

Ongoing reporting for  
effective teaching and  
learning



# Contents

Introduction	5
Making Connections	7
Meeting the Challenges	8
Facilitator’s Guide	10
Working with the Guiding Principles of Reporting	13
Using the Support Material	14
The Guiding Principles of Reporting:	
Guiding Principle 1	15
Guiding Principle 2	19
Guiding Principle 3	22
Guiding Principle 4	25
Guiding Principle 5	28
Guiding Principle 6	31
Guiding Principle 7	34
Guiding Principle 8	38
Appendix I: Sample student questionnaire on assessment	41
Appendix II: Checklist for teachers on assessment	43
Appendix III: Sample parent questionnaire on assessment	44
References and links	45



## Introduction

This booklet is intended for use by **teachers**, the **school management team**, and the **facilitator** of the school's discussion and reflection on its current and future reporting practice. It is part of the series of *Focus on Learning* booklets designed to support learning and assessment. It aims to help schools develop approaches to ongoing reporting for teachers, students and their parents. In this context the term **ongoing reporting** refers to the systems and structures that the school puts in place to report on student progress right across the school year. While it may include them, ongoing reporting is not confined to end-of-year reporting or to the awarding of certificates.

**Ongoing reporting** on student progress can take a variety of forms, for example:

- informal oral and written feedback
- parent-teacher meetings
- discussions with class teacher/tutor, year head/tutor
- student learning logs and diaries
- end-of-topic/-term/-year reports.

**Ongoing reporting** can reflect many aspects of school life, for example:

- the school's calendar and its teaching/learning programmes
- the school's communication and engagement with parents/guardians
- students' learning progress and achievement in subjects and short courses
- engagement with the learning behaviours and dispositions of students
- the wellbeing of students
- student participation and achievements in extra-curricular activities
- the results of classroom-based-assessments (CBAs)
- areas such as attendance, punctuality, and behaviour.

As you can see from these examples, ongoing reporting on student progress does not confine itself to the results of tests or assignments. In terms of student progress, it is helpful to think of ongoing reporting as involving both assessment that is **formative** (assessment **for** learning) and **summative** (assessment **of** learning).

**Reporting is the part of the assessment process that provides feedback in support of student learning.** There is strong evidence that when reporting on progress is done effectively students feel involved in their learning, are helped to see how well they are progressing and how they can improve. Reporting goes beyond giving marks and grades; it is an important way of sharing progress between teachers, students and parents. This booklet provides schools with opportunities to reflect on their current reporting practice and to develop it into the future.

**School contexts differ.** Therefore, the booklet is not prescriptive. We encourage you to use it in a flexible way to suit your school's context and circumstances. The examples and workshop material are not intended to *show you how to do it* but to offer discussion points that will help you to shape the kind of reporting culture and practices you would like your school to have. Remember that **changes you make must be meaningful and sustainable** for teachers, students, and parents. The *Framework for Junior Cycle (2015)* states that *reporting at junior cycle aims to contribute to the personal and educational development of students, to support and underpin ongoing learning and assessment, and to be manageable, accessible and effective for the school, teacher, student and parent/guardian.*

### **The Guiding Principles of Reporting**

A consultation process has agreed on these eight guiding principles as a sound basis for schools to take forward developments in ongoing reporting practice in junior cycle.

Effective reporting should:

- *Encourage authentic engagement with parents*
- *Provide opportunities for students through feedback to reflect on their learning*
- *Value the professional judgements of teachers*
- *Use the language of learning to provide effective feedback*
- *Be manageable and not take time away from learning and teaching*
- *Clearly communicate students' progress in learning*
- *Provide information on a broad range of achievement*
- *Be sensitive to the self-esteem and general wellbeing of students and take an inclusive approach*

The section ***Working with the Guiding Principles of Reporting*** focuses on each of these principles in turn.

## Making Connections

### Connecting assessment and reporting with teaching and learning

Teaching, learning, assessment and reporting are all connected. The language we use should be the same across all these areas – it should be **the language of learning**. [See Principle 4, pp. 25-27]. How we report on student progress sends important signals to students and parents about what students should know and how they ought to manage their learning. Reporting needs to be closely aligned with **the kind of learning behaviours** we want to encourage. Students who are actively engaged, are aware of how their learning is progressing, persist in the face of difficulties, and ask questions when they are unsure, are most likely to be successful learners. Planning for assessment and reporting is, therefore, an important part of planning for teaching and learning. It is important, then, to consider ways of bringing planning for assessment and reporting into subject and lesson planning. Some useful ideas on planning can be accessed through the Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT) support service by visiting:

<http://www.jct.ie/home/home.php>

### Linking work on assessment and reporting with the School Self Evaluation (SSE) process

[The School Self Evaluation Guidelines 2016-2020](#) (DES 2016, page 10) require schools to ask the following key questions about their work (including reporting):

- How well are we doing?
- How do we know?
- How can we find out more?
- What are our strengths?
- What are our areas for improvement?
- How can we improve?

This booklet along with the various checklists and reflection tools will complement the work your school is already doing with the six-step school self-evaluation process.

## Meeting the Challenges

Before taking forward reporting policy advice in practice, it is necessary to consider the challenges presented. These challenges include:

### **Encouraging genuine understanding rather than compliance**

There is a danger that teachers might merely comply in a functional way if they are simply told what to do in terms of their reporting practice and there is a lack of time for reflection and discussion. In such circumstances teachers may understandably adopt a compliance approach rather than coming to their own personal understanding of the key ideas and how they might apply or adapt them for their classroom. It will be important for teachers, therefore, to have time to develop their own understanding of reporting. Teachers, for example, will require time to fully engage with the idea that **how** and **what** we report on reflects the learning that we value.

### **Moving forward from mechanical use of new practices**

Everyone involved in developing new assessment and reporting approaches should be encouraged to adopt a reflective perspective in all of this. Unquestioning application of a set of techniques is not the aim. While the approaches suggested in this booklet are well-grounded in research, teachers should be encouraged to be flexible in their approach and avoid becoming too uncritical in implementing changes to their practice. For example, in formative assessment it is sometimes useful for teachers to explore the learning intentions with their students during class rather than immediately sharing the intentions with them by writing them out on the board.

### **Not taking on too much too fast**

Schools should consider the ideas in this booklet and try them out one at a time rather than trying to apply all the guiding principles together. In taking forward one principle, it is important to be mindful of the connections to the other principles of reporting. There is no 'quick fix'; embedding and sustaining ongoing reporting practices takes time.

You may find the video link below helpful to share with staff- it features Andy Hargreaves exploring approaches that work best in taking forward changes in practice.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JyuTujJMgho>

## Facilitator's Guide

This section offers guidance on how you might prepare for and organise some workshops on reporting with staff and parents. You can access a general guide for facilitators here

<https://www.ncca.ie/en/resources/facilitators-guide-final-en>

You may find it useful to follow the suggestions set out below and use these to develop your own workshop plans.

Before you get started:

### 1. Find out



What information or data do you already have in relation to reporting practices in the school?  
Is there any data gathered through SSE that might be relevant?

What can students or parents tell you about their experiences of reporting? Is their experience of reporting limited to written reports and parents-teacher meetings? How might this information help you to further develop ongoing reporting practice in your school? You might find some of the survey tools in this booklet useful in gathering such data. [See Appendices at end of booklet, pp. 41-44].

Are there any staff members already developing innovative approaches to ongoing reporting, perhaps through participation in CPD courses or further study? How might you involve them in sharing their experiences with the rest of your staff as part of the introductory workshop?

### 2. Seeking the views of students

Research by Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris (2004) shows that student achievement and engagement will increase when students genuinely feel part of their school community. What students say about their own learning deserves our attention. Students have untapped

expertise and knowledge that can bring renewed relevance and authenticity to classrooms and support how a school changes its practice in an area like reporting.

Students benefit from opportunities to practice the problem solving, leadership, and creative thinking required to participate in decision-making in the school community.

What are the ways that you might try to capture the voices of your students in relation to ongoing reporting practice?

You can find out what some Irish students think about assessment and ongoing reporting [here](#). You may find some of the questions used at this NCCA Student Voice event helpful to use with your own students.

### 3. Seeking the views of parents

Similarly, research has shown the positive impact on student education of parental involvement, particularly when the school sees parents as partners in the process of feedback about learning. As a major partner in the ongoing reporting process it is important that parents are confident about interacting with their children's teachers and believe that their views are valued by the school. It is also important that parents understand what level their children have achieved in terms of their learning, what progress they have made to reach that level and what they need to learn next in order to progress their learning further. You may find some of the audit tools in the Appendices helpful in gaining the views of parents about your present approaches to ongoing reporting and how they might be improved (see Appendix II, p.43).

### 4. Review

After you have received feedback from teachers, parents and students, review the material in this booklet and decide the most suitable starting point to begin working with your colleagues. We recommend that to begin with you **focus on one or two of the guiding principles of effective reporting**. In time you can broaden your focus on reporting to gradually include the other principles.

## 5. An introductory session with staff

As you set out in this work, it is important that staff members engage with **the rationale for changing reporting practice** through an introductory session. You may find these [PowerPoint slides](#) useful in planning and conducting that session. It will be helpful too to consult the Appendices (beginning on page 41), which are designed to support the review and planning sessions.

The introductory session will provide opportunities for teachers in your school to share their experiences of current reporting practice or to say how they are attempting to do things differently.

Some survey information gathered from teachers, parents and students about ongoing reporting could also be reviewed at this meeting and this might help to identify the school's priority areas for change.

**This introductory meeting can then form the basis for planning future sessions.**

## Working with the Guiding Principles of Reporting

Consider again the eight guiding principles that have been agreed on in the context of junior cycle, where it is considered that effective reporting should:

- *Encourage authentic engagement with parents*
- *Provide opportunities for students through feedback to reflect on their learning*
- *Value the professional judgements of teachers*
- *Use the language of learning to provide effective feedback*
- *Be manageable and not take time away from learning and teaching*
- *Clearly communicate students' progress in learning*
- *Provide information on a broad range of achievement*
- *Be sensitive to the self-esteem and general wellbeing of students and take an inclusive approach*

The principles are best taken forward in a cycle of development, though the sequence of principles may vary across schools. You should choose the starting point that is best for your school based on discussions with staff members, parents and students.



## Using the Support Material

Accompanying each guiding principle is a slide presentation which introduces the guiding principle in question. In the Appendices, there is associated workshop material.

The material for each principle is designed to support two to three hours of staff engagement mainly through an interactive workshop. However, you can break the materials up and use them for shorter sessions. Each school will use and adapt the material in a way that suits their own context.

### Possible approach to using the material:

1

#### Step one

You may find it useful to visit these [slides](#) on the rationale for change to reporting in junior cycle. Following this scene-setting you should briefly introduce the key ideas about the guiding principle. You can adapt the facilitator's notes to suit your own school's context. The suggested time for the slide presentation is 6-7 minutes.

2

#### Step two

Show the short video or share the short text which is aimed at stimulating initial discussion about the guiding principle. Use the reflection questions as a basis for discussion or as an audit tool.

3

#### Step three

Having provided an introduction, you are now ready to use the workshop materials. Choose the materials that are most relevant for your school's context. Capture the main ideas and points from the discussion sessions and share them with your colleagues. You may decide to share the summary of the main points from their discussion on flip-charts.

4

#### Step four

Review what has been learned and what are the big messages and action points for the school. Share these action points with staff and, where appropriate, students and parents.

## Guiding Principle 1: Encourage authentic engagement with parents

Ongoing reporting arrangements should place a significant focus on the relationship between students, teachers and parents as a means of improving learning. In this context, schools will value parents as key partners in the process when taking forward their development work on reporting.

**You might use [this video](#) with parents as way of sharing with them the changes in reporting and assessment in Junior Cycle.**



Houtenville and Conway (2008) found that combining a variety of different ways of approaching school/parental engagement has a significant effect on student achievement. In a [study](#) about the impact of parental involvement on students' learning, the Australian Research Alliance argues that *for parents to be effectively engaged in learning, schools need to ensure there are trusting relationships between teachers and parents. This is particularly the case for parents in traditionally 'hard to reach' or 'under-served' groups, including those from diverse cultural backgrounds.*

Research also indicates that low parental engagement is very often to do with a lack of confidence rather than a lack of interest. Where schools make determined attempts to engage parents viewed as 'hard to reach', there is evidence that the effect on student learning can be very positive.

Slide Presentation



## Guiding Principle 1: Encourage authentic engagement with parents

Reflective questions for staff members: Work either individually or with a partner and then discuss how well you feel your school is doing in terms of engaging with parents as part of the reporting process.

Indicate your responses to the questions below using this code:

**A = Always**

**S = Sometimes**

**N = Never**

- Our school looks for ways to encourage parents to be involved in their child's learning
- We provide a warm, welcoming environment for parents when they visit our school
- We reach out to try to engage with 'hard to reach' parents
- We are aware of issues of equality and diversity when we are engaging with parents
- Our parent-teacher meetings are valued by parents and teachers
- We keep contact with parents about student progress throughout the year in various ways
- Our students and their parents are involved in developing our reporting processes.
- We make good use of technology to share students' progress
- We share any proposed changes to our assessment and reporting approaches with parents well in advance of the changes being made
- We make good use of reports and other information from primary schools to inform learning in first year of junior cycle
- We regularly check how well we are doing when we change our approach to assessment and reporting
- Our written reports are discussed with students before they are sent to parents
- We involve students in our parent-teacher meetings
- We have student-led events where students share their progress with their parents.

## Guiding Principle 1: Encourage authentic engagement with parents

### Workshop discussion

Parents should be given regular, timely and accurate information about their child's educational and personal development. Traditional school mid-term or end-of-term reports that take the form of a grade or mark and a generalised comment for each subject can be reassuring and supportive for the parents of students who are clearly achieving well. These reports, however, are not always comprehensive enough to give either parent or student a thorough understanding of what has been achieved and what remains to be done. Therefore, the traditional school report card should be seen as only one part of the reporting process between school and home.

### Discussion point:

What might be the implications of the advice about effective reporting suggested above for our school's reporting processes?

## Guiding Principle 1: Encourage authentic engagement with parents

**Workshop discussion:** In your groups consider how our school might plan to communicate with parents about changes to reporting practice. How useful do you think this letter would be for parents? What details might we include in our letter to parents?

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am writing to you to share some of the proposed changes on how we will report your son/daughter's progress in junior cycle this session. We have a parents' meeting scheduled for Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> of October at 7.00pm when we would like to share the proposed changes in some more detail.

### **Changes to reporting in new junior cycle subjects**

Reporting about your son/ daughter's progress for new junior cycle subjects will be ongoing throughout the year and help you and your child to understand and discuss learning.

Reporting will provide:

- information about your son/daughter's strengths and next steps in their learning
- an opportunity for you to talk to your son/daughter about their progress
- an opportunity for you to give your views on your son/daughter's learning
- an opportunity for your son/daughter to give their views on their progress
- an opportunity to discuss how you can support their next steps in learning.

You will be informed about how your son/daughter is progressing in various ways, such as:

- through teachers' comments on their work
- parents' nights when you can speak to your son/daughter's teacher(s)
- the yearly report, which details progress made, strengths and next steps
- open days
- student-led parent/teacher meetings
- learning logs in which your son/daughter will record how they are getting on in their learning
- E- portfolios – your son/daughter will gather their work in an electronic portfolio

Reporting will also include information on the wider achievements that your son/daughter has gained and describe strengths and areas for development. The reporting process will also describe any additional support that your son/daughter may need and how you can help.

We look forward to seeing you at the meeting when we will have the chance to discuss these changes in more detail

Yours sincerely,

.....

## Guiding Principle 2: Provide opportunities for students through feedback to reflect on their learning

The *Framework for Junior Cycle* (2015) emphasises the role that students themselves will play in the reporting process by building their confidence in their ability to achieve as well as encouraging them to have a stronger voice in their own learning. Students will play an important role in the reporting process through a process of reflection and the opportunity provided for students to discuss the progress they are making in their learning.

### Why is reflection an important part of learning?

Most students are not used to reflecting on their learning. They will need to develop skills in reflective thinking and will need support to decide whether they have achieved their set goals. Whilst these skills may be new to them at first, they will become more adept in these skills as they progress through junior cycle and opportunities are provided to engage in discussions about how well they are doing in their learning and how they might improve.

### What is reflective learning?

Watch the video below for a short introduction to some of the key ideas related to student reflection:

<https://vimeo.com/ncca/review/113080595/03c467f62e> (3 mins)

(Thanks to Vancouver Community College, Baking Department for permission to use this video.)

[Slide Presentation](#)



## Guiding Principle 2: Provide opportunities for students through feedback to reflect on their learning

**Reflective Questions:** Work either individually or with a partner and then discuss how well you have developed your classroom practice in developing students' reflection skills.

Indicate your responses to the questions below using this code:

**A = Always**

**S = Sometimes**

**N = Never**

- I allow time for students to reflect on their progress at the end of a lesson/set of lessons
- I encourage students to think about what they have learned **and** how they learned it
- I encourage students to plan the next steps in their learning
- I provide questions and tools to help students reflect on their learning
- I use language associated with reflection in class, such as, 'let's pause to reflect on what you've just learned'
- I provide opportunities for students to self-assess as part of the reflective process
- I allow time for students to reflect on feedback that they receive from me and their peers.

### Follow-up questions for whole staff or departmental discussions

- How does practice within our school encourage students to reflect on their learning?
- What evidence would show how well our students were involved in self-reflection?
- How might we improve the quality of student self-reflection?
- How might our school take a phased approach to the introduction of student self-reflection and self-assessment?

Further material is available on the [School Self Evaluation](#) website. A range of material including planning documents are available at <https://www.ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/assessment-and-reporting/focus-on-learning> to support schools in taking forward their work on student self-reflection.

## Guiding Principle 2: Provide opportunities for students through feedback to reflect on their learning

**Workshop Discussion:** In your groups, consider how useful these approaches would be for your practice. What are the challenges and opportunities offered by each approach?

**Learning log:** A learning log is a planned, purposeful, follow-up written response to a student's learning experience. These reflections can be kept online or in a special journal. They can enable a dialogue between the student and teacher on the learning journey. In some cases, reflections might be shared in a small group or with a partner.

**The purple pen for reflection:** If you don't want students to separate their reflections from their day-to-day learning, you can ask them to use a blue/black pen when completing their work and a purple pen to write their reflections on their work. This will make it easier for them and for you to see their reflections in their copies.

**Reflection and 'self-talk':** Given our culture, students often have difficulty realising that they need to engage in 'self-talk'. To help students develop the internal voice of reflection, they can be asked to do the following:

- Write a letter/text to themselves detailing what they learned from an experience.
- Send themselves a letter of advice, reminding themselves what they can do to improve their learning/work next time they do something.

**Sharing their reflections:** The opportunity to share one's reflections is helpful because it helps students develop both the language and practice of reflection.

Here are suggestions for helping students develop the capacity for sharing their reflections:

- Sit in a circle. Ask each person to share one reflection about how they learned within the class or small group today.
- Invite students to reflect on their areas of difficulty or concerns and then share problem-solving strategies.
- Invite students to think about a recent mistake or error they made and how they have learned from it. Many of us grow up thinking of mistakes as bad. To maximise our learning, it is essential to ask: 'How can we get the most from every mistake we make?'

### Guiding Principle 3: Value the professional judgements of teachers

Teachers can best see how well a student is performing by looking at a number of pieces of work completed by that student. In line with the *Framework for Junior Cycle* (2015), teachers will then draw upon this wider range of evidence to report on student progress.

New junior cycle subject specifications, for example, encourage teachers to use evidence of learning from a variety of sources to make judgements about students' learning and development. For example, the teacher may make an initial judgement about a student's learning based on observation and questioning and confirm this by referring to the student's samples of work from a range of different sources. These judgements will be based on a set of success criteria or, in the case of Classroom-Based Assessments, a national set of Features of Quality. In the case of success criteria, teachers may wish to develop their practice so that such criteria are co-constructed with students.

### Making judgements about student performance

*The Subject Learning and Assessment Review*: Watch [this video](#) of teachers discussing student performance and how they come to judgements against the Features of Quality (you must register your access details with [www.curriculumonline.ie](http://www.curriculumonline.ie) to see this resource).

Watch a group of English teachers engaging in a subject learning and assessment review meeting:



[Slide presentation](#)

## Guiding Principle 3: Value the professional judgements of teachers

### Reflective Questions

Work either individually or with a partner and then discuss how well you are doing in terms of coming to sound judgements about student progress.

Indicate your responses to the questions below using this code:

**A = Always**

**S = Sometimes**

**N = Never**

To arrive at sound judgements about student progress:

- I assess student achievement by referring to the success criteria for the lesson, or series of lessons, and I use both formative and summative assessment approaches when communicating with student progress
- I gather evidence of students' learning and also use my professional judgement to assess their skill development
- I provide students with oral and written feedback based on the evidence of their learning
- I have a clear and efficient method of recording evidence of student progress based on my professional judgements
- I gather a range of assessment evidence and I use this evidence to track and monitor student progress
- I am confident about coming to professional judgements about student performance in Classroom-Based Assessments
- I consider annotated examples of student work when coming to professional judgements about student performance in Classroom-Based Assessments
- I use discussions in the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings to confirm my professional judgements of Classroom-Based assessments

A further checklist is available on the Department of Education and Skills' [School Self-Evaluation website](#)

## Guiding Principle 3: Value the professional judgements of teachers

Look at the video at this link: <https://vimeo.com/89619211>

This video clip relates to research by Paul Black and Dylan Wiliam in a project entitled 'Inside the Black Box'. This project draws interesting conclusions about the power of formative assessment methods in student learning.

### Workshop Discussion

What challenges and opportunities do you face as a teacher in moving towards a greater focus on making judgements about student progress?

How might you approach the issue of different sources of evidence of student learning?

How might your school plan to address these challenges and embrace these opportunities?

## Guiding Principle 4: Use the language of learning to provide effective feedback

A big change in reporting will be the move away from reporting based mainly on percentages, marks and grades towards reporting which includes capturing student achievement using descriptors of performance in Classroom Based Assessments and in the provision of formative feedback.

This change in junior cycle will involve judgements of student performance based on success criteria and progress in learning being reported using the language of learning. The report will be just **one** way of sharing progress. The commentary on student progress will draw on a broad range of evidence and a variety of sources. The report should indicate the student's strengths and areas for development.

If a school decides to include the results of in-house examinations, then these results should be expressed in the terminology used by the State Examinations Commission for the terminal examination. In the report, it is important that the language used to describe performance in school examinations is kept separate from the language used to describe ongoing classroom-based assessment. The Slide Presentation for this Guiding Principle includes material on using the language of learning to provide assessment feedback to learners.

**This approach is in keeping with the dual approach to assessment outlined on page 35 of the *Framework for Junior Cycle***



Slide Presentation



Formative assessment, complemented by summative assessment, will be a key feature of the new Junior Cycle.

*Framework for Junior Cycle*

Following this presentation, it is recommended that staff members might watch and discuss Geoff Petty explaining the kind of information that students need to receive in their feedback. Geoff Petty 'Medals and Missions':

[http://www.teacherstoolbox.co.uk/medals and missions feedback](http://www.teacherstoolbox.co.uk/medals_and_missions_feedback)

## Guiding Principle 4: Use the language of learning to provide effective feedback

### Reflective Questions

Work either individually or with a partner and then discuss how well you feel your school is doing in terms of using the language of learning to provide feedback to students.

Indicate your responses to the questions below using this code:

**A = Always**

**S = Sometimes**

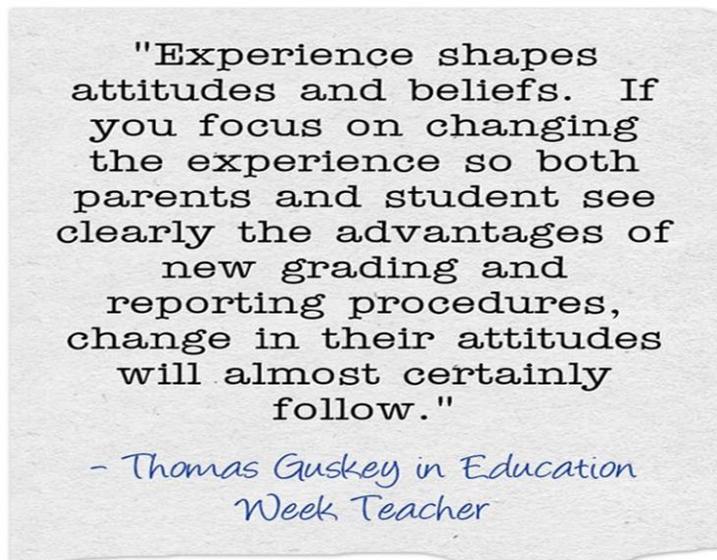
**N = Never**

- Does my feedback use the language of learning to focus on how the quality of the students' work might be improved?
- When I use the language of learning to provide feedback, do I identify success and achievement as well as areas for improvement?
- Does some of my feedback provide prompts for student thinking?
- When I provide feedback, do I allow time for students to improve their work based on my feedback?
- Do I think carefully about the kind of verbal feedback I give my students?

## Guiding Principle 4: Use the language of learning to provide effective feedback

### Workshop Discussion

Changes to how your school will report on student progress using the language of learning may entail significant change for parents and students. In this context, how useful is this quote from Thomas Guskey?



Students and parents will require support in coming to a clear understanding of the new language of reporting in junior cycle. How might you assist parents and students to develop an understanding of the new descriptors?

## Guiding Principle 5: Be manageable and not take time away from learning and teaching

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. **Most feedback between students and teachers should be in the form of oral communication.** A key aspect of effective feedback is the dialogue between teacher and student, ensuring that the focus is on learning and teaching **and not on unnecessary record-keeping.**

Where written reports are generated, they should contain short meaningful comments on how well a student has progressed in respect of the most significant aspects of learning.

The purpose of an assessment determines what and how much information is recorded. The teacher can make immediate use of much of the information gathered from ongoing assessment in structuring and supporting the student's learning. The teacher will make a professional judgement on what assessment information is important for recording in his/her notes. For example, the teacher would not record the minutiae of a class discussion but might note the unexpectedly enthusiastic contribution of a student who rarely participated. Similarly, the teacher is unlikely to note detailed errors in mathematics work but might record that some students in the class showed evidence of requiring additional support in certain computation skills.

An important way of reducing how much the teacher needs to record is by involving students in reflecting about their learning and asking them to record their self-assessment of significant learning moments in their note books or as part of student portfolios or learning logs. Involving students in such a manner is a positive approach to ongoing reporting as it enables and empowers students to have a voice in their own learning.

[Slide Presentation](#)



## Guiding Principle 5: Be manageable and not take time away from learning and teaching

### Reflective Questions

Work either individually or with a partner and then discuss how well you feel your school is doing in terms of ensuring that reporting is manageable.

Indicate your responses to the questions below using this code:

**A = Always**

**S = Sometimes**

**N = Never**

- I decide on how much information to record depending on the assessment methods that we are using
- I make use of technology that supports effective reporting on student progress
- I gather only the **key** information from what students say, write, make and do, and use it to report on their progress
- I involve students in recording their progress by asking them to reflect and record their progress against success criteria
- I use students' learning logs and e-portfolios as sources of evidence for reporting on student progress

## Guiding Principle 5: Be manageable and not take time away from learning and teaching

### Workshop Discussion

Given that teachers may have a considerable amount of evidence of student learning from ongoing classroom work, how can you plan to efficiently record and report learning achievement?

One way of freeing up time for learning and teaching would be to reduce time spent on preparing and marking school examinations. What steps would your school need to put in place if you were to decide to move away from the use of 'in-house' exams in first and second year of junior cycle?

## Guiding Principle 6: Clearly communicate students' progress in learning

Using clear, jargon-free language to report on learning progress will help students to understand where they are and where they need to be, and to talk confidently about their achievements, challenges and progress in learning. Equally, using such language in communicating meaningful and useful information to parents should be at the heart of the ongoing reporting process.

The benefits of reporting in plain language include being able to help parents feel more informed about their child's education, more confident in communicating with schools, and better prepared to play a proactive role in their children's learning

Teachers may require time and support to develop/refine their skills in providing effective feedback. It is recommended that schools consider including short statements on students' learning progress within reports as feedback becomes a more firmly established part of ongoing assessment practice. The move towards effective, clear commentary in reporting is likely to be best developed when feedback, both oral and written, is part of ongoing practice in the classroom.

[Slide Presentation](#)



## Guiding Principle 6: Clearly communicate students' progress in learning

### Reflective Questions

Work either individually or with a partner and then discuss how well you feel your school is doing in terms of clearly communicating students' progress.

Indicate your responses to the questions below using this code:

**A = Always**

**S = Sometimes**

**N = Never**

- My reporting is positive in tone, recognising students' strengths and interests
- I use a wide variety of styles and content, commenting on attitudes, values, skills and knowledge
- I use plain language, so that all my reporting is easily understood and conveys clearly the learning that has taken place
- I include explanations of the grading codes that I used in my reporting
- My reports contain descriptive statements of student achievement
- My reports have space for the student and parents to comment on the student's own learning.

## Guiding Principle 6: Clearly communicate students' progress in learning

### Workshop discussion

How can our school ensure that the process of producing student reports provides helpful information to support learning but does not become overly-complicated or bureaucratic?

How helpful are these suggestions for reporting progress to parents?

- The space for writing comments on reports is often limited. Including two connected ideas per sentence is a useful way of optimizing the space available
- Avoid unnecessary information that does not focus on the students' learning
- Ensure that your feedback to parents communicates the achievements and improvements required, related to your subject. e.g. 'Rachel is a pleasure to teach' does not help her parents to understand how Rachel is progressing in Maths
- Try to avoid using specialist terms. The language used in reporting should be jargon-free
- Parents want to know about the learning achievements, what improvement is required and next steps. e.g. 'Bernie has completed all of this term's assignments'. In this example, there is no evaluation of how well she has done or what she needs to do next
- Focus on key messages for improvement as it is impossible to include comments on all areas of a student's learning
- Be discreet and avoid insensitive comments

## Guiding Principle 7: Provide information on a broad range of achievement

The *Framework for Junior Cycle* (2015) highlights the value of providing a broad picture of students' learning progress and achievement to both parents and students.

While a focus on student academic achievement is a key feature of the reporting process, schools may also wish to report on some related areas, such as work habits and effort, homework, participation, attendance and punctuality. Reporting on effort, for example, addresses the progress of the student who attains a high level of achievement but could make further progress if there was greater application. It allows for students who work very hard but make limited progress to have their efforts recognised.

Teachers' comments offer a brief holistic overview of student learning and progress (identifying strengths and areas for further development) and may include aspects of key skills development. Reports may also indicate student learning in the school's Wellbeing programme, thus providing parents with a picture of what students are learning about Wellbeing and the skills they are developing to support their wellbeing.

The value of a wide variety of other learning opportunities and experiences for students during the three years of junior cycle should be recognised and included in the reporting process. Other learning experiences and events that a student has participated in might include, for example, involvement in sports, charity fundraising events, school choir, coding club, debating, ECDL, the Green Schools project, musicals and drama, science club, SciFest, student council, model United Nations, mentoring younger students, social justice advocacy, Young Scientist, Young Social Innovators, and book club, to name just a few.

[Slide presentation](#)



## Guiding Principle 7: Provide information on a broad range of achievement

### Reflective Questions

Work either individually or with a partner and then discuss how well you feel your school is doing in terms of providing information on a broad range of achievement

Indicate your responses to the questions below using this code:

**A = Always**

**S = Sometimes**

**N = Never**

- We report on student learning in the school's Wellbeing programme
- We report on how well students are doing across a wide variety of learning opportunities and experiences
- In addition to formative comments about students' learning we report on their work habits and effort, homework, participation, attendance and punctuality
- We allow space for the student to contribute to this aspect of the report

## Guiding Principle 7: Provide information on a broad range of achievement

### Workshop Discussion

In addition to student academic achievement, what areas will you prioritise in your reports to parents/students and why?

How might a student comment box in the formal report help students to reflect and comment on their learning for and about wellbeing?

### Reporting on Wellbeing in junior cycle

Meaningful reporting on Wellbeing in junior cycle depends on ongoing opportunities for students to reflect on their learning for and about wellbeing.

The *Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines* (NCCA, 2017) set out a series of indicators which describe what is important for young people and their wellbeing. (See pp. 44, 45 at [https://www.ncca.ie/media/2487/wellbeingguidelines\\_forjunior\\_cycle.pdf](https://www.ncca.ie/media/2487/wellbeingguidelines_forjunior_cycle.pdf)). These indicators are:



### To consider:

While CSPE, PE, SPHE and guidance-related learning provide the main pillars for building a school's wellbeing programme, other subjects and short courses can also make an important contribution.

*What elements of learning and teaching within your subject could contribute to a well-planned wellbeing programme within your school?*

*What opportunities do you provide at present within your subject for students to be respected, connected, resilient, aware, active and responsible?*

*How might you encourage students themselves to reflect and report on their learning about wellbeing?*

*As part of the planning for your wellbeing programme what steps does your school need to put in place to efficiently collect a range evidence of students' learning about wellbeing which can be collated for inclusion in the formal report or in the JCPA?*

Think about how the ideas below might support your school's reporting on wellbeing. How might the evidence from these activities be gathered to inform reporting on wellbeing?

***(a): Class tutor/ year head time***

*On a weekly/monthly basis, students could be encouraged by their class tutor/ year head to reflect on when they learned something important about their wellbeing or had a positive experience of wellbeing.*

***(b) Extra-curricular programme***

*As part of a school's extra-curricular activity programme students are asked to reflect and comment on their learning about wellbeing using a learning log which uses the wellbeing indicators as headings for students to structure their reflections.*

***(c) Learning across the curriculum: e.g. History***

*During subject lessons based on a particular topic or theme, students might be encouraged to reflect on their learning through the lens of the wellbeing indicators. For example:*

***Confident and Respected:*** *In History, we worked in pairs to complete a project about a famous person in the past. My partner and I were encouraged to work on our own researching and designing the project. We got a chance to present to the class. We really felt listened to and respected and this boosted our confidence. At the end of our presentation, our classmates gave us helpful feedback on how I might do a better presentation next time.*

*How effective do you consider these approaches for gathering information for reporting on student wellbeing? What other approaches might your school use?*

## Guiding Principle 8. Be sensitive to the self-esteem and general wellbeing of students and take an inclusive approach

Effective reporting practice is sensitive to the self-esteem and general wellbeing of all students while providing honest and constructive feedback. Reporting needs to focus on learning and progress and so build on the ongoing feedback students receive in class about their learning throughout the school year.

In developing your reporting practice, you will wish to show how all young people can learn and improve. For some students with special educational needs, it may be appropriate that reporting focuses primarily on qualitative comments about progress made towards learning targets by referring to clearly understood examples of positive achievements and pointing to clearly explained next steps that will advance learning further. In addressing the needs of these students, it is important to ensure that the appropriate challenge is provided so that high expectations of achievement are maintained for all students.

Particular care should be given to the impact that reporting progress using a set of descriptors may have on the self-esteem and motivation of students with significant special educational needs. You may wish to consider a range of possible ways of reporting progress for students with special educational needs (including but not limited to reporting as part of the Level 2 Learning Programme).

Slide Presentation



## Guiding Principle 8. Be sensitive to the self-esteem and general wellbeing of students and take an inclusive approach

### Reflective Questions

Work either individually or with a partner and then discuss how well you feel your school is doing in terms of being sensitive to the self-esteem and general wellbeing of students and taking an inclusive approach.

Indicate your responses to the questions below using this code:

**A = Always**

**S = Sometimes**

**N = Never**

- I find a range of different ways of reporting progress for students with special educational needs
- My reporting practice is sensitive to the self-esteem and general wellbeing of all students
- My reporting focusses only on learning and progress, rather than on subjective judgements about students
- My reporting practice is based on an understanding that all young people can learn and improve
- When reporting on students with special educational needs, I focus primarily on providing clear feedback about progress made, including affirming achievements and clearly highlighting next steps required
- In reporting on the progress of students with special educational needs I ensure appropriate challenge is provided so that there is a high expectation of achievement for all my students
- Based on the likely impact on the self-esteem and motivation of students, I use my professional judgement to decide whether to report on progress using a set of descriptors. Arrangement for the use of these of descriptors in these situations will have been agreed on a school-wide basis

## Guiding Principle 8. Be sensitive to the self-esteem and general wellbeing of students and take an inclusive approach

### Workshop Discussion

Are our current reporting arrangements sensitive to the self-esteem and general wellbeing of our students? What strengths can we highlight and what areas can we aim to improve?

To what extent would broadening ways of reporting progress to parents be particularly helpful for students with special educational needs?

How can we ensure that reporting arrangements are suitable for students with special educational needs?

## Appendix I

**School Name:**

**Reporting Questionnaire for Students**

This questionnaire should take about 15 minutes to complete. You may complete the questionnaire anonymously and all individual responses will be treated confidentially. Thank you very much.

Please circle the year group you're in:

1<sup>st</sup> yr

2<sup>nd</sup> yr

3<sup>rd</sup> yr

TY

5<sup>th</sup> yr

6<sup>th</sup> yr

**Our school reports on each student's learning and progress through (please tick):**

- Feedback directly to students
- Parent-Teacher meetings
- Christmas/Summer school reports
- Phone calls from year heads/tutors/learning support teachers as needed
- Via our newsletter/website/Facebook or other social media
- At achievements/ awards day

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>In conversation with my teachers and classmates, I understand what's going well, what's not and what I need to do to improve my learning</b>					
<b>My teachers explain to my parent(s)/guardian(s) at parent-teacher meetings:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what progress I've made,</li> <li>• what level of achievement I'm reaching and</li> <li>• what I need to do to improve</li> </ul>					
<b>My school reports help me to see:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what progress I've made</li> <li>• what level of achievement I'm reaching and</li> <li>• what I need to do to improve</li> </ul>					
<b>Lots of different types of achievements (written, oral, practical, extra-curricular etc...) are reported by my school.</b>					
<b>Reports about my learning (conversations, parent-teacher meetings, printed Christmas/Summer reports etc...) reflect my achievements and help me to think about how I can improve</b>					
<b>I get a chance to talk to my teachers about my learning and how my learning is reported to my parent(s)/guardian(s) (in P/T meetings and printed reports etc...)</b>					

**Any additional comments or suggestions about how communication about learning between the school/teachers and students/parents could be improved?**

## Appendix II

### Sample Teacher Checklist: Assessment

<b>Assessment of students' work</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Comment</b>
A whole-school policy on assessment appropriate to the curriculum and our students has been developed and is implemented consistently			
The whole-school assessment policy ensures the assessment calendar is organised to maximise the manageability and impact of assessment events			
Teachers have collectively developed a common approach to the use of oral and written feedback to students			
Feedback is managed effectively and provided for students in a timely fashion			
Teachers design and prepare in advance learning tasks suited to the learning intentions identified for a lesson or series of lessons			
Students' work, including homework, is assessed for formative and summative purposes as appropriate			
Feedback is clear, specific and leads to actions on the part of the student			
Teachers plan for assessing all aspects of student learning using a variety of modes of assessment			
Teachers assessment practices assess knowledge, skills and student dispositions			
Students are explicitly taught the skills of self and peer assessment			

### Appendix III

**School Name**

### School Self-Evaluation Questionnaire for Parents

Dear parents and guardians,

We are undertaking a self-evaluation of how we report about students' learning in our school. To help us in that evaluation, we would be very grateful for your views and opinions on the matters in the questionnaire below. The questionnaire should take between 10 and 15 minutes to complete. We would be very grateful if you would complete it and return it to the school before xxxx. Please note that you may complete the questionnaire anonymously and that all individual responses will be treated confidentially.

Thank you very much.

**Insert name** (Principal)

**Insert date**

Please put an **X** in the correct box and circle the relevant year group:

My son  daughter  is in:

1<sup>st</sup> Yr                  2<sup>nd</sup> Yr                  3<sup>rd</sup> Yr

5<sup>th</sup> Yr                  6<sup>th</sup> Yr                  TY

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>Reports on my child's learning are written in clear and accessible language</b>					
<b>Reports on my child's learning give me a clear insight on how he / she is progressing in their learning</b>					
<b>Reports on my child's learning help me to talk to him / her about their progress and how I can help him / her</b>					
<b>Reports on my child's learning help him /her to engage with his / her own learning</b>					
<b>The school is open to two-way communication about my child's learning</b>					

**Any additional comments or suggestions about how communication about learning between the school and students' parents / guardians could be improved.**

## References and links

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NCCA. Introductory slide presentation for NCCA reporting partner schools (online resource)

NCCA. Student forum 22 Oct 2015: Overview of Feedback (online resource)

NCCA. Resource video ('Seán') accessed at: <https://vimeo.com/a00/review/178670254/b47a3b043d>

NCCA. Resource video (reflective learning) accessed at: <https://vimeo.com/ncca/review/113080595/03c467f62e>

NCCA. *Focus on Learning* resource accessed at: <https://www.ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/assessment-and-reporting/focus-on-learning>

Petty, Geoff. Resource video accessed at: [http://www.teacherstoolbox.co.uk/medals\\_and\\_missions\\_feedback.html](http://www.teacherstoolbox.co.uk/medals_and_missions_feedback.html)

Website of NCCA curriculum documents: [www.curriculumonline.ie](http://www.curriculumonline.ie)

Note: This is a summary of resources mentioned in this booklet and is not intended to be an exhaustive bibliography of literature and resources on the subject of reporting