

St Patrick's De La Salle Boys National School



Policy on Assessment

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 whole school response to their needs. An effective assessment policy is central to this core objective. Using assessment information to inform teaching and learning will make learning a more enjoyable and challenging experience for the child, and will contribute to a more enriching and rewarding professional experience for the teacher.

Assessment in primary school is about building a picture over time of a child's learning progress across the curriculum. The teacher uses different ways to gather evidence about how and what the child learns on an ongoing basis. This information is used to celebrate the child's current learning, and to help make decisions about next steps for future learning. (Professional Development Service for Teachers)

Relationship to School Ethos

The school adopts a holistic approach to the education and development of each child, the enhancement of teaching processes. Our assessment policy seeks to be effective by identifying 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 to:

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 whole 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 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. The policy will address each curriculum area/subject and encompass the knowledge the child acquires, the skills the child learns, the attitude and values the child develops and the dispositions the child shows.

Assessment and Screening Tests

Standardised Testing

The school uses Micra T, Sigma T standardised tests for screening purposes. All classes from First class to Sixth are tested. The tests are administered in the month of May by the SEN team. Standard and Percentile Rankings scores are recorded on the class Record template and stored by each individual teacher with a copy held in Mrs Regan's room. The SEN teams analyse the results in June for allocation of resources to pupils in September.

In our school we carry out the following assessment procedures:

- Junior Infants: Teacher Observation, Checklists, BIAP (on selected pupils)
- Senior Infants: Teacher Observation, Checklists, MIST/ DTEL & DTEN, Reading Recovery testing (on selected pupils)
- 1st class: Teacher Observation, Checklists, Micra T, Sigma T, and Reading Recovery testing (on selected pupils)
- 2nd class: Teacher Observation, Checklists Micra T, Sigma T, NNRIT
- 3rd class: Teacher Observation, Checklists, Micra T, Sigma T.
- 4th class Teacher Observation, Checklists, Micra T, Sigma T.
- 5th class: Teacher Observation, Checklists, Micra T, Sigma T
- 6th class: Teacher Observation, Checklists, Micra T, Sigma T.

We continually review the assessment and screening tests that we use in order to balance the needs of our pupils and the need to provide information for appropriate support. Therefore we may deviate from the above list prior to the review date.

Diagnostic Assessment

The school policy on Psychological Assessments lists all diagnostic tests used by the school. Such tests are administered by the SEN Teachers (SETs) 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 diagnostic tests used in the school include:

- Neale Analysis
- Jackson – Get Reading Right
- Schonell Reading and Spelling Tests
- Phonological awareness and Assessment Battery (PHAB)
- Quest

Screening

The screening tests used to identify learning strengths and weaknesses in our school are –

- Micra T
- Sigma T
- Belfield Infant Assessment Programme
- Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST)
- Early Literacy Test

These tests are administered individually or on a whole class basis. The MIST, Micra T & Sigma T. are administered on a whole class basis, while the diagnostic tests are administered individually by the SETs when deemed appropriate. Screening is used by the school to initiate the staged approach to intervention as per circulars 24/03 and 02/05.

Staff have adopted the use of Student Support Files for those pupils requiring additional support. The *Continuum of Support* model is used to identify the priority level for the needs of the pupil in such circumstances.

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 (see Psychological Assessment policy). An assessment will determine the subsequent level of intervention, be it Learning Support Resource hours or an Individual Education Plan.

Assessment Formats

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 / end of year report. 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 Maths tests, spelling tests and quizzes.

Teachers are cognisant of assessment approaches to learning of a summative nature (*assessment of learning*) and a formative nature (*assessment for learning*). Planning for better learning outcomes for our pupils must involve giving effective feedback to the pupils as well.

Recording

The school maintains three kinds of records:

- The teacher's day to day records
- The Pupil file
- The Report card

Each pupil has a file and record sheet, which is stored securely in a filing cabinet in the classroom. This file records standardised test results and end of year reports. It takes account of the child's strengths and needs, the progress he has made, and any areas of learning and development that need particular attention. This file is passed from teacher to teacher as the child progresses through the system. Procedures are in place to manage sensitive data (see Data Protection Policy).

The assessment information contained in the pupil file and on the Report Card will be phrased in a positive manner in order to support further learning and development. It will be readily accessible and comprehensible to all relevant interests. This will entail clarity and consistency in recording and reporting assessment information from teacher to teacher within the school and in reporting to parents at the different stages of their children's primary school education. Similar consistency and clarity is needed in sharing assessment information between schools.

Reporting

Assessment results will be reported to parents twice yearly. One of these will include Parent/Teacher meeting, which is held at the end of October, and the other can include a written report and meeting at the end of the school year. Outside these formal meeting, teachers may meet parents informally. Appropriate information should be communicated to pupils also. A Student Transfer form, pupils' report card information and standardized test results will be provided to the principals of schools to which pupils transfer.

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

Roles and Responsibilities

Mainstream, 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 and Deputy Principal assume 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.

Review

This document is dated 2016. Minor revisions are made as required. The policy will be reviewed as necessary by means of a whole-school collaborative process.

References

www.sess.ie

www.ncca.ie

www.pdst.ie

National Strategy for Literacy and Numeracy

Working together to make a difference for children – NEPS

Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum- Guidelines for Schools (NCCA)

D.E.S. Circular 02/05 – 24/03

D.E.S. Learning Support Guidelines 2000

Chairperson, Board of Management

Principal / Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: _____

