# EtonHouse

## Malaysia

### International School • Kuala Lumpur

**Inquire • Think • Learn**

*Shaping the future through education*

# *Assessment Policy*

*The purpose of the EtonHouse Malaysia Assessment Policy is to unify the school as a whole in its methods and procedures for assessing, recording and reporting.*

# Philosophy

At EHM, the IB Learner Profile (2013) inspires our beliefs about Assessment.

**Inquirers**         We nurture curiosity, and develop skills for continuous assessment. We identify individual and collective learning. We build upon existing and newly acquired knowledge in order to sustain students' love of learning throughout life.

**Knowledgeable**     We assess conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines, and designing effective assessments that make students' learning visible. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.

**Thinkers**          We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse assessment results related to our own teaching and students' learning. We take responsible actions in supporting each other throughout continuous growth, and exercise initiative in making reasoned, informed and ethical assessment decisions.

**Communicators**     We consistently assess the progress of ourselves and our students. We do so confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways of evolving assessment. This encourages feedback exchanges between peers, students and parents, resulting in a thorough assessment of the learner.

**Principled**        We act with integrity and honesty when developing assessments. We maintain a strong sense of fairness and justice, and respect for the dignity and rights of students and teachers. We expect children and adults to reflect on their own learning, actions and consequences. We are transparent with our actions and results.

**Open-minded**       We consider a wide range of evidence of learning, and we design a wide range of assessment tasks. We seek students' acceptance on their differences of ideas and their willingness to grow from the experience.

**Caring**            We show empathy, compassion and respect for each child's learning style to support them in reaching their potential. We use an on-going assessment process to identify the strengths and weaknesses in learning and teaching to ensure a positive learning outcome in EHM.

**Risk-takers**       We approach assessment with forethought and determination. Our assessment is resourceful and resilient, to meet the challenges of providing effective assessment of all our students' learnings. We work cooperatively, with students and peers, to explore new ideas and innovative assessment strategies.

**Balanced**          We understand the importance of balancing different aspects and approaches to assessment, using a variety of tools and strategies, in order to achieve intellectual, physical and emotional success for ourselves and others.

**Reflective**        We thoughtfully consider the students' interpretations of the world as well as our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support teaching, learning and personal development. We reflect on our teaching and learning in the past and present so we can take thoughtful action in the future.

## Definitions

**Assessment** is the systematic basis for making inferences about the learning and development of students.  It is the process of defining, selecting, designing, collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and using information to increase students' learning and development. (Assessing Student Learning and Development: A Guide to the Principles, Goals, and Methods of Determining College Outcomes; Erwin 1991)

**Pre-assessment** is an instructional strategy teachers use to uncover what students know about a curriculum unit before they begin formal instruction. (Jeanne H. Purcell, Ph.D.; Connecticut State Department of Education 2011)

**Formative Assessment**, or **Assessment for Learning**, is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there. (Assessment Reform Group; 2002)

**Summative Assessments** are used to evaluate student learning, skill acquisition, and academic achievement at the conclusion of a defined instructional period—typically at the end of a project, unit, course, semester, program, or school year. (Glossary of Educational Reform; 2013) (Also known as **Assessment of Learning**)



The garden analogy

If we think of our children as plants...

Summative assessment of the plants is the process of measuring them. It is interesting and important to compare and analyse measurements but, in itself, this does not affect the growth of the plants.

Formative assessment, on the other hand, is the equivalent of feeding and watering the plants appropriate to their needs – directly affecting their growth.

(New Zealand Ministry of Education; no date)

## Roles

**Teachers**, in teams, strategically design, administer and analyze assessments with the aim of understanding and improving student learning. Teachers keep careful records of assessment results. Teachers write Report Cards, and support students in the development of their Portfolios, and in preparing for their Student-Led Conferences.

**Students** participate in informal and formal assessments to demonstrate their learning. Students use assessment information to improve their learning. Students use their Portfolios and Student-Led Conferences to better understand their learning journey, and to set goals for future learning.

**Parents** use assessment information, from their child, the teacher, Report Cards, Portfolios and Student-Led Conferences, to understand their child's learning journey. Parents provide information to teachers about their students, to assist teachers in fully assessing the child's learning. Parents participate in setting goals for future learning based on assessment information. Parents support students in meeting learning goals set by the student, school or teacher.

**Leadership** supports teachers, students and parents in understanding and improving assessment practices. Leadership analyzes assessment results with the aim of identifying the school's strengths and challenges, and plans strategic efforts to maintain the strengths and meet the challenges.

## Assessing The Five PYP Elements

"Assessment is integral to all teaching and learning. It is central to the PYP goal of thoughtfully and effectively guiding students through the five essential elements of learning: the acquisition of knowledge, the understanding of concepts, the mastering of skills, the development of attitudes and the decision to take action." (Making the PYP Happen; 2009)

At EHM, assessment is designed and utilized in all five of these areas of learning.

# On-Going Assessment

Assessment takes place almost continuously. Whenever a teacher observes a child, the teacher can interpret the child's actions, and assess what the child knows and can do. Since assessment is happening all the time, teachers must make important decisions about when and how to organize that assessment, along with when and how to record judgments.

| Planned? | Formal? | Example | Best Practices |
|---|---|---|---|
| Impromptu | Informal | A student makes a game at playtime in which you can see she understands how to add and subtract numbers up to 19. This is relevant to your learning objectives. | <ul><li>Notice what the student knows and can do</li><li>Record a judgment if this is new and important information</li><li>Consider what the student's next step should be, and plan for that</li></ul> |
| Planned | Informal | You set up learning stations where students will practice various math skills. During practice, you check to see where each student is relative to your learning objectives.<br><br>You facilitate a class discussion related to the Central Idea. | <ul><li>Let the students know the learning objective(s)</li><li>Notice what each student knows and can do</li><li>Record judgments (often but not always)</li><li>Consider what steps different students should take next, and plan for those; differentiate</li></ul> |
| Planned | Formal | At the end of a unit, you ask students to prepare and deliver a presentation to the class.<br><br>You ask students to demonstrate their measuring skills by independently measuring specific objects around the classroom, and turning in their answers. | <ul><li>Ensure you have taught all the needed skills</li><li>Prepare a rubric, checklist, anecdotal record, exemplars and/or continuum</li><li>Let parents and students know the assessment is coming up</li><li>Let parents and students know the learning objective(s)</li></ul> |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | ● Use the rubric, checklist, anecdotal record, exemplars and/or continuum to determine what each student knows and can do<br>● Record judgments<br>● Consider what steps different students should take next, and plan for those; differentiate |

These types of assessment happen on different timelines, with the first being determined by the student, the second happening frequently as planned by the teacher, and the third happening less often, usually towards the end of a UoI or block of instruction. The first and second types are most often, though not always, formative assessment, while the third type is likely to be a summative assessment.

# Tools and Strategies

The IB recommends the following Tools and Strategies in conducting assessments, and making and recording judgments.

| Assessment Strategies and Tools | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Rubrics | Exemplars | Checklists | Anecdotal Records | Continuums |
| Observations | ✔ |  | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| Performance Assessments | ✔ | ✔ |  | ✔ | ✔ |
| Process-Focused Assessments | ✔ |  | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| Selected Responses |  | ✔ | ✔ |  | ✔ |
| Open-Ended Tasks | ✔ | ✔ |  | ✔ | ✔ |

(Making the PYP Happen, 2009, pp 48-49)

| Assessment Strategies | |
|---|---|
| **Observations** | All students are observed often and regularly, with the teacher taking a focus varying from wide angle (for example, focusing on the whole class) to close up (for example, focusing on one student or one activity), and from non-participant (observing from without) to participant (observing from within). |
| **Performance Assessments** | The assessment of goal-directed tasks with established criteria. They provide authentic and significant challenges and problems. In these tasks, there are numerous approaches to the problem and rarely only one correct response. They are usually multimodal and require the use of many skills. Audio, video and narrative records are often useful for this kind of assessment. |
| **Process-focused assessments** | Students are observed often and regularly, and the observations are recorded by noting the typical as well as non-typical behaviours, collecting multiple observations to enhance reliability, and synthesizing evidence from different contexts to increase validity. A system of note taking and record keeping is created that minimizes writing and recording time. Checklists, inventories and narrative descriptions (such as learning logs) are common methods of collecting observations. |
| **Selected responses** | Single occasion, one-dimensional exercises. Tests and quizzes are the most familiar examples of this form of assessment. |
| **Open-ended tasks** | Situations in which students are presented with a stimulus and asked to communicate an original response. The answer might be a brief written answer, a drawing, a diagram or a solution. The work, with the assessment criteria attached, could be included in a portfolio. |

(Making the PYP Happen, 2009, pp 48-49)

| Assessment Tools | |
|---|---|
| **Rubrics** | An established set of criteria for rating students in all areas. The descriptors tell the assessor what characteristics or signs to look for in students' work and then how to rate that work on a predetermined scale. Rubrics can be developed by students as well as by teachers. |
| **Exemplars** | Samples of students' work that serve as concrete standards against which other samples are judged. Generally there is one benchmark for each achievement level in a scoring rubric. Each school is encouraged to set benchmarks that are appropriate and usable within their particular school context. |
| **Checklists** | These are lists of information, data, attributes or elements that should be present. A mark scheme is a type of checklist. |
| **Anecdotal records** | Anecdotal records are brief written notes based on observations of students. "Learning stories" are focused, extended observations that can be analysed later. These records need to be systematically compiled and organized. |
| **Continuums** | These are visual representations of developmental stages of learning. They show a progression of achievement or identify where a student is in a process. |

(Making the PYP Happen, 2009, pp 48-49)

# Expectations for Record-Keeping

Teachers are required to keep careful records of each student's assessment results, indicating each student's achievement relative to the EHM curriculum standards. While records are kept by the teacher, they are the property of EHM. Teachers have discretion to design the form of these records, so long as the following expectations are met:

- Records are kept in a form which is accessible to others, including leadership and other teachers as needed.
- Records are clearly organized and labeled in a way which is easily understandable by leadership and other teachers.
- Records are kept in a consistent manner for all students.
- Assessment information is recorded for the EHM Curriculum Standards relevant to the teacher's class(es). Judgments indicate each student's progress towards, or beyond, those curricular expectations.
- Records are regularly updated, multiple times during each Unit of Inquiry.  For clarity, not every judgment needs to be updated, just those on which new information has been obtained.
- Records reflect the following
    - each summative assessment
    - most formative assessments
    - most pre-assessments
    - informal observations as relevant.

Records (and assessment judgments) may be based on formal or informal, planned or impromptu, assessment situations. A student may demonstrate their achievement relative to a curriculum objective at any time and in a variety of ways; it is perfectly valid to record an unrequested demonstration made during playtime, just as it is valid to record the results of a planned observation.

Records must be based on a teacher's best professional judgment. If a teacher does not have enough information on which to base a judgment, the teacher should seek additional information before recording a judgment about that student's learning. In situations where sufficient information cannot be obtained, the teacher should record that a judgment cannot be made, rather than that the student has not achieved the objective.

Records differ from documentation. To document a student's learning, teachers look for ways to preserve evidence, such as the child's actual work, or photographs of the child demonstrating a skill. While records are based on evidence, that evidence cannot always be preserved. For example, a teacher may directly observe a young student sorting toy dinosaurs according to their size or color, an important mathematical skill. This achievement can and should be recorded; it would be hard, however, to document in the absence of a video. Records therefore rely on judgments which may or may not be supported by documentation; the professionalism of the teacher is paramount in ensuring that all relevant judgments are recorded, and that all recorded judgments are valid.

# Report Cards

*The purpose of the EtonHouse Malaysia Report Card is as a record of student learning, in each subject area, in a format that can be understood by parents, teachers, leadership and other schools.*

A sample Report Card is available in a separate document.

For each student, the EHM Report Card includes individualized information in the following areas:

| Area | Grade | Effort Grade | Comment | Data |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Days of School, Days Absent and Days Late | | | | ✔ |
| Language Arts | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | |
| Mandarin | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | |
| Mathematics | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | |
| Performing Arts | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | |
| Physical Education | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | |
| Visual Arts | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | |
| Unit of Inquiry, including PSPE, Science and Social Studies | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | |
| Learner Profile | | | ✔ | |
| English as an Additional Language (for students receiving support only) | | | ✔ | |

**Grades** indicate each student's achievement relative to the EHM curriculum standards.  The three levels are

| Mark | Descriptor |
|------|------------|
| ES: Exceeding Standards | The student is able to independently demonstrate their mastery of almost all, or all, of the year-level standards. In addition, the student is able to independently demonstrate mastery of knowledge and skills significantly beyond the year-level standards. |
| MS: Meeting Standards | The student is able to independently demonstrate their mastery of almost all, or all, of the year-level standards. |
| BE: Below Expectations | The student has not yet mastered the year-level standards. |

On mid-year Report Cards, grades relate to the year-level standards already taught. On end-of-year Report Cards, grades relate to all year-level standards. In other words, grades are cumulative for the year.

**Effort Grades** indicate each student's effort to learn, as determined using the rubric below. The Effort Grade is based only on the current reporting period; it does not reflect the child's Effort in earlier periods.

It is important not to consider attitude and discipline in determining the Effort Grade. Consider only the observable behaviors mentioned in the rubric.

| Mark | Descriptor |
|------|------------|
| EE: Exceeding Expectations | The student **sometimes** made efforts to extend their learning beyond class requirements.<br>The student **almost always** completed classwork and homework as requested, and with **full attention** to set requirements.  The student **frequently** asked appropriate questions and contributed to class activities **on their own initiative**.  The student **always** came to class with all necessary items. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **ME:**<br>**Meeting**<br>**Expectations** | The student **usually** completed classwork and homework as requested, and with **attention** to set requirements. The student **regularly** asked appropriate questions, and **usually** contributed to class activities **on their own initiative**. The student **usually** came to class with all necessary items. |
| **BE:**<br>**Below**<br>**Expectations** | The student **sometimes or rarely** completed classwork and homework as requested, and paid **insufficient attention** to set requirements. The student **occasionally** asked appropriate questions or contributed to class activities **when individually guided by the teacher**. The student **rarely** came to class with all necessary items. |

**Comments** are individualized for each child. Rather than provide information on what the class has been doing or learning, they are intended to help parents, leadership and teachers understand more about the child's personal learning achievements, challenges and goals. Comments are written in English, EHM's main language of communication.

*Sample comment: Timmy used his knowledge of decimals as he worked to understand fractions. He is now able to convert simple fractions (halves, quarters and tenths) to decimals, and to add and subtract decimals. Timmy's next steps in mathematics will be to master addition and subtraction of fractions with the same denominator, and to calculate equivalent fractions. Once he achieves this, he will be meeting all year-level expectations related to fractions and decimals.*

**Data** is provided for Attendance, without comment. When a teacher finds that these data points suggest the need for a conversation, the teacher works with leadership to determine the best path forward.

# Student-Led Conferences

*The purpose of Student-Led Conferences at EtonHouse Malaysia is for students to take ownership of their learning by facilitating conversations between themselves, parents and teachers about their learning journey and individual growth.*

**Students** are the key leaders of Student-Led Conferences. They are involved in all stages of the process: preparation, implementation and evaluation; the level and type of involvement differs according to year level, and is scaffolded to students' skill levels. Students are also responsible for working with the teacher to identify their strengths and needs, and collecting evidence to validate learning. They are engaged in self-reflection on the learning process, helping them to develop self-evaluation and presentation skills.

**Teachers**, including classroom and single-subject teachers, take the role of backstage facilitators. They organize the conference environment with the children to guarantee success. Teachers educate students about what the conference will be like, and help students prepare to lead at each station. In preparing the Student-Led Conference, teachers outline student portfolio requirements, and support students in preparing to use their portfolios as an aid during the Conferences. (See also the Portfolio guidelines given elsewhere in this Assessment Policy.)  Portfolios allow students to use work samples in communicating their learning and processes during the Student-Led Conferences.

**Parents** are partners in learning when students lead the conferences. Parents have the opportunity to focus on their child's learning and achievement in a one-on-one conversation. Prompts are given to parents in advance of the conferences, to support them in asking meaningful and appropriate questions as their children take ownership of the conversation.

Student-Led Conferences happen once a year near the end of the academic year. The SMT prepares a schedule which allows for 10 to 15 minute conferences at each station:

- UoI (includes Social Studies and Sciences)
- Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Mandarin
- Visual Arts
- Music
- Physical Education

The SMT also prepares sample prompts for use by parents; teaching teams for each grade level use these prompts as a starting point, adding or adjusting as needed to reflect the class's specific needs. Teachers then distribute these prompts to parents.

# Portfolios

*The purpose of student portfolios at EtonHouse Malaysia is to accumulate tangible evidence of learners' progress and attainment in all areas of the PYP. Portfolios provide an opportunity for students to take ownership of their learning, and a means to reflect on their personal learning journey. Portfolios also serve to facilitate students' transitions between academic facilitators.*

Often teacher will ask student to choose pieces illustrating areas for improvement, strengths and personal choices such as work samples. The goal is to help student communicate their learning and processes to their parents through work samples.

Each student's portfolio is to include the following elements:

- Portfolio cover page, including the child's name, year level, and photo or self portrait
- Portfolio purpose statement
- Cover page for each UoI, with the student's reflective illustration.
  - If this is not possible due to age or for a specific UoI, a teacher-produced cover page may be used as an alternate
- Samples of the student's work from each subject area and UoI
  - Samples may take the form of actual student work, evidence of the student's work (such as a picture/video of the work or the child engaged in the work), and/or reflective pieces
  - It is impossible to specify the "correct" number of pieces to include. In all cases there should be at least one piece from each subject area and UoI, and in most cases a minimum of 2-3 pieces per subject area and UoI. It is possible, depending on the student and subject, to include far more pieces.
  - Samples can be chosen for inclusion for multiple reasons:
    - milestone pieces such as summative assessments
    - a suite of pieces showing the student's progression over time
    - samples of the student's best work
    - samples which have special meaning to the student
  - Decisions about which pieces to include should be driven by the student under the guidance of the teacher. For younger children, teachers will need to take a more active role; as students mature, they are given increasing autonomy. Regardless of the age of the child, in rare cases it is sometimes necessary for the teacher to make decisions if the student declines to do so.
  - It may take time to develop a complete set of samples including all subject areas. This should be accomplished no later than the end of January for each school year, and updated from there.
  - Teachers may include a transcription clarifying the student's work, especially for younger students who are still learning to write and/or spell
  - Teachers may include an explanation or summary of what skills, knowledge or progress is demonstrated in the sample
- For older children, it is possible to include the student's notes regarding discussions about their Portfolio, including the student's goals and progress towards them.  If

included, such notes and goals must be developed by the student, not by the teacher or parents.

- Once items are added to the Portfolio, they are not normally removed except during the annual movement of one year-level section from EHM to home (see below).

In keeping with the purpose of portfolios as a tool for the student to take ownership of learning, the following sorts of items should be avoided:

- Teacher-developed items such as newsletters, UoI Planners or summaries, Report Cards or extensive feedback on student work (since feedback is often written on student's work at the time of completion, some feedback may appear)
- Grades
- Teacher records such as EAL Levels, Reading Levels or Developmental Summaries
- School documents such as this Assessment Policy or the section on Portfolios
- Teacher or parent comments about the Portfolio

The **Physical Form** of the Portfolio is as follows:

- A ring binder with a Front Cover, including the child's name, year level, and photo or self portrait
- The Portfolio Purpose Statement on the inside front cover
- Tabbed sections for each Year Level, in chronological order with the current year as the final section
- Tabbed sections for each UoI within the Year-Level sections
- Samples of work, reflection and possibly student goals within the appropriate Year-Level and UoI sections

Portfolios are maintained in a **Three-Year Cycle**. Each Portfolio includes work for the current year, as well as the two previous years (or less if the child has been at EHM for a shorter time). At the beginning of each school year, teachers assist students in Year 1 and above in removing the section from the earliest year in their Portfolio.  (For example, students in Year 4 remove the Year 1 section, leaving the sections for Year 2 and 3, and making room for the Year 4 section.) The removed section is sent home, and students/parents are encouraged to preserve it as a continuing portfolio at home.

At the transition between each school year, teachers meet to hand-over Portfolios from their previous class to the next teachers, and share information about each child's learning journey. This can happen either at the end of the year, or the beginning, as needed.

Portfolios are maintained at EHM and are not sent home, except for the annual movement of one year-level section from EHM to home. Parents have access to Portfolios during Parent-Teacher Conferences, Student-Led Conferences, or by appointment.

Upon a student's official withdrawal from EHM, the full Portfolio is given to the student to take home, normally on their last day of school.

## Assessment and Reporting Timeline

Parent-Teacher Conferences take place about halfway through the first term.

By the end of January each year, Portfolios must contain samples of work representing the full range of subjects.

Student-Led Conferences take place about one month before the last day of the school year.

Report Cards are sent out twice a year, on the last day of the reporting period.

Preparation for these pieces begins well in advance. The SMT shares more detailed timelines as needed for different pieces, including for example such things as when teachers must complete report card narratives in advance of them being sent to parents.