



## **Solid Foundations Primary School**

### **Assessment Policy (2023/11)**

#### **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, assessment activities or provincial/national examinations provided or suggested 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 term. (Alternatively, teachers may record assessment activities on general Year Plans, with some differentiation to identify them.)

Plans reflect the following:

##### **3.1.1. Intersen Phase (Gr 4-7):**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Minimum number of planned formal assessment activities per term (Term 1- 3)</b>	<b>Maximum “weight” of any individual assessment activity (Term 1-3)</b>	<b>Minimum number of planned formal assessment activities per term (Term 4)</b>	<b>Maximum “weight” of any assessment activity (Term 4)</b>
English and Mathematics	6	25% of report mark (Grade 4 - 6)	1	100%
Afrikaans, NS, Geography, History	4	40% of report mark (Grade 7) <i>{Minimum weight of an exam mark is 25%}</i>		<i>{Minimum weight of an exam mark is 25%}</i>
LO, EMS and Technology	2	50% of report mark (Grade 4 – 7)	1	100% <i>{Minimum weight of an exam mark is 25%}</i>

### 3.1.2. Foundation Phase:

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Minimum number of planned formal assessment activities per term (Term 1- 4, excluding Grade 1 Term 1)</b>	<b>Maximum “weight” of any assessment activity</b>
English oral	3	50%
English spelling	6	20%
Reading	2	50%

Subject	<u>Minimum</u> number of planned formal assessment activities per term (Term 1- 4, excluding Grade 1 Term 1)	Maximum “weight” of any assessment activity
Writing (Creative writing and general language activities)	3	50%
Comprehension (Not a requirement for Grade 1 assessment)	2	50%
Afrikaans	Grade 1: 5x vocabulary test	20%
	Grade 2: 5x vocabulary tests 2x writing activities 2x reading activities	20%
	Grade 3: 1x oral activity 1x reading activity 1x writing activity 1x spelling/ vocab activity 1x general language activity 1x comprehension activity	20%
Handwriting	Continuous	
Mathematics	6	50%

### 3.1.3. Preschool:

All assessment tasks (see criteria on report card) are repeated at least twice during an assessment cycle, but preferably thrice.

- 3.2. The above recommendations, per phase, are the minimum requirements, 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 5 – 7 are submitted to the Deputy Principal within the first week of each school term (4 times annually) who then checks to ensure that the workload 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. The school runs on four terms/ 4 assessment cycles, resulting in report cards given out the Tuesday of the second week after a school holiday (Terms 2, 3 and 4) and the last week of Term 4. The preschool year is divided into 2 assessment cycles, resulting in 2 report cards given out annually (first week in May, first week in December).
- 3.5. Grade 4-7 pupils must be given a clear indication of the content that will be covered in examinations at least three weeks before an examination, in a written demarcation. A demarcation is considered to be a list of content that will be examined on.
- 3.6. Grade 4-7 pupils may not be given new examinable content within the two-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. Grade 4-7 pupils' homework should be reduced or minimalised in the two-week period before exams.
- 3.8. Pupils must be given a clear indication of the content that should 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.
- 3.9. Assessment activities must be marked and returned to the pupil within two weeks.

#### **4. Pre-moderation and post-moderation of assessment activities**

- 4.1. In Grade 1 – 3, all assessment activities recorded in markbooks are pre-moderated by a second teacher in the school of the same grade, as both teachers will be doing the same proposed

assessment activities. This pre-moderation process is undertaken before any activity is presented to the class. Pre-moderation involves the two teachers discussing an activity as well as the detailed rubric/memo for their marking of the activity. Evidence of pre-moderation will be apparent in that both mark books will reflect the same assessment activities, weighting the same amount. Post-moderation (checking the marking of two pupil samples) is only required for all writing, comprehension and mathematics activities recorded in markbooks (regardless of their weighting). Evidence of post-moderation will be a signed initial in the markbook next to each writing, comprehension and mathematics activity.

- 4.2. For Grade 4 – 7, all examinations and any large other assessments (weighting more than 20% of a term mark) are pre and post moderated by a second teacher in the school. This pre-moderation process is undertaken at least two weeks before the examination date (the date of the first exam in an exam cycle)/ date of the presentation of the assessment to pupils and should be returned to the teacher within 2 days. Evidence of satisfactory moderation is reflected on the title page which includes the author and the moderator’s name e.g. “Grade 6 June Geography Exam. Set by ----, Moderated by ---- .”
- 4.3. The following factors are taken into consideration by the pre-moderator:
  - 4.3.1. The fair distribution of easy, mediocre and difficult questions in any tests or examinations.
  - 4.3.2. The fair distribution between questions requiring the repetition of learned content, application of learned content, and comprehension of new content (case studies or comprehensions) in tests and examinations.
  - 4.3.3. The fair distribution between multiple choice, true and false, fill-in-the-blank, one word, paragraph and essay-type questions in tests and examinations.
  - 4.3.4. The accuracy of the given memo.
  - 4.3.5. The fairness of the mark allocation.
  - 4.3.6. The correct calculation of marks towards the assessment total.
  - 4.3.7. Whether the assessment truly reflects learned knowledge and accurately captures a child’s capabilities in the subject at the time of the assessment.
  - 4.3.8. General spelling and grammar.

- 4.4. For Grade 4-7, in addition to the above, two random samples of all examinations, term tests, or assessment activities weighing 20% or more of a cycle, are submitted for post-moderation to the same moderator after the assessments have been marked. These assessments are re-marked by the post-moderator in a different colour than the original mark.
- 4.5. For Grade 4-7, oral assessment activities weighing 20% or more should be post-moderated through video recordings or live repetitions (two samples).
- 4.6. Post-moderators use the rubric/memo provided by the teacher, and confirm in writing that marking was done accurately and fairly.
- 4.7. Post-moderators (Grade 1-7) must return assessments that have been moderated within one day of receiving them.
- 4.9. Mark discrepancies between original mark and post-moderator's mark, of more than 5%, will result in all tests/ assessments being re-marked and re-moderated.
- 4.10. Mark discrepancies between original mark, and post-moderator's mark, of less than 5%, will result in the pupil being allocated the highest mark of the two marks.
- 4.11. Planned examinations are stored safely in the principal's office, or locked in a teacher's classroom cupboard, when not being marked or moderated.
- 4.12. Preschool moderation is only done through a pre-moderation procedure. All assessment activities are discussed between two preschool teachers, and the rubric is worked out in detail before-hand.

## **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 (see policy on Internal Monitoring of Academic Standard for detailed requirements for markbook layout).
- 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. Activities are also labelled with their weighting (out of the term mark) and their actual mark. Activities are also labelled briefly with a descriptive heading e.g. frog comprehension
- 6.6. Markbooks may be subject to inspections by the principal at any time but will be formally inspected during the principal's formal inspections (twice annually) or before the conclusion of each reporting cycle.

6.7. Markbooks may be used in hard copy or electronic format. Electronic markbooks must be saved on the cloud, in the Solid Foundations Google Drive.

## **7. Report Cards**

7.1. Marks and percentages (per subject) on report cards are a summative reflection of the assessment activities reflected on the Assessment Plans.

7.2. 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.

7.3. Marks and percentages on report cards may be accompanied by brief home-room teacher comments expounding the results.

7.4. Report card comments and marks are submitted electronically to the principal at least one weekend before report card due dates. For the June exams, marks are submitted only after students have received feedback on their exams. Marks must be submitted to the principal by the first Friday of the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> term, and at least 4 days before the report due date of the final 4<sup>th</sup> term report.

7.5. Markbooks are printed out and submitted to the principal for moderation the Friday before the week that report cards go out in Term 2, 3 and 4.

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).

7.8. The following designated codes are used in reporting:

Code 7	Outstanding/ Excellent Achievement
Code 6	Good achievement
Code 5	Satisfactory achievement/ Average
Code 4	At risk/ Limited achievement
Code 3	Needs assistance/ Not meeting minimum requirements



Code 2	Struggling/ Not meeting most requirements
Code 1	Not achieving any requirements

7.9. Overall marks are 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.

7.12. The report will reflect a mark for each term and then a final year promotion mark. The final year promotion mark is calculated as an average of the four terms.

7.13. Grade averages should ideally be within the ranges of 60% and 70%. If the grade average is above 70%, teachers should reconsider the manner in which their marks are weighted.

## **8. Parental involvement**

- 8.1. Parents/ guardians are notified via newsletter of 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 office.
- 8.5. Teachers keep personal written record of any decisions and action plans developed in these parent meetings. Copies of these written records are submitted to the office for 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 (getting a year average below 50%) any other three subjects excluding Mathematics or English, 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 (**level 3 or lower**), particularly in Maths and English.
- 9.6. 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 fourth 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.
- 9.7. Should a parent request that a child be retained, even if the child meets the basic promotion requirements, this request will be taken into consideration by the school principal and permission may be granted in unique circumstances.
- 9.8. 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 July/August of the school year to assist the school in deciding about promoting a pupil. Pupils scoring below 50% in the Grade R entrance test and below 60% 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 are 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 heaviest marking load. The current, recommended timetable is presented below but is subject to change. Finalised exam timetables will be given to pupils at least 3 weeks prior to the examination period. (Day 4 and 7 may be switched if Mathematics teachers attend school camp at the end of the year).

<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	
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 first exam of the exam session being written (when content to study for exams is given to the pupils) and exams are submitted for peer moderation at least two weeks before the first exam of the exam session.

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.

12.4. An examination session is 2 hours long. Exams are drafted to cover 90 minutes of the session. Students will be given the full 2 hours to write an exam. This allows for a pupil to review their paper and make any corrections for an additional 30 minutes. 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 to substitute homeroom teachers in invigilating. This teacher invigilation time-table will be drawn up and posted by the principal two weeks prior to the beginning of the exam sessions.
- 12.6. Pupils in Grade 4-7 may leave after their first exam session as long as they are not writing in the second exam session. If pupils opt to leave, they must vacate the school premises between 10h00 and 10h20, through the "Troll Bridge Gate". If the child is not collected during this allocated time-slot, they will be required to remain at school until the end of the second exam session.
- 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. The book must remain on the floor until the exam paper has been collected.
  - 12.7.3. A dictionary, maths set or calculator (if permission is granted by the examiner).
  - 12.7.4. Water bottles which may be kept under the pupil's seats.
- 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.

12.10. Exam papers are not sent home after being marked. Parents are welcome to view the exam any time in the term following the report for which the exam was used as a term mark, after which, the exam will be destroyed.

### **13. Report protocol**

13.1. Report comments must be accurate and honest. In the Intersen Phase, Comments must centre on aspects of the child's character, personality and work ethic, and not on the marks obtained. E.g. "You didn't do as well as you could in English 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 obtained 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 deputy principal.

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 saved 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 at the conclusion of the academic year.