

Reminders

Effective Student Reporting

Report cards should be a clear, concise, jargon free report of student progress and achievement that all parents can easily understand. The challenge is to provide all the relevant detail about students' progress and ensure that the information on the report is both clear and concise. It is important the report is coherent and there are logical links between the achievement of the student, areas for improvement and actions the school and parents might take.

Student reports should provide the following key information:

Clear information on what the student has achieved - focus on each student's progress on the basis of assessment evidence gathered.

Suggestions for areas of improvement the student should work on next - focus on future learning to be addressed in the following reporting period.

Information on how the school will help the student to improve - outline actions to be taken by the school to help the student's future learning.

Suggestions on how parents can help the student to improve – suggest specific ways in which parents can support the student, taking account of the areas for improvement or future learning.

It is important to keep your intention clear in your mind as you write your comments. **What are the key messages that this student's parents need to be aware of?**

Care needs to be taken in getting the balance right. If we 'sugar coat' our messages too much parents may be oblivious to real issues. If we are too blunt with our message we can offend parents and be perceived as insensitive.

Avoid long lists of areas for improvement or for future learning. If too much is listed, students and their parents will find it hard to know where to focus attention. Instead, focus on what is critical.

The 80 / 20 rule from the Italian mathematician Pareto is relevant and applies to report writing. Pareto says it is important to identify the critical few and the trivial many.

80% of our time will often be spent carefully
writing and editing the reports on 20% of our students.

Some reports take longer to write than others. Make a list of the reports that are going to need the most care in writing, draft them first and then revisit them again at the end. Ask a colleague or your partner to re-read your comments on your 'critical few' reports for clarity and tone.

Jargon and specialist educational terms should be avoided and should not be included in the reports. The report card should present information in clear, jargon-free language. For example, 'higher order thinking' represents a meaningful concept to teachers but not to most parents. Your choice of wording should reflect community understanding, not professional terminology. For example, 'He has appropriately completed all of the nominated tasks' really means 'He completed all the expected work'.

Avoid unnecessary information and crowding the report with less important details and being too detailed. 'Padding' adds no helpful information and takes up valuable space. Delete redundant words or sentences that do not change the meaning.

Reference Victoria Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Working in schools can be stressful!

These articles are intended to help the great people who work in schools to reduce

Reporting Tips

Ensure there are coherent links between achievement, areas for improvement and ways forward

Identify and list the students whose reports are going to take longer to write

DRAFT the difficult to write reports first

Clarify your intent - What are the key messages I need to communicate?

Avoid jargon

Keep it simple and concise

Ensure you have the balance right - not too harsh but not sugar-coated either

Avoid unnecessary information and crowding with detail

Make everything as simple as possible, but not simpler.

Albert Einstein

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