

## **Policy on Assessment**

### **Introduction:**

The policy was redrafted in May 2011 and was ratified by the Board of Management in June 2011, and has been reviewed and ratified bi-annually since.

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

### **Policy Content:**

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 and individual education plans.

### **Assessment of Learning**

#### **Informal Assessments:**

The most common form of assessment used in our school is teacher observation, teacher designed tests, 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 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. The most common types of informal teacher designed testing in our school are math's tests, spelling tests and quizzes. Teachers use a school designed assessment template to track each pupils progress. This moves with the child through the school and is updated termly. Children also use an online portfolio called Seesaw as a means of self reflection. Teachers are also in the process of introducing, through the digital strategy plan, a digital portfolio for each child.

## Assessment for Learning

### Standardised Testing:

The school tests 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> using either Micra; Sigma or Drumcondra Standardised Tests. The tests are usually administered in November by the class teacher. Standard and percentile ranking scores are recorded on the class record template and stored by the SET. The SET analyses the results for allocation of resources to pupils. S.W.S.T single word spelling test: assess spelling attainment to choose a programme appropriate to each pupil's ability. This is administered in September.

### Rational of Testing in November:

- Assessment for learning – to allocate resources during the school year;
- Opportunity to discuss results with parents at the PT meetings during the school year;
- Reduce stress on children;
- Months of May and June tend to be the busiest months with extra-curricular activities and can be a quite disruptive time for testing;
- Allows for re-test of a child in June if necessary.

## Diagnostic Assessment:

The diagnostic tests used in the school include;

- NARA Neale Analysis of Reading Ability.
- Jackson – Get Reading Right.
- Aston Index.
- Accelerated Reader.
- MALT.

Such tests are administered by the SET 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 provided with test results 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.

## Screening:

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

- Belfield Infant Assessment Programme.
- Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST).
- Non Reading Intelligence Test (NRIT).
- Aston Index to screen language difficulties.
- PhAB phonological awareness.
- Otis-Lennon Mental Ability Test.
- SEN Resource Pack Dyslexia Dyscalculia.
- WRAPS – Word Recognition & Phonic Skills.
- SPAR – Spelling & reading Tests.
- Drumcondra English Profiles – Oral Language.
- Jolly Phonics Reading Test for Senior Infants.

These tests are administered individually or on a class basis. The MIST and BIAP are administered on a class basis in Term 2 of each year, while the Neale Analysis is administered individually by the SET when deemed appropriate. Screening is used by the school to initiate the staged approach to intervention as per **Circular 24/03** and **Circular 02/05**.

### **Psychological Assessment:**

The school has implemented the continuum of support framework, classroom support plans, school support plans and school support plus plans. 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. An assessment will determine the subsequent level of intervention, be it classroom support or school support.

### **Recording:**

Each pupil has a file which is stored in the SET Room. This file records standardised test results and end of year reports. This file is accessible to all teacher as the child progresses through the system.

### **Success Criteria:**

This policy is considered successful if;

- Early identification and intervention is achieved
- Clarity is achieved regarding procedures involved in a staged approach
- Procedures are clear, with roles and responsibilities defined
- The SET has clearly defined roles and objectives
- There is efficient transfer of information between teachers

### **Roles and Responsibilities:**

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

### **Ratification & Communication:**

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management in March 2024.

### **Review Timetable:**

This policy will be reviewed in 2 years time.

### **References:**

DES Circular 02/05 – 24/03

DES Learning Support Guidelines 2000

[www.sess.ie](http://www.sess.ie)

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