Atlantic Academy Portland
an Aspirations Academy

Miss Heppell - Principal

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14th September 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

RE: Assessment in Year 8

We hope your child has enjoyed a positive start to the new school year and is settling well into their new routines. As we begin the term, we would like to share how assessment helps us understand your child's learning, recognise their progress and identify where they may need further support or challenge. Your feedback last year has helped shape changes to our assessment approach, which we outline below, alongside key dates and information to help you support your child's learning at home.

Types of Assessments
There are different types of assessment that students will experience each year at Atlantic Academy. All of them are designed to enable us to support students with their learning and ensure consistent progress is made from Year 7 to 11.

NGRT (New Group Reading Test): evaluates reading comprehension, vocabulary, and sentence structure skills.
NGST (New Group Spelling Test): Assesses spelling ability, phonics knowledge, and word patterns.

These assessments are undertaken twice per year, in September and February, they are not formal "pass/fail" exams and require no preparation or revision. They serve as diagnostic tools to help us tailor our teaching and support in our secondary school.

Knowledge Retrieval Test: These are low-stakes assessments designed to identify gaps in students' knowledge while reinforcing and embedding prior learning. Teachers use the outcomes to target areas for immediate improvement and to celebrate strengths.

Tests will always be peer or self-marked, ensuring students take an active role in their learning. Where questions are frequently answered incorrectly, teachers will review and revisit the relevant content in subsequent lessons. This supports the development of students' capacity to store and retrieve accurate information over time.

The tests are closely linked to students' self-quizzing within each subject area. Outcomes will be recorded internally and used to guide tailored interventions, ensuring every student is supported to make sustained progress.

End of Unit/Topic Assessments: Each subject will assess students at regular intervals throughout the academic year. The timings of these assessments will be appropriate for that subject curriculum and taken at the end of each unit or topic. Subjects will assess what has been taught and are planned within the subject's curriculum. These assessments will support the development of students' examination skills over time and subjects will pause their curriculum delivery in preparation to focus on personalised learning checklists (PLCs) and effective revision techniques beforehand. Outcomes will be recorded internally to help reward effort and direct student interventions.

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End of year Assessments: Year 8 students will sit an end of year holistic assessment 'End of Year Examination'. The aim is to assess the content from that year's academic subject curriculum and will be reported as Assessment Point 3. This is in addition to their regular end of topic tests, and will last 50 minutes. These will take place during normal timetabled subject lessons. Examinations will be marked by the class teacher, moderated within the department and an attainment level will be assigned to the level the student achieved against the subject's Age Related Expectations (ARE). Subjects will pause their curriculum delivery for a week, in preparation to focus on personalised learning checklists (PLCs) and effective revision techniques beforehand. Outcomes will be recorded internally to help reward students, direct interventions and set changes for the following year.

Reporting
Academic reports will be generated three times per year. Students will receive an electronic copy of their report and parents/carers will be able to access an electronic copy using their Arbor accounts.

Parents' Evenings
There will be a subject parents' evening for Year 8 January 21st 2027 , where students and parents/carers can meet with their child's subject teachers to discuss their attainment and agree on targets for improvement. Parents/carers will receive booking information and instructions nearer to the date.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you in advance for your support. Collectively, we can continue to work together to ensure that students are fully prepared and motivated to do well in every style of assessment we have mapped out for them. Every assessment counts.

Yours faithfully

Mrs K Biddle
Vice Principal