

# LOWER SCHOOL ASSESSMENT POLICY

## OVERVIEW

Assessment assists teachers and schools in:

- Monitoring the progress of students and diagnosing learning difficulties
- Adjusting programs to ensure all students have the opportunity to achieve the intended outcomes
- Developing subsequent learning programs
- Reporting student achievement to parents
- Whole-school and system planning, reporting and accountability procedures.

## Teachers

- Develop a teaching/learning program that adheres to SCSA guidelines
- Provide students with a learning area course handbook which contains, a course outline and assessment schedule, at the commencement of the course
- Ensure that assessments are fair, valid, and reliable
- Maintain accurate records of student achievement and assessment
- Meet school and external timeframes for assessment and reporting
- Inform students and parents of academic progress as appropriate.

## Student & Parents

It is the student's responsibility to:

- Complete the prescribed work requirements in each course by the due date
- Complete all assessment tasks described in the learning area course handbook
- Maintain a good record of attendance, conduct and academic progress at school
- Initiate contact with the school concerning absence.

*Note: A student who is regularly absent will be deemed to be at academic risk*

**Assessment tasks are used by staff to support their judgments when determining grades and marks that a student should be awarded.**

## ASSESSMENT TASKS

### 1. Information provided to students

Before teaching starts, the teacher will provide electronic access to the following documents via the Course Cover Page in SEQTA:

A learning area course handbook outlining:

- Course Content
- An outline of assessments that includes:
  - The number of tasks to be assessed

- The timing of each assessment task (i.e., the week the task will be conducted or the start and submission dates for an extended task)
- The weighting for each assessment task.

**Please Note:** students without internet access at home can request a hard copy of these documents from their teacher.

## 2. Absences

Students who are absent from an assessment task need to supply a written explanation from their parent/guardian on their return to school, which should be submitted to the Attendance Officers in Student Services as per normal absence protocol. Depending on individual circumstances:

- The student may take an assessment task at an alternative time
- The student may have to complete an alternative assessment task
- The assessment task may not be included in the student's assessment profile
- The student may be awarded a mark of zero if the absence is due to truancy or other unauthorized reason.

*Note: A medical certificate or other acceptable documentation may need to be provided to cover a period of sickness. To be awarded a grade a minimum number of assessments must be completed, which may vary between Learning Areas (typically at least 50% of the course will be completed).*

**Students who are absent from assessment tasks on a frequent basis will have their situation reviewed by the HOLA/TIC or Administration. This may require appropriate documentation to support claims. Special conditions may be imposed.**

## 3. Late Enrolments or Transfer of Schools

Where possible, students who have missed assessments because of late enrolment or transfer from another school will be assessed on work completed at Duncraig Senior High School. If a student starts at Duncraig Senior High School late into the school's reporting cycle, parents and guardians will be notified about how the student will be reported on. It may be the case that no report is provided, depending upon the timing of transfer or enrolment. This will be determined by the relevant Associate Principal.

## 4. Transfer between courses/classes

Students who wish to transfer between courses may be permitted, with a written note from a parent and a signed course change form, to change courses within the first three weeks of Term 1 and Term 3. No further changes will be permitted after this time (Year 7 & 8 student's ability to change courses is limited due to timetabling constraints).

**Class change requests will not be considered at DSHS** (changes may be made by the school to ensure staff alignment with school needs).

## 5. Late Assessment Tasks

All assessments should be handed in on or before the agreed due date. Work submitted after the due date, without any request of extension or an acceptable reason (see Section 6), may not be accepted and the student may not be assessed for the task (a mark of zero **may** be awarded) and parents/guardians will be informed. Students may negotiate an extension **before** the due date with their teacher, giving reasons to support their request. An accompanying note must be signed by a parent or guardian. Extensions of more than one week may not be granted.

## 6. Acceptable reasons for non-completion or non-submission of an assessment task

The penalty for non-completion or non-submission of an assessment task will be waived if the student and parent/guardian provide a reason which is acceptable to DSHS. For example:

- Where sickness, injury or significant personal circumstances prevents a student attending on the day that an in-class assessment task is scheduled
- Where sickness, injury or significant personal circumstances for part or all of the period of an out-of-class assessment task prevents completion or submission by the due date.

Where the student and parent/guardian provide a reason, which **is acceptable** to DSHS for the non-completion or non-submission of an assessment task, the class teacher will:

- Negotiate an adjusted due date for an out-of-class assessment task or an adjusted date for an in-class assessment task (generally, within two days of the student's return), **or**
- Decide on an alternate assessment task (if, in the opinion of the teacher, the assessment can no longer be considered confidential), **or**
- Exempt the student from completing the task (provided, in the opinion of the teacher, sufficient evidence exists in the other tasks completed to meet the Authority's requirements for the course and to enable a grade to be assigned), **or**
- The teacher can provide an estimated mark for the assessment based on the student's prior performance in similar assessment types over the duration of the course.

Events that can be rescheduled are not a valid reason for non-completion or non-submission of an assessment task (e.g., family holidays, unless granted an assessment consideration prior to departure)

### **Where a catastrophic event (e.g., a pandemic) impacts the assessment outline for a course.**

This includes any impacts on the delivery of the teaching program, the completion or submission of the following.

- One or more assessment tasks and/or
- Completion of DSHS's examination timetable.

In this event an amended assessment outline will be published on SEQTA and communication, in writing (e.g., via email), will be provided to students and parents summarising the changes being made.

### **In the event of a prolonged absence from school:**

- Where a student is unable to attend school for a lengthy period due to injury, illness or a family emergency, the school will endeavour to provide support for the student's learning program.
- It is the parent's responsibility to contact the school to discuss any situation that will involve their student having a prolonged absence from school as soon as possible.

### **In the event of a student being suspended from school:**

It is the student's responsibility to ensure any assessment task is handed in by the due date. Students on suspension are not permitted on school premises; hence the assessment task needs to reach the school by some other means.

When a test or examination occurs during a period of student suspension, the school will determine the appropriate course of action to be followed from the list of options below.

- The student may take the test/examination at an alternative time
- The test may be supervised by a member of the Executive Team in the Main Administration area
- The student may have to complete an alternative assessment item
- An estimated mark/grade may be awarded
- The test/examination may not be included in the student's assessment profile.

### **In the event of a Family Holiday that impacts on a student's attendance at school:**

Parents are actively discouraged from scheduling family holidays during non-school holiday periods. The school does not encourage students to be absent for the purpose of holidays.

- Students who miss an extended period due to a family holiday may be able to apply for assessment consideration for one such absence in a school year. This application will need to be made in writing by the parent/guardian, to the relevant Associate Principal, prior to the start of the holiday period
- If a parent has not applied for assessment consideration prior to the student's departure then the student will automatically be awarded a mark of zero for any missed assessments due to family holidays
- Subsequent applications (due to Family Holiday) will not be considered and missed assessments will be awarded a mark of zero.

## **7. Students with Disabilities**

Students with a disability, confirmed by a medical practitioner/registered health professional, may be allowed extra time in assessment tasks. If students have a diagnosed Specific Learning Disorder or difficulty, they may be eligible for special assessment and examination arrangements. The School Psychologist and Learning Support Coordinator should be notified for students to access this special consideration. **Assessment protocols will be discussed on a case-by-case basis with families.**

## **8. Working in Groups**

All students within a group should have the same opportunities to demonstrate achievement of outcomes. When group work assessment tasks are set, teachers will inform students if a measure of achievement of individuals within the group is to be gained and how the process will take place.

## **9. Cheating, Collusion and Plagiarism**

Students must not cheat (i.e., engage in a dishonest act to gain an unfair advantage for themselves or another student.) All work in each individual assessment task must be the work of the student. Students are not permitted to submit for marking, i.e., as original, any work which:

- Is prepared or substantively contributed to by another person (e.g., student, teacher, parent, tutor, or expert)
- Is copied, downloaded, or significantly paraphrased from the internet without acknowledging the source
- Paraphrases or presents a summary of the work of others.

If a student is believed to have engaged in cheating, collusion or plagiarism, the teacher will refer the matter to the relevant Head of Learning Area responsible for the course. As part of this process, the student and the parent/guardian will be informed of the suspected inappropriate behaviour. The student will be provided with the right of reply.

If it is determined by the relevant Head of Learning Area that a student has cheated, colluded, or plagiarised, one of the following penalties will be applied:

- A mark of zero for the whole assessment task, **or**
- A mark of zero for the part of the assessment task where the teacher can identify that the work is not the student's own.

The student and parent/guardian will be informed in writing by the relevant Head of Learning Area of the decision made, the penalty and any further disciplinary action.

## 10. Security of assessment tasks

Where there is more than one class studying the same course at DSHS, all the assessment tasks will be the same to ensure student marks are on the same scale. In cases where there is more than one class, to ensure that no students are unfairly advantaged, the question papers used for in-class assessment tasks will be collected at the end of the lesson and retained by the teacher until the task has been completed by all classes. In their own interests, students must not discuss the nature of the questions with students from the other classes until after all classes have completed the task. Discussion of the questions will be treated as collusion and the students will be penalised as outlined in Section 9 of this policy.

## 11. Modification of the assessment outline

If circumstances change during the teaching of a course, requiring the teacher to make adjustments to scheduled assessment tasks, then students and parents will be informed in writing (e.g. via SEQTA) and a copy of the amended assessment outline will be made available on the course SEQTA cover page.

## 12. Lower School Examinations

To help prepare students for examinations in Years 11 and 12 and to give our students practice with long term recall, the school holds exams for Years 8 (Semester 2 only), 9 & 10 (Semester 1 & 2). These exams vary in length of time, but generally take up to 1 to 2 Periods to complete.

Examination and test conditions are imposed to provide equality for all students and to ensure validity of assessment. These conditions and expected behaviours within these conditions are discussed with students prior to examinations and tests by teachers. **Students may be awarded a mark of zero and/or may be removed from the examination or test** should these conditions be breached.

It is the policy of the school that no special arrangements are made for students who miss work or assessments, in the lead up to an examination or the examination itself due to a family holiday. **A mark of zero may apply.**

## 13. Reporting

DSHS reports student achievement to parents/guardians at the end of Semester 1 and again at the end of Semester 2. The end of Semester reports provides the following information for each course:

- An Outline summarising the nature of the course content covered during the semester
- A grade (program grades may also apply)
- The percentage mark in the school-based examination (where relevant)

Students will be kept informed of their progress throughout their course. Teachers will assess completed tasks and relay assessment information to the student promptly (no later than two weeks). Parents can monitor a student's progress details via the SEQTA Engage portal. Teachers may also draw parent's attention to poor academic performance by a student via a SEQTA Academic Concern notification, an email or a phone call.

Both students and parents/guardians will be informed when it is identified that there is a risk of the student:

- Not achieving at the expected standard
- Being awarded a grade of D or E in any course.

**END OF DOCUMENT**