



17th September 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As part of a whole-school approach to assessment, Loreto College Foxrock staff will be using a 'comment-only' approach to marking the work of all 1st and 2nd Year students until the October mid-term break. After mid-term, a combination of 'comment-only' and the traditional mark or grade will be used.

The rationale behind comment-only marking is that it helps students to focus on how they learn. Research shows that students respond better to constructive comments than to grades as it allows them to better understand how their work can be improved.

For 1st Year and 2nd Years, this form of assessment is an integral part of the new Junior Cycle approach to learning. It helps students to be more active, independent and responsible participants in their own learning. It develops skills that help our students not just to achieve their full potential in state examinations but also to become lifelong learners.

The use of this marking procedure in our school reflects wider changes sought by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) as they promote 'Assessment for Learning (AfL)' approaches across second-level schools. The DES considers this approach to assessment an exemplar of 'highly effective practice' and it will, in time, become the generic standard for all schools. In recognition of the fact that this change will take some time and that students still engage in summative assessments (state examinations); post-midterm, teachers will use a combination of comment and graded feedback.

Thank you for your ongoing support as our school continues its journey towards the implementation of DES reforms in education.

Yours faithfully

Suzanne Lea

Teaching and Learning Team