

Assessment & Recording Policy

1. Policy Rationale

The core of the policy is that all children should experience success at school. This policy is geared towards using assessment to inform planning and identify the needs of all pupils so that adequate strategies are in place early enough to facilitate remediation. These strategies may include pupil self assessment, pupil profiling, two way communication between parents and teachers, modification of teacher programmes and Individual Education Plans. See also Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy.

This policy endeavours to identify at the earliest possible opportunity, children who may have learning difficulties and put in place a whole school response to their needs. An effective assessment policy is central to this core objective.

2. Relationship to School Ethos

The school adopts a holistic approach to the education and development of each child and the enhancement of teaching processes. An effective Assessment policy identifies early interventions that need to be put in place to ensure that relative success, increased confidence and raised self esteem is achieved.

3. Aims and Objectives

The primary aims / objectives of the policy are to:

- facilitate improved pupil learning
- create a procedure for monitoring achievement
- track learning processes which assist the long and short term planning of teachers
- coordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis involving parents and pupils in managing strengths and weaknesses.

4. Screening

Scoil Naomh Buithe promotes a policy of early intervention in order to support children identified as having a need for additional support from the SEN team. We believe it is very important to identify and assess children with special needs as early as possible, so that effective interventions can be put in place. To this end

Early Literacy tests are administered in **Junior Infants** during their **last term** in school.

From Christmas onwards in **Junior Infants**, the class teacher and SEN team tracks results of all Periodic tests (sight words, reading fluency and sounds). If these scores show cause for concern parents are contacted and a support home programme is set up with them. (Ref Stage 1 Page 8)

This also applies to Senior Infants, Rang a 1 and Rang a 2 throughout the school year.

The **MIST (Middle Infants Screening Test)** is administered to all pupils in **Senior Infants** during the **second-term** of the school year.

Both **Drumcondra Early Numeracy** and one of **Drumcondra Early Literacy** or **Jolly Phonics Assessment** are administered in the **last term** of **Senior Infants**

Children whose **Mist/Drumcondra/Jolly Phonics** scores show cause for concern are prioritised for Learning Support subject to time being available.

Further diagnostic tests are carried out throughout the year by the Learning Support Teacher on specific children as the need arises.

5. Formal Assessment

(a) Formal In-class testing: Reference Appendix 1 and 2

All Teachers must follow these guidelines.

(b) Standardised Testing

The Sigma Maths, Drumcondra English, Irish and Spelling Tests are administered in May of each year to Classes 1st to 6th. Drumcondra Reading and Sigma-T test results are examined in June in order to identify pupils who are at risk. Pupils who obtain a percentile score of 10 or less are timetabled for learning support the following year. Children who score between the 10th and 20th percentile may be considered for support if allocation allows. Class teachers' observations, periodic assessments records and concerns are also used to identify pupils at risk.

Standard, Sten and Percentile Rankings scores are recorded by each teacher on the Aladdin System. The Principal uses the system to record, analyse and store a hard copy of the results for each class. Whole school results are also analysed and studied for progress, concerns etc

Following DES guidelines all standardized test scores will be orally given to parents/guardians at Parent/Teacher meetings and a STEN score will be written in the end of year reports.

(c)Diagnostic Assessment

Diagnostic tests are administered by the Learning Support and Resource Teachers following referral by the class teachers in consultation with parents / guardians. The administration of such tests is in keeping with the approach recommended by Circular 02/05 where a staged approach is used by the individual class teachers before recourse to diagnostic testing /psychological assessment. Parents are advised of the outcome and if a psychological assessment is warranted, parental permission is sought and a consent form is completed. The Principal will facilitate such an assessment happening.

Appendix 3 outlines a list of Diagnostic tests that are available in the school.

(d) **Psychological Assessment** If stages 1 and 2 fail to deliver adequate intervention the class teacher / Principal will contact the parents for permission to secure a Psychological Assessment for their child. This assessment if available will determine the subsequent level of intervention, be it Learning Support or Resource hours.

6. Informal Assessment

The most common form of informal assessment used in our school is teacher observation, teacher designed tasks, projects and homework (informal assessment). These informal assessments are at the discretion of individual teachers. Records of teacher-designed tests are kept by the individual teachers and will be used to communicate with parents at the Parent-teacher meeting and when writing end of year reports.

Homework and class work are marked and comments are made as appropriate. Marks and especially grades are not usually given. Work is ticked to indicate that the teacher has looked at it and a written comment to indicate sources of error; good points etc. will normally be made.

Obviously, 'informal' assessment is ongoing during all lessons in response to oral work, team work, skill development, project work etc.

Homework is checked both formally and informally in a routine way.

7. Recording

Hard copies of each pupil's end of year report are stored in a locked cabinet. Standardised Test scores are stored on Aladdin and a hard copy is kept in the office. Results of all Formal In-Class assessments (weekly, periodic, termly, seasonal and annual) are collected, reviewed by Principal and Deputy Principal and stored in the main office. (*Reference Assessment Folder in Main Office*) Information is passed on from teacher to teacher on a need to know basis. Children receiving extra support in school have a separate file which contains their IEP, IPLP/GPLP. These files are stored in a locked cabinet.

8. Success Criteria

This policy is considered successful if -

- Early identification and intervention is achieved
- Clarity is achieved regarding procedures involved in staged approach
- Procedures are clear and roles and responsibilities are defined
- The Special Education team have clearly defined roles and objectives
- There is efficient transfer of information between teachers

9. Roles and Responsibilities

Special Education teachers and the Principal assume shared responsibility. It is the responsibility of the class teacher to set in train staged interventions at class level. At Stage 2, the responsibilities are shared with the Special Education team. The Principal assumes a primary role at Stage 3 when a Psychological Assessment may be required. Parents have a role at all stages and the lines of communication must be always kept open.

10. Implementation

This policy reflects current practice in the school and will be reviewed and amended as necessary.

References

DES Circular 02/05 - 24/03

DES Learning Support Guidelines 2000

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