Abacus International Kindergarten Assessment Policy

1.1 Introduction:

At Abacus International Kindergarten, we view assessment as integral to all teaching and learning. It is the means by which we measure children’s learning and the effectiveness of teaching. Assessment provides the foundation on which we base future planning, teaching and learning.

At Abacus we use a range of strategies to assess, record and report on children’s learning. Assessment is central to our aim of providing appropriately pitched, challenging activities for each individual learner. Through, assessment we are able to guide children through the process of understanding concepts, acquiring knowledge, mastering skills, developing attitudes and taking action.
At Abacus, we believe that everyone involved in the learning process including teachers, educational assistants, parents and children should be involved in assessing children’s progress through observation, discussion and reflection opportunities.

This Policy is subdivided into three closely related areas.

- Assessment - How do we Assess?
- Recording - How do we record assessment data?
- Reporting - How do we report assessment data?

1.2 Principles of Assessment:

Assessment involves the gathering and analysis of information about children’s development and learning. It identifies what children know, understand, can do and feel at different stages in the learning process. Educational Assistants, Parents and Teachers should be actively engaged in assessing children’s progress. Children should also be given opportunities to reflect on their learning in order to develop their critical-thinking and self-assessment skills.

It is important that children, teachers and parents, have a clear understanding of the reason for assessment, what is being assessed, the criteria for success and the method of assessment. Teachers need to be mindful of the particular learning outcomes on which they intend to report, prior to selecting or designing the method of assessment. They need to employ techniques for assessing children’s work that take into account the diverse, complicated and sophisticated ways individual children use to understand learning experiences.

Children’s development is assessed against overall learning objectives (Transdisciplinary Skills and Scope and Sequence Outcomes) as well as Unit of Inquiry specific expectations. Assessment provides information used to inform members of the school community and others of the learning.

1.3 Assessment of the inquiry process:
Our approach to assessment recognises the importance of assessing the process of inquiry as well as the product(s) of inquiry, and aims to integrate and support both. Teachers are expected to record the detail of inquiries initiated by children in order to look for an increase in the substance and depth of the inquiry. Consideration needs to be given to:

- the nature of children’s inquiry developing over time—are they asking questions of more depth, that are likely to enhance their learning substantially
- are children becoming aware that real problems require solutions based on the integration of knowledge that spans and connects many areas
- children’s mastery of skills
- are children accumulating a comprehensive knowledge base
- can children apply their understanding to further their inquiries successfully
- are children demonstrating both independence and an ability to work collaboratively.

2.1 ASSESSMENT - HOW DO WE ASSESS?

At Abacus, the assessment of children’s development, knowledge and skills is an essential component of the curriculum. It helps to inform continued development, teaching and learning. Children are observed in a variety of situations and a wide range of formative and summative assessment strategies are implemented. This allows children to demonstrate their achievements and caters for the diverse abilities and learning styles in the kindergarten.

Well-designed learning engagements provide data on children’s knowledge, skills and conceptual understanding and are consequently a vehicle for summative or formative assessment.

2.2 Pre-Assessment – Is the process of assessing children’s prior knowledge, interests, skills and experiences. It is a vital component which enables teachers to scaffold children’s development and plan learning engagements which meet each individual child’s needs.

2.3 Formative assessment – Is the process of assessing children as learning is taking place. It provides information that is used to plan the next stage of learning. It is interwoven with learning and helps teachers and children to find out what the children now know and can do.
Formative assessment and teaching are directly linked and function purposefully together. Formative assessment allows teachers to refine the teaching and learning process in order to meet individual or group needs and plan for future learning. Formative assessment promotes learning when regular and frequent feedback is given. This helps learners to improve knowledge and understanding, to develop enthusiasm for learning, to engage in thoughtful reflection, to develop the capacity for self-assessment and to recognise criteria for success.

2.4 **Summative assessment** – Is the process of assessing children’s knowledge, understanding and skills at the end of the teaching and learning process. It aims to give teachers and children a clear insight into children’s understanding at the culmination of the teaching and learning process. Summative assessments give children opportunities to demonstrate what has been learned. It can assess several elements simultaneously: it informs and improves children’s learning and the teaching process; it measures understanding of the central idea, and prompts children towards action.

2.4 **Assessment in the classroom includes:**

- Using examples of children’s work to provide information about their learning
- Observing and recording children’s thoughts and actions
- Collecting evidence of children’s understanding and thinking
- Observing and recording evidence of children’s developing skills
- Documenting the learning processes of groups and individuals
- Engaging children in assessing and reflecting on their learning
- Children assessing work produced by other children
- Using clear rubrics to assess children’s learning against key objectives
- Identifying exemplar children’s work
- Keeping records of task results.

After any assessment is complete, it is important to ask further questions such as the following.

- Have the tasks provided ample information to allow a judgment to be made about whether the purposes or objectives have been met?
• What does the children’s performance reveal about their level of understanding?
• Have any unexpected results occurred?
• What changes should be made in the assessment procedure?
• How should the teaching and learning process be modified as a result of the assessment?

3.1 RECORDING - HOW DO WE RECORD AND ANALYSE THE DATA?

Assessment strategies and tools form the basis of a comprehensive and structured approach to assessment that enables us to answer to the question “How will we know what our children have learned?”

The assessment strategies are the methods or approaches that teachers use when gathering information about a child’s learning. Teachers record this information using a variety of assessment tools, which are the instruments used to collect data.

When choosing appropriate assessment strategies, it is important to take into consideration which assessment tools are most applicable and relevant to that strategy. This helps to ensure that an effective assessment of the learning experience takes place. A variety of strategies and tools are used (see Appendix, Table 1).

Assessment Strategies and Tools

Assessment strategies have been identified that are central to the assessment process (see Appendix A). These strategies cover a broad range of approaches, from the more subjective and intuitive to the more objective and scientific. It is essential that they be seen as a package since they have been selected in order to provide a range of approaches and therefore to provide a balanced view of the children.

At Abacus we assess children’s progress against the PYP scope and sequence documents in Language and Maths and update this information termly on Gateway. In addition teachers record evidence of children’s understanding of the Central Idea and Lines of Inquiry for each Unit and record this on Gateway at the end of each Unit of Inquiry.
Please see Appendix D for further notes on effective assessment.

**Assessment Folders**

All class teachers keep assessment folder in their classes. All Assessment Folders should contain in the front:

1. Assessment Booklet
2. Class tick lists
3. Class notes
4. Class language assessment (Principal and PYP Coordinator)

Each child’s personal section should contain:

5. SEN Expression of concern (if applicable)
6. Renfrew Vocabulary Test or Welcomm Language Assessments (if applicable)
7. Regular observation notes from children participating in weekly activities and independent / free play
8. Regular observations of child’s language ability (long written observations, short child’s voice, video or sound bites)
9. Termly Sound Assessment (K2 all children + more able K1s)
10. Termly Sight Vocabulary Assessment – Reception High Frequency Words (K2 all children + any able K1s)
11. Termly Number writing assessment sheet to 10 and then 100(K2 only and any able K1)
12. Termly CVC word / writing assessment (K2 and any able K1)
13. Termly Example of Independent Writing

Assessment Folders will be collected and Gateway data will be monitored and moderated termly across the year group by senior leaders and teachers.

**4.1 REPORTING: HOW DO WE REPORT ASSESSMENT DATA TO PARENTS?**

Reporting on assessment is about communicating what children know, understand and can do. It describes the progress of the children’s learning, identifies areas for growth, and contributes to the efficacy of the programme. Reporting should provide clear information that is useful to both children and parents.
Reporting allows parents to:

- see evidence of children’s learning and development
- develop an understanding of their child’s progress
- to support and celebrate their child’s learning

**Effective reporting:**

- involves parents, children and teachers as partners
- reflects what the school community values
- is comprehensive, honest, fair and credible
- is clear and understandable to all parties
- allows teachers to incorporate what they learn during the reporting process into their future teaching and assessment practice.

At Abacus reporting to parents may occur through:

- Parent Information Evenings
- Parent Conferences (Two way and three way/student led - TBC)
- School Website
- E- Portfolios
- Written Reports
- Newsletters
- Celebrations and sharing of Units of Inquiry
- Additional Meetings requested by teachers or parents (SEN etc)

**Parent Information Evenings**

Parents gain information about the school routines, class expectations and the curriculum through parent information meetings.

**Parent Conferences**
Parent conferences provide an opportunity for parents to engage in discussions about their child’s learning. These conferences formally take place at least twice a year and are designed to give the parents information about their child’s progress development and needs. Teachers should take this opportunity to gather background information, to answer the parents’ questions, to address their concerns and to help define their role in the learning process. The parents should take the opportunity to provide the teacher with the cultural context of the children’s learning.

At Abacus Parent conferences take the form of:

1. Two-Way Conferences (Teacher – Parent)

This is where a formal appointment is made between the child’s class teacher and the parents of the child. The purpose of this meeting is for the parent and teacher to meet one another, develop a rapport and to share information, pastoral or academic, that either party considers important for the success of the child’s learning. Confidential information may be shared at this time.

2. Three-Way Conferences (Child/Parent or Guardian/Teacher)

This is a formal discussion about a pupil’s learning between the teacher, the pupil and one or both parents. The teacher facilitates the discussion and the student and parent/s are encouraged to contribute. A Three Way Conference should focus on recognising and celebrating the progress that a pupil has made in his or her learning, and identify the next steps that need to be taken, within a supportive environment. Parents should be aware that the priority of Three-Way Conferences is to focus on discussing children’s progress in ways which motivate and encourage the child in his/her future learning. Finally, a Three Way Conference is not intended to be a rehearsed ‘performance’ by the pupil, but a genuine conversation that encourages objective and realistic discussion of the pupil’s learning progress. As children become more experienced at managing three-way conferences they will work towards leading the conference process. This means that some children may be encouraged to lead the conference (student led) instead of engaging in the three-way conference.
3. Student –Led Conferences. (Child/Parent/Teacher)

Once children have experienced and are comfortable with three-way conferences they will be encouraged to lead their parents and teachers through a discussion and dialogue about their learning. The child will reflect upon their learning and explain what they have learned and what they need to learn next.

Please see Appendix B for guidline for conferences.

School Website
The school website is updated frequently to provide parents with information about the curriculum, including the current Programme of Inquiry. It also provides a medium for teachers to share events and information about their classes on their class page. Photos from important events and information about upcoming events are also shared through the kindergarten website.

E-Portfolios
E-portfolios are designed to show evidence of each child’s individual learning journey. They may contain photos, samples of work, video, observational notes or sound files of children. E-portfolios capture the children’s learning and development over a period of time and are designed to demonstrate successes, growth, higher order thinking, creativity and reflection. A portfolio should be thought of as an exhibition of an active mind at work.

The portfolio contains a collection of different types of learning that has been gathered on a regular basis for individuals. The information gathered within the portfolio is shared online with the student and parents to support their learning journey.

Each Portfolio should contain the following examples each term:

1. Name Writing
2. Self Portrait
3. Language Example – Piece of work identifying child’s voice or another aspect of language
4. Chinese – in any format to reflect child’s learning of additional language (child’s voice, group reading (photo & write up), unit related piece (could be bilingual).

5. Four samples of learning linked to the central idea/line of inquiry (Through the Year). These could be from another subject area showing the child’s social interaction, level of confidence, self-assessment or physical development (fine & gross motor). They could also include reflections at the end of the unit of inquiry.

Written Reports:

At Abacus written reports are seen as a summative record for children, parents and the school itself of a child’s progress. They may also document targets for future development.

Our annual written reporting system ensures that:

1. The learner profile is addressed.
2. The transdisciplinary units and the subject-specific teaching are included.
3. All teachers involved in the children’s progress have an opportunity to comment.
4. All the essential elements of the programme are included.

As an IB school we are required to report on each child’s development according to the attributes of the learner profile. However, teachers do not need to report on each attribute at the end of every reporting period. It is not appropriate to grade or score the attributes of the learner profile. Teachers provide informal opportunities for children to consider their progress in relation to the attributes listed in the IB learner profile in the context of their learning.

At Abacus our written reports take the following form:

K1 Settling – In Report – This report is a general report written by the teacher during the first half term of Kindergarten. It will describe how the child has settled into school and give parents information about their progress and next steps.

Gateway End of Unit Reports – These are updated continuously throughout the year on Gateway. At the end of each Unit of Inquiry teachers update the written report on Gateway to
reflect children’s progress during the Unit. Progress is recorded on a rubric against the Lines of Inquiry and the teacher will then add a personal comment about the child’s progress during the Unit. These are printable by the parents in the final end of year report.

**End of Term Summative Reports** – These formal reports are written to inform parents about their child’s progress throughout the Term or Year. They will be written at the end of Term 1 in K2 and the end of Term 3 in both K1 and K2. The reports are visible online when they have been written and uploaded and are printable at the end of Term 1 and Term 3.

The formal reports consist of:

- **General Comments** written by the teacher.
- **Language Development Comments** written by the class teacher and Chinese teachers.
- **Mathematical Development** written by the class teachers.
- **Unit of Inquiry Assessment** rubrics and comments from throughout the year.

Please see Appendix C for suggestion on report comments content.

**Newsletters**
The newsletter at Abacus is also used to share whole class learning with parents. Class teachers will give information about the current unit of inquiry, children’s learning and action.

**Celebrations and sharing of Units of Inquiry**
At Abacus parents may be invited into school throughout the year to share different celebrations such as Christmas and Chinese New Year. The children will share their learning through these events. Parents may also be invited to school to share the children’s learning during a Unit of Inquiry, this may be through an art exhibition, science day or maths day.

**Additional Discussions or Meetings requested by teachers or parents (SEN etc)**
As necessary, parents can phone or email to arrange extra parent teacher meetings if they have concerns or wish to discuss aspects of their children’s development. Teachers may also arrange extra meetings to discuss IEPs with parents or any concerns that they may have which they wish to address before the regular timetabled conferences.
In addition parents and teachers may feedback on children’s progress through the diaries or through informal conversations during pick-up and drop off times.

**Acknowledgements:**
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### Appendix A:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment strategies and tools</th>
<th>Rubrics</th>
<th>Exemplars</th>
<th>Checklists</th>
<th>Anecdotal records</th>
<th>Continuums</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>Performance assessments</td>
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<td>Process-focused assessments</td>
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<td>Selected responses</td>
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Table 1

#### Assessment strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment strategies</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>All childrens 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 children or one activity), and from non-participant (observing from without) to participant (observing from within).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance assessments</td>
<td>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.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Process-focused assessments

Children 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 children 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.

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**Table 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment tools</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rubrics</td>
<td>An established set of criteria for rating children's in all areas. The descriptors tell the assessor what characteristics or signs to look for in children's work and then how to rate that work on a predetermined scale. Rubrics can be developed by childrens as well as by teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exemplars</td>
<td>Samples of childrens’ 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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checklists</td>
<td>These are lists of information, data, attributes or elements that should be present. A mark scheme is a type of checklist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anecdotal records</td>
<td>Anecdotal records are brief written notes based on observations of childrens. “Learning stories” are focused, extended observations that can be analysed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Continuums

These are visual representations of developmental stages of learning. They show a progression of achievement or identify where a child is in a process.

Table 3

Appendix B - Guidelines for conferences

Roles

For three-way and student-led conferences to work effectively it is important that all participants in the process know and clearly understand their role.

Pupils

In preparation for the Three Way and Student-Led Conferences, pupils will spend some time with their teachers reflecting on the progress they have made in their learning. They will be looking back through their portfolio, identifying successes and setting some goals and targets for the future. When students know that they must be ready to talk about their learning in the conference they become much more engaged in the process of self-reflection.

During the three-way conference, pupils will be prompted by their teachers to discuss their learning. For example, they may be asked to select and discuss examples from their portfolio that they are proud of, or explain something that they found challenging. Children will be guided to consider how their work demonstrates progress in a particular area, as well as being challenged to consider what they need to do in order to improve. Children will also listen carefully to questions and comments from their parents and discuss their learning directly with them. Some families might find it useful to carry out some of this discussion in their ‘home’ language.

Student–led conferences require children to think carefully about their learning and to demonstrate an ability to lead their parents and teacher through a discussion of what they have achieved, what has worked well for them and to identify areas of challenge and difficulty. These discussions should be based on evidence from portfolios and other work samples and include some reflection upon their preferred learning styles. As a result of going through this process, children are able to reflect more accurately upon their capabilities areas that need developing.

Teachers

Before the two-way conference teachers will be aware of any previous concerns that have previously been shared by/with the school. If teachers have any specific concerns about the child a two-way conference is a good forum in which to raise them. The teacher will also provide time for parents to share any issues and concerns that they may relating to their child’s academic and pastoral progress. Teachers should be responsive at other times during the year to requests from parents to discuss important pastoral or academic concerns, and not just at the scheduled two-way conference times.
During the three-way conference, teachers will lead the children through a process of self-evaluation and help them to think about appropriate goals and targets for their learning. For some of the younger children, teachers may prepare the pupils for the conference by rehearsing to build their confidence, with pupils playing the roles of both child and adult.

During the three-way conference, teachers will facilitate the conversation, prompting and questioning children about their learning and involving parents in the discussion. Teachers, with the help of the children, will ensure that parents not only receive information about the child’s learning, but also about how this relates to the school curriculum and the teaching and learning strategies that are used to engage and motivate the children.

During the student-led conference the teacher’s role is to support the child through use of encouraging body language, and if necessary, to get the child back on track if they ‘dry up’ or become anxious or nervous. The teacher will respond to student questions or interact where appropriate. It is important, however, to remember that the child is leading the conference. Clearly, student confidence and competence will vary from child to child and the teachers should ensure that the conference ‘flows’.

Parents

The two-way conference provides parents with the opportunity to share important, and sometimes sensitive information with their child’s class teacher. Medical information is an example of this. Many parents feel more comfortable talking about these issues if the child is absent. Given that two-way conferences take place early in the year, this is an ideal time for parents and teachers to share information that may significantly affect the progress of the child as the year progresses. It is important to note that parents should be able to make an appointment to discuss important academic and pastoral issues at any time.

During three-way and student-led conferences it is beneficial if parents support and encourage their child, praising both the work products and the child’s efforts. Throughout the process parents should feel free to ask questions that prompt their child to look realistically at the quality of their learning. As a school we will provide parents with sample questions and prompts to encourage dialogue with their child as well as a chart outlining the roles of each participant. Most importantly, the parents’ should enjoy observing their child confidently and enthusiastically discussing his/her learning.

Appendix C - Suggestions for Written Reports content.

The formal reports consist of a **General Comment** written by the teacher which may include:

- General Comments about the child.
- Social Skills and Interaction with peers.
- Confidence when approaching new activities and participating in group/whole class discussions.
- Comments about their transdisciplinary skills development.
• Comments about concentration and focus in self chosen/small group/whole class activities
• Any learner profile attributes or attitudes the children have demonstrated.
• Next Steps

They will also contain a comment on the children’s **Language Development**. These may include comments about children’s:

• Confidence when speaking in small groups/large groups.
• Vocabulary development.
• Sentence structure and grammar.
• Understanding / Receptive language – avoid jargon like receptive/expressive though.
• Phonic Knowledge. Talk about the sounds they know – avoid terms such as phonic awareness or even phonics as many of our parents are EAL and they are not teachers.
• Reading/Pre Reading Skills – how to use a book, whole words they can read, strategies to read – picture clues, sounding out words, understanding of story structures, joining in with rhymes etc
• Mark Making / Writing skills – handwriting, emergent writing, whole words they may know, imagination.
• Progress in Chinese.
• Next Steps

Written Reports will also contain a comment on the children’s **Mathematical Development**. Comments may include:

• Enjoyment of maths activities
• Counting skills.
• Number recognition / ordering of numbers.
• Calculation skills
• Understanding of Shape and Space concepts
• Understanding of Pattern Concepts
• Understanding of Measuring Concepts
• Problem solving skills. Can they work out simple number word problems? Solve shape puzzles.
Appendix D - Effective assessments:

The following criteria for effective assessments are applicable to both formative and summative assessment.

Effective assessments allow children to:

- share their learning and understanding with others
- demonstrate a range of knowledge, conceptual understanding and skills
- use a variety of learning styles, multiple intelligences and abilities to express their understanding
- know and understand in advance the criteria for producing a quality product or performance
- participate in reflection, self- and peer-assessment
- base their learning on real-life experiences that can lead to further inquiries
- express different points of view and interpretations
- analyse their learning and understand what needs to be improved.

Effective assessments allow teachers to:

- inform every stage of the teaching and learning process
- plan in response to children and teacher inquiries
- develop criteria for producing a quality product or performance
- gather evidence from which sound conclusions can be drawn
- provide evidence that can be effectively reported and understood by the whole school community
- collaboratively review and reflect on children performance and progress
- take into account a variety of learning styles, multiple intelligences and abilities including different cultural contexts
- use scoring that is both analytical (separate scores for different aspects of the work) and holistic (single scores).
Further considerations for assessing the learning of young children:

The assessment of the development and learning of young children is an essential component of the curriculum, and helps to inform continued development, learning and teaching. Children should be observed in a variety of situations, and a wide range of assessment strategies should be implemented. The teacher observes the young children in order to:

- build up a clear picture of the children and his or her interests
- identify what and how the children is thinking and learning
- assess the effectiveness of the environment on the children’s learning
- extend the children’s learning.

When observing, the teacher should record what the children say and do. By listening carefully to the dialogue between children, especially in dramatic play, the teacher can learn about their current interests, knowledge base, level of involvement and social skills. The teacher should share these observations with the children, with colleagues and with parents to know better the inner world of the child, analyse the interactions within a group, discover the children’s strengths and difficulties, and reflect on the effectiveness of the practices used to implement the programme of inquiry and other classroom experiences.

It is important to identify the needs of each child and to view learning as a continuum, with each children achieving developmental milestones in different but relevant ways. Through listening and observing, areas of learning that the children particularly enjoy can be identified, and stimulating experiences can be planned to consolidate or extend the learning further.