions they would have taken in the absence of the evidence that was elicited”.*

(Black, Paul; Wiliam, Dylan (2009). "Developing the theory of formative assessment". *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability*. **21** (1): 5–31

The goal of formative assessment is to monitor student learning to provide ongoing feedback that can be used by teachers to improve their teaching and by students to improve their learning. This happens during the learning process in order to allow teachers and students to modify teaching and learning strategies, thereby maximising the potential for meaningful learning. A broad range of evidence and a variety of

sources may be drawn upon to achieve this. Formative assessment is intended to complement the use of summative assessment rather than replace it.

Formative assessment:

- helps students to better understand their strengths and weaknesses and to identify target areas that need work through the use of teacher feedback.
- helps teachers recognise where students are struggling and address problems appropriately.

## 6. Implementation of Formative Assessment

St Aidan's CBS endeavours to implement formative assessment. This is in line with our School Improvement Plan (SIP) 2016 - 2020 and may involve using some of the following methods:

- **Learning Intentions:** Teachers will share the learning intentions with students at an appropriate time in each lesson, refer back to them throughout the lesson and again at the end of the lesson where deemed necessary. This will help to clarify what the student was supposed to have learned and will assist both teachers and students in determining the levels to which the outcomes have been achieved.
- **Features of Quality/Criteria for Success:** Teachers will tell students in advance of a piece of work what exactly they will be looking for when assessing it. Teachers are aware that it is important to share this information with students beforehand so that they will be in a better position to know what is expected of them. They can also decide how far they want to push themselves.
- **Self-assessment:** Teachers will, from time to time, supervise students to correct their own work, based on a list of criteria for success. Departmental rules/guidelines are applied to suit specific subject needs. Following such methods, teachers will encourage students to reflect on their work and write down how they can improve and assist them in achieving it.
- **Peer-assessment:** Teachers will also, from time to time, supervise students to correct their peer's work, based on a list of criteria for success. Following such methods, teachers will encourage students to reflect on their work and write down how they can improve and assist them in achieving it.
- **Formative feedback:** Teachers, from time to time, will engage in comment-only feedback. It allows both the teacher and the student to identify the next steps in learning. This includes the following:
  - What the student has done well

- Where the areas for improvement are and
- How the improvement might be made

## 7. Feedback

Oral feedback to students is an effective method of highlighting strengths, weaknesses and target areas for improvement. It is therefore necessary to use effective dialogue appropriate to the student. It is good practice to ask the student to repeat the feedback to the teacher and also take note in their copy for future reference. Most feedback between students and teachers should be in the form of oral communication. Oral feedback happens frequently and can be given following homework exercises, classwork, class questioning, or examinations.

Written feedback to students is a specific targeted area of improvement in our school. As part of our School Improvement Plan on Homework and Assessment, we seek to improve our practices in this area. It is school policy to state what the student has done well, what they need to improve and how to improve. Written feedback happens from time to time and can be given following homework exercises, classwork, or examinations. Recording all feedback to learners in written form can impinge on valuable time for learning and teaching. Therefore, it is not expected that all feedback should be provided in written form.

In the case of school reports, feedback is short but meaningful. Teachers endeavor to comment on how the student can make progress.

We consider the following to be key classroom practices and strategies needed for AFL:

- a positive classroom culture and ethos, which encourages students to think and talk about their learning and which provides a safe place for open, honest and respectful discussion.
- questioning skills (student to teacher/ teacher to student/ student to student), which stimulate thinking and reflecting on learning and explicit teaching of how to consciously reflect on what one knows and how to make an evaluative comment on it (see appendix 1, Bloom's Taxonomy)
- frequent identification and review of learning goals through teacher-directed discussion, clearly defining learning objectives and success criteria thereby empowering students and enabling them to take responsibility for their learning

- a recognition and acknowledgement of the purpose and importance of collaboration between home and school in the student's learning process. This may be facilitated by various means including web resources.

## **8. Summative Assessment - Assessment of Learning (AoL)**

Definition:

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

All years (except Transition Year) have timetabled examinations in November or December. Junior Certificate/Cycle and Leaving Certificate have Mock examinations in early February and state exams in June. Other years have house exams in May. Certain departments may hold uniform in house tests in March.

- Teachers give regular class tests in various subjects and results are recorded on the relevant pages of the Homework Journal to track academic progress. Results will be returned to students in a timely manner.
- The mode of assessment may include: written examinations, practicals, aurals, oral work, project work, CBAs/assessment tasks.
- Transition Year (TY) assessments may involve the following: external certification, portfolio, oral presentation, and self and peer evaluation.
- Examinations generally follow a similar format to the Junior Certificate/Cycle and Leaving Certificate Examinations and a marking scheme is clearly identified.
- Mock Examinations are set and corrected externally.
- Reports are sent to parents/guardians following examinations (see schedule below).
- The report template is computerised and allows teachers to distinguish levels. A mark and grade are awarded and a comment can be generated from a menu.

- Parents of TY students receive progress reports in January.
- Classroom Based Assessment (CBA) descriptors are awarded to students on completion of CBA 1 in Second year and CBA 2 in Third year. The descriptors from CBA 1 will be included in the student's end of year report.
- The Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) will include the student's written exam results from their examinations at the end of Third year, their descriptors from CBA 1 and CBA 2 and results from any short courses undertaken or LPL1 and LPL2 results.
- Any Other Areas of Learning from any non academic achievements will also be included on the JCPA. The student journal has a dedicated area where students can record other areas of learning.

### **Psychometric Tests**

The following tests are administered to incoming First Years students by the Guidance Counsellor and the Deputy Principal on First Year Assessment Day:

- CAT 4 Level E – Verbal, Numerical, Non-Verbal, Spatial

When the results of the tests become available appropriate action is taken in line with S.E.N. Policy. Students with numeracy and/or literacy issues are identified and applications made to to the DES for low incidence hours where necessary.

The following test is also administered to First Year students by a First Year Tutor and the Deputy Principal.

- DOTS - Spatial Abstract and Reasoning (Grade level:First Year)

When the results of the test become available they will be shared with the S.E.N department to provide extra information on students as learners.

All results of psychometric tests, CAT and DOTS are available to teaching staff in the S.E.N. folder on the school network.



### **Homework as a means of assessment**

Homework is considered to be an important element in reinforcing the student's grasp of material and work covered in class. It allows the teacher to informally assess how well the students have grasped new concepts and allows both the teacher and student to identify the next steps of learning. (see Homework Policy).

## **9. New Junior Cycle**

In September 2020 all subjects are assessed under new subject specifications, and in June 2022 all subjects will be examined by the State Examinations Commission (SEC). The state exams will be no longer than 2 hours, the results will form a part of the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA). This offers students a more complete report on progress throughout the Junior Cycle.

The JCPA will also include descriptors awarded for levels of achievement in classroom-based assessments, short courses and other learning experiences. The Assessment Task mark will be included in the final examination grade and both are graded by the SEC. The grading of new subjects will be as follows in State Exams:

Grading of the Final Examination :

Distinction	≥90% to 100%
Higher Merit	≥75% and <90%
Merit	≥55% and <75%
Achieved	≥40% and <55%
Partially Achieved	≥20% and <40%
Not graded	≥0% and <20%

## **10. Classroom Based Assessment (CBA)**

Classroom-Based Assessments will emphasise the importance of formative assessment in supporting teaching and learning. In each subject, students will undertake two Classroom-Based Assessments facilitated by their teacher.

One Classroom-Based Assessment will take place in Second Year and a second Classroom-Based Assessment in Third Year. Classroom-Based Assessments will

provide students with opportunities to demonstrate their understanding and skills in a way which would not be possible in a formal examination.

A particular purpose of the ClassroomBased Assessments will be to facilitate developmental feedback to students during their engagement with the assessment task and at the end of the process.

Examples of CBAs include oral presentations, written work of different types, practical or designing and making activities, artistic performances, scientific experiments, projects or other suitable tasks.

Work related to the Classroom-Based Assessments is best seen as an integral part of ongoing assessment and routine classroom practice. See appendix 2 for more information on CBA's.

## **11. Marking of CBAs.**

There are four descriptors of achievement for classroom-based assessment as follows:

- Exceptional.
- Above expectations.
- In line with expectations.
- Yet to meet expectations.

Teachers develop an understanding of the above descriptors by attending Subject Learning Assessment Review (SLAR) meetings. This is when teachers come together in subject departments meetings to discuss the quality of the students work. The SLAR meetings play a key role in helping teachers to understand standards and expectations.

The descriptors from CBA1 and CBA2 will be communicated to parents on VSWare.

The descriptors will also be included on the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) that the students receive from the school after the Junior Cycle.

## **12. Assessment Task (AT)**

The written Assessment Task, marked by the SEC, relates to the learning outcomes of the second Classroom-Based Assessment. The written Assessment Task may require the student to demonstrate an understanding of the knowledge and skills developed during the second Classroom-Based Assessment.

The Assessment Task will be completed in class under the supervision of the teacher and will be sent to the SEC for marking along with the script for that subject in the state-certified examination. Marks for the Assessment Task in each subject will be incorporated into the presentation of the grade for that subject.

Further details and the specifications for the Classroom-Based Assessments are available on the Assessment Toolkit at [www.juniorcycle.ie](http://www.juniorcycle.ie)

## **13. Reporting**

Teachers are encouraged to use the teacher journal, student journal, and our VSWare software system to keep records and report progress on assessment. From time to time, teachers may arrange formal and informal meetings with parents and/or students in support of this ongoing progress.

## **14. School Reports**

A school report is an official document completed by a student's teachers and signed by the Principal setting out the achievement and progress of a student in all subject areas at particular stages of the academic year. The report is addressed to a student's parents/guardians but will be written in a manner that is easily understood by the individual student. A school report complements the ongoing assessment of a student by their teachers that takes place regularly during the academic year e.g. correction of homework, classroom tests. (see appendix 1)

School reports will be issued as follows:

- November (6th Year) - grade and comment from November exams. Normally distributed at December PTM.
- November (3rd Year) - depending on subject/course but generally a grade and comment based on November exams.
- January (5th Year) - grade and comment from December exams.
- January (1st/2nd Year) - depending on subject/course but generally a grade and comment based on December exams.
- March (3rd/6th Year) - grade based on mock exams and results.
- June - (1st/2nd/5th Years) grade and comments based on summer exams.

Every report will be available to staff on VSWare, and a paper copy of each student's report will be posted home. Each printed report will include a full explanation of the grading system applicable to the particular year group. When considered necessary by senior management, a general letter relating to educational matters in a particular year group may be attached to reports.

In commenting on student performance and progress on reports, teachers will use as much formative feedback as possible i.e. pointing out areas of strength as well as how improvement can be made, where applicable. To facilitate this, the range of pre-set comments on reports will be kept under ongoing review and teachers will be encouraged to use as much free text as possible.

Parents/guardians are strongly advised to monitor their son's progress by also having regard to the more frequent marking and correction undertaken by teachers throughout the full school year e.g. homework, class tests.

## **15. Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA)**

The reporting process at Junior Cycle will culminate in the award of the JCPA to students. The JCPA will reward achievement across all areas of learning as applicable: Subjects, Short courses, Wellbeing Priority Learning Units, Other Areas of Learning. The JCPA will be issued by the school in December after the Junior Cycle is completed.

## **16. Parent-Teacher Meetings**

The school arranges a formal parent-teacher meeting for each year group in the course of the academic year. Each meeting takes place between 16.15 and 18.45 on a date that is stated in the annual school calendar.

Given the structure of parent-teacher meetings, it is essential that certain protocols will apply, as follows:

1. Consultations between teachers and parents should be kept as brief as possible in an attempt to minimise delays.
2. These meetings must conclude by 18.45. Parents are asked, therefore, to attend as early as possible at the relevant meeting.
3. It is expected that all meetings between teachers and parents will be conducted in a professional and respectful manner with focus on the student's performance in the relevant subject.

4. Because of the relative lack of privacy and time constraints at these meetings, any matters requiring more detailed discussion and sensitivity should be addressed at a separate meeting that can be arranged at a mutually-suitable time.

The Principal and/or Deputy Principal will also be available to meet parents in the course of these meetings.

## **17. Project work:**

There are various deadlines for project work, classroom based assessments, portfolios and orals to be met by each student at Junior Cert level and Leaving Cert level. The key dates for the Junior Certificate/Cycle can be checked on the State Examinations timetable.

The key dates in each subject at Leaving Certificate level are listed below. It is expected that students do not leave class in a subject to complete project work in another subject except in exceptional circumstances and only when agreed by both teachers impacted.

### **Examples of Projects/Oral Exams:**

**Irish:** Oral exams in late March of 6th Year

**French:** Oral exams in April of 6th Year

**History:** Project due in April of 6th Year

**Geography:** Project due in early April of 6th Year

**LCVP:** Portfolio due in early March, 6th Year

**Art:** Practical exams in May of 6th Year

**Design and Communication Graphics:** Project due in mid January of 6th Year

**Construction Studies:** Project and portfolio in April of 6th Year

**Technology:** Project due in March of 6th Year

**Music:** Practicals just before the Easter break

**Economics:** Research Topic due in 6th Year

## **18. Other policies that should be read in addition to this policy:**

- Parental Involvement Policy.
- Homework Policy.
- SEN Policy.

## 19. Communication, involvement and dissemination

This policy was written by the Assessment and Reporting Policy working group. A review by the policy co-ordinator and the deputy principal followed. It was shared for collaboration with management, staff, the students' council, the parents' council.

## 20. Evaluation

We are committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of this policy. In addition to the performance criteria mentioned above, important to this process is:

- Legislation and other relevant guidelines
- Pupil feedback
- Staff feedback
- Parental feedback

## 21. Review and Development

We are also committed to the review and development of our school policies. As part of our ongoing review process, this policy will be examined to reflect feedback from our evaluation practices and also to ensure legal compliance and the maintenance of best practices.

### Review Dates:

Staff	29/01/20	Staff Consultation
Parents	13/03/20	Parents Council Meeting
Student Council	03/03/20	Student Council Meeting
Board of Management	30/03/20	Ratified by Board of Management

## Appendix 1 -

Bank of Suggested report comments:

- \*\*\*\* consistently uses his personal best effort on a daily basis.
- \*\*\*\* is an enthusiastic member of the class and shows willingness to learn.
- \*\*\*\* tackles new challenges eagerly and with a positive attitude.
- \*\*\*\* always looks for ways to be helpful in the classroom.
- \*\*\*\* has great potential and works toward achieving it.
- \*\*\*\* is confident, positive and a great role model for his classmates.
- \*\*\*\* shows a positive attitude with classmates on group projects and activities.
  
- \*\*\*\* can improve by spending more time outside class practising past exam questions
- \*\*\*\* needs to be more prepared on a daily basis. Books, equipment, copy essential.
- \*\*\*\* could take more care and pride in homework. His grades would improve with more time spent on the subject at home.
  
- try to use a variety of words to broaden and improve descriptions
- focus on learning key terms and use examples to support explanations
- remember to consider timing when doing assignments or study
- mind mapping can help to revise chapters before exams
- make to read questions correctly so you address it correctly
- make sure to fully complete assignments/questions
- organisation of work including page and question numbers would help
- contribute to class more by asking questions, it's good to be curious
- \*\*\*\*'s dedication to his studies has constantly impressed over the past number of weeks.
  
- X has consistently improved over the course of the year. His progression is something staff are very positive about.

## **Appendix 2 - FAQs on CBAs.**

*Retrieved from <https://www.jct.ie/perch/resources/maths/new-cbaslar-frequently-asked-questions.pdf>*

### **Q. Should I give feedback to my students when they are completing their CBA?**

Yes, the process of completing the Classroom-Based Assessment should be viewed as part of the teaching and learning, and not solely for assessment purposes. It is envisaged that the teacher will guide, support and supervise throughout the process.

### **Q: What type of support should I give?**

Support may include clarifying the requirements of the task, using annotated examples of student work to clarify the meaning and interpretation of the features of quality to students, and providing instructions at strategic intervals to facilitate the timely completion of the assessments.

### **Q: Can students get help with their work outside the classroom?**

Support for students can be given but the teacher must monitor the student throughout the process. Only work that is the student's own can be accepted for assessment in the JCPA.

### **Q: I have a student with special educational needs (SEN). What supports can they be given?**

If a student has a specific physical or learning difficulty, reasonable supports may be put in place to remove, as far as possible, the impact of the disability on the student's performance in the ClassroomBased Assessments. These supports e.g. the support provided by a special needs assistant or the support of assistive technologies, should be in line with the arrangements the school has put in place to support the student's learning throughout the school year.

### **Q: How do we assess the work using the features of quality?**

Page 7 of the Assessment Guidelines describes how to use the Features of Quality as follows: 'When using the Features of Quality to assess the level of student achievement in a Classroom-Based Assessment, teachers use 'on balance' judgement. The teacher should read the Features of Quality (starting with Yet to meet expectations) until they reach a descriptor that best describes the work being assessed. Where it is not clearly evident which descriptor should apply, teachers



must come to a judgement based on the evidence from the student's work to select the descriptor that best matches the student's work overall. This 'best fit' approach allows teachers to select the descriptor that 'on balance' describes the work being assessed'.

**Q: Does the CBA count towards the SEC grade at the end of Third Year?**

CBA's do not form part of the SEC component. The Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement will document achievement in CBA's and for the SEC component separately. The SEC component includes student achievement in the assessment task and the final assessment towards the end of third year. It should be noted that 'The Assessment Task is directly related to the nature and focus of the second Classroom-Based Assessment the Statistical Investigation, which is to pose a question, gather and analyse data and interpret it in the context of the original question. The knowledge and skills developed by students during this Classroom-Based Assessment emerge from their growing awareness of statistical inquiry' (Assessment Guidelines p.32).

**Q: Should every Mathematics teacher in a subject department attend a SLAR meeting?**

Section 2.13.4 of DES circular 0079/2018 (page 20) states that 'When students have completed CBA's, the CBA's will be assessed by the students' teachers, and the outcomes will be reported to the students and parents/guardians. To support teachers in assessing students' ClassroomBased Assessments, teachers will engage in Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings (SLARs)'. If you, as a Mathematics Department, feel there is merit in other teachers attending, then you have the freedom at a local level to decide if they do attend and the nature of their involvement at the SLAR meeting.

**Q: What if a teacher is absent on the planned date for the SLAR meeting?**

The Assessment Guidelines (page 14) states that 'It is important to set the times and dates for implementation as early as possible. The key date to establish at the outset is the timing of the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting from the range of dates provided by the NCCA. In setting this date the school will be guided by its own local circumstances bearing in mind that the Mathematical Investigation assessment must be completed by the end of Year Two'. Ensuring that you have an agreed date at the outset for the SLAR meeting will help to ensure everybody is available to attend. If there is an unavoidable absence, local circumstances will dictate whether the meeting can be rescheduled or not.

**Q: Can a descriptor be appealed?**

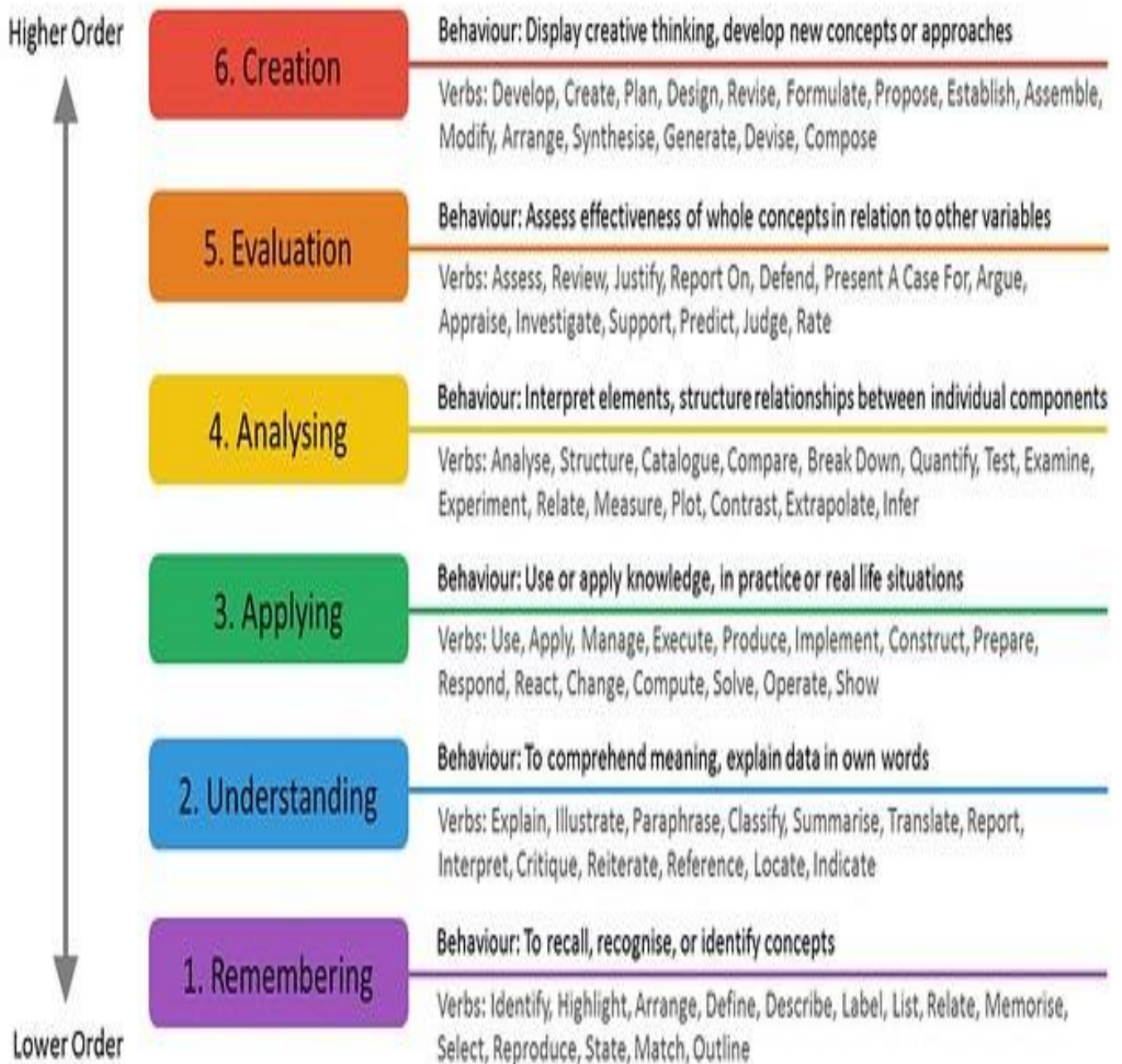
Queries in relation to the Descriptors awarded for the Classroom-Based Assessments, where they arise, will be dealt with by the school (Assessment Guidelines page 23).

**Q: When does the SLAR meeting happen?**

CBA and SLAR window dates are updated annually by the NCCA on [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie).

## Appendix 3 - Bloom's Taxonomy

### Bloom's Taxonomy - Cognitive



Designed by Ian Teh RunningMan, September 2016