

ASSESSMENT & REPORTING POLICY

Alice Miller/Candlebark is committed to the continuous provision of information to students and parents about student progress, and areas in which improvement is needed and is feasible.

The schools' reporting procedures

- reflect the integrated nature of assessment and reporting;
- are appropriate for the special nature of the schools, and its close relationship with the families of its students;
- are based on valid and reliable assessment;
- are efficient and manageable;
- support student learning and enhance student motivation and commitment to learning;
- enable the schools and parents to develop effective partnerships to support the learning of students;
- provide explicit and understandable information about the level at which students are achieving;
- allow planning for each student's future learning;
- utilise a range of reporting strategies;
- are inclusive;
- do not involve teachers in meaningless and time wasting reporting procedures;
- provide reasonable accommodations for students and parents with special needs;
- protect the privacy of individuals; and
- enables the schools to demonstrate accountability for student learning and outcomes.

Nature of assessment and reporting

The schools continuously assess students, throughout each year. Depending on the requirements of various subjects, a student's assessment may include tests, assignments, homework, bookwork, classwork, practical work, exhibitions and performances.

Reporting is multifaceted, and can include grades, written reports, formal and informal parent-teacher interviews, telephone conversations, e-mail exchanges, informal notes, and many opportunities for students to present work to parents in the context which enables progress to be witnessed and results to be evaluated. Grades, with comments if appropriate, are mailed home late in terms two and four.

Progress Reports

A student's report provides a formal record of the student's progress and achievement at a point in time. Progress reports are issued in terms 1 and 3. Each Progress Report is a single sheet summary, with grades, of a student's progress in all subjects. Progress is assessed for Achievement and for Attitude. The report is designed to give an indication of the student's performance in classes and to formally alert students and parents/carers to any concerns about the student's progress. Teachers may contact parents at any time to indicate an interview is required to discuss a student's work or progress.

Parent/Teacher Interviews

An important feature of the reporting system are parent/teacher meetings. Interviews are conducted by appointment or informally, often over lunch. Unlike many schools, to maximize the advantages of these discussions, there is often no time limit on interviews.

At Alice Miller (including Candlebark), nominated teachers are responsible for particular groups, for issues like class morale, academic and social progress, emotional development, and incident management. Parents are invited to discuss concerns about their children at any time of the year by making an appointment with the nominated teacher/s at a mutually convenient time.

Significant changes in achievement or work patterns

Parents and carers are contacted, face-to-face or by phone or e-mail, if significant concerns about achievement or work patterns arise between written reports. Problems include non-submission of assignments or set work, lack of work in class, non-completion of homework and a lack of commitment to the subject or the work being studied.

Semester Reports

Each semester report contains grades which provide a snapshot of a student's performance in relation to the cohort, and whatever written comments for each subject may be deemed necessary. Comments identify student strengths, the student's attitude and commitment to learning, areas for further development and strategies to support and/or extend learning. Teachers are mindful at all times of their obligations under the Privacy Act 1988, so that comments do not carry implicit messages about other members of the class.

Grades

Achievement grades are awarded to students in all year levels at the end of each semester for subjects studied during that semester. Grades are awarded as follows:

A - Approximately 12 months or more ahead of his or her year level.

B - Approximately 6 months ahead of his or her year level.

C - At the level expected for his or her year level.

D - Approximately 6 -18 months behind his or her year level.

E - Approximately 18 months or more behind his or her year level.

Assessment of students with special needs

Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) are designed for identified students with special needs to inform the planning, delivery and assessment of the student's educational program. The ILP is developed by teachers in collaboration where necessary with parents and appropriate stakeholders. Students on ILPs may have assessment modified by a reduction in the number or length of assessment tasks, the provision of extra time to complete work or the provision of individualised assignments. Students on ILPs receive the full range of reports provided to other students, and meetings are held when necessary to evaluate their progress and programs.

NAPLAN Testing (National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy)

All students in years 3, 5, 7 and 9 across Australia sit national tests in Literacy and Numeracy. They sit the same tests in the content strands of Reading, Writing, Language Conventions (incorporates spelling, grammar and punctuation) and Numeracy (incorporating calculator and non calculator papers). Results from the national tests give measures (of questionable validity) about how students are performing in literacy and numeracy. Individual students and their parents are given reports which indicate each student's level of achievement. Alice Miller School has no objection to these tests in principle, but objects to the excessive and unwarranted importance paid to their results, and the comparison of test results between schools, leading to false assumptions being made about schools, and so Alice Miller School does not evangelise to parents about the value of the tests.

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John Marsden