

# WCHS Guide to Achievement, Growth & Student Assessment



**Winston Churchill High School  
1605 – 15 Avenue North  
Lethbridge, AB  
T1H 1W4**

**[wchs.lethsd.ab.ca](http://wchs.lethsd.ab.ca)  
403-328-4723**

## Guide to Achievement, Growth & Student Assessment, 2018-2019, Grades 9-12

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At Winston Churchill High School, we are committed to supporting the learners of today to becoming the leaders of tomorrow. One of the ways we support all students to be successful is by always seeking to improve the way we assess and evaluate authentic student learning. We also commit to timely and informative communications to share how your child is doing at school.

This guide will help you understand:

- Responsibilities of staff, students and parents/guardians;
- How we will communicate with you about your child's progress and learning;
- How your child is assessed;
- Your child's opportunities to complete missing assessments, and;
- How we assign grades/marks to your child.

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### What is assessment?

In this guide, we use the terms assessment and evaluation to describe what students have learned, and how well they have learned it. Assessment and evaluation are not just about tests and grades, it encompasses the entire learning experience over the course of a class.

Assessment means gathering information about what your child knows, understands and can show the teacher, based on the Alberta programs of study (curriculum) or their Individualized Program Plan (IPP). Assessment and evaluation cannot use your child's behaviour, effort and work habits to determine grades/marks, unless it is explicitly identified in the Alberta programs of study for a specific subject or course.

To find out where your child is at in their learning, teachers use many tools and strategies. Conversations, observations and student work are just some of the ways teachers discover students' strengths, and where they might need additional supports to improve their learning on curricular outcomes.

The conversations, observations and products students create help teachers shape their lesson plans and learning activities to foster ongoing growth in learning and achievement. These can even guide *how* they might explain a concept to help every student meet their learning goals. The activities also help inform a teacher's understanding of students learning to guide them in determining student grades, course sequences or program levels. Assessment practices allow teachers to give you a clear and accurate picture of your child's progress in school.

Teachers and administrators at Churchill will be assessment literate and follow sound guiding principles about assessment. A variety of assessment strategies and tools for assessment will be used to give students a range of opportunities and a variety of ways to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and growth in learning.

### How to support your child's learning

As a parent or guardian, you are your child's first teacher. So, understanding how your child is doing in school is important. Read this guide, and contact the school to make an appointment to see your child's advisor, teacher, or a school administrator if you have any questions or concerns.

## Supporting Student Success

We all have a role to play in helping your child be successful.

### Parents/Guardians can support their child's learning by:

- Working in partnership with school staff;
- Providing a quiet place for your child to study at home;
- Staying informed and keeping in touch with school staff. This includes reading newsletters and digital messages, referencing documents from the school web page and referring to PowerSchool regularly, and;
- Actively engaging in communications from teachers and attending parent-teacher conferences.

### Teachers will help your child succeed by:

- Providing programming that appropriately challenges your child's abilities and skills;
- Providing many opportunities in variety of ways, for students to show what they know in response to the defined learning outcomes;
- Providing opportunities for students to use accommodations and/or assistive technologies as needed;
- Giving students who have missed important assessments and activities the opportunity to complete the work;
- Providing and clearly explaining what is expected of students in all courses, and how students work will be assessed and graded/graded (i.e. course outline) ;
- Keeping detailed, accurate notes describing your child's successes and challenges;
- Communicating with you about your child's progress and achievement;
- Ensuring their availability to students during Individualised Instruction (I-2) Time, and;
- Providing opportunities for you to be involved in your child's learning.

### Students have a responsibility for their own learning and are encouraged to:

- Attend school every day and arrive to each class on time;
- Finish learning activities, assignments, projects and tasks to the best of their ability;
- Demonstrate their learning by actively engaging in the learning opportunities provided by teachers;
- Participate in activities to celebrate learning;
- Take advantage of opportunities to revise or redo tasks, assignments or tests to show growth in their knowledge and skills;
- Advocate for their own growth in learning and access to supports;
- Set and revise personal learning goals.

### The role of homework is meant to:

- Help support and improve your child's learning;
- Reinforce what your child learned in school; and
- Give your child more practice to work towards higher levels of competency.

At Winston Churchill, homework is intended to support, not replace, course work such as reading background information, reviewing learned material, and researching and preparing for summative assessments. Homework is not independent learning activities or newly assigned tasks that have not been presented and supported during instructional time.

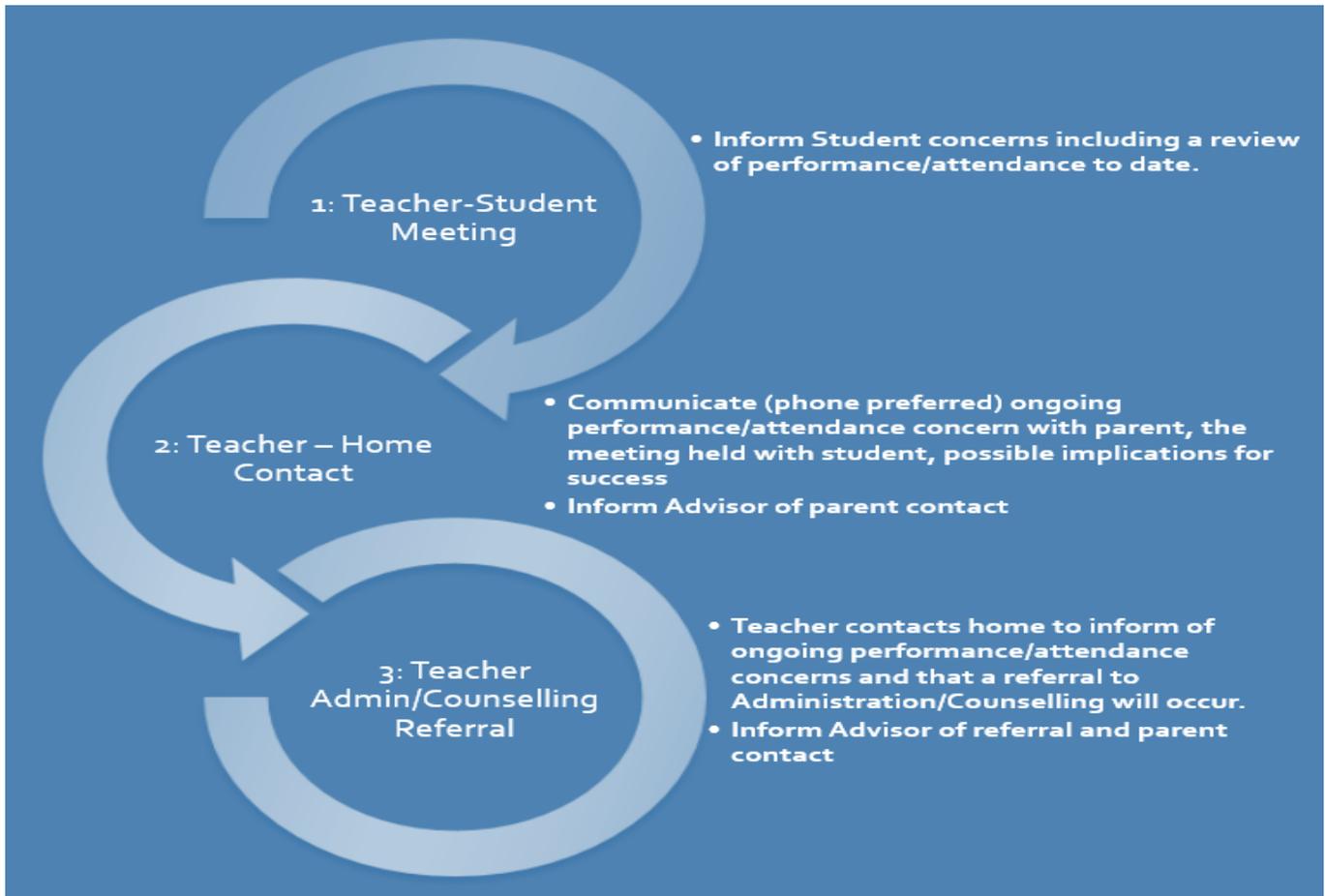
## Our Communication Strategies for Reporting Progress

There are many ways we help you stay informed about your child's learning throughout the year. We encourage you to: regularly access PowerSchool to view assessment/evaluation scores and attendance; actively engage in conversations with teachers and advisors when contacted; attend conferences regularly. Teachers will update mark summaries and/or progress notes to PowerSchool on a regular basis to share formative and summative assessment results.

### Progress Reporting (refer to the yearly school calendar for specific dates each year):

Semester 1:	Early October	Phone Home reports by advisors to share early progress and any concerns.
	Late October	Parent-Teacher Interviews (Thursday evening, Friday morning times available)
	Mid-November	Mid-term grades finalised through PowerSchool
	End of January	Semester-1 grades finalised and available through PowerSchool. Advisors will also contact students and parents/guardians of unsuccessful courses.
Semester 2:	Early March	Phone Home reports by advisors to share early progress and any concerns.
	Mid-March	Parent-Teacher Interviews (Thursday evening times available)
	Mid-April	Mid-term grades finalised through PowerSchool
	End of June	Semester-2 grades finalised and available through PowerSchool. Advisors will also contact students and parents/guardians of unsuccessful courses

### Communications and Interventions with Performance or Attendance Concerns:



## **Individualized Program Plans (IPPs) & Individual Student Profiles (ISPs)**

For students who need specialized services and supports, the IPP/ISP is a working document that is developed within the first two months of the school year. It is a record of your child's progress related to specific goals and strategies. It gives you confirmation that your child's needs are being addressed and provides information about accommodations and supports your child needs to succeed. The IPP/ISP is reviewed each year. We expect you and your child (as appropriate) to provide input into the IPP/ISP.

IPP and ISP planning will begin in September. Each student, through a collaborative process with teachers and parents/guardians, will create a plan which includes strengths, areas for growth, goal setting, strategies for learning and accommodations. Parents and guardians will be contacted to provide input in the fall of each year. The IPP/ISP plan will be shared by mid-November of each year. Ongoing support will occur around the IPP/ISP as the year progresses and parents/guardians are invited and encouraged to discuss the IPP by personal visit, email, phone and parent/teacher conferences. The first parent/teacher conference is late October each year.

The first IPP/ISP will be ready for a signature once all considerations have been made. Typically, communication will flow through each student's advisor or a Learning Support Teacher (LST). Parent/guardians are encouraged to come to the parent/teacher conferences to discuss the IPP/ISP, and are also encouraged to reach out to their child's teachers if they have any questions or concerns. A year end review conversation is conducted to ensure that supports from the IPP/ISP carry through to the next school year.

## **English Language Learner (ELL) Proficiency Assessments**

For students learning English, the ELL Proficiency Assessments measure English abilities in four areas: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Teachers use a variety of tools each year to help them plan lessons and communicate with you about your child's progress in learning English.

Some new students to the school are identified for support through our Division of Instructional Services (Learning Supports and Services), and these students may participate in conversations and pre-registration interviews or assessments with our District Lead Teacher (English as a Second Language), or our English Language Learning Making Connections worker. Parents are provided with language supports when a referral is made. Our District, and our school, works closely with Lethbridge Family Services (Immigrant Services) as well as many other community professional stakeholders to support student transitions to formal schooling.

ELL Benchmarking is done in the fall of the current school year and is revisited in the spring to mark progress for students. All currently identified ELL students are benchmarked by their teachers on the criteria (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) using an online tracking sheet which is a working document. The benchmarking process allows teachers to communicate with parents/guardians areas of strength and/or difficulty in their English language development. ELL students are also provided with accommodations and adaptations to ensure their success. The language in the benchmarking (e.g., beginning, developing, expanding) allows for effective reporting related to language proficiency for students.

Language proficiency testing results are communicated to parents through ongoing progress updates in PowerSchool and face-to-face conferences. Also, when there is evidence that the student's proficiency is improving or adjusted supports are needed, parents are notified through ongoing communication by phone or email from the classroom teacher, an administrator, or the Learning Support Teacher. Winston Churchill High School provides programming for students with limited formal schooling (LFS) experiences, as well as targeted ELL programming through a one to two-year cohort model that supports students in meeting ELL learning goals. These goals include transitioning into "mainstream" Alberta high school courses, preparing students for success in these academic courses, and supporting students transitioning to programs outside of our school district.

## How We Determine Student Grades/Marks

At Winston Churchill, we determine grades/marks in a variety of ways to best reflect the nature of the subject, the growth in learning students display, and their level of meeting the Alberta Education Program of Studies (curriculum).

### Formative Assessments

Throughout a course, your child will work on many activities that help them increase what they know and to practice their skills. These activities show your child's teacher how they are doing, what their strengths are, and where they can improve. This is called formative assessment. Formative assessment is ongoing and intended to improve learning and understanding before summative assessments are undertaken. Teachers may choose to communicate formative assessments as ranges of understanding and growth in learning rather than using numerical grades.

Teachers use this information to adjust their teaching, give your child feedback to help them improve, and prepare your child for times when they will receive summative grades/marks.

### Summative Assessments

In all courses, your child will have a chance to show what they have learned up to that point in time through summative assessments. Summative assessments generally have a numerical grade assigned that reflects knowledge and understanding relative to the Alberta Education Program of Studies outcomes. Summative assessments are generally based on an individual's academic performance on the defined learning outcomes and do not include subjective assessments on behaviours, attitude and attendance.

### Missing or Incomplete Student Work

When your child has missing or incomplete work, a code or note will be applied in a teacher's PowerSchool grade book to alert parents/guardians of missing assignments. Teachers at Churchill will use a variety of strategies to support students in completing missed assessments and curricular objectives. These strategies may include:

- Collaboration and goal setting between the teacher, student and a parent/guardian.
- Instructional and missed assessment support, targeted tutorials (Individualised Instruction (I-2) access).
- Alternative assessment tasks.

The strategies used to support students in completing missing or incomplete work will vary, but will always provide ample opportunity for students to provide teachers with evidence of their learning.

### Final Course Grades

To determine a grade/mark for a student at the end of each reporting period, teachers use their judgment as professionals to make decisions and give grades/marks to your child. They base these decisions on what they've seen your child do (observations), discussions they've had with your child (conversations) and the work your child has completed (products). Formative and summative assessments form the basis of determining grades that best represent the level of achievement and understanding displayed by students at the end of a course.

### Grade 12 Diploma Examination Courses

For all 30-level diploma courses, the school mark will be weighted at 70 per cent of the total final grade, and the diploma examination mark will be weighted at 30 per cent of the total final grade. To pass a diploma course, a student must earn a final 'blended' mark of at least 50 per cent. More information about the Diploma Examination Program is available online at [www.education.alberta.ca/students/exams.aspx](http://www.education.alberta.ca/students/exams.aspx).

## Grade 9 Option Course Grading

Student learning for all grade 9 option classes will be communicated using an assessment scale that identifies the level of student understanding and growth in meeting the defined outcomes. This approach to communication supports the understanding that not all students learn the same way and at the same pace. Grade 9 option classes give students the opportunity to explore pathways for high school diploma requirements and to take risks in learning new and novel skills. The primary goals of exploration and growth occur in a safe learning environment that is not punitive through grades or comparison to others. The assessment scale is focused on growth and learning to encourage and support meeting students where they are currently at, and providing learning opportunities for individual growth and improvement.

All grade 9 option classes will communicate achievement using one of the following descriptors identifying the stage of learning the course outcomes:

- **Acquire** Construct meaning and understanding of the requirements of a learning outcome.
- **Apply** Demonstrate and practice knowledge and skills associated with a learning outcome.
- **Adapt** Analyze, assess, reflect on, integrate or modify knowledge and skills associated with a learning outcome.

## Academic Integrity

It is important that the work students are credited for at Winston Churchill High School is indeed their work and has been created under acceptable conditions with the use of appropriate resources. All members of the school community need to ensure that individuals do not engage in activities that bring in to question their academic integrity. This includes plagiarism (copying someone else's work and passing it off as your own), accessing an exam or information about an exam prior to the writing session, providing answers or work to others to claim as their own. Depending on the nature of the assessment or exam, opportunities to redo an assessment may occur. Provincial, National and International exams and assessments will fall under the directives provided by the governing organisation and do not generally provide redo opportunities. The complete Winston Churchill High School Academic Integrity Guidelines & Expectations can be found [HERE](#).