

Assessment Policy

Scoil Chomáin Naofa



**Introduction:**

*Assessment is integral to all areas of the curriculum and it encompasses the diverse aspects of learning … In addition to the products of learning, the strategies, procedures and stages in the process of learning are assessed. Assessment includes the child’s growth in self-esteem, interpersonal and intrapersonal behaviour, and the acquisition of a wide range of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values.* (Primary School Curriculum, 1999, page 17)

**School Ethos:**

The school adopts a holistic approach to the education and development of each child and there is an emphasis on the creation of a positive learning environment. 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. Scoil Chomáin Naofa seeks to enable each child to develop his/her potential in a caring environment where the talents of each child are valued.

**Aims and Objectives:**

The primary objectives of the policy are;

1. To facilitate improved pupil learning and identify pupils with learning difficulties.
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
5. To evaluate pupil achievement in curricular areas in comparison with the national norms.

**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. This policy sets out to formalise our existing practice within the school and takes on board the Department of Education’s publication on assessment entitled ‘Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum (2007).’

A broad continuum of modes of assessment is necessary in order to create a picture that will reflect the full range of the child’s progress, attainment and development. Such a continuum include

* teacher observation
* teacher designed tasks and tests
* work samples, portfolios and projects
* standardised tests
* diagnostic tests

No single form of assessment is adequate in developing a comprehensive profile of

the child. 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 inclass testing.

**Standardised Testing:**

The school uses Micra T, Sigma T , Single Word Spelling Test (SWST) and MIST tests for infant classes. The tests are usually administered at the end of May each year adhering strictly to the conditions outlined in the testing manuals. Standard and percentile and STEN ranking scores are recorded on the class record template and stored by each individual teacher with a copy held by the learning support teacher. The learning support teacher analyses the results in June for allocation of resources to pupils in September. First priority for learning support is given to children with a high incidence disability and after a percentile of 12 or below (c.f. Learning Support Policy). The MICRA-T & SIGMA-T Computerised Scoring System will be used to track pupil performance over a number of years. Results are communicated to parents at annual parent-teacher meetings and on the end of year school report.

**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 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. The assessment will be a central part of the educational plan for the child and would incorporate recommendations made by the specialised professionals.

The diagnostic tests used in the school include;

* Checklists
* Quest
* Miscue Analysis- PM benchmark kit
* Jackson – Get Reading Right
* Jackson – Phonics

**Screening:**

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

* Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST)
* Single Word Spelling Test (SWST)
* Non Reading Intelligence Test (NRIT)

These tests are administered individually or on a class basis. The MIST and SWST is administered on a class basis in May of each year. Screening is used by the school to initiate the staged approach to intervention as per **Circular 24/03** and **Circular 02/05.**

**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. An assessment will determine the subsequent level of intervention. 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 inclass testing.

**Recording:**

Each pupil has a file which is stored in the teacher’s classroom filing cabinet. This file records standardised test results and end of year reports and any further psychological assessments of the child. This file is passed from teacher to teacher as the child progresses through the system. Procedures are in place to manage sensitive data. There is a folder in the school which holds all relevant documentation on each child with special educational needs. All such information is treated as confidential. However, parents may view any information held about their child by making an appointment with the class teacher and/or the learning support/resource teacher. No child is assessed by any outside party without parent’s consent. Teachers treat all such information as confidential. Relevant psychological assessments/reports are transferred onto secondary school on receipt of parental consent.

**Success Criteria:**

This policy is considered successful if;

* Early identification and intervention is achieved
* If assessment is used to inform teaching and planning.
* Clarity is achieved regarding procedures involved in a staged approach
* Procedures are clear, with roles and responsibilities defined
* The Special Education teachers (learning support/resource) have clearly defined roles and objectives
* There is efficient transfer of information between all parties involved.

**Roles and Responsibilities:**

Mainstream and 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 Teachers. 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.

**Implementation:**

This policy is effective from ………… 2014.

***This Policy is a working document subject to biannual approval.***

**Reviewed:** October 2014

**Responsibility for Review:**

 All members of staff

Parents/Guardians

 B.O.M.

**Ratification and Communication:**

Policy ratified by B.O.M

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Chairperson Board of Management

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix 1**

**Staged Approach**

A three-stage process for individual casework, which complements the recommendations in the Learning-Support Guidelines. ***Stage One*** involves the class-teacher and parent(s). Concerns are shared on the basis of screening results and observation of the child’s work and personal development. At this stage, the educational psychologist may have an advisory role, but would not normally be involved directly with the individual pupil.

***Stage Two*** involves more specialised teachers, for example the learning-support teacher, along with the class-teacher and parent(s). The effectiveness of the initial IEP is reviewed and, if appropriate, more diagnostic testing is carried out. At this stage the Educational Psychologist would not normally be involved directly with the individual pupil. The psychologist’s role continues to be advisory, but may involve indirect support for the child on the basis of the information available. A new IEP is developed collaboratively to address the child’s needs. Consultation about the possibility of more formal casework may take place at this stage.

At ***Stage Three***, the NEPS psychologist, subject to parental consent, will become involved directly with the individual pupil, and a formal individual assessment of the child’s needs may take place. Based on the total information available, a programme of support will be drawn up in consultation with the class teacher and the learning support teacher to address the child’s needs. The implementation and review of this programme are implicit in this stage.