

# **St. Patrick's Marist College**



**Founded 1872**

## **School Certificate Assessment Handbook 2008**

**Information for Students and Parents/Guardians**

# **SCHOOL CERTIFICATE**

## **INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS**

These guidelines are to give parents/guardians and students information concerning the rules governing the School Certificate Assessment process. The College has its own Assessment Policy, which is based on the Board of Studies' Assessment and Certification Manual.

### *Common Questions*

#### **1. *What is School Certificate Assessment?***

Assessment is the process of collecting information about a student's work during the learning process. In Assessment, certain activities or group of activities are identified as Assessment Tasks and are used in determining how a student's grade will be reported.

School Certificate Assessment Tasks can vary considerably: class tests, fieldwork, reports, oral tasks, portfolios of work, research assignments, examinations.

#### **2. *What is the School Certificate Grading System?***

School Certificate Grading is the process of describing what each student has achieved at the end of Year 10. This achievement is expressed against a fixed standard for each course. These standards are divided into five bands, from A-Excellent to E-Elementary with the exception of Mathematics which has nine bands.

Each band or grade has a description attached to it for each subject. If the description fits a student's performance in Assessment Tasks, he or she will be awarded that grade.

#### **3. *What are Performance Descriptors?***

For all the subjects in the School Certificate, the Board provides a set of Performance Descriptors. The descriptors can be found at the rear of this booklet. At the end of the year a student's achievement in the Skills and Knowledge components of a course is matched against the Performance Descriptors allocated to that course, in order to determine a grade.

Performance descriptors are an assessment and reporting tool used to enable teachers to make judgments about overall student achievement at the end of a course. Performance descriptors are a series of statements, which summarise observable and measurable features of a student's achievement. These are used by teachers to award grades to students based on descriptions of typical achievement from A-Excellent to E-Elementary.

Performance descriptors describe the main features of a typical students' performance at the end of the course. The vertical columns in the descriptors describe different levels of student performance. In using these descriptors, the College match the student to the descriptor column which best fits the student's overall achievement in the course.

There are five grades:

- A - Excellent Achievement
- B - High Achievement
- C - Sound Achievement
- D - Basic Achievement
- E - Elementary Achievement

Grade (Achievement)	GENERAL PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTORS
<b>A</b> <b>Excellent</b> <b>Achievement</b>	The student has an extensive knowledge and understanding of the content and can readily apply this knowledge. In addition, the student has achieved a very high level of competence in the processes and skills and can apply these skills to new situations.
<b>B</b> <b>High</b> <b>Achievement</b>	The student has a thorough knowledge and understanding of the content and a high level of competence in the processes and skills. In addition, the student is able to apply this knowledge and these skills to most situations.
<b>C</b> <b>Sound</b> <b>Achievement</b>	The student has a sound knowledge and understanding of the main areas of content and has achieved an adequate level of competence in the processes and skills.
<b>D</b> <b>Basic</b> <b>Achievement</b>	The student has a basic knowledge and understanding of the content and has achieved a limited level of competence in the processes and skills.
<b>E</b> <b>Elementary</b> <b>Achievement</b>	The student has an elementary knowledge and understanding in few areas of the content and has achieved very limited competence in some of the processes and skills.  <i>Where an A to E grade appears opposite a course, the student has satisfactorily completed the course by meeting the following requirements in: a) attendance – meeting the required number of hours; b) participation in the required learning experiences and assessment tasks; c) effort and achievement; d) reaching at least some of the course goals.</i>
<b>N</b>	Where ‘N’ appears in place of an A to E grade it indicates that the student has failed to meet one or more of the above requirements.

Most subjects will produce a set of ‘mini-descriptors’ for each assessment item, called *Assessment Criteria*. These are used in allocating grades on each assessment task and are handed out with the task so students know exactly what they have to do to get a particular grade. Teachers will always be able to tell you why a particular grade was awarded.

#### 4. ***What Courses are Assessed at this Stage?***

There are two types of courses offered at St Patrick’s Marist College. Mandatory subjects: Religious Education; English; Mathematics; Science; Australian History, Civics and Citizenship; Australian Geography, Civics and Citizenship; and Personal Development, Health & Physical Education, are offered over Stage 5. Formal Assessment Tasks are conducted in Year Ten. These tasks determine the final grade for the School Certificate. The second type are elective subjects, these may be studied in Years Nine and Ten and formal Assessment Tasks are conducted to determine the final grade for the School Certificate.

#### 5. ***How Many Assessment Tasks?***

The number of tasks range from three to five depending on the course studied.

**6. *How will I know what Assessment Tasks are set and when they will be held?***

This booklet is the best guide. Section Two of this booklet includes a table of Assessment Tasks for all subjects. Students should keep this book safely at home and copy the tasks into their diary. A calendar will be published for students, displaying the date of all formal Assessment Tasks.

Teachers will inform students as to when an Assessment Task is to be held, or for longer assignments and projects, between what dates it will be completed. Students should receive at least two weeks notice of any task. As soon as students receive an Assessment Task he or she should highlight the date in their calendar and write it in their diary.

**7. *How are these tasks used in determining my final grading?***

Teachers use the formal assessment information to make a summative judgment of each student's overall level of achievement at the end of the course. An order of merit can be used as a guide in determining the most appropriate grade for each student.

Teachers will then review the grade awarded to ensure that no anomaly has occurred. Teachers can refer to informal tasks completed by students to assist in a final determination of a grade. The final grade is determined by the best overall description of the student's achievement based on all the evidence available.

There is no predetermined proportion of students who will receive particular grades.

**8. *When are the examinations?***

Examinations in class and common tests are held in many courses throughout the year. In Year Ten, students will sit for a Mid Year Examination in some subjects in Term Two and for Trial School Certificate Examinations at the commencement of Term Four.

The Board of Studies holds State School Certificate examinations for English; Mathematics; Science; Australian History, Civics and Citizenship; and Australian Geography, Civics and Citizenship courses in November. Students will receive more information about these examinations from the Board of Studies. The Board of Studies will provide students with their individual results toward the end of the year.

**9. *Does everybody get a School Certificate?***

Everybody who fulfils the minimum requirements receives a School Certificate. This means: the student has satisfactorily completed the course by meeting the following requirements in: a) attendance – meeting the required number of hours; b) participation in the required learning experiences and assessment tasks; c) effort and achievement; d) reaching at least some of the course goals. Students may complete a 'Life Skills' School Certificate that recognises their achievements to a different set of outcomes from other students.

**10. *What are my responsibilities?***

These are the student's responsibilities:

- (a) To be aware of all formal Assessment Tasks for all subjects.

- (b) To submit an Assessment Task on the due date, at the beginning of the relevant lesson or in the case of practical or written tasks to be present and prepared for that task.
- (c) If a subject teacher is absent, the task must be submitted to the supervising teacher at the beginning of the lesson. The supervising teacher will keep a list of those students whose work has been received. Each student will sign the class list when they submit their assignment.
- (d) To ensure that all Assessment Tasks are clearly labeled with the student's Board of Studies number, the subject teacher's name and the title of the task.
- (e) To ensure that any query about grades or comments that are awarded for an individual piece of work are resolved with the subject teacher at the time the work is handed back.
- (f) It is the responsibility of all students to return **marked** assessment tasks to their parents/guardians for their signature.
- (g) To sign a verification sheet when their task is returned which confirms their mark.

### **11. How do I submit my work?**

- (a) All Assessment work in the form of assignments or other non-test tasks must be handed in on the due date in the subject period, or at a time specified by the subject teacher or their designated substitute. Students must follow directions issued by their teacher.

- **It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the Assessment Task arrives on time. Illness or misadventure must be supported by documentary evidence. This must be given to the Head of Department by 9.00am on the first day of return to the College. The Head of Department will retain a copy.**
- **The task is one day late if not received by the designated time on the due date.**
- **Computer or printer breakdown will not be accepted as a valid reason for late submission.**

#### **In the event of printer or computer failure:**

- (i) It is the student's responsibility to bring the backup disk to the College and use the Library to print the assessment task.
- (ii) The student must notify the Head of Department before 9.00am on the due date.
- (iii) Students who use the computer for Assessment Tasks are strongly advised to:
  - regularly back up their work on **a number** of devices (e.g. inbuilt hard drive, external hard drive, SD memory card, flash disk, or in Home Folder at school, etc).
  - print a draft version prior to the due date.
  - complete the final copy of the assignment at least 24 hours before the due date (not on the night before or on the morning of the due date).
  - **Do not rely on an emailed assignment on the due date. Ensure you have a backup.**
- (b) If a student knows that he or she will be absent on the date the Assessment Task is due, then he or she must ensure that the work is submitted on time. This includes prearranged College activities such as work placement and excursions, as well as family leave.

- (c) Assessment work in the form of an assignment or non-test task is to be submitted in the manner specified by the Course teacher. Task papers should be firmly stapled together or otherwise secured. Assignments are **not** to be submitted in plastic sleeves.
- (d) Students should note that:
- first day an Assessment Task is late will result in a 30% penalty (thereafter a zero mark will be awarded); a task is assumed to be one day late if not received by the designated time on the due date;
  - each day of a weekend is regarded as part of the late total; (every day of the weekend is counted) and
  - even if the Assessment Task is late students must still submit the work to meet the course requirements.
- (e) In the case of examinations or class tests, where the student:
- i. Has prior knowledge of absence:**
    - the student must inform the Head of Department and the Year Coordinator in advance of the day of absence
  - ii. Is absent on the day, due to illness or misadventure:**
    - the student must phone the Year Coordinator and the Head of Department
    - the student must obtain a medical certificate from a Registered Medical Practitioner for the day the illness occurred. The certificate must be submitted to the Head of Department by 9.00am on the first day of returning to the College. (Back dated medical certificates will not be accepted).
  - iii. Is taken suddenly ill at school:**
    - student must inform the appropriate Head of Department and Year Coordinator prior to leaving the College or attending sick bay.
    - the student must obtain a medical certificate from a Registered Medical Practitioner for the day the illness occurred. The certificate must be submitted to the Head of Department by 9.00am on the first day of returning to the College. (**Back dated medical certificates will not be accepted**).
- (f) In the case of examinations or class tests any student who fails to meet the requirements outlined above will be awarded a zero mark.

## **12. What happens if I do not complete a Task?**

- (a) It is the student's responsibility to attempt Assessment Tasks and to follow the correct procedure for submitting them. If through unforeseen circumstances it is anticipated that the work will not be completed on time, the student is to negotiate with the Head of Department for an extension of time well in advance of the due date. Extensions will **not** be granted on the due date.
- (b) Extensions of time are a privilege given in exceptional circumstances. A student should not assume that he or she would be granted an extension.
- (c) A student who is absent from an Assessment Task, or who fails to hand it in by the due date, without justification, **will** incur a penalty.

- (d) If a student does not:
- i. **Attend an examination on the set date;**
    - He or she must consult the Head of Department on the day or by 9.00am on the first day of return to the College.
    - If a Medical Certificate or a justifiable reason is provided then the student may sit for the examination or may be given a substitute examination. This will be at the discretion of the Head of Department.
    - A penalty will be imposed unless there is a justifiable reason.
  - ii. **Submit an Assessment Task on the due date;**
    - He or she must consult the Head of Department on the day or by 9.00am on the first day of return to the College to make arrangements for a new submission date.
    - Unless there is a justifiable reason, a penalty will be imposed.
  - iii. **Present an Oral Task on the due date:**
    - He or she must consult the Head of Department on that day or by 9.00am on the first day of return to the College to indicate when the oral task will be presented.
    - A penalty will be imposed for each day late unless there is a justifiable reason.
- (e) The following *may* be regarded as reasons justifying absence or inadvertent late submission:
- i. Illness, if there is proof in the form of an original Medical Certificate from a Registered Medical Practitioner who was consulted on the day of the illness. Back dated doctors' certificates will **not** be accepted;
  - ii. Misadventure, such as public transport delays or car-breakdowns (in this case, the student may be asked to provide proof of the circumstances leading to the delay);
  - iii. Accident, meaning some injury which physically or mentally prevents the student from completing the task, examination or test.
- (f) In the case of prolonged absence, an estimate may be given. An estimate is a mark based on the previous Assessment performances of the student and moderated by the Head of Department to ensure fairness.
- (g) Computer failure or printer breakdown will not be accepted as a valid reason for late submission.
- (h) Absence from school on the day preceding an examination, or preceding a due date, may be assumed to be gaining an unfair advantage. Students must provide documentary evidence to fully explain their absence. Failure to do so may result in a full or partial penalty.
- (i) *Where a student has been given a zero mark for non-completion or late submission in Assessment Tasks **totalling** 50% or more of the final course assessment, the Head of Department will inform the Deputy Principal – Studies who will certify that the student has not completed the course satisfactorily.*

### **13. What happens if I am late submitting a Task?**

- (a) In other than the exceptional circumstances in which extensions are granted, late submissions of Assessment Tasks will incur penalties.
- (b) The penalties will be 30% of the maximum for the first day the task is overdue. After this day a zero mark is awarded, except in special circumstances (at the discretion of the Head of Department). On the awarding of the penalty or zero mark, the Parents/Guardian of the student will be informed in writing by the College.
- (c) Students should be aware of the implications of this policy in the case of Assessment Tasks completed outside class. They can be summarised as follows:
  - If the Assessment Task is one day late, 30% of the total mark will be deducted.
  - If the Assessment Task is two days or more late, a zero mark will be awarded.
  - Each day following the due date will be counted, regardless of whether it falls on weekends, public holidays, etc.
  - The task is one day late if not received by the designated time on the due date until the same designated time the following day.
  - **IN ANY CASE, A STUDENT MUST SEE THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT – OR IN EMERGENCIES, THE YEAR COORDINATOR BY 9.00A.M. UPON RETURN TO THE COLLEGE, IT IS ESSENTIAL TO CONSULT THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT.**

### **14. Procedures in the event of lateness or misadventure?**

- (a) The subject teacher will have a list of those students whose work has NOT been received. It is the student's responsibility to submit the task to the subject teacher or to follow the submission procedures outlined by the Head of Department.
- (b) Parents/Guardians of students who are penalised for any reason will be notified in writing by the College. Parents/Guardians must sign the penalty acknowledgement slip. The student must return the slip to the Head of Department within 24 hours. Failure to do so may result in a detention.
- (c) Students should be aware of the consequences of being absent for an Assessment Task. These are summarised as follows:
  - i. If the student is unable to complete an Assessment Task for reasons of ill-health, then he or she must submit a medical certificate to Head of Department by 9.00am on the first day of returning to College.
  - ii. If any task is missed for any other serious reason, the student may be required to submit documentary evidence to the Head of Department.
  - iii. Any Assessment Task which is missed, and for which an acceptable reason is not given, will be recorded as a zero mark.
  - iv. If a student is taken suddenly ill he or she must contact the relevant Head of Department, Year Coordinator or the Deputy Principal – Studies before leaving the College.

### **15. How will the College report on my progress?**

Parents/Guardians will receive a report each Semester.

### **16. Who should I see if I have a problem?**

Students should talk to their subject teacher first. If the problem is not resolved, he or she can then discuss it with the Head of Department or their Year Coordinator. For major issues, an appointment to speak to the Deputy Principal – Studies should be made.

## 17. *Some final advice.*

1. **Be Organised:** Use your Calendar. Mark when your assessments, outings, work, family engagements, etc are and plan your assessment work time so as to finish them on time. Plan time to study for exam task.
2. Begin the first stages of an Assessment Task the night you get it. Make sure you understand the task and see your teacher immediately if you don't. Start your collection of information as soon as possible if it is a research task.
3. Don't spend all your study time on assessments. Give time also to organising, revising and learning from your class notes, texts and by resources. Plan for this.
4. Check out the marking guidelines for a task or find out what you have to do to achieve at the high and highest levels of achievement. See how close you can get to it.
5. Evaluate your work when the assessment task is returned. Work with your teacher on this but be settled and calm when you do.
6. There is no substitute for hard work but reward yourself at key stages in your work when you have achieved short term goals or when you feel you deserve it. Relax at home, go out with friends, play sport, enjoy some food, etc.
7. **Plagiarism:** Taking and using another person's work and claiming it as your own is plagiarism. If direct words are used, they must be referenced, i.e. they must be placed in quotation marks and the source and page number acknowledged.