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Assessment and Recording Policy

Introduction:

This policy was revised during the 2023-2024 school year.

Policy Rationale:

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

Relationship to School Ethos:

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

Aims and Objectives:

The primary aims/objectives of the policy are.

1. To facilitate improved pupil learning and achievement in school.
2. To create a procedure for monitoring pupil achievement.
3. To track learning processes which assist the long-term and short-term planning of teachers.
4. To co-ordinate assessment procedures on a school basis involving parents/guardians and pupils in managing pupil strengths and weaknesses.

Principles

1. Careful thought is given to the purpose of assessment, adopting a wide range of methods to reflect the whole Primary Curriculum and learning opportunities. The main purpose of assessment must be to facilitate progress in a pupil's learning.
2. Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process, a valuable formative tool.
3. The range of opportunities for carrying out continuous assessment is increased by good classroom organisation, which encourages children to work independently while the teacher is concentrating on a small group.

4. The outcomes of assessment modify our teaching approaches, provide feedback on the Curriculum as well as indicate pupil progress and achievement in school.
5. We recognize the potential for assessment in developing a positive self-image in the pupil from positive and constructive feedback and the feeling of success, which encourages further study.
6. Results of assessment are reported in a way useful for pupils, teachers, parents/guardians and other interested parties.
7. Assessment of behaviour and performance gradually builds up into a profile for each pupil over his/her school career. This is a working document for the use of teaching staff only.

Policy Content:

Our school embraces **N.E.P.S. Continuum of Support** and we follow the **D.E.S. Guidelines for the New Model of Support (2017)**. This policy is geared towards using assessment to inform planning and identify the needs of all pupils, including the exceptionally gifted so that adequate strategies are put 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 (differentiation in the classroom) and School Support Plans.

Standardised Testing:

Standardised tests in Literacy and Mathematics are administered to pupils in 1st-6th classes during every school year. We use the *Sigma-T Maths Test* and the new *Drumcondra Reading Tests*. These standardised tests are usually administered by the class teacher, during a designated week in May (See Appendix 1). We introduced the *Drumcondra Spelling Test* in 2018. This is administered to pupils in 1st-6th classes by Class/S.E.T. teachers in Term 3, usually during the month of April. We also administer the *Micra-T* in the Autumn term to children in First Class only.

All standardised Test scores are recorded on Aladdin by each individual class teacher with a hard copy held by the S.E.T Co-ordinator. The Principal and the S.E.T. team analyse the results to help inform and prioritise the allocation of resources to pupils in September of the following school year. Standardised Test scores are also included in the children's end of year reports for parents/guardians.

Diagnostic Assessment:

Diagnostic tests are administered by the S.E.T. team following referral/concerns raised by the class teachers in consultation with parents/guardians. The administration of such tests is in keeping with the approach recommended by **N.E.P.S. Continuum of Support** where a staged approach is used by the individual class teachers before recourse to diagnostic testing /psychological assessment. These tests provide detailed information to allow for implementation of S.M.A.R.T. targets and an individualised plan for intervention (S.S.F.). Parents are provided with test results and following consultation with our assigned NEPS psychologist, if a NEPS psychological assessment is warranted and available to the school, parental permission is sought, and a consent form is completed. The Principal will facilitate such an assessment happening on an agreed date during the school day.

The diagnostic tests available in the school include:

- Quest Diagnostic
- Neale Analysis
- Jackson – Get Reading Right
- Dyslexia Portfolio
- YARC; (York Assessment of Reading Comprehension) including Early Reading Assessment

- BIAP, (Belfield Infant Assessment Profile)

Other diagnostic tests may be borrowed from our local NEPS office in Naas as deemed appropriate.

Exemptions from the Study of Irish

Circular 0054/2022 EXEMPTIONS FROM THE STUDY OF IRISH results from the initial review of the implementation of circular 0052/2019 which has been withdrawn. **Circular 0054/2022** was introduced by the Department of Education with effect from September 2022 and sets out the **exceptional circumstances** in which consideration may be given to granting a pupil an exemption from the study of Irish.

“Granting an exemption from the study of Irish

2.1 An exemption should be granted only in exceptional circumstances

Exempting a pupil from the study of Irish will be considered only in those exceptional circumstances set out in section 2.2 of this Circular. The decision to exempt a pupil from the study of Irish is an important decision that has implications for his/her future learning. The decision to grant an exemption from the study of Irish is made by the principal, but it must be made following detailed discussion with the pupil’s parent(s)/guardian(s), the class teacher, special education teachers¹ and the pupil. A decision to grant an exemption should only be considered in the circumstances set out in section 2.2 below.

2.2 The circumstances in which a pupil may be granted an exemption from the study of Irish

An exemption from the study of Irish may be allowed in the following circumstances, 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3, 2.2.4 or 2.2.5 only:

2.2.2 A pupil who experiences significant literacy difficulties which are an obstacle to their learning across the curriculum.

An exemption from the study of Irish may be granted to a pupil:

(i) who has at least reached second class

AND

(ii) who presents with significant literacy difficulties that are persistent despite having had access to a differentiated approach to language and literacy learning in all subjects/across the curriculum and over time. Documentary evidence to this effect, held by the school, should include *Student Support Plans* detailing:

- regular reviews of learning needs, as part of an ongoing cycle of assessment
- target-setting
- evidence-informed intervention and review, including test scores (Word Reading, Reading Comprehension, Spelling, other scores of language/literacy) at key points of review.

AND

(iii) who, at the time of the application for exemption presents with a standardised score on a discrete test in either **Word Reading, Reading Comprehension or Spelling at/below the 10th percentile.”**

If the need arises, our school will use "The Drumcondra Spelling Test" and/or **Y.A.R.C. (York Assessment of Reading Comprehension)** to determine if a child meets the above criteria. Both tests are approved by the D.E.S. for this purpose.

Screening

The screening tests used to identify learning strengths and weaknesses in the school are:

- Middle Infant Screening Test (M.I.S.T.): Second term of Senior Infants.
- Drumcondra Early Numeracy Test (Senior Infants)
- NEW Non-Reading Intelligence Test (N.N.R.I.T.): Second Term in First and Third Classes. (See Appendix 1)

These tests are administered on a class basis. Screening is used by the school to initiate the staged approach to intervention as per our S.E.N. Policy. The "Forward Together" programme will be undertaken if any child meets the criteria after the M.I.S.T. screening test.

Professional Assessments

If stages 1 and 2 fail to deliver adequate intervention, the class teacher/S.E.T. will contact the parents to discuss the need for a suitable professional assessment for their child: Educational, Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language, Multi-disciplinary assessment. An assessment will provide further information in determining the subsequent level and nature of intervention needed.

Informal Assessments

We use the Continuum of Assessment methods as outlined in NCCA "Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum: Guidelines for Schools" (2007).

Teachers are encouraged to use a wide range of assessment methodologies such as:

- Teacher observations
- Self-Assessment
- Teacher designed tasks and tests
- Conferencing
- Rubrics
- Portfolio Assessment
- Concept mapping
- Responses the child makes to question and answer situations
- Interaction and reaction of the child

These informal assessments are at the discretion of individual teachers. Records of teacher-designed tests are kept by the individual teachers and communicated to parents at the Parent-Teacher meeting and the school report issued at the end of the school year. Each teacher has discretion as to the format, administration and frequency of in-class testing/assessment. Class teachers keep an "Assessment" folder detailing results of tests given and outlining progress throughout the year.

Teachers may use the *Drumcondra Profiles* (3rd to 6th) to assist them in making judgements about their pupils' achievement of key Curriculum outcomes in English.

Recording

Each pupil has a digital file which is stored on "Aladdin". All Standardised Test results are also stored in a secure filing cabinet in the SEN Co-Ordinator's room. This file is accessible to their Class teacher/ SEN teacher/Principal. All pupils have a pupil profile which includes class tests and samples of work. The class teacher holds these documents in a secure filing cabinet in the classroom and they are passed on to next class teacher at the start of every new school year. Procedures are in place to manage sensitive data (see Data Protection Policy).

Success Criteria:

This policy is considered successful if:

- Early identification and intervention is achieved
- Clarity is achieved regarding procedures involved in a staged approach incorporating the N.E.P.S. Continuum of Support.
- Procedures are clear, with roles and responsibilities defined
- S.E.T. have clearly defined roles and objectives
- There is efficient transfer of information between teachers

Roles and Responsibilities:

The mainstream Class teachers, the Special Education Co-ordinator (SENCO), the S.E.T. Team and the Principal assume shared responsibility. It is the responsibility of the class teacher to set in train staged interventions at class level, first putting a *Classroom Support Plan* in place if deemed necessary.

At Stage 2, the responsibilities are shared with the Special Education Team and a *School Support Plan* is opened.

The SET Co-ordinator and the Principal assume a primary role at Stage 3 when a Psychological Assessment may be required. A meeting is convened with our assigned NEPS psychologist and the school SET team at the beginning of every school year to review the pupil needs in the school and to prioritise pupils for an assessment if available. Parents have a role at all stages and the lines of communication must be always kept open to ensure a collaborative approach.

Implementation

This policy supersedes the previous policy and is effective from May 2024.

Ratification & Communication:

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in May 2024 and communicated to parents thereafter.

Review Timetable:

This policy will be reviewed every two years (or as circumstances may warrant) and amended as necessary by means of a whole school collaborative process.

References:

DES Circular 02/05
DES Circular 0056/2011
DES Circular 0018/2012 Supporting Assessment: Standard Testing in Primary Schools
DES Circular 0013/2017
DES Circular 0054/2022
NCCA Assessment Guidelines (2007)
DES Guidelines For Primary Schools: Supporting Pupils With Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools or New Model of Support 2017

Working Together to make a Difference for Children – NEPS
NCSE Student Support File Guidelines www.NCSE.ie
NCSE Toolkit New Special Education Teacher (SET) Allocation Model 2017

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in May 2024

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Chairperson, Board of Management

<u>Month</u>	<u>Test</u>	<u>Class</u>
September	Individual Benchmarking (PM Benchmarking Kit)	New Senior Infants
October	Micra T (Reading)	1st Class
Feb/March	N.R.I.T.	1st & 3rd Classes
March (end of Term 2)	M.I.S.T.	Senior Infants
April/ May (After Easter)	Drumcondra Spelling Test:	1st to 6th Classes
May	Drumcondra Reading Test	1st to 6th Classes
	Drumcondra Early Numeracy	Senior Infants
	Sigma T Maths	1st to 6th Classes

Appendix 1. **Annual School Calendar of Testing**