

Crete-Monee Middle School Assessment Policy

Philosophy and principles of assessment

Assessment makes a major contribution to the realization of the objectives of Crete-Monee Middle School as summarised in its mission statement:

Crete-Monee Middle School strives to develop principled, knowledgeable, and caring students who positively impact their intercultural community.

To meet this mission, we promote an inclusive environment where inquiry, intercultural understanding, and open-mindedness are valued, and where student efforts impact their local and global community.

Assessment facilitates the evaluation, adjustment, direction and redirection of curriculum planning and delivery. It enables students, teachers, and parents to monitor the learning undertaken by each student in terms of allround personal development. All aspects of learning as embodied in the IB learner profile must be evaluated and monitored to provide students and teachers with information on the progress being made towards attaining the goals of the whole programme. Assessment supports setting personal learning targets and helps each student reach his/her own full potential. It should lead to a clear understanding of the progress made by the learner and facilitate the establishment of effective teaching practices based on the needs of the students. Thus assessment informs curriculum planning in a curriculum designed to deliver all aspects of the IB learner profile.

2. Goals of assessment

The assessment policy is instituted to provide students, teachers, and parents with well-analyzed timely feedback in every area of learning. Crete-Monee Middle School undertakes to provide regular and constructive assessment. Students and teachers will commit to using assessment only where it contributes positively to learning. There will be no “assessment for the sake of assessment”, that is, merely to accumulate marks to put into reports.

Assessment serves to promote

- excellence in learning
- joy of learning
- self-assessment and peer-assessment with the active support of the teacher
- mutual understanding between student and teacher on goal setting, pace of learning, and acquisition of knowledge and critical skills
- demonstrable skills of expression, collaboration, and service to others

3. General assessment practices

While the IB programme guidelines lay down the parameters of assessment, they also ensure that each student is evaluated individually and not ranked or graded to fit into a comparative scale of performance. In the hypercompetitive context of contemporary societies, it is particularly

necessary to emphasize that assessment is for learning, that it provides guidance for purposive directed learning, and for meeting programme standards. It is not for producing a rank ordering which compares one student's performance against another's.

- A wide range of tools of assessment will be used and shared among teachers and students. A shared understanding of the purpose and accuracy of assessment tools will nurture a constructive climate for assessment and the reporting of that assessment.
- Assessment criteria will be explained to and understood by students prior to learning. This will enable learners to reflect upon and assess themselves based upon agreed criteria, and thus empower them as learners. It will also enable learners to communicate with teachers and peers, to reflect on their own learning, from achievements to analysis of strengths and weaknesses, and to understand and evaluate trajectories for learning.
- Crete-Monee Middle School will ensure that assessment is for learning and not the other way round. While both formative and summative assessments guide learning, the former is used in daily practice to shape next steps. Summative assessment comes at the end of a unit of learning. In other words, the former is development-oriented and the latter measures mastery of knowledge and skills.

4. Formative assessment

Formative assessment is assessment *for* learning, and is ongoing throughout the teaching and learning process. It provides information that is used in order to plan the next stage in learning. It is interwoven with learning, and helps teachers and students to find out what the students already know and can do and how well they are learning new knowledge and skills. Formative assessment and teaching are directly linked and function purposefully together to direct and shape curriculum planning.

Formative assessment aims to promote learning by giving regular and frequent feedback throughout the learning process. This process helps learners to improve knowledge and understanding, to foster self motivation and enthusiasm for learning, to engage in thoughtful reflection, to develop the capacity for self assessment, and to recognize criteria for success.

Students will grow to engage in self- and peer-assessment opportunities to develop the confidence needed if they are to be stewards of their own learning.

Assessment in the classroom involves teachers in:

- developing task-specific clarifications in advance of starting teaching so that the basis of assessment can be made known to students before learning commences as part of the strategy of giving shape to the learning objectives
- using representative samples of students' work or performance to provide information about student learning
- collecting evidence of students' understanding and thinking
- documenting learning processes of groups and individuals
- identifying exemplary student work
- keeping qualitative as well as quantitative records of test/task results.

Assessment in the classroom involves learners in:

- reflecting on their learning
- communicating their learning to teachers and peers
- evaluating work produced by themselves and by others against known rubrics (level descriptors)
- sharing their learning and understanding with others
- using a variety of styles and abilities to demonstrate their learning
- analyzing their learning and understanding; what needs to be improved.

For free exchange of evaluative feedback to be possible, an atmosphere of trust and co-operation between teachers and learners must be established not only within the classroom but across the academy community. Without such an atmosphere, evaluation can be experienced as destructive rather than constructive, and, conversely, poor relationships can inhibit effective communication of information about what needs improvement. To be effective, formative assessment must therefore take place in an environment which is single-mindedly dedicated to being positive and supportive rather than negative and destructive.

5. Summative assessment

Summative assessment (assessment of learning) is undertaken at the end of a unit or topic and aims to give teachers and students a clear insight into students' understanding. Summative assessment marks the culmination of the teaching and learning process, but it is not the purpose of the teaching and learning process; it gives students opportunities to demonstrate what they have learned.

Summative assessment can, and usually should, assess several elements of learning simultaneously in order to inform and lead students to improve their integrative and trans-disciplinary learning skills; it measures understanding of central significant ideas.

6. Special features of assessment in the Middle Years Programme (MYP)

Crete-Monee Middle School regards teaching, learning and assessment as fundamentally interdependent. Assessment is regarded as an integral part of all learning and teaching which should be evident in every lesson.

6.1. Aims of the assessment policy

The assessment policy aims to ensure that all teachers know what is expected of them with regard to assessing students, and to support teachers in the development and administration of assessments. It aims to help teachers to realize the importance of engaging students in the assessment process, recognize the appropriate use of various methods of assessment, and reflect on their current practices with a view to improving the quality of the assessment process.

The policy also endeavours to ensure that all assessments are developed and administered in accordance with the IB guidelines on MYP assessments.

The policy also intends to make assessment constructive and manageable for teachers and students.

6.2. Reasons for assessment

Assessment is an essential part of the learning and teaching process because it:

- helps students to know whether they really understand what they think they understand and so encourages reflective, critical learning
- promotes positive attitudes to learning and builds confidence
- encourages the development of higher-order cognitive skills
- helps teachers and students to build a clear picture of each student's learner profile
- monitors the progress of an individual student's learning and achievement
- gives students and teachers feedback on what each student can do and reveals areas for improvement in the learning process in the future
- helps teachers and students evaluate the effectiveness of the learning environment
- helps students to build an understanding of what they need to improve
- helps students to develop self-assessment skills
- indicates ways in which students can be supported
- can be used to inform/report to parents and guardians.

6.3. Summative assessments

In accordance with IB guidelines, all MYP summative assessments are assessed with a criterion-related process and are based upon predetermined task-specific clarifications that are shared with students in advance. All assessment should *inform* curriculum planning.

Assessment in the MYP is:

- developed and conceived as an integral part of unit planning
- designed to incorporate a variety of methods and to be relevant and motivating to students, taking account of their different learning styles
- for assessing students across a broad range of concepts, attitudes, knowledge and skills appropriate to
- their age and year level
- criterion-related using the age-appropriate assessment criteria published in the MYP guides; these must be made clear to students at the beginning of any new unit
- for supporting and encouraging student learning
- for providing timely and constructive feedback to students

Each student's success will be measured in terms of 'levels of achievement' across the different subject groups. The level of achievement attained on each criterion will be decided by the subject teacher according to a 'best fit' in the appropriate assessment criterion level descriptor after a standardization process with like teachers of the same course.

Assessment criteria

- are task specific and made available to students prior to any formal assessment
- have rubrics which focus on positive achievement
- is reported with each summative assessment task/rubric that is evaluated and sent home

Each criterion strand must be assessed a minimum of twice a year in each year of the MYP. All MYP achievement levels are determined after standardization and moderation within the department.

Assessment in practice

Informal formative assessments should be an integral part of every lesson. These could be in the form of observations, open and/or closed questioning, “thumbs up, thumbs down”, “think, pair, share”, “traffic lights”, peer and self-assessments etc.

Teachers will sight each student’s work during lessons, although the frequency will vary across subjects and depend upon the work being done. Teachers will undertake to mark a piece of work (whether a written, oral, or practical task) at least once every two weeks. Marking may involve assigning a level of achievement (as per an appropriate MYP task-specific clarification), or giving students descriptive feedback. All such marking will be recorded by the teacher in a mark book and/or electronically.

Teachers of all subjects are responsible for supporting literacy and will address spelling, punctuation and grammatical issues in an appropriate manner.

Marked work will be returned to students as soon as possible with appropriate oral and written feedback. Comments will be positive and aimed at helping students to improve.

Methods of assessment

Methods of assessment used in the MYP will be varied in design and cover a broad range of learning and communication styles.

Methods of assessment include (but are not limited to):

- observation (of expressions, behavior, attitudes etc.)
- Socratic seminar
- questioning
- exercises, essays and compositions
- mind maps
- projects
- presentations
- debates
- quizzes
- investigations
- experiments
- physical skills

- role plays
- performances
- tests

Reporting to Parents

We believe that parents, teachers & staff, and students are partners in education. Open and consistent communication strengthens this partnership. Students and parents are kept informed in the following ways:

- Summative assessments using MYP criteria are task specific and made available to students prior to any formal assessment.
 - Teachers provide feedback to students using MYP rubrics.
- Continual access to current grades on Skyward
 - Official Reporting Times
 - Report Cards: Three times a year after each trimester in October, February and June.
 - Progress Reports: Three times a year in the middle of each trimester.
- Curriculum Night
- Parent/Teacher Conferences in November and March
- IEP: Individual Educational Plan for Special Education students
- Teacher-Specific Grading Policy: Each subject area teacher's grading policy and curriculum materials will be communicated to parents at the beginning of the school year