**Assessment Policy**

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**Assessment Policy**

**Introduction**

The existing policy for Assessment was reviewed by the principal and teaching staff of St. Mary’s National School (Uimhir Rolla 11135K), Bagenalstown, Co. Carlow. All teachers were involved in revising up this policy at a staff meeting in January 2021.

**Rationale**

The policy, underpinned by the Education Act 1998, is a response to the impact of the introduction of mandatory standardised testing in accordance with DES Circular 0138/2006 and its implications for practice in the school. The review was also prioritised following a WSE in June 2012 and in light of the requirements of Circular 0056/2011 Initial Steps in the Implementation of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy. This policy is also cognisant of the Guidelines for SSE and Circular 29/2012 which outlines the process for SSE. Assessment activities used in this school will contribute to pupil learning and development by encouraging the pupils to become active participants in their own learning and by identifying how well each pupil is learning and developing to his/her full potential.

**Relationship to characterise the Spirit of the School**

The Introduction to the Primary School Curriculum (1999) identifies assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning. It emphasises the importance of assessing the process of learning as well as the product. The school’s approach to assessment reflects the spirit of the school by incorporating therein the contribution of teachers, SNAs, principal, parents and children.

Formal and informal assessment methods are used in order to optimise the quality and the diversity of information gleaned from them.

**Aims of Policy**

By implementing this policy the school hopes to:

• Benefit school learning

• Monitor learning processes

• Generate baseline data that can be used to monitor achievement overtime

• Involve parents and pupils in identifying and managing learning strengths or difficulties

• Assist teachers’ long and short term planning

• Coordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis

• To help teachers avoid the perils of over-assessment (NCCA Guidelines Pg. 41).

• To ensure a consistency between learning and assessment throughout the school.

**(a) Purposes of Assessment**

Assessment is used

* To inform planning for, and coverage of all areas of the curriculum.
* To support the school’s early intervention approach for the prevention of learning difficulties. Teachers aim to identify at-risk children by the end of Senior Infants.
* To identify the particular learning needs of pupils/groups of pupils including the exceptionally able.
* To monitor pupil progress and attainment.
* To enable teachers to modify their programmes in order to ensure that the particular learning needs of individual pupils/groups are being addressed.
* To compile records of individual pupils’ progress and attainment.
* In line with DES circular and subject to parental consent, to ensure that a reliable and informative record of a child’s progress and attainments in primary school is available to forward to a post-primary school or another primary school on the occasion of a child transferring to another school.
* To facilitate communication between parents and teachers about pupils’ development, progress and learning needs as outlined by Education Act 1998, the Primary School Curriculum (1999) Pg. 10 and NCCA Guidelines (Pg 16).
* To facilitate the involvement of pupils in the assessment of their own work.
* To enable teachers to monitor their own approaches and methodologies. Teachers use their findings to inform ongoing teaching and learning activities (NCCA Guidelines).

**b) Assessment for learning**

Assessment is central to the process of teaching and learning. It is used to monitor learning processes and to ascertain achievement in each area of the curriculum. Description of the use of assessment for learning and assessment of learning, for each subject of the curriculum is in the Whole School Plan for each subject.

The value of assessment for learning and assessment of learning is reflected in each subject plan. The Primary School curriculum notes that assessment in each subject should reflect the child’s attainment of objectives, particularly in terms of knowledge, concepts and skills as well as taking account of the full range of the child’s abilities

Teachers use a broad continuum of modes of assessment including formal and informal methods. Informal assessment includes

Teacher observation

Teacher designed tasks and tests

Work Samples, portfolios and projects.

Assessment for learning involves an ongoing process of engaging children in their own learning by providing rich feedback using effective questioning and engaging children in self-assessment. In our school we have adapted the SALF system. The Self Assessment and Learning Folders (SALF) provide a framework for children to present evidence of their work and their assessment of that work, across all the curricular areas. The folders provide evidence of learning as well as a source of information that can be used by them to make assessment decisions about that learning. This system ensures a continuum of teacher assisted, self-assessment throughout the school. The SALF process recognises both the role of the teacher as facilitator of children’s learning and the central role the child occupies in the assessment process. Through the process the children learn to identify what is good work, to consider the extent to which they have/have not achieved the criteria for ‘good work’ and agree ways to bridge the gap and the next steps needed to achieve that. SALF also provides a means of linking learning inside and outside the school – particularly when the folders are part of homework.

Different methods of recording assessment are used depending on age level and subject. A variety of the following methods are utilised

Oral evaluation

Quizzes

Copybook for Subject

Project Work

Worksheets

Spelling Copy

Table Copy

Pupil Self-Assessment (SALF)

Checklists or significant observations will be kept by class teacher if deemed useful in reviewing the progress of a child.

**(c) Standardised Tests**

Tests used in school are Sigma T, Drumcondra Maths, Micra T and Drumcondra Reading.

In line with Circular 0056/2011 standardised assessment in the school will take place during May/June and will also take place in October with 1st class.

The Special Education Teacher (SET) is responsible for purchasing, distribution and co-ordinating of testing.

The class teacher and Special Education Teacher (SET) administer the standardised tests.

The Principal, class teacher and Special Education Teacher (SET) can decide if a standardised test is inappropriate for a student. Appropriate measures are put in place to cater for the needs of the student while his/her class is being tested.

The results of the standardised tests including the raw score, standard score, percentile rank, STEN (when available) and Reading Age are recorded on a class sheet and filed in the strong room off the Principal’s Office and on Aladdin.

The scripts of Standardised Tests are held in the filing cabinet in the strong room off the Principal’s Office for the current and previous academic year in line with Circular 0138/2006

Each year, test scripts that become redundant are shredded.

Standardised test results are analysed by the class teacher and the Special Education Teacher (SET). Results of the standardised tests are given to parents as part of the end of year written report in 2nd, 4th and 6th class only. They are accompanied by documentation explaining the scores etc. Results may be discussed by parents and teachers at individual parent teacher meetings. Results of any tests administered within the school can be requested by parents to the class teacher.

In accordance with DES Guidelines on the allocation of learning support hours, all children below the 10th percentile in English and then Maths are offered supplementary teaching first. The children under the 20th percentile in English and then Maths are offered any other available time for supplementary teaching on the timetable.

The class teacher and Special Education Teacher (SET), in consultation with the principal, decide how to deploy the teachers available to optimise the support for students. During the year the Special Education Teacher (SET) uses other standardised tests to monitor the progress of students receiving supplementary teaching.

These tests include:

RAIN, Schonell’s Reading Test, Schonell’s Spelling Test. These are used in conjunction with the Dolch reading list of most used reading words and Culligan’s list of most used words in spelling.

**(d) Screening Tests**

2nd and 4th Class New NRIT – This is administered by the class teacher and the Special Education Teacher (SET) in November for 2nd class and February for 4th class.

Drumcondra Spelling Tests – 2nd – 6th class is administered by the class teacher and the SET in February/March.

Junior Infants - Bell Infant Assessment Profile – This is administered by the class teacher where a Parent/teacher meeting is held to fill in part of this profile.

Senior Infants – Drumcondra Screening tests for Reading and Mathematics - This is administered by the class teacher and if needed along with the Special Education Teacher (SET) in March. This replaces the Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST).

The class teacher and the Special Education Teacher (SET) interpret the results of the screening tests. They decide what intervention programmes are necessary.

The analysis of standardised testing and screening tests inform the class teacher on interventions to be introduced at class level for individual students. (Stage 1 of Circular 02/05). If targets devised by the class teacher are not achieved by a particular student within a specified period of time then written permission to conduct further diagnostic tests is sought from the student’s parents. (Stage 2 of Circular 02/05) This consent is obtained during a parent teacher meeting.

**(e) Diagnostic Testing**

The school uses the following diagnostic tests:

* QUEST
* DRA - Diagnostic Reading Analysis.
* Aston Index
* WRATT 5

The Special Education Teacher (SET) and the class teacher decide which children need to be administered diagnostic tests. A parent can initiate the process by coming to the class teacher with concerns for the child’s progress.

The Special Education Teacher (SET) administers the diagnostic test. The Special Education Teacher (SET) and class teacher analyse the results.

The diagnostic test results inform the priority needs of the student. Targets for each term are set for each student based on these priority needs. Information is shared between teachers, parents and outside personnel as needed.

Following the analyses by the class teacher and Special Education Teacher (SET) of the results of the Diagnostic Tests, supplementary teaching is offered to the student (Stage 2 Circular 02/05). If consultation with a psychologist is deemed necessary by the parent, principal, class teacher and Special Education Teacher (SET) then the Special Education Teacher (SET) makes an appointment for the student.

**(f) Psychological Assessment.**

If the principal, the class teacher and the Special Education Teacher (SET) deem it necessary to refer a child to a psychologist, then a meeting is set up with the child’s parents, class teacher and Special Education Teacher (SET) to explain the procedure and to obtain permission to request an appointment.

The Special Education Teacher (SET) contacts the psychologist and requests an appointment. If the child needs to be referred to a speech and language therapist, an occupational therapist, a physiotherapist or a child psychiatrist then the Special Education Teacher (SET) explains to the parents that they need to request a referral to these services through their GP.

The assessment obtained from the psychologist or other specialists inform the parents, class teacher, principal and Special Education Teacher (SET) on the priority learning needs of the child. The priority learning needs of the child are then used to guide in drafting an educational plan for the child. (Stage 3 of Circular 02/05)

All psychological reports are stored in the locked strong room in the principal’s office. Class teachers can access the psychological report by requesting it from the Principal or Special Education Teacher (SET).

**(g) Recording the results of assessment.**

All pupils have a report card for every academic year in their file in the principal’s office. Results of standardised tests are recorded each year on a pupil tracking sheet which is stored in the pupil’s folder.

The results of each class’ standardised tests for every academic year are recorded on the class record sheet stored in the lever arch file in the strong room in the principal’s office and on Aladdin.

The results of MICRA-T are stored on Aladdin and the hard copies in the strong room off Principal’s office. Comments are recorded in an instructive and objective manner using the descriptors provided in the test manuals. The Aladdin software is password protected, and teachers have only access to student files for whom they teach on any given school year. The Special Education Teacher (SET), Principal and Deputy Principal have also access to view these test results.

The transfer of appropriate information between teachers regarding children is done formally at a briefing at the end of the school year and at the beginning of the new school year. The close-knit ethos of the school allows for ongoing consultation between teachers and SNA during the school year.

Parents and outside professionals e.g. therapists or SENO, have access to these records through the principal in accordance with Education Act 1998, Data Protection Act 2003 and Education Welfare Act 2000.

This Assessment Policy is informed by all other school policies on file.

**Success Criteria**

Success of this plan will be measured using the following criteria:

Procedures run smoothly and efficiently because there is clarity about what is expected and who is responsible for different aspects.

Transfer of information from class teacher to class teacher , in consultation with the Principal and the Special Education Teacher (SET), happens efficiently at the beginning and end of school year and throughout the school year.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

The principal and the Special Education Teacher (SET) are responsible for the co-ordination of the assessment policy.

**Implementation Date**

The procedures as outlined in this assessment policy apply from February 2023..

**Timetable for Review**

The operation of the procedures outlined in the policy will be reviewed in the school year 2026/27 or sooner if deemed necessary.

**Ratification and Communication**

This revised policy was communicated to all members of the teaching staff.

**This policy has been ratified by the BOM on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (date)**

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

**Chairperson of the Board of Management**