

WHITBY



Assessment Policy

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Introduction

The purpose of this document is to present an understanding of assessment at Whitby School, as well as guidelines and procedures that faculty follow in relation to assessment.

This policy outlines our assessment philosophy practices and procedures. It is based on the collaborative work of faculty and administration, as well as research related to leading and best practices and assessment standards as outlined by International Baccalaureate. In addition, it fulfills standards and practices of the International Baccalaureate Primary and Middle Years Programs (IBPYP and IBMYP) and the accreditation requirements of the both the American Montessori Society (AMS) and the Connecticut Association of Independent Schools (CAIS). This document is binding to all members of the **Whitby School** faculty and administration.

Mission

Whitby inspires a passion for learning and empowers each child to take responsibility as an open-minded, principled citizen in a global community.

At Whitby School we believe that we can monitor the school's adherence to the mission statement through the effective and consistence implementation of this Assessment Policy, ensuring assessment remains integral to our teaching and learning process.

Guiding Principles of Assessment at Whitby School

- Assessment is integral to teaching and learning, assessing student understanding and skills across the curriculum and over time.
- Assessment is purposeful, with clear criteria that are communicated in advance and are related to learning outcomes, standards and criteria as outlined in the [Curriculum Guides](#).
- Assessments are reliable and consistent.
- Assessment is balanced and holistic, including a variety of strategies and tools that engage learners -formative and summative, external and internal.
- Assessment must be monitored and documented so learning is made visible to all stakeholders.
- Assessments are selected or designed to be relevant, engaging, authentic and accessible to all students.
- Assessment is ongoing throughout the teaching and learning cycle.
- Assessment data are collected, reviewed and analyzed regularly to understand what a student is able to do and understand, to differentiate instruction for students, to monitor and report on student learning, and to monitor the effectiveness of our program.
- Assessment provides clear, regular and specific feedback on the learning process and goals to students, parents and teachers to inform next steps for future learning.
- We focus on developing assessment capable student, who can monitor their learning, reflect on feedback and make adjustments, with the ultimate goal for students to be their own assessors and thus, lifelong learners.

Why Do We Assess?

The main purposes of assessment are:

- To determine what a student knows, understands and is able to do
- To inform our teaching
- To provide feedback about student learning to the students themselves, to parents and to teachers
- To monitor the effectiveness of a program
- To develop assessment capable students

Assessment *for*, *as* and *of* learning all support student learning and must be appropriately balanced.

| ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING | ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING | ASSESSMENT AS LEARNING |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Teachers design and administer assessments to collect data to understand what a student understands, guide planning and differentiation of instruction and provide feedback to students. | Teachers design and administer assessments to collect data at the end of the unit or grade level to understand the student learning and report on learning progress, as related to curriculum goals. | Students take ownership of their learning by engaging in the metacognitive process of reflecting and self-assessing as they learn and practice how to recognize their own areas of strength and challenge and to plan for their own next steps as learners. |

Assessment Capability

We assess learning while simultaneously building students' ability to effectively engage in self-assessment, acting on constructive feedback, reflecting on their progress, setting goals about their learning and making decision about the next steps necessary to achieve their goals.

What Do We Assess?

We assess student acquisition, development and application of knowledge, skills and conceptual understanding. We monitor academic progress associated with learning outcomes outlined in the *Curriculum Guides*, aligned with Common Core and NGSS standards and guided by the framework of the International Baccalaureate. We assess students' development and demonstration of interpersonal skills using the *Approaches to Learning* from the PYP, MYP, and Montessori practices. We always communicate the purpose and criteria for assessment to students, beforehand.

How Do We Assess?

Assessment must be planned with a clear purpose in mind. We design assessments that enable us to collect evidence of and provide feedback related to student learning.

- We use a variety of assessment strategies, designed or selected based on the purpose of the assessment, with curriculum outcomes, central ideas/guiding questions and assessment tasks in mind.
- We plan assessments to be authentic, essential, rich, engaging and feasible, and inclusive of the learner.
- We integrate standardized assessments into our program that provide us with an externally normed or benchmark comparison.

As we collect, review and analyze evidence of student learning to inform teaching and learning, we consider the four dimensions of assessment.

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p style="text-align: center;">MONITORING LEARNING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Continuously checking in on students' understanding</i> • <i>Checking the progress of learning against students' personal learning goals and success criteria</i> • <i>Using a variety of tools and strategies</i> • <i>Providing feedback on student learning</i> • <i>informing next steps in teaching and learning cycle</i> | <p style="text-align: center;">DOCUMENTING LEARNING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>documenting evidence of learning</i> • <i>shared with others so learning is visible to stakeholders</i> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">MEASURING LEARNING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Measuring learning progress through quantitative data (standardized assessments, criterion-based assessments, benchmark assessments)</i> | <p style="text-align: center;">REPORTING ON LEARNING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Communicating clear information about learning to parents</i> |

What do we do with our evidence of learning?

Collection of Learning Data

Through monitoring, documenting and measuring learning, we collect data so that we can compile the most comprehensive picture of student progress and achievement over time. We monitor learning on a daily basis, using a variety of strategies and tools, providing clear and purposeful feedback to students to feed forward the next steps in learning. As we collect learning data, we document learning, ensuring evidence of learning is visible to all stakeholders. Middle School students progress is measured using [MYP criteria](#), which represent the knowledge, understanding and skills that are taught. Standardized and benchmark assessments add to the comprehensive picture of the student learning as we measure and monitor the progress of learning.

Strategies

- Conferencing
- Focused observations
- Self-reflection
- Performance-based task
- Presentations
- Oral assessments
- Questioning
- Portfolios
- Standardized and benchmark assessments
- Reader responses
- Teacher-designed written assessments

Tools

- Exemplars
- Rubrics
- Checklists
- Project grids
- anecdotal notes
- conferring forms
- technological tools

Culminating Experiences as Assessment

At the end of Lower School (PYP) and Middle School (MYP), students engage in culminating experiences during which they demonstrate learning through an in-depth inquiry, plan for action and reflection into an issue in their community whether that be local or global.

- **The IBPYP Exhibition** at Whitby takes place at the end of Grade 4 and requires students to demonstrate engagement with the five essential elements of the program: knowledge, concepts, skills, attitudes and action. It is a transdisciplinary inquiry conducted in the spirit of personal and shared responsibility, as well as a summative assessment activity that is a celebration as students move from the PYP into the middle years of schooling. The exhibition represents a significant event in the life of a PYP school and student, synthesizing the essential elements of the PYP, and sharing them with the whole school community. It is an opportunity for students to exhibit the attributes of the learner profile that have been developing throughout their engagement with the PYP.
- **The IBMYP Community Project** at Whitby takes place in Grade 8, which is the final year of our school. The aims of the community project are to provide students the opportunity and support to personally inquire and engage in issues that are relevant to them. As a learning journey that spans an extended period of time, successful completion of the community project requires students to employ the skills, attitudes, and knowledge that have been fostered throughout their time at Whitby, while also providing a chance to reflect on their growth as they prepare to transition to the next stage of their education.

English as an Additional Language Assessment

Students for whom English is not their mother tongue and/or is an additional language are assessed during the admissions process, using the WIDA MODEL standardized assessment together with our own internal assessment tools to determine English support needs.

Students placed in the English as an Additional Language (EAL) program are assessed throughout the year to determine progress in their English language development. These assessments include, but are not limited to: classroom observations, achievement on formative and summative assessment tasks, performance on classwork and homework, class participation, conversations with classroom teachers, and further WIDA MODEL assessments.

Standardized and External assessments Whitby commits to using data from standardized assessments to inform student learning and program evaluation in conjunction with assessment conducted in school on a day-to-day basis throughout all grade levels. Standardized assessments used at Whitby are either externally scored by other testing organizations or internally scored using a standardized process. These assessments are planned in advance of each year and scheduled within the school calendar of events. The Director of Assessment analyzes the results of each assessment and reviews the data in collaboration with pedagogical leadership and grade level teams/subject departments, identifying any trends or patterns are identified. We use these external data, together with other assessment data in the curriculum review cycle, to identify areas of growth and success of program and practice, as well as areas in need of development so that we may develop and implement an action plan related to how we can address these areas in need of development. The results of this analysis are shared with the school's faculty and the parent community, in addition to sharing individual student results with the families.

Standardized Test preparation at Whitby

- At Whitby, "test prep" is not a separate unit or genre of study. In preparing our students for standardized tests, however, we have identified specific strategies, which will help students as they engage in this unfamiliar setting and format of assessment. Instruction of these strategies is integrated in the curriculum throughout the year. Teaching these strategies is done in authentic and meaningful ways that will enhance the child's learning

Analysis of Learning Data

We collaboratively analyze and reflect on the data as evidence to support evidence-based decision-making. These decisions are for individual learners, grade levels and across the school to identify patterns and trends in student learning. As we review and respond to student learning data, we ask questions about our students, the learning experiences, and our learning objectives.

Reporting of Learning Data

Reporting on assessment is about communicating what students know, understand and can do. It describes the progress in a child's learning and identifies areas of strengths as well as areas of growth and goals for the future learning process.

At Whitby, effective reporting will:

- Involve parents, students and teachers as partners
- Reflect the values and beliefs of the school community
- Be clear and transparent
- Be based in evidence
- Be comprehensive, fair, honest and credible
- Inform teaching and learning

We communicate clear information related to student learning to parents through:

- student-led parent-student-teacher conferences
- parent-teacher conferences
- Interim Reports (Middle School) and Mid-year Reports (Children's House and Lower School), Pre-conference Forms (Children's House and Lower School) and end of year reports (all divisions)
- Assessment folders and digital portfolios

The Reporting Cycle

Assessment Reporting

Assessments from Lower School and Middle School are sent home in a digital or physical Assessment Folder, for parent review after the scored assessment has been shared with the student.

Teacher-Student Conferences

These informal conferences are incorporated into the regular classroom routines and are meant to provide students with feedback on their progress. These conferences ensure students reflect on their own work and understand their strengths, areas in need of development and next steps.

Formal Parent Conferences

In the Lower School, we host two parent conferences per school year. Conferences are scheduled in November for all Lower School families and in April we host a student –led portfolio conference. During conferences, progress is shared related to grade level expectations as well as individualized goals for the student.

In the Middle School, Parent-Student-Teacher conferences are held twice a year. These occur in November and April. At these conferences Middle School students, parents and teachers meet to discuss student learning, including areas of progress and future growth for each child. learning or any other issue at any time.

Report Cards

In addition to sharing assessment data through conferences, assessment folders and standardized test scores, the school formally reports on student learning twice a year through narrative report cards. The learning outcomes that are reported are directly linked to our [Curriculum Guides](#). These report cards are posted on Veracross for parent download and provide an overview of each child’s progress within our curriculum. The report cards are stored through Veracross as part of a student’s permanent record, and backed up on Whitby’s cloud storage, BOX.

CTP Reporting

Each spring, individual student data as well as whole school data from the Comprehensive Testing Program (CTP) are shared with parents through electronic communication as well as during a formal presentation by the Director of Assessment.

Accommodations for Standardized Assessment

- Whitby seeks to provides reasonable accommodations for students during standardized tests, taken as part of the school's curricular program. Standardized testing accommodations for a given student are derived from the accommodations outlined in a student's psychological-educational evaluation, IEP, or Instructional Plan. As explained in Whitby's Test Accommodations Policy " accommodations allow a student to access curricular material and assessments without undue burden. Accommodations ultimately aim to remove barriers that would otherwise negatively impact a student's ability to show the full extent of his or her understanding." In the context of a standardized assessment, an accommodation offered by Whitby School would not alter the content of the assessment itself.

Implications of Policy and Future Research

Upon publishing this policy, Whitby School will commit to:

- Continued research into the most effective combinations of instructional models and assessments that result in improved student learning.
- Identifying types of professional development and supporting activities that best enable the assessment capability of teachers and leadership.
- Identifying patterns and trends (strengths and areas in need of development) in our curriculum through analyzing performance assessment data.
- Annually review this policy in light of leading practice and research

Acknowledgements

Making the PYP happen: A Curriculum Framework for International Education, International Baccalaureate Organization

Bavarian International School Assessment Policy, IBPYP Assessment Handbook

Understanding by Design, Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe

Assessment in the Primary Years Programme: From Principle to Practice, 2005-2022, International Baccalaureate Organization

Assessment in the Middle Years Programme: From Principle to Practice, International Baccalaureate Organization

