



First Year information night 2023

MONDAY 11TH OF
SEPTEMBER 2023



Deputy
Principal/Principal
Introduction

Welcome

Introduction of Keynote
speakers

Input from Deputy
Principal



Portumna Community School



Our Vision for Education



Our Vision for Education





School Self Evaluation



Input from Guidance Counsellor
Ms. Denise Lyons

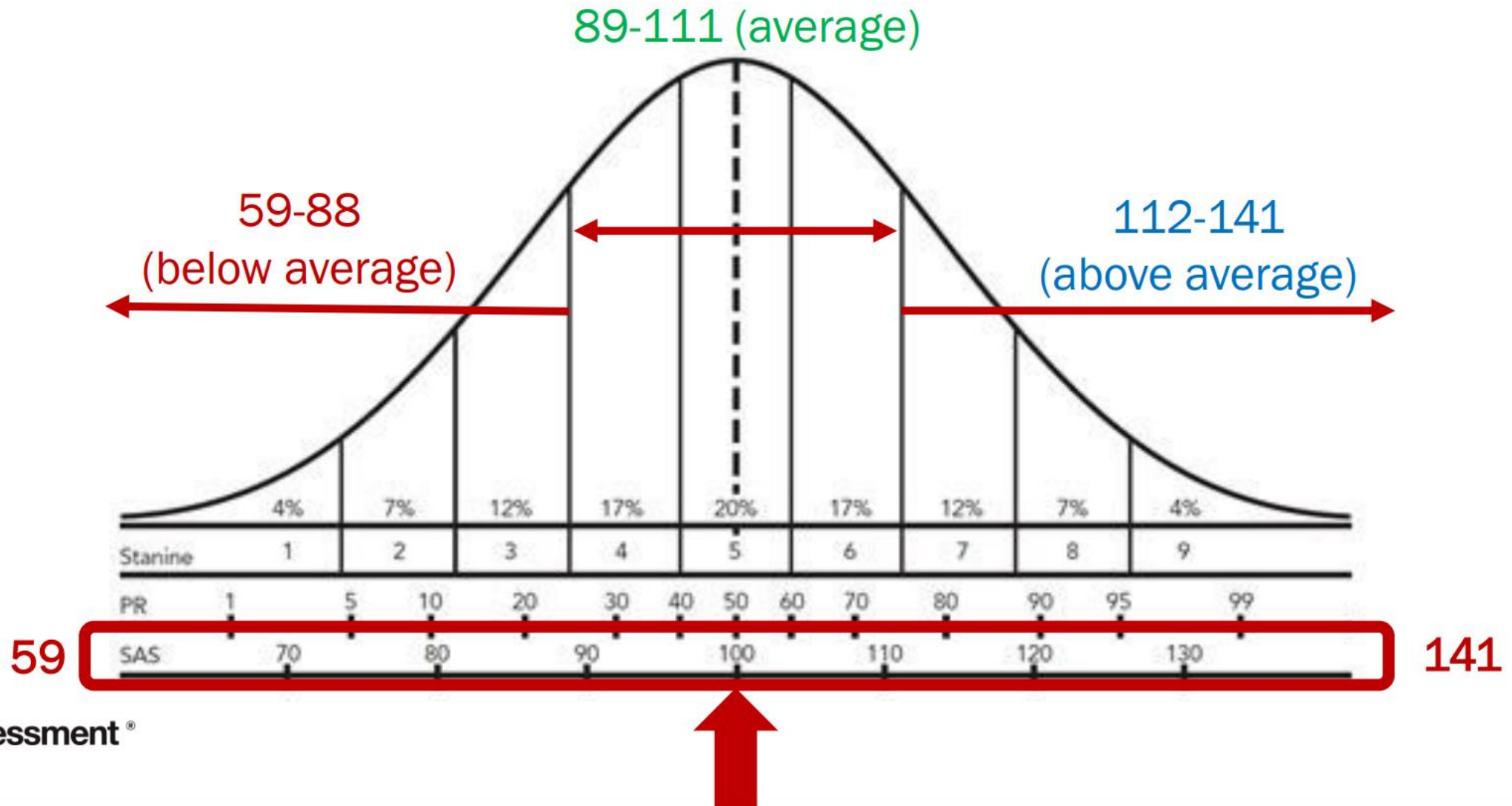
Aptitude Testing



Why use Aptitude Tests?

- Used to inform teachers, students and their parents/ guardians about an individual's underlying ability and how this can be recognised and built upon to ensure that a student achieves their potential
- It provides a benchmark re ability (SAS, Stanines, Percentile scores) and can be used very effectively as part of a review of student's performance alongside other information including teacher assessment and school management data on aspects such as attendance, additional needs and EAL
- Can provide indicators of attainment in school subjects which can provide a starting point for target setting (Athena) and inform subject choice in 1st Year and for Senior Cycle options

Standard Age Score (SAS)



HOW WILL WE USE THE DATA FROM TESTING AT PCS

Referral to SET Team-
SAS score below 89 for
additional screening
and supports

Inform Subject choice

Identify strengths and
areas for improvement

Set targets for students
(Athena)

Inform teaching
strategies for learning

Support RACE/
DARE Applications

Reference point for all
year groups

Referral to Academic
Excellence
Academies at HEI's with
SAS above 125/ 95th
Percentile

ADMINISTERED TESTING AT PCS

Aptitude Tests

- CAT 4 Level E: Incoming First Years May 2023
- NGRT: Incoming First Years May 2023
- CAT4 Level F: 3rd Year November 2023

Additional Needs Screening

- WIAT III
- DASH Handwriting Screening Test



Verbal Reasoning:
Reasoning with words

Quantitative Reasoning:
Reasoning with numbers

Non-Verbal Reasoning:
The ability to understand
and analyse visual
information

Spatial Reasoning:
Thinking with and mentally
manipulating shapes in 3D



*The four main types of ability known to make a
difference to learning and achievement.*

Verbal Reasoning

This test measures the ability to reason with words and to understand and use the concepts expressed in words.

Possessing a good aptitude in verbal reasoning is important for work involving communicating ideas or understanding written material.



Good Verbal Reasoning skills are highly important when studying academic courses.

Sample Careers/courses:

- **Law**
- **Journalism**
- **Social Work**
- **Arts**
- **European Studies**
- **Media**
- **P.R.**
- **Advertising**
- **Education**

Possible Subjects:

- English
- History
- Languages
- LCVP Link Modules
- Music, Art
- Religious Education
- Geography
- Home Economics

Numerical Reasoning

Numerical reasoning measures the ability to reason with numbers and to deal intelligently with quantitative measures.

It is important for work in the technical professions and is also important for many jobs in business and finance.



Numerical Reasoning is also relevant to any sort of work in which calculations or precise measurement need to be made.

Sample Careers/courses:

- Science
- Engineering
- Computing
- Architecture
- Accounting
- Joinery
- Finance

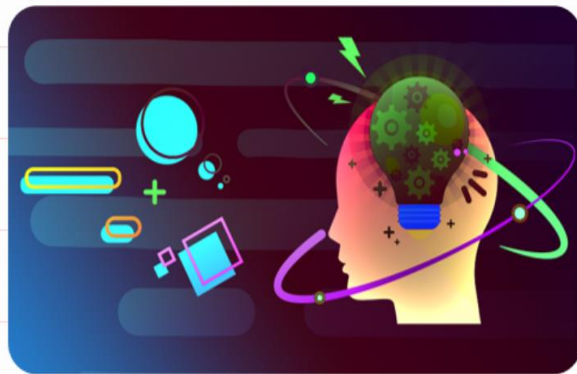
Possible Subjects:

- Maths
- Physics
- Chemistry
- Applied Maths
- Accounting
- Economics

Abstract/Non-Verbal Reasoning

This aptitude test measures a person's ability to reason with abstract ideas, and is a measure of non-verbal/numerical reasoning power.

Possessing a good aptitude in abstract reasoning is needed for work which involves seeing relationships between things; either in a logical sense or in a practical sense.



Abstract reasoning is also important for working in the field of design, since design is often concerned with the expression of abstract ideas or themes.

Sample Careers/courses:

- **Computer Programming**
- **Software Design**
- **Mathematics**
- **Science**
- **Engineering**
- **Management**

Possible Subjects:

- Physics
- Chemistry
- Biology
- Music
- History
- Art
- Applied Maths
- Computer Science
- Technology
- Design and Communication Graphics

Space Relations / Spatial Ability

The Space Relations test assesses a person's ability to visualise objects in three dimensions.

This ability is needed for any form of work in which it is important to be able to visualise objects and to understand how they relate to each other.



Possessing good spatial abilities are required for many of the technical craft related areas of work.

Sample Careers/courses:

- **Architecture**
- **Designing**
- **Fine Arts**
- **Dentistry**
- **Photography**
- **Fashion Design**

Possible Subjects:

- Art
- Home Economics
- Design and Communication Graphics
- Construction Studies
- Engineering
- Technology

SAMPLE CAT4 REPORT FOR TEACHERS

Name: Connor Yates			
School: Sample Irish School			
Group: 1st Year			
Date of test: 02/10/2013	Level: E	Age: 12:05	Sex: Male

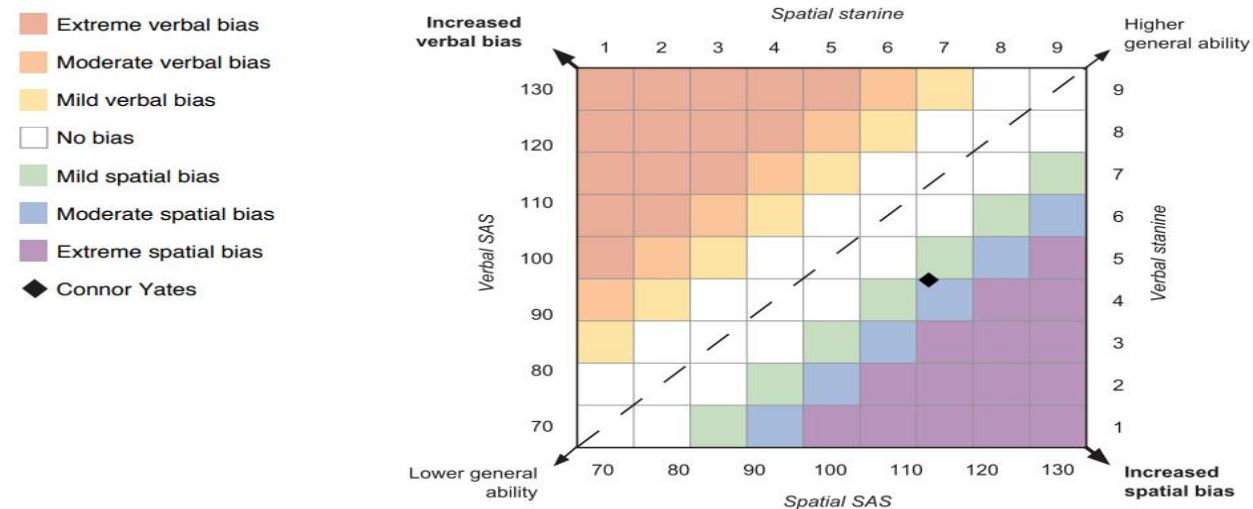
Scores

Battery	No. of questions attempted	SAS	NPR	ST	GR (/60)	SAS (with 90% confidence bands)											
						60	70	80	90	100	110	120	130	140			
Verbal	48/48	96	40	4	=37					<div><div></div><div></div></div>							
Quantitative	18/36	93	32	4	=41				<div><div></div><div></div></div>								
Non-verbal	42/48	117	87	7	4						<div><div></div><div></div></div>						
Spatial	35/36	113	80	7	=11						<div><div></div><div></div></div>						
Mean	-	105	-	-	-					<div><div></div><div></div></div>							

Profile summary

The analysis of *CAT4* scores allows all students to be assigned a profile; that is they are assigned to one of seven broad descriptions of their preferences for learning. The Verbal Reasoning and Spatial Ability Batteries form the basis of this analysis and the profiles are expressed as a mild, moderate or extreme bias for verbal or spatial learning or, where no bias is discernable (that is, when scores on both batteries are similar), as an even profile.

The black diamond shows Connor's profile, which is indicated by the coloured band.



IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING & LEARNING

Name: Connor Yates			
School: Sample Irish School			
Group: 1st Year			
Date of test: 02/10/2013	Level: E	Age: 12:05	Sex: Male

Moderate spatial bias

- This profile demonstrates a moderate preference for spatial over verbal learning.
- Connor's performance should be markedly better when engaged in tasks that require visualisation and he will learn well when working with pictures, diagrams, 3D objects, mind maps and other tangible methods.
- His weaker verbal skills suggest he will perform at a low average level when learning through written texts, writing and discussion.
- Connor is likely to prefer active learning methods such as modelling, demonstrating and simulations, but should also be able to engage with most written material.
- Connor's attainment should be average or above in subjects that make the most of his spatial ability such as science, technology, design and geography, but may find language-based subjects such as English, humanities, history and modern foreign languages more challenging unless teaching methods are adapted to suit his profile.

Implications for teaching and learning

- A lack of relative progress in verbal reasoning may be preventing Connor from accessing key areas of the curriculum.
- A test to establish a reading age is recommended to ascertain whether Connor is able to access the curriculum.
- Connor may benefit from some targeted additional support, with a focus on strategies to develop greater verbal ability.
- This may include opportunities for discussion, support with specialist vocabulary, and opportunities to develop presentational skills.
- Pairing Connor with someone who is stronger in this area may support his progress.
- Paired work is likely to be more beneficial than group work.
- Connor is likely to perform better where both spatial and visual approaches to learning are used.
- Connor should be encouraged and helped to use his better spatial ability in subjects which depend on verbal skills. So encourage him to use visual material (pictures to support text, videos, etc), create visual representations of events in history, use mind maps as an aid to remembering the key events and characters in a text in English and annotate text to reinforce key facts and information in science.
- Connor may find extended pieces of writing easier to do if he plans them using flow charts, putting down ideas in note form and then deciding how to sequence these before starting the actual writing.

SAMPLE CAT 4 INDIVIDUAL REPORT FOR PARENTS

CAT4 Individual report for parents

Name: Connor Yates			
School: Sample Irish School			
Group: 1st Year			
Date of test: 02/10/2013	Level: E	Age: 12:05	Sex: Male

What is CAT4?

Your child has taken the *Cognitive Abilities Test Fourth Edition (CAT4)* which assesses how well a student can think about tasks and solve problems using a range of different questions.

Some tasks involved thinking about shapes and patterns (Non-verbal Reasoning), some with words (Verbal Reasoning) or numbers (Quantitative Reasoning) and, finally, some questions were answered by thinking about shape and space together and imagining a shape being changed and moving (Spatial Ability).





Why use CAT4?

- CAT4 is used in many schools across Ireland to provide information to teachers, students and parents that, with other information, forms the basis for discussion about how best you can learn and reach your potential in school.
- CAT4 does not require any prior knowledge and you cannot 'learn' how to answer the questions in CAT4. It is therefore a good test because everyone starts at the same place.
- The abilities tested in CAT4, such as spatial ability, may be difficult to demonstrate in the classroom so it is important that teachers know the level of a student's ability in such areas.
- CAT4 results will help your teachers decide about the pace of learning that is right for an individual and whether additional support or challenge is needed.
- CAT4, unlike an English or maths test, is not a test of what the student has learned. It tests how an individual can think in areas that are known to make a difference to learning and achievement.

SAMPLE CAT 4 INDIVIDUAL PARENT REPORT

Name: Connor Yates			
School: Sample Irish School			
Group: 1st Year			
Date of test: 02/10/2013	Level: E	Age: 12:05	Sex: Male

Profile

Verbal		
Quantitative		
Non-verbal		
Spatial		

Summary

Connor's profile of scores from *CAT4* shows he has a clear preference for learning that uses visual images – pictures, diagrams, moving images, etc. rather than learning by reading, writing and talking about topics.

- Connor should use online resources, videos and books with plenty of pictures to help remember key facts and information.
- Connor's good spatial skills can be used across the range of subjects and can help support relatively weaker verbal skills in subjects such as English and history.
- However, Connor may find some of his schoolwork difficult, particularly where a high level of reading and writing is required.
- Does Connor find reading difficult? If so, he may need some extra help at home with guidance from school.
- When you are helping with homework, make sure that Connor understands each step of the task before moving on. It is important that Connor learns at a pace that is right for him.
- Tell Connor to ask the teacher to explain anything that is not clear.

NGRT

NGRT Digital Group Report for Teachers

NGRT

School: Example School
Group: Unknown
Period of testing: 29/03/2017 – 26/06/2017
No. of students: 20

Group Scores for Sentence Completion and Passage Comprehension (by Surname)

Student name	Age at test (yrs:mths)	SAS (90% confidence bands)	Overall Stanine	NPR	GR (/20)	Reading age	Reading age confidence bands		SAT reading indicator	Stanine	
							Lower	Upper		SC	PC
Helena Adams	8:04	83	3	13	≈15	6:4	5:10	6:10	89	3	2
Tilda Baldock	10:01	92	4	30	10	9:0	8:4	9:8	95	4	4
Roger Castleford	7:04	93	4	32	9	6:6	6:0	7:0	95	5	4
Hinay Dasani	9:09	104	6	60	6	10:8	9:11	11:5	102	5	6
Usama Khan	7:08	69	1	2	≈18	5:0	5:0	5:0	80	1	-
Henry Lita	7:01	69	1	2	≈18	5:0	5:0	5:0	80	1	-
Elie McPartland	7:00	76	2	6	17	5:0	5:0	5:4	85	2	-
Annabel Norris	7:00	87	3	20	13	5:8	5:2	6:2	92	3	3
Annie Oliver	9:06	83	3	13	≈15	7:2	6:7	7:9	89	3	2
Rita Oliver-Evans	9:06	99	5	48	8	9:7	8:11	10:3	100	5	5
Jasmine Part	7:08	103	5	58	7	8:0	7:5	8:7	101	6	5
Ronan Parry	8:03	69	1	2	≈18	5:0	5:0	5:0	80	1	-
Leann Quigley	7:09	84	3	14	14	6:0	6:6	6:6	90	3	3
Eva Rogers	9:10	112	7	78	3	12:1	11:4	12:10	107	6	7
Nigel Smith	7:01	89	4	24	12	5:10	5:4	6:4	93	4	2
Mervyn Tull	8:09	114	7	82	2	11:4	10:7	12:1	108	6	6
Ronan Twyford	9:02	109	6	72	4	10:8	9:11	11:5	105	6	7
Derek Villers	9:08	106	6	66	5	10:8	9:11	11:5	103	7	5
Scott Yardley	8:02	91	4	28	11	7:1	6:6	7:8	94	4	4
Theresa Zigmund	9:03	122	8	93	1	14:0	13:2	14:10	113	8	8

- Standardised reading assessment
- Reading ability can be benchmarked using SAS score
- Provides information about sentence completion and comprehension
- Identify SEN students below SAS 89/ Highly able students
- Inform teaching strategies for learning
- Compare with CAT4 VR test

WIAT III

- Used to screen for Dyslexia: Scores below SAS 81 may suggest SLD is present
- Referral for Learning Support
- Referral to NEPS/ Private Education Psychologist
- SAS 85 can be used to support applications for RACE
- SAS 81 or below used to support DARE
- SAS 81 or below needed for eligibility for HEI Exemptions for Irish/ MFL



DASH HANDWRITING TEST

- Used to analyse the speed and legibility of handwriting
- Support applications for Assistive Technology grant for students with DCD
- Support application for use of Assistive Technology in State Exams/ RACE- Handwriting speed must be no more than 12WPM to qualify



FURTHER INFORMATION

Guidance Counsellor/ Testing Administrator

- Ms Denise Lyons dlyons@portumnacs.ie

1st Year/ Head

- Mrs Margaret Lohan mlohan@portumnacs.ie

SET Co-ordinator

- Ms Natasha Murtagh nmurtagh@portumnacs.ie

Deputy Principal

- Ms Elaine Shanahan Dunne Edunne@portumnacs.ie

Principal

- Mr Shane McClearn Principal@portumnacs.ie

Chaplain

- Ms Brid Dunne bdunne@portumnacs.ie



Understanding Athena-Role of Academic Director. Input from Ms. Anne Fahy

What Athena does:

It uses your CAT4 results to predict your potential achievable grades in your exam subjects.

It uses past performance from students who completed the Leaving Cert all over Ireland with similar CAT4 results, to predict your potential grade for each subject.

Athena Colour tracker



Results Above Expectation

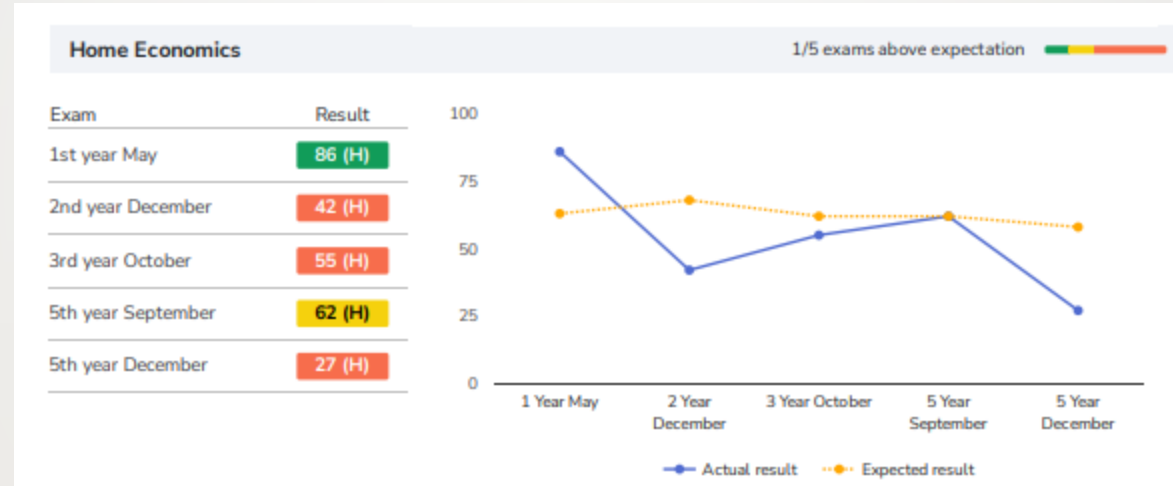


Results in line with Expectation

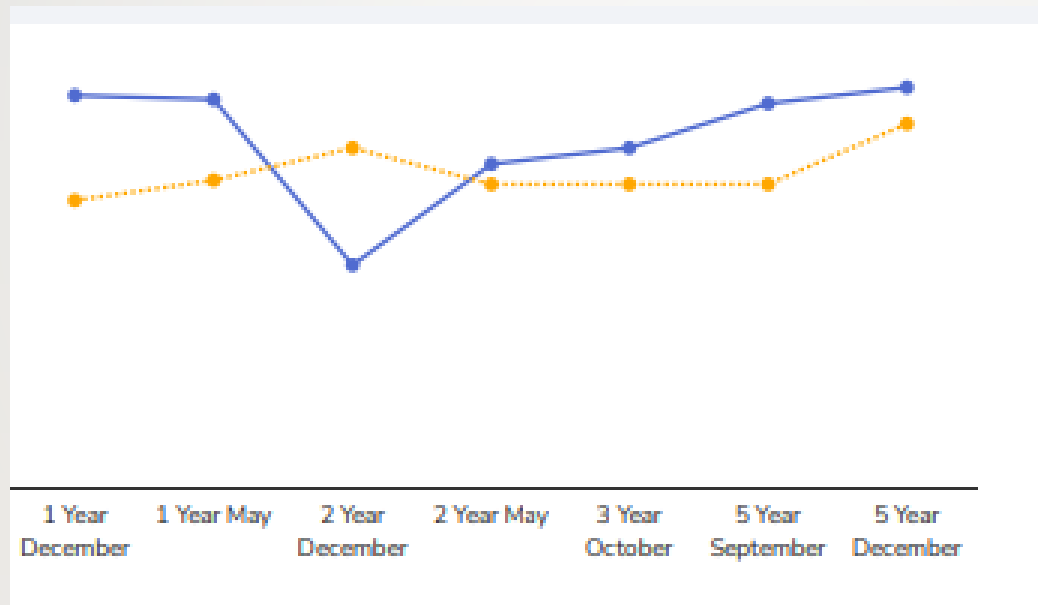


Results Below Expectation

Here's an example; what does your report look like?
Take a few minutes to open your report and review it.



Responding well to disappointing results:
You have the CHOICE to change the direction of
your blue line.



IT'S YOUR CHOICE

We've looked at Athena and CAT4.

Now let's consider what you can do...

Today's focus

- ✓ Realising your potential
- ✓ Your choice has a consequence
- ✓ You are in control of your choices



What choices do you make in class?

1. Do you choose to listen?
2. Do you choose to take notes?
3. Do you choose to ask questions if you don't understand?
4. Do you choose to read over your class work that evening?
5. Do you take feedback on board? And if not, why not?



What choices do you make?

Consider an interest (farming, part time job, music, hobby, sport)?

1. Do you choose to turn up on time?
2. Do you choose to have your work/sports clothes ready?
3. Do you choose to practice?
4. Do you choose to maintain your level of commitment even when you're having a tough day?



Anyone thinking,
'Yeah but that's
different to school'?
Answer this – how is it
any different?

What choices do you make when you're doing your homework?

1. Do you choose to do it?
2. Do you choose to put away distractions (phone, TV) and engage fully in your work?
3. Do you choose to ask questions if you don't understand?
4. Do you choose to try complete the task even if you find it really tricky?

Your Future – Your Choice

- What steps do you need to take for your next assessments?
- What **can** and **will** you do?
- What are the choices you now have to make for this to happen?

**Input from Year
Hed Ms. Lohan**

Lockers / Books

- ▶ The locker/book rental fees should all be paid at this stage. If books are lost or misplaced they must be replaced at parents/ guardians expense- they are now barcoded.
- ▶ Students are only permitted to use their locker at the following times;
 - morning
 - break / lunch time
 - after school

Students are **not** permitted to use their locker during class time.

- ▶ Students need to label their books/property/gear bags/ hurls etc and be organised!! There are bag racks positioned around the school and near each year groups lockers for gear bags etc.

Access to toilets

- ▶ Access to the toilets is limited as much as is possible to the Mornings/Break/Lunch time.
- ▶ Toilets in the extension are for the First Years only.

Journals

- ▶ Students journals are essential for the recording of homework and it is expected that they use it every day.
- ▶ Random checks will be carried out by the YH, on the journals to ensure that they are being used correctly.
- ▶ The journal will still be used to facilitate communication between Teachers & Parents/Guardians e.g no homework etc
- ▶ Please ensure that you;
 - your sons\daughters timetable is filled in correctly on the inside cover
 - sign your sons/daughters journal every week and check in on their organisation skills
 - Take note of the extra resources included on the front & the back of the journal.

Timetables

- ▶ Please ensure that students familiarise themselves with their final timetable (after tasters) and what rooms they will be in for each class/subject – colour code if necessary in journal.
- ▶ Be on time for class and be organised using the allocated times allowed for lockers – make a list of extra things needed for class next day eg ingredients for Home Ec, drawing box for DCG etc.
- ▶ If there are still any issues regarding subject allocation then please make an appointment with Mr Mc Clearn to discuss.
- ▶ For Mornings/Break/Lunchtimes students should be organised & seated in their classroom for the second bell – encourages punctuality.
- ▶ Students are not permitted to leave the classroom/school building until the end-of-class/day bell sounds (Junior students are not allowed to leave the school during lunch time)

Homework

- ▶ It is good practice that all students develop and maintain regular routines for the completion of homework and revision. A quiet room and a consistent routine of evening study will lay the foundation for future academic progress.
- ▶ Regular review of the journal will ensure that parents/guardians know that homework is being completed.
- ▶ **Supervised evening study** is available to all year groups and can be organised through the school App and through the shop.
- ▶ Students are required to get homework from classes missed due to a school activity - Ask a friend/classmate to send a picture of notes received in class for homework given that day or refer to TEAMS. (a platform where the students can converse with Teachers and receive notes from class etc)

Assessments

- ▶ CBA Classroom Based Assessments
- ▶ Your son/daughter will do a CBA in 2nd and 3rd year they will be reported on in the JCPA (Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement) using the following language of reporting – Exceptional, Above expectation, in line with expectation and Yet to achieve
- ▶ Junior Cycle Award Written Exams in 3rd Year will be the formal written exams in line with DES. They will be reported on as a
- ▶ Distinction 90-100%,
- ▶ Higher Merit 75 -89%,
- ▶ Merit 55- 74%
- ▶ Achieved 40 -54%
- ▶ Partially achieved 20- 39%

Uniform

- ▶ Students are required, as per the school rules, to be in full uniform every day - jumper shirt tie trousers/skirt/ black leatherette shoes plus a blazer or jacket as the student prefers.
- ▶ Spot checks will be done by Year Heads and it is necessary that a note is supplied if there is an issue with the uniform – we will understand.
- ▶ Students are encouraged to wear extra under-layers coming into the winter months.
- ▶ All Uniforms can be purchased locally.

Attendance (Absenteeism/Lates)

- ▶ Students are expected to attend school every day & be punctual.
- ▶ If they are unavoidably absent then a note from a Parent/Guardian must be submitted preferably via the school app. (any issues – email/hand-written note will suffice)
- ▶ If your son/daughter has to be collected early from school, then permission is required via a note on the app from Parent/Guardian and a parent/guardian will also have to sign student out at the office.
- ▶ Students are required to sign in electronically at the front door if they arrive to school late and a text will be automatically sent home.
- ▶ 3 unexplained lates = an after school detention on a Friday.

Code of Behaviour

- ▶ High standards of behaviour are expected both inside & outside of the classroom
- ▶ Sanctions are in place, as per the Ladder of Referral, to determine appropriate actions to be taken in instances of misbehaviour
- ▶ A consent form agreeing to the COB should be signed by your son/daughter and Parent/Guardian via the app
- ▶ PHONES are not permitted and if a student is found with their phone – inside/outside of the classroom - then it will be confiscated & given to DP
 - 1st offence = 24 hours
 - 2nd offence = 48 hours

Mobile Phones and other Electronic Devices

- ▶ Students are not allowed to use their mobile phones in school.
- ▶ If students wish to make contact with home, they may use the office phone free of charge by speaking to the school secretary.
- ▶ If parents/guardians wish to make contact with their children, they may phone the school and leave a message on our automated system; any message left can be conveyed by email to the staff concerned.
- ▶ The school recommends that you give very careful consideration to your child's access to the internet and social media. In our experience, the most difficult and hurtful experiences for young people often come from these sources and they can find themselves in breach of Irish and European law with serious consequences.

School Committees, Clubs and Extracurricular Activities

- ▶ A number of school committees were established to promote and engage with a variety of social and environmental issues. Students and staff members work together on these committee's promoting various initiatives to highlight and address issues of concern. Established committees include; World Wise Schools, Green Schools and Health Promotion.
- ▶ Students will be notified via the school app and noticeboards around the school regarding affiliation and training/meeting times of school teams, extracurricular activities and clubs.
- ▶ It is imperative that students are prepared for all activities e.g. appropriate P.E gear for PE tracksuit/ teeshirt/ shorts/ boots/runners etc

ICT Access

- ▶ All students will receive an individual school email address and password where they can access Office365, providing access to Microsoft Teams, Excel, PowerPoint, Word, OneDrive, SharePoint etc.
- ▶ This is the ICT platform that will be used across the school and all electronic correspondence by students to staff must be via their school email or Microsoft teams.
- ▶ Students receive Digital literacy guidelines during Digital Media Literacy class.
- ▶ Ensure that your son/daughter have regular access to Teams at home to facilitate communication of updates/homework given by Teachers/Year Heads.

Healthy Eating

- ▶ A company called **Food Village** offers a range of pre-orderd hot foods, snacks, drinks at morning break and at lunch time in the school gym at reasonable prices.
- ▶ The promotion of healthy eating guidelines should be followed where possible to ensure good habits are taught.
- ▶ There is a filtered water system in the extension that students can fill their reusable bottles at break and lunch if/when necessary,
- ▶ 'Soft drinks' and especially 'energy drinks' are not permitted for consumption on school premises.

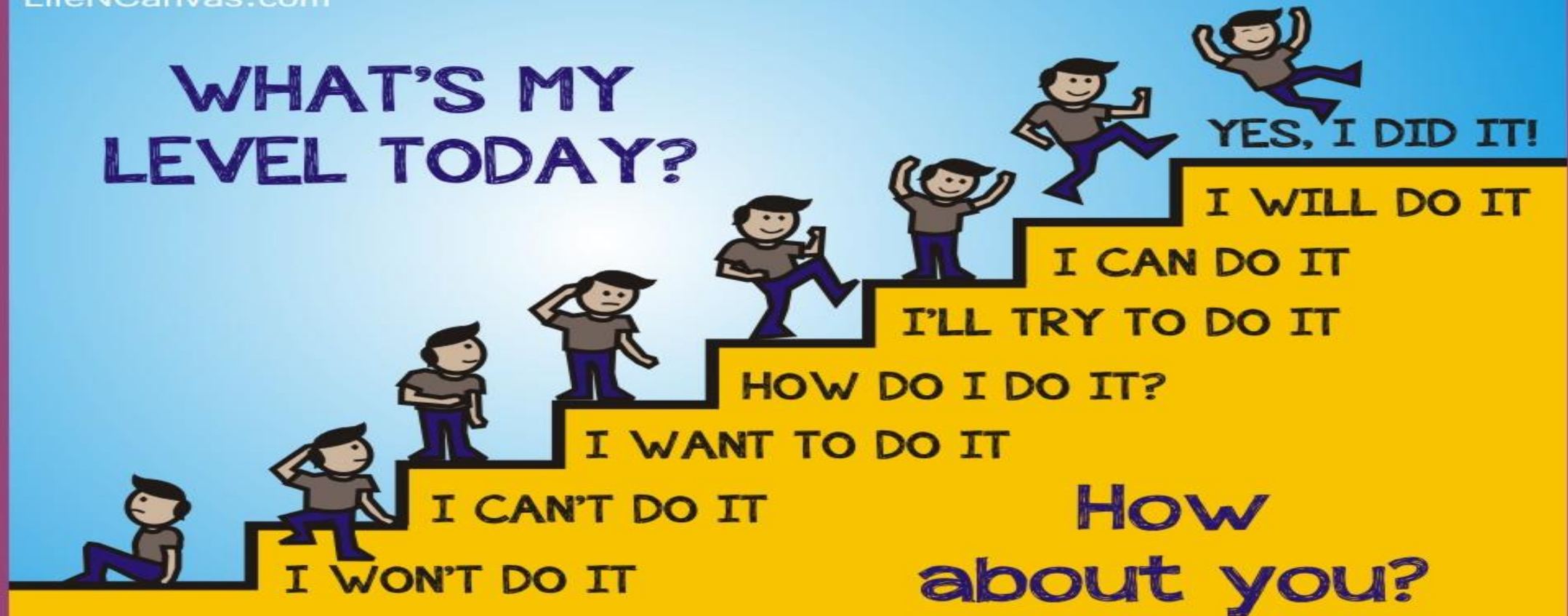
Contact Details

- ▶ Your son/daughters Year Head is Ms Margaret Lohan
- ▶ Email MLohan@portumnacs.ie
- ▶ Deputy Principal is Ms Elaine Shanahan Dunne
- ▶ Email Edunne@portumnacs.ie
- ▶ Principal is Mr Shane Mc Clearn
- ▶ Email principal@portumnacs.ie
- ▶ School Chaplain is Ms Brid Dunne
- ▶ Email Bdunne@portumnacs.ie

'The secret of change is to focus all of your energy not on fighting the old, but on building the new'.
Socrates

LifeNCanvas.com

**WHAT'S MY
LEVEL TODAY?**



**How
about you?**