**Guidelines for Formative and Summative Assessment Feedback**

To Students, Parents, and Guardians:

It is the intention of the **JA Williams Social Studies Department** to provide relevant and informative feedback to students and to do so in a reasonable amount of time.

In Social Studies courses, some assessment is summative while other is considered formative:

**Summative assessment** refers to the assessment ***of*** learning and summarizes the development of learners at a particular time. After a specified period of work (e.g. a month long unit), the learner demonstrates a current knowledge, skill, or ability (e.g. a unit exam or essay) and then the teacher marks the test and assigns a numerical score. The test aims to summarize learning up to that point. The test may also be used for diagnostic assessment to identify any weaknesses and then build on that using formative assessment. All summative assessment will be completed in classes in order to ensure the security of the assessment. As a result, summative assessments should not leave the school. For projects that require work to be done at home, the summative grade will be primarily based on an in-class analysis component of the project, while anything produced at home will be formatively used to inform summative grades.

**Formative assessment** is assessment ***for*** learning. An example of this would be the written comments and corrections on a student essay and the conversation between student and teacher about strengths and weaknesses in their writing. It involves a self-reflective process that intends to promote student attainment of a knowledge, skill, or ability that is aligned with curricular outcomes; that is, the teacher’s role is to provide information that assists the learner in achieving a certain level of a desired outcome. This is meant to be a bi-directional process between teacher and learner to enhance, recognize and respond to the learning. An assessment is considered formative when the feedback (written or spoken) from learning activities is actively used **by the learner** to work toward meeting their own learning needs. This process can help students take control of their own learning and provide them with more direction; they must discover where they are in relation to where they want to be, and only then can they work toward arriving there.

Students will be given opportunities throughout the course to partake in self-assessment activities, in which they are able to reflect on their own strengths, weaknesses, and set goals in accordance with their reflections. This can take a variety of forms; however, teachers will guide students through various activities in order to ensure that the formative assessment process incorporates the student voice into the learning process.

On occasion, students will be given choice in their means of demonstration of curricular outcomes, as deemed suitable by the teacher. In these instances, students may select a means of demonstrating their understanding in a method that best suits the learner’s strengths. This allows the student the best opportunity to be successful, as well as increasing student ownership of their summative grade, as they have selected the means in which they will be assessed. Students should ensure that they are aligning their own learner attributes with their selection of demonstration method.

Northern Lights School Division’s Administrative Procedure 240.6 states that “assessment shall include clear and timely communication among parents, students, and teachers of learner outcomes, criteria, and student achievement of learner outcomes”. Feedback of both kinds will be provided in a **reasonably timely manner**, depending on the nature of the assessment and whether or not formative written feedback is involved. Some examples of general guidelines for timeliness of feedback include but are not limited to:

* Summative Tests or Quizzes (e.g. Multiple Choice) – 2 to 5 working days
* Tests or Quizzes with written responses – 1 to 2 weeks
* Written Responses with minor feedback/corrections – 1 to 2 weeks
* Written Responses with extensive formative feedback[[1]](#footnote-1) – 2 weeks to 1 month

Adherence to these guidelines may vary due to extenuating circumstances, which is why we encourage you to contact the individual teacher with any questions or cause for concern. If there are any concerns about the timeliness of a student receiving feedback, **please contact the teacher directly** through e-mail or by phoning the school and leaving a message. We are always glad to discuss concerns with students and their guardians.

According to Northern Lights School Division’s Administrative Procedure 240.3(d), “schools will develop procedures so that students are provided with opportunities to have another chance at a summative assessment when appropriate”. Teachers at J.A. Williams School’s Social Studies Department will choose an appropriate strategy to assess any developments in student competency and knowledge in relation to curriculum outcomes. This **will not necessarily translate to re-writing** a specific summative assessment. Rather, an additional written response may be used to allow students opportunities to demonstrate improvement in their writing, and the teacher may score specific target areas as deemed appropriate by student and teacher. Similarly, a reading comprehension goal may require students to do additional readings and demonstrations of understanding, whether that means multiple choice responses, written or oral presentations to the teacher, project development or any other means of assessing understanding at a grade-appropriate level. As well, a student may be required to provide a body of evidence (as dictated by the teacher) of formative work in order to qualify for re-assessment, such as attending tutorials, completing additional formative assessments, or providing proof of additional learning in relation to specific curriculum outcomes or learning goals relevant to the area of weakness for that particular student.

While **missed tests or late assignments** may not be penalized numerically, the nature of the assessment may change as deemed appropriate by the teacher. As always, if you have questions and concerns, contact the teacher directly to develop a plan for accurately assessing new learning.

1. This may include formative feedback such as corrections, editorial suggestions, questions prompting further thought, requests for further details, individual or group discussions, peer editing, and ultimately re-submission. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)