



## **Solid Foundations Primary School** **Assessment Policy (2021/1)**

### **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:

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Minimum number of planned formal assessment activities per assessment cycle/ report</b>	<b>Maximum "weight" of any assessment activity (including maximum weight of an examination)</b>
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. For 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 assessment cycles 1 and 2 (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).
- 6.7. Markbooks may be used in hard copy or electronic format. Electronic markbooks must be saved on the cloud.

## **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 1<sup>st</sup> of May, 1<sup>st</sup> of August and 1<sup>st</sup> of December. Generally, preschool reports are given out on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May and 1<sup>st</sup> 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 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. Report card comments and marks are submitted electronically to the principal at least one week before report card due dates.
- 7.6. Report cards in the Foundation Phase comply with the CAPS stipulated codes (1-7 point rubric system) indicating academic accomplishment.
- 7.7. 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.
- 7.8. 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

- 7.9. 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

7.10. Reports are:

- 7.10.1. Uncomplicated and easily interpreted by the educator and by others.
- 7.10.2. Genuine, factual indications of the pupil’s strengths and areas of support needed.
- 7.10.3. Readily accessible.
- 7.10.4. Kept in a secure place to protect the confidentiality of learner progression.

7.11. In Grade 5-7, any subject below 50% (see point 9) is circled on the report card by the homeroom teacher before being given to the pupil

**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 primary school 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. Solid Foundations recognises 50% (level) as the pass mark for all subjects
- 9.3. In Grade 4-7, failing English or Mathematics (getting a year average below 50%) is regarded as a failure to comply with progression requirements for that grade.
- 9.4. In Grade 4-7, failing any other three subjects excluding Mathematics or English (getting a year average below 50%) is regarded as a failure to comply with progression requirements for that grade.

A subject pass mark of 50% or more is applied to all subjects	Mathematics	Child may not fail and progress to the next grade
	English	Child may not fail and progress to the next grade
	Afrikaans	Child may not fail 3 or more of these subjects and progress to the next grade
	History	
	NS	
	Technology	
	EMS	
Geography		

- 9.5. Retention in Grade 1-3 is determined at the teacher’s discretion based on the following criterion (confirmed through continuous assessment):
  - 9.5.1. The child is continually struggling to keep up with the work pace of his/her peers
  - 9.5.2. The child repetitively scores below class average for formal assessments, particularly in maths and English
- 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, and parents provide signed confirmation of receiving due warning. 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. 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.
- 9.5. The school reserves the right to transfer a learner from one grade to the next even 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 preschool 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.
- 10.2. 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 report mark has been given.

#### **12. Exam protocol**

- 12.1. The exam timetable will be reviewed annually by the principal. The timetable will give preference to teachers who have the highest marking load. The current time-table is presented below but is subject to change. Finalised exam timetables will be published in the newsletter at least 3 weeks prior to the examination period.

<b>Day</b>	<b>Session 1</b>	<b>Session 2</b>
1	Gr 7 EMS	Gr 7 LO
2	English language (no dictionaries permitted)	English creative writing (no dictionaries permitted)
3	Afrikaans language	Afrikaans creative writing (dictionaries permitted for Grade 7 pupils only)
4	Geography (Calculators compulsory)	
5	History	

Day	Session 1	Session 2
6	NST (Gr 5 and 6) Science (Gr 7)	Technology (Gr 7) (Calculators compulsory)
7	Maths (Calculators and maths sets compulsory for Gr 7. No calculators or maths sets for Gr 5 and 6)	

- 12.2. Exams papers are drafted at least three weeks prior to the exam being written (when content is given to the pupils) and exams are submitted for peer moderation at least two weeks before exam date
- 12.3. Moderators must provide feedback to the examiner within two days of receiving the paper. Consensus must be reached between the two teachers if alterations are required. If consensus cannot be reached, the teachers must bring the issue to the principal. Once exams have been moderated, edited and re-typed, a new exam copy must be given to the moderator to concur that changes were satisfactory. The following factors are taken into consideration by the moderator:
- 12.3.1. The fair distribution of easy, mediocre and difficult questions in the paper
  - 12.3.2. The fair distribution between questions requiring the repetition of learned content, application of learned content, and comprehension of new content (case studies or comprehensions)
  - 12.3.3. The fair distribution between multiple choice, true and false, fill-in-the-blank, one word, paragraph and essay-type questions
  - 12.3.4. The accuracy of the given memo
  - 12.3.5. The fairness of the mark allocation
  - 12.3.6. The correct calculation of marks towards the exam total
  - 12.3.7. General spelling and grammar
- 12.4. An examination session is 2 hours long. Exams are drafted to cover 90 minutes of content. Students will be given the full 2 hours to write an exam. Invigilators are required to hand out the exam 5 minutes before the examination period commences. During this 5-minute period, the invigilator briefly pages through the exam with the class, ensuring that all exams are without error. Pupils may not write longer than the allocated 2-hour period and exam papers will be collected once this window period is concluded. If a pupil has not completed their exam in this 2-hour session, the invigilator must write in red pen on the pupil's exam "insufficient time", to give feedback to the examiner when marking.
- 12.5. Pupils write exams in their homeroom classes under the supervision of their homeroom teachers. Senior primary teachers who do not have a homeroom class are expected to volunteer one day per grade (3 in total) to substitute homeroom teachers in invigilating. This volunteer teacher invigilation time-table will be collated and posted by the principal two weeks prior to the beginning of the exam sessions.
- 12.6. Pupils in Grade 5-7 may leave after their first exam session as long as they are not writing in the second exam session. If pupils opt to leave on day 4-7 (see exam timetable), they must vacate

the school premises between 10h00 and 10h15, through the “troll bridge” gate. If the child is not collected in this allocated time-slot, they will be required to remain at school until 12h30.

- 12.7. Pupils’ personal items and pockets may be subject to a search before or during the exam session by the exam invigilator. Pupils may only bring the following items into the exam session:
  - 12.7.1. Stationery appropriate for the writing of the given exam. Pencil cases/bags must be stored underneath student’s chairs, with only the relevant stationery on their desks.
  - 12.7.2. A book (novel) to read after the exam has been written and taken in by the invigilator
  - 12.7.3. A dictionary, maths set or calculator (if permission is granted by the examiner)
- 12.8. Invigilators must encourage children to use the bathroom in the minutes preceding the exam session. Only in extreme circumstances may a pupil be excused for a bathroom break during the exam session (if their paper has not been completed and collected by the invigilator). In such an instance, the pupil must be accompanied by a responsible peer.
- 12.9. Pupils may ask for paper for rough working out/ first drafts during their examination sessions

### **13. Report protocol**

- 13.1. The principal will announce the due date for report comments and marks to be uploaded on the cloud by e.g. If announced that uploads are DUE by 3 March, teachers must ensure that marks and comments are uploaded by midnight on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March.
- 13.2. Teachers are encouraged to upload marks and comments before the due date
- 13.3. Report comments must be accurate and honest. Comments must centre on aspects of the child’s character, personality and work ethic, and not on the marks attained. E.g. “You didn’t do as well as you could in Geography but well done for your excellent History mark” is NOT viewed as an acceptable report comment. This is a mark reflection. Rather say e.g. “Your enthusiasm for participating in my class discussions is a pleasure”. As such, report comments are not dependent on first seeing the marks attained in all subjects by the learner, but should come from the personal experience of the homeroom teacher with the child.
- 13.4. Reports are formal documents, and as such, teachers must refrain from using the following in their report comments:
  - 13.4.1. Contractions e.g. *don’t* instead of *do not*
  - 13.4.2. The platitude “good luck”
  - 13.4.3. The use of multiple punctuation marks e.g. Well done!!!!
  - 13.4.4. Long sentences using conjunctions
  - 13.4.5. Double spacing after a typed full stop
- 13.5. Report comments are edited by the principal and volunteer English teachers
- 13.6. Once report comments and marks have been edited, reports are run and the principal signs them. First drafts of reports are given to teachers. Teachers are expected to meticulously check at least 5 printed reports (taken from different places in the class register) to ensure that marks and comments correlate with the report spreadsheet on the cloud. Issues requiring editing are brought to the attention of the principal immediately.
- 13.7. It is the responsibility of the homeroom teacher (Grade RRR-7) to make a copy of the final report and to file it in the child’s Learner Profile