**Duncan MacMillan High School**

**Communicating Student Learning 2018-2019**

We value a collaborative approach to educating children. Students, teachers, and parent(s)/guardian(s) can all work effectively together when they have a shared understanding of expectations and achievements. This plan outlines the means by which we will achieve improved communication between school and home.

The policy indicates that the basis for assessing and evaluating student learning will be the expected learning outcomes established by the Nova Scotia Department of Education. These outcomes describe the knowledge, skills and attitudes the student will demonstrate by the end of each grade level.

Informal communications include but may not be limited to: conversations with student(s), conversations with parent(s)/guardian(s), e-mails, phone calls, websites, and Twitter.

Communication made about student learning and progress is important. Every effort is made by teachers to keep parent(s)/guardian(s) informed regarding student progress. Students and parent(s)/guardian(s) are encouraged to regularly check PowerSchool, as this is updated regularly by teachers.

Our office hours are from 8:00 am – 4:00 pm and the main office number is 902-885-2777. In the interest of facilitating open lines of communication, all teachers have their own voice-mail (calls during class time go directly to voicemail), email addresses and websites that can be accessed through the Duncan MacMillan High School website ([www.dmh.hrce.ca](http://www.dmh.hrce.ca/)).

· Parent(s)/guardian(s) of students in grades P through 6 may register online with PowerSchool to view attendance. You can register by emailing Ms. Walsh (twalsh@hrce.ca).

· Parent(s)/guardian(s) of students in grades 7 through 12 may register online with PowerSchool to view up-to-date marks and attendance. You can register by emailing Ms. Walsh (twalsh@hrce.ca).

· Attendance is available daily to parents/guardians through PowerSchool. Attendance codes used include; present, late (L), leave early (LE), absent (A), absent with notification (AWN), school activity (ACT), in school suspension (ISS), out of school suspension (OSS), observance of a religious holiday or ceremony (R), medical reason (MR), operational issue (OI).

· Within the first three weeks of school a Curriculum Night will be held. This year, Curriculum Night will be held on Thursday, September 13, at 6:00 pm.

· Parent teacher interviews will occur twice a year. Please plan to attend as this is an effective way to communicate student progress.

· During the first week of a new course, junior and senior high teachers will provide students with a course outline and detailed information on how their work will be evaluated. Parent(s)/guardian(s) can arrange to meet with teachers if further clarification is needed.

**DMHS School Year Calendar**- Dates for Curriculum Nights, Parent-Teacher Interviews, exams and all other important events can be found on the school website ([http://dmh.hrce.ca](http://dmh.hrsb.ca/)).

**HRSB School Year Calendar**-Otherimportant dates can be found on the HRSB website (http://www.hrce.ca).

**Student Assessment and Evaluation**

Please refer to the following definitions:

*Assessment* – the process of gathering information on student achievement with the purpose of improving both teaching and learning.

*Formative Assessments (Assessment for Learning)* – ongoing assessments that take place during the teaching and learning process for the purpose of showing growth over time, determining student’s needs, planning next steps in instruction and providing students with descriptive feedback.

*Summative Assessments (Assessment of Learning)* – assessments that take place at the end of a period of learning for the purpose of determining the extent to which learning has occurred.

*Evaluation*– the process of analyzing, reflecting upon and making judgments or decisions based on summative assessment data.

*Expected Learning Outcomes* –goal statements prescribed by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development that indicate what teachers are required to teach and what students are expected to know.

*Curriculum Alignment* – the matching of instructional and assessment practices with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development’s curriculum documents/outcomes.

*External Large Scale Assessments* - Schools participate in regional, provincial, national and international external large-scale assessments as required by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and the Halifax Regional School Board.

**The purpose of assessment** is to improve student learning. Teachers assess student learning to check mastery and understanding. Assessments inform instruction and design of the curriculum. All assessments contribute to the summative evaluation at the end of the marking period, documenting how well students understand and apply the learning outcome(s) in given skills/knowledge of the program.

Teachers use a variety of strategies to gather information about student achievement. No one source is necessarily better than another. Each strategy can provide useful and different information about student achievement. The most accurate profile of student achievement is based on findings gathered from assessing student performance in a variety of contexts. Teachers utilize, but are not limited to, the following methods of assessment:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Strategy/Method** | **Information Provided** |
| Tests/Quizzes/End of the Year  Assessment | Multiple Choice  True/False  Short Answer  Matching  Extended Response | Recall  Recognition  Memorization  Problem solving process  Content mastery pre and post-test of knowledge |
| Learning Logs | Reflective Journals  Personal Response Journals  Portfolio  Self/Peer Assessment | Personal connections  Connection to concepts in literature  Understanding of story elements Personal experience  Goal setting  Background knowledge  Written ability |
| Observations | Anecdotal Records  Conferences  Checklists | Social skills and behaviors Immediate evaluation and  feedback of learning  Teamwork  Attitude  Oral language skills  Listening skills  Leadership skills  Respect  Levels of understanding |
| Performance Tasks | Demonstrations  Labs  Presentations  Technological Productions | Creativity  End product  Public speaking  Group work  Organizational skills  Real life application  Reasoning skills |
| Projects | Models  Experiments  Surveys  Scrapbooks | Knowledge  Planning  Research  Skills  Organization  Perseverance  Cooperation |
| Written Language | Research Papers  Journals  Stories  Articles  Story Boards | Comprehension  Following directions  Writing skills  Expression  Vocabulary  Style  Understanding of different  writing structures/genres  Research skills  Evaluation |
| Oral Language | Debate  Interviews  Questions/Responses  Teaching a Lesson  Games  Reader’s Theatre  Class Discussions  Critique Process | Comprehension  Paraphrasing  Speaking and listening skills  Reasoning  Perspective  Organization  Decision making skills  Attitude  Memorization  Confidence  Articulation |
| Visual Communication | Illustrations  Story Boards  Videos  Collages  Maps  Dioramas | Comprehension  Organization  Creativity  Depth of conceptualization Application of knowledge and skills  Equipment use  Decision making |

**Evaluation Policies and Procedures**

As education is our primary goal, helping students cope with the stress of evaluation is important. In order to do this, the following practices will be followed:

1. Students are encouraged to prepare for upcoming exams a week in advance.

2. Final summative evaluation events that require preparation at home are to be completed at

least one week prior to the formal exam week of that semester.

3. Pre-reading materials necessary for exams will be given out at least one week prior to

exams.

4. Practices, field trips, extra-curricular activities, evening performances or recitals will not be

scheduled during the week prior to the first exam.

5. The Assessment and Evaluation policy dictates that no single assessment event will be

evaluated at more than 20% of the final course mark.

**Qualities of Effective Assessment:**

In order for assessments to be effective tools for measuring student learning, students and teachers

should be able to answer the following questions:

**1.** **What is being assessed?**

Clearly defined and in a language students can understand and communicate. *What*

*curriculum outcomes are being assessed?*

**2.** **What is the purpose of the assessment? Why is the assessment taking place?** Define and

communicate a clear purpose to students. *What purposes will this assessment serve?*

**3.** **How will this be assessed or evaluated?**

What tools, methods or strategies will be used to collect information that accurately reflect

student learning of the intended outcome.

**4.** **Is this assessment fair?**

Has bias been removed and do students have the skills to complete the activity?

**5.** **Have** *students* **been involved in the assessment & evaluation process?**

Has this involvement helped students to develop the skills and strategies to become self-assessors?

Prior to each assessment, teachers will inform students what is expected, what quality looks like and how they will be assessed.

**Purpose of the Report Card**

The purpose of a report card is to provide a student’s parent(s) or guardian(s) with a summary of how well a student understands what is being taught, and their level of academic achievement and social development. Report cards should be used in addition to other forms of communication between the home and school such as the Student-Parent Portal, parent-teacher meetings, newsletters and e-mails.

**Report cards have four parts:**

**1. Attendance** - Reports the number of days the student has absent from school. Teachers monitor student attendance daily using PowerSchool and include the information in report cards.

**2. Learner Profile** - Reports on the social development and work habits using codes that show how often they are displayed over the reporting period. The codes are assigned based on the grade level expectations for social development and work habits:

· C – Consistently

· U – Usually

· S – Sometimes

· R – Rarely

· N/A – Not applicable

A comment can be included to provide more detail on the social development and work habits of the student.

**3. Course comments** – A short summary of what the student has learned, which includes:

· Strengths (areas of the curriculum where your child is having success);

· Learning needs (areas of the curriculum where your child is still developing); and

· Suggestions to support further learning.

**4. Grades** - Grades represent academic achievement only. Although social development and work habits impact student achievement, they are reported in the Learner Profile.

Grades are based on the evidence of student learning and understanding the curriculum concepts and skills taught in the classroom. Evidence is collected over time in a variety of ways, including work products, conversations and observations, etc.

Reporting codes are used to describe how well a student understands the material covered and how well they can apply concepts and skills in relation to the learning outcomes for each subject:

**Reporting: Code Reporting Descriptors for Grades 1-6**

**Effective September 1, 2013**

**A** The student demonstrates achievement with **thorough** understanding and application

of concepts and skills in relation to the expected learning outcomes.

**B** The student demonstrates achievement with **good** understanding and application of

concepts and skills in relation to the expected learning outcomes.

**C** The student demonstrates achievement with **basic** understanding and application of

concepts and skills in relation to the expected learning outcomes.

**D** The student demonstrates achievement with **limited** understanding and application of

concepts and skills in relation to the expected learning outcomes. The student has not

met expectations.

**N/A** Not applicable at this time.

**INS** Insufficient evidence to report on achievement of the expected learning outcomes.

**Teachers in Grades 7-12 will use the same grades and descriptors.**

· 90-100% - Demonstrates excellent understanding and application of concepts and skills in

relation to the learning outcomes.

· 80-89% - Demonstrates very good understanding and application of concepts and skills in

relation to the learning outcomes.

· 70-79% - Demonstrates good understanding and application of concepts and skills in

relation to the learning outcomes.

· 60-69% - Demonstrates satisfactory understanding and application of concepts and skills in

relation to the learning outcomes.

· 50-59% - Demonstrates limited understanding and application of concepts and skills in

relation to the learning outcomes.

· Below 50% - Has not met minimum requirements of the course

INS - Insufficient evidence to determine a grade

IP - In progress until all components of the course are completed.

NA- Not applicable at this time. (Used only for reporting in strands in Mathematics grades 7 & 8)

**The Provincial P-12 Achievement Level Scale**

The provincial P-12 Achievement Level Scale, used across the curriculum by teachers to describe a student’s level of achievement related to one or more outcomes in a formative assessment, has recently been revised. Three additional ‘+’ levels have been added for tracking and communicating information related to student progress.

The revised NS Provincial Achievement Levels and their descriptors include:

**Achievement Level Description**

· 4 In‐depth knowledge and understanding of content and concepts. Able to extend the

application of related skills.

· 3+ Competent +

· 3 Competent knowledge and understanding of content and concepts. Appropriate

application of the related skills.

· 2+ Developing +

· 2 Developing knowledge and understanding of content and concepts. Developing in the

application of the related skills.

· 1+ Limited +

· 1 Limited knowledge and understanding of content and concepts. Limited application of

related skills.

Achievement levels have always best been used with clearly defined and communicated success criteria. For teachers interested in using the additional ‘+’ levels, they should be used when a student meets all of the success criteria expected at the lower level of achievement and some of the criteria at the higher level. Teachers whose achievement tracking needs are met by the original 1-4 scale may continue to use 1-2-3-4 as they have with students in the past.

**Reporting Periods**

At the elementary and junior high levels, there are three reporting periods where report cards are sent home to parent(s)/guardian(s) (November, April and June). At the senior high level, there are four reporting periods (November, February, April and June). Additional documents are sent home for students with adaptations and Individual Program Plans (IPP). Parent(s)/guardian(s) and students are encouraged to monitor student progress through the parent and student portal in PowerSchool.

**Web-Based Student Information System (PowerSchool)**

The Halifax Regional School Board uses the Student Information System called PowerSchool. The system allows students and parents to log on using their own private online account to see grades, track attendance, learn about upcoming assignments, and catch up on school events and announcements.

Information is made available about how to log on to a private account and access real-time information. Students and parents will be able to log on anywhere there is internet access and access information.

**10 reasons why students recommend using PowerSchool**

1. To check on the accuracy of my attendance and late records to make sure everything is in

order to receive my exam exemption.

2. To read the daily announcements using the School Bulletin feature so that I don’t miss an

event or other important information.

3. To track my grades so that I know where I stand and see if I have any outstanding

assessments.

4. To view the Grade History section, and click on my grade percentage to see the breakdown

of all assignments and tests and the marks I received for each that has brought me to that

grade percentage to date.

5. To see courses/credits I have completed to date so that I know what I need to graduate.

6. To directly email my teacher from PowerSchool if I have any questions.

7. To read comments from my teachers about my areas of strengths and needs in my learning.

8. To choose my course requests for the following school year from PowerSchool.

9. To be more in charge of my learning and attendance by looking at common patterns (eg.

I’m always late for the first class in the morning).

10. To see my attendance and marks before my parents do.

**Students with Special Needs**

At Duncan MacMillan High School, we are dedicated to supporting the learning of all students. Teachers, parents, and students themselves can initiate a referral to the School Planning Team. Once a referral is received, the School Program Planning Team will begin the process of reviewing the profile of the learner. A program planning team meeting is held and suggestions are made to the classroom teachers. At this time, adaptations or individualizations may be recommended to support the student in meeting with academic, social or behavioral success. Parent/Guardian participation is essential to the success of the process in both program adaptations or in the development of the IPP. It should be noted that some students will require an Individual Program Plan in one course, while other students may require an Individual Program Plan in all courses.

In the case of program adaptations, teachers will communicate to the parents the adaptations required to assess and evaluate learning and achievement related to the outcomes of the course. In the case of an IPP, teachers will base evaluations on the student’s success in meeting the individualized outcomes developed.

**New Provincial Homework Policy (September 2015)**

Homework and/or assignments are a constructive tool in the teaching/learning process. Purposeful assignments not only enhance student achievement but also develop self-discipline and good working habits. The purpose of homework is preparing students for class, practicing new skills or knowledge, and enrichment of learning. Homework assignments will:

· be purposeful learning

· reinforce, enrich, or help students prepare for classroom learning

· be designed with consideration for the needs and circumstances of each student

· be appropriate for each student’s age and developmental stage

· have a clear purpose

· directly connect to what students are learning in their classes

· build on skills or knowledge that a student already has

Homework assigned in grades 7–12 will expand students’ learning of advanced skills and will be based on the specific course of study. On average, at the high school level, students can expect to spend 6-8 hours of homework per week.

**Due Dates**

It is important for students to complete and pass in their assignments on time so that teachers can provide timely feedback. All assignments require due dates. Missed due dates can influence the student’s summative or final evaluation. An extension can be granted if negotiated with the teacher on or prior to the original due date.

During the course of the semester chronic cases of late or missed work will be communicated to the parent(s)/guardian(s) directly by the teacher. After the Extended Deadline has expired and the assignment is still not passed in, the student will be given a zero for the corresponding piece of work for failure to demonstrate that the outcomes have been met.

**What about Summative (Major) Assessments?**

Although there is an expectation for and responsibility of all students to submit assigned work by the deadline date set by the subject teacher, the school recognizes that from time to time a circumstance may arise whereby a student may need an extension of the pre-established deadline date.

Unless there are extenuating circumstances, a request for an extension of a summative assessment must be given a minimum of one day prior to the deadline date and to the classroom teacher.

The length of the extension will be determined taking into consideration the following:

· the nature of the assignment and the amount of time needed for completion

· time needed for additional instruction

· the need to return assignments to other students for meaningful feedback

· the need to maintain the logical progression of the course as prescribed by the Department

of Education and Early Childhood Development

**Summative Assessment Events:**

· Teachers of junior high will ensure the year end summative assessment event will determine no more than 10% of the students’ year end final course grade.

· Teachers of senior high will ensure that students participate in a final cumulative assessment opportunity that allows them to demonstrate an appropriate range of the learning outcomes and process skills involved in the course. This final assessment, whether a written examination or an alternative assessment opportunity, will be worth no more than 20%.

**Protocol for Concerns Regarding Evaluation Results**

Students should first discuss the issue with the teacher. If more clarification is needed, parents should contact the teacher to discuss the concern. If students or parents are not satisfied following the conversation with a teacher (including the Department Head), they should contact the Vice-Principal. The school’s administration will make every effort to resolve the situation with all parties involved.

The following is a list of provisions to help students and parents/guardians when concerns arise as part of the Halifax Regional School Board’s Parent Concern Protocol:

1. **Students should contact the teacher** and discuss the grade immediately following the

return of the assessment/evaluation.

2. If more formal clarification is needed, **the parent(s)/guardian(s) or student should contact**

**the teacher** directly in writing.

3. The **teacher will respond to this communication** either in writing or by phone, in a timely

manner after receiving the request.

4. The **teacher will document the conversation or meeting**.

5. If **unresolved, the matter should be referred to the department** **head** by the student

and/or parent(s)/guardian(s).

6. The **department head will then meet with the parties involved** to resolve the situation.

7. If, for any reason, **the matter remains unresolved, it should be referred to the vice**

**principal or principal**. The determination of the principal is final.

**Vacation Time**

Given that exam dates are published well in advance, it is expected that family vacations will be scheduled around this important assessment time. Absence due to such vacations will not be considered excused and not special circumstance. Also, there are instances when the school is closed during the scheduled exam day due to inclement weather, power failures or unforeseen circumstances. Exams will be moved forward one day in the schedule. All students must be present on the day of their exam.

**Contact Us:**

**Main Office:** 902-885-2777

**Fax:** 902-885-2790

**School Website:** [http://dmh.hrce.ca](http://dmh.hrsb.ca/)

**Twitter:** @dmhs\_duncan

**PowerSchool:** https://sishrsb.ednet.ns.ca/public/

**Please check our school website for a list of teacher websites and email addresses.**