



Solid Foundations Primary School **Assessment Policy (2020/1)**

1. Introduction

Our school recognises assessment as a process of gathering reliable information about the performance of a learner. This process is continuous, criterion referenced, diagnostic, summative and varied. As a private institution, the school follows its own Assessment Policy and does not adhere to the dates or provincial/national examinations provided by the Department of Education.

2. The primary purposes of assessment

- 2.1. To determine a learner's baseline achievement and subsequent progress and to lend assistance based on diagnostic evaluation
- 2.2. To determine the effectiveness of teaching
- 2.3. To determine the best teaching strategies that will enable learners to achieve
- 2.4. To keep all interested parties informed of the learner's progress

3. Planning assessment

- 3.1. The teacher's preparatory files contain an Assessment Plan for each cycle. (Alternatively, teachers may record assessment activities on general Year Plans, in a different colour for differentiation.)

Plans reflect the following:

Subject	<u>Minimum</u> number of planned formal assessment activities per assessment cycle/ report	Maximum "weight" of any assessment activity (including maximum weight of an examination)
English and Mathematics	6	25% of report mark (Grade 4 - 6) 40% of report mark (Grade 7)
Afrikaans, NS, Geography, History, LO	4	
IsiZulu, EMS and Technology	2	50% of report mark (Grade 4 – 7)

- 3.2. This is the minimum requirement, but teachers may include more activities at their discretion, to establish a fair and continuous assessment result for their report marks.
- 3.3. Assessment Plans for Grade 4 – 7 are submitted to the principal within the first week of each school term (4 times annually) who then checks to ensure that the work load for pupils is evenly spread between their subjects. The collated, edited and approved plan is given to parents within the first week of each term.

- 3.4. Although the school runs on four terms, the school year is divided into 3 assessment cycles, resulting in three report cards given to parents. The preschool year is divided into 2 assessment cycles, resulting in 2 report cards annually.
- 3.5. Pupils must be given a clear indication of the content that will be covered in examinations at least three weeks before an examination, in writing.
- 3.6. Pupils may not be given new examinable content within the three-week period prior to their examinations beginning. Teachers may teach new content within this pre-exam period, but it may not be included in the exam.
- 3.7. Pupils must be given a clear indication of the content that will be covered in speeches, assignments and large tests (excluding foundation phase tests or senior primary “quizzes” where content will be given weekly) at least two weeks before the due date of these assessment activities.
- 3.8. Assessment activities must be marked and returned to the pupil within two weeks.

4. Moderation of Assessment Activities

- 4.1. In Grade 1 – 4, all formal assessment activities are moderated by a second teacher in the school of the same grade. This moderation process is undertaken before the assessment activity is presented to the class. Evidence of satisfactory moderation is reflected in the title of the assessment activity which includes the author and the moderator’s name e.g. “Bonds of 10 Test. Set by -----, Moderated by ----- .”
- 4.2. Grade 5 – 7 all examinations, all term tests, and any large other assessments (weighting more than 20% of a cycle mark) are moderated by a second teacher in the school. This moderation process is undertaken at least two weeks before the examination date/ date of the presentation of the assessment to pupils. Evidence of satisfactory moderation is reflected on the examination title page which includes the author and the moderator’s name e.g. “Grade 6 June Geography Exam. Set by -----, Moderated by ----- .”
- 4.3. In addition to the above, all assessment activities, as described in the Assessment Plan for each cycle, are submitted for moderation at the end of an assessment cycle (post-moderation) to school moderators.
- 4.4. Moderators are teachers who volunteer and are then selected by the principal in the first staff meeting of each year. One or more moderators will be selected for each phase. Moderators are re-selected annually.
- 4.5. Folders with planned examinations are stored safely in the principal’s office, or locked in a teacher’s classroom cupboard, when not being moderated.

5. Assessment methods, tools and techniques

- 5.1. Our school recognises that a variety of methods and appropriate tools and techniques are used in the assessment process. Chosen methods, tools and techniques provide a range of opportunities for learners to demonstrate knowledge and skills. Examples of recognised assessment methods and tools include:
 - 5.1.1. Student self-assessment
 - 5.1.2. Oral questions and answers (student interviews)
 - 5.1.3. Textual questions and written answers

- 5.1.4. Examinations, quizzes and tests
- 5.1.5. Participation in class discussions
- 5.1.6. Peer assessment
- 5.1.7. Teacher observation
- 5.1.8. Written assignments
- 5.1.9. Journal entries
- 5.1.10. Worksheet assignments
- 5.1.11. Projects
- 5.1.12. Role play
- 5.1.13. Posters
- 5.1.14. Presentations and speeches
- 5.1.15. Constructions and design
- 5.1.16. Drawings and maps
- 5.1.17. Debates

6. Recording of assessment

- 6.1. Markbooks serve as a vehicle in which evidence of progress and performance is noted.
- 6.2. Markbooks are uncomplicated and easy to interpret.
- 6.3. Markbooks indicate the progress of the learner continuously.
- 6.4. Every educator is responsible for the maintenance and timeous updating of his/ her markbook.
- 6.5. Markbooks indicate assessment results for planned formal assessment activities described in the teacher's Assessment Plan. All such assessment activities are dated (using the term and week e.g. T2W4) in the markbook, and these dates correlate with the annual Assessment Plan.
- 6.6. Markbooks may be subject to inspections by the principal at any time but will be formally inspected during the school's formal inspection weeks (twice annually).

7. Report Cards

- 7.1. The report card dates correlate with the conclusion of assessment cycles and are determined at the beginning of each school year in the staff meeting held the day before school begins, taking into consideration the school's overall calendar. Generally, reports are given out on the 1st of May, 1st of August and 1st of December. Generally, preschool reports are given out on the 1st of May and 1st of December.
- 7.2. Marks and percentages (per subject) on report cards are a summative reflection of the assessment activities reflected on the Assessment Plans.
- 7.3. The learner's report card in preschool (and the first report card of Grade 1) is a description of the perceived perceptual, social, academic and physical skills of the school beginner, and not necessarily a formal summative assessment of subjects e.g. English, mathematics etc.
- 7.4. Marks and percentages on report cards may be accompanied by brief home-room teacher comments expounding the results.
- 7.5. Obtaining a year average below 50% (level 4) for English and 50% (level 4) for Maths is regarded as a failure to comply with progression requirements for a grade.

- 7.6. Obtaining a mark below 40% (level 3) in Afrikaans is regarded as a failure to comply with progression requirements for a grade. This decision may be subject to exemption for foreign students (up to a period of 2 years in the country) and unique cases brought before the principal.
- 7.7. Obtaining a mark below 40% (level 3) in three other subjects excluding Mathematics or English is regarded as a failure to comply with progression requirements for a grade.
- 7.8. Report card comments and marks are submitted electronically to the principal at least one week before report card due dates.
- 7.9. Report cards in the Foundation Phase comply with the CAPS stipulated codes (1-7 point rubric system) indicating academic accomplishment.
- 7.10. Report cards for Intermediate and Senior Phases contain actual percentages to reflect academic attainment, along with the CAPS stipulated codes (1-7). Symbols (A,B,C etc.) are used to evaluate pupil effort and parents are provided with a rubric on the report card for interpretation thereof.
- 7.11. The following designated codes are used in reporting:

Code 7	Outstanding/ Excellent Achievement
Code 6	Meritorious achievement
Code 5	Adequate achievement
Code 4	Moderate achievement
Code 3	Elementary achievement
Code 2	Inadequate achievement
Code 1	Not achieved

- 7.12. Code 1 – 3 is interpreted as a “failed” status for a subject in the Foundation Phase.
- 7.13. Overall marks may also be converted to levels/codes for reporting in the Senior Primary Phase. The following table provides a method for converting marks to codes:

<u>Marks (%)</u>	<u>Codes</u>
80– 100%	7
70– 79%	6
60– 69%	5
50– 59%	4
40– 49%	3
30– 39%	2
0 - 29%	1

- 7.14. Reports are:
 - 7.14.1. Uncomplicated and easily interpreted by the educator and by others.
 - 7.14.2. Genuine, factual indications of the pupil’s strengths and areas of support needed.
 - 7.14.3. Readily accessible.
 - 7.14.4. Kept in a secure place to protect the confidentiality of learner progression.

8. Parental involvement

- 8.1. Parents/ guardians are notified at least a week before-hand via newsletter of actual report dates.
- 8.2. Parent Meetings are held within a two-week period of report cards being sent home. These meetings may be general or by invitation only, based on the discretion of the teacher. The teacher makes herself available directly before or after school to discuss report cards with parents should they wish to do so. These discussions are arranged by appointment through the school secretary.
- 8.5. Teachers keep personal written record of any decisions and action plans developed in Parent Meetings. Copies of these written records are submitted to the principal for later filing in learner profiles.

9. Possible retention of learners

- 9.1. It is expected that in the main, learners will progress with their age cohort. In exceptional cases, a learner may be retained in the same grade if such a decision is in the best interest of the learner. It is not permitted for a learner to remain more than 4 years in a particular phase in the school.
- 9.2. The educator must have documented proof that the learner is experiencing severe difficulties with regards to learning, in order to retain a learner. The principal and parents are informed personally of this possibility by no later than the end of term 3. The decision on the child's retention status is finalised after the third and final assessment cycle, and parents are advised accordingly. Any documents and proof relating to such a learner is made available to the parents/guardians upon request.
- 9.4. As a rule, any pupil obtaining a mark under 50% (level 4) for any subject, is considered as a learner in need of support for that subject. Learners in need of support who are experiencing barriers to learning that are too difficult to address by the grade educator are referred to the school-based therapists, or external therapists for support.
- 9.6. The school assists foreign non-English speaking students wishing to study in South Africa by admitting them to the grade in which they will most successfully obtain the required academic outcomes without undue stress, albeit that they are older than their fellow students in this grade. Not more than one such student is admitted per class, and the class teacher makes the decision, in conjunction with the parents, when the child is ready to progress to a higher grade.
- 9.7. Should a learner be identified as a learner in need of support, yet improves to the extent that he/she could progress to the next grade, but the parents request that he/she be retained, the principal and teacher will take this request into consideration and decide accordingly.
- 9.8. The school reserves the right to transfer a learner from one grade to the next if they have not met the minimum criteria for passing. This will only be considered in unique and extreme circumstances and at the consensus of the principal, parents and staff.

10. Possible retention of learners in Grade RR and R

- 10.1. The school acknowledges that school readiness is a vital milestone required for successful early education. As a private school, the school reserves the right to retain learners in Grade RR and R should it deem necessary and in the best interests of the child.
- 10.3. Pupils in Grade RR and R are subject to testing in June/July of the school year to assist the school in making a decision about promoting a pupil. Pupils scoring 50% and below in the Grade

R entrance test and 60% and below in the Grade 1 entrance test will not be considered for promotion to the next grade. This score is taken into consideration together with the opinion of the child's teacher. The opinion of the teacher is weighted more heavily than the result of the test.

11. **Assessment appeals and grievance procedure**

- 11.1. In the unlikely event that parents or learners have a grievance regarding a learner's mark, the parents or learner is encouraged to make an appointment with the teacher concerned to discuss the particular grievance.
- 11.2. Should this not result in a satisfactory resolution between the teacher and the parents/learners, the principal is consulted to act as a mediator in this regard.
- 11.3. Appeals and grievance cases are only considered in the period of one month after the mark has been given.