



## **Scoil Mhuire, Green Lane, Leixlip, 19459h**

### **Assessment & Recording Policy**

#### **1. Introductory Statement and Rationale**

- This policy was drafted in April 2020 by the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO), and was subsequently discussed and developed by the staff of Scoil Mhuire, Leixlip. This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2020.
- In order to ensure that all pupils in our school achieve their potential in line with their ability, we believe it is imperative that any learning difficulties are identified at the earliest opportunity and that the school put in place an appropriate response to their needs. An effective assessment policy ensures quality in education is central to this process of teaching and learning.
- Through assessment, the teacher constructs a comprehensive picture of the short term and long term needs of the pupil and plans accordingly. Assessment assists communication between all parties involved in the pupil's education i.e. teacher and pupil, teacher and parent and teacher to teacher. It helps the pupil become more self-aware as a learner and develops powers of self-assessment. It is integral to all areas of the curriculum and to the pupil's self-esteem and development of a wide range of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values.
- We adhere to the NCCA definition of assessment as "the process of gathering, recording, interpreting, using and reporting information about a pupil's progress and achievement in developing knowledge, skills and attitudes" (NCCA, 2007, p. 7).

#### **2. Relationship to School Ethos and Mission**

Scoil Mhuire adopts a holistic approach to the education and development of each pupil and the enhancement of teaching processes. An effective Assessment Policy identifies early interventions that need to be put in place to ensure that relative success, increased confidence and raised self-esteem is achieved. This work can be best achieved where there is a high level of openness and co-operation between staff, parents, pupils and the whole school community. We believe that this Assessment Policy will enhance our work.

### **3. Aims of Policy**

The primary aims of the policy are to:

- Facilitate improved pupil learning
- Conduct assessment for learning - to help guide teachers with short term and long term planning
- Monitor learning processes and learning styles
- Conduct assessment of learning - to generate baseline data that can be used to monitor achievements over time
- Involve parents, guardians and pupils in identifying and managing learner strengths and needs
- Emphasise the importance of early identification of pupils with specific numeracy and literacy problems through establishing relevant baseline data which in turn can be used to monitor achievement over time
- Co-ordinate and structure assessment procedures on a whole-school basis
- Establish the necessary and appropriate tools and approaches to gather assessment information for reporting to parents
- Follow the assessment guidelines set out by the NCCA (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment).

### **4. Staff Roles and Responsibilities**

- It is the responsibility of the class teacher to use correct and appropriate assessment practices, as per this policy, and to ensure that a staged intervention, differentiated or support approach is provided for, in line with NEPS - Continuum of Support Guidelines and the school SEN Policy. Class teachers are responsible for Stage 1 of the Continuum but can seek the support of the Special Education Team at this stage.
- At Stage 2, the responsibilities are shared with the Special Education Team (SET) in forming school support plans.
- The Principal and / or SENCO assume(s) 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.
- The pupils are involved as is appropriate and their opinions will be valued. 'My Thoughts about School' questionnaire is a useful resource.
- The SENCO is responsible for the ordering of test booklets and the organisation of the timeline of assessment for the year. The SENCO files or shreds the various testing materials and keeps the central file up to date.
- The Principal and SENCO are the only individuals with access to the central file.
- Each class teacher is responsible for the administration and scoring of Standardised Assessments.

- SET teachers generally carry out one-to-one screening or diagnostic assessments.
- The inputting of standardised test results for 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> to the Department is completed by the principal.

## **Policy Content**

### **5. Purpose of Assessment**

- To inform planning for, and coverage of, all areas of the curriculum
- To gather and interpret data at class/whole school level and in relation to national norms
- To identify and support the particular learning needs of pupils/groups of pupils, including the exceptionally able
- To contribute to the school's strategy for prevention of learning difficulties
- 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
- To facilitate communication between parents and teachers about pupils' development, progress and learning needs
- To facilitate the involvement of pupils in assessment of their own work
- To enable teachers to monitor their own approaches and methodologies taking into accounts pupils' different learning styles

### **6. Assessment Methods**

#### **a) Assessment of Learning (AoL):**

A wide range of AoL methods are in use in the school, based on the NCCA Assessment Guidelines. These are:

#### **1. Standardised Testing:**

- Scoil Mhuire administers the Sigma T and the New Drumcondra Primary Reading Test in May. All classes from first class to 6<sup>th</sup> class complete standardised assessments.
- 1<sup>st</sup> class pupils complete the Micra T assessment in September.
- The SENCO is responsible for the ordering, distribution and co-ordination of testing.
- Standardised tests will be administered, corrected, interpreted, recorded and reported by the class teacher. If pupils are absent, 'catch up' tests may be administered by a SET teacher, if the SENCO and / or principal feel a result will be of benefit to the pupil.
- Once a test is completed, the raw score, standard score, percentile rank and STen scores are recorded on the class record template. A copy of this document is kept

by the mainstream teacher, given to the various SET teachers who work with the class and to the SENCO for filing in the central file. These results are also inputted into the Aladdin system. A hardcopy of the class record template is passed on to next year's teacher in June by the current teacher and any additional copies of the class record template are shredded. The SENCO is given the test booklets for filing in the central file.

- The SENCO liaises with the mainstream class teachers, the SET team and the principal to analyse the results in June for allocation of resources to pupils in September.
- Results of standardised tests are reported to parents using the end of year report card and at parent - teacher meetings. The STen score is used to explain results to parents.
- English medium schools are required to administer standardised testing in English reading and Mathematics during the period May/June for all students in 2nd, 4th and 6th classes on an annual basis. These results are reported to the Department of Education by the Principal in June using the Esinet Portal.

## **2. Screening Tests:** Screening tests used in the school include:

- **Belfield Infant Assessment Profile (BIAP):** The BIAP is administered to Junior Infants before Easter. The assessment is administered with the help of the class support teachers. Results are used by the class teacher to support the learning needs of pupils and to inform future teaching. Results are communicated to parents, where the teacher has a concern about a pupil. Results and test materials are given to the SENCO for filing in the central file.
- **Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST):** The MIST is administered in Senior Infants each year. Results are used by the class teacher to support the learning needs of pupils and to inform future teaching. Results are communicated to parents, where the teacher has a concern about a pupil's progress. The MIST programme, Forward Together will be recommended for pupils who obtain scores below the threshold. Parents will be encouraged to use the Forward Together programme at home. Results and test booklets are given to the SENCO for filing in the central file. These results are inputted on Aladdin
- **New Non Reading Intelligence Test (NNRIT):** The NNRIT is administered in November to all pupils in 2<sup>nd</sup> Class. Results are communicated to parents, where necessary. The test is administered and corrected by the SET. Results and test booklets are given to the SENCO for filing in the central file. These results are also inputted on Aladdin
- **SPAR Reading:** Senior Infants – 6<sup>th</sup> Class. This test is administered and corrected by the SET. The SET / class teacher communicate these scores to all parents of pupils who receive additional support and in any other case deemed necessary. Results and test materials are given to the SENCO for filing in the central file.



- **Young Spelling:** 1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Class. This test is administered and corrected by the SET. The SET / class teacher communicate these scores to all parents of pupils who receive additional support and in any other case deemed necessary. Results and test materials are given to the SENCO for filing in the central file.

The SET Team will make every effort to support pupils who score significantly below the class average in any of the screening tests listed above. Most will already be in receipt of support from the SET team.

### Standardised and Screening Tests

The following procedure for whole school testing is in place.

Test	Class	When Administered	Who Administers
B.I.A.P.	Junior Infants	Before Easter	Class Teacher / S.E.T.
M.I.S.T.	Senior Infants	In February	Class Teacher / S.E.T.
SPAR Reading	Snr. Infs. – 6 <sup>th</sup>	June	S.E.T.
Young Spelling	1 <sup>st</sup> - 6 <sup>th</sup>	June	S.E.T.
MICRA-T	1 <sup>st</sup> class	September	Class Teacher / S.E.T.
New D.P.R.T.	1 <sup>st</sup> – 6 <sup>th</sup>	May	Class Teacher
SIGMA-T	1 <sup>st</sup> – 6 <sup>th</sup>	May	Class Teacher
N.N.R.I.T.	2 <sup>nd</sup>	November	S.E.T.

**3. Diagnostic Tests:** Diagnostic tests have an important role to play in identifying pupils with learning difficulties. The mainstream team and the SET team are involved in selecting pupils for diagnostic assessments. The SET will administer the tests. The school has a staged approach to assessment to ensure that the results of the assessments inform subsequent learning plans (refer to the SEN Policy). If it is felt necessary to consult a psychologist (NEPS or other) about diagnostic test results, the SENCO and / or principal arrange for such a consultation, in conjunction with parents. In Scoil Mhuire, diagnostic testing includes:

- **YARC – York Assessment of Reading & comprehension 5 – 11.** This may be distributed to individual pupils who seek an Irish Exemption, if they do not have a report from an outside agency to say an exemption is required. Results may be shared with parents. Test materials will remain in the pupil's file in their SET's room.
- **Dyslexia Screening Test** – If the SET team suspect a pupil demonstrates dyslexic tendencies, they may administer this test. This test will provide no diagnosis, however it can be a good indicator of Dyslexia. Results may be shared with parents. The pupil's name will be included on the list for the NEPS caseload. If the pupil cannot be allocated an assessment through the school with the NEPS psychologist, sometimes parents seek an assessment by an

outside agency. The results of this test and the test materials will remain in the pupil's file in their SET's room.

- **The SET team continue to explore further diagnostic testing**

#### **4. Psychological Assessment:**

- In Scoil Mhuire, pupils with the greatest needs are allocated additional supports first, as outlined in the SEN Policy.
- The school NEPS psychologist generally offers 3 assessments to the school each year. Each September, the SET team and the Principal meet with the SENCO to outline the school's caseload. Priority is given to pupils who are in 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class, preparing to transition to second level. In order to offer the supports to the greatest number of pupils possible, Scoil Mhuire can only provide one assessment to a pupil during their time in the school.
- In deciding whether intervention from a psychologist is required, the class teacher, the SET team and the Principal will discuss the results of interventions put in place for the pupil, diagnostic testing, screening and informal testing. The staff members involved will adhere to and follow the guidelines provided in the 'Continuum of Support' (NEPS, 2007). If deemed appropriate, the relevant staff members will discuss the case with the NEPS psychologist assigned to the school.
- The class teacher, SET and/or Principal meet parents to inform them if their pupil is being considered for psychological assessment. This may be done on an ongoing basis throughout the school year. As assessment can be daunting for parents, discussion about assessment needs to be sensitive and teachers need to allow parents time to weigh up the potential outcomes of an assessment.
- The SENCO will organise the assessment with the NEPS psychologist.
- The outcomes of the assessment will inform a support plan for the pupil and this plan will incorporate recommendations made by the psychologist or other specialised professional(s). The reports are stored in the individual pupil's files in a filing cabinet in the support teacher's classroom.
- Some parents choose to seek a private assessment for their child from an external agency and are asked to share the results and recommendations from the assessment with the school. These reports will also be stored in the individual pupil's files in a filing cabinet in the SET's classroom.

#### **5. Other Assessments:**

- Pupils who present with possible SLT (Speech and Language) / OT (occupational therapy) needs will be identified by teachers to the Principal. The Principal and/or the class teacher will advise parents to make an appointment with their GP who may make a medical referral for a speech and language or OT assessment.

b) **Assessment for Learning (AfL)**: AfL has been defined as "the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where their learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there" (Assessment Reform Group, 2002).

- The following types of informal assessment methods are used in the school and can provide teachers, pupils and parents with a valuable insight into **assessment of and for learning**:

**1. Teacher Observation** – Teacher observation, spontaneous or planned, can happen any time a teacher and pupil interact. When teacher observation is compiled as a written record, it allows the teacher to describe a pupil's learning in context. These records can make the planning of further work for an individual, group or whole class more focused and systematic. It also helps the teacher to assess not only the pupil's ability to transfer skills and knowledge across the curriculum but also his/her ability to use learning materials and resources. Class teachers complete 'Strengths and Needs' documents in May for each pupil who has a support plan. These inform teaching for the next school year.

**2. Teacher Checklists** – Teachers may utilise checklists for various subjects to monitor assessment for and of learning.

**3. Support Plans** – Teachers continuously refer to the classroom support, school support or school support plus plans.

- Classroom Support Plan – involves additional support in the class from the class teacher
- School Support Plan – involves support from SET team
- School Support Plus Plan – involves support from outside agencies

The targets in these plans are examined informally at various stages throughout the year. A formal review of the targets takes place in January and new / revised targets are set for February to June. Further guidance on the support plans can be found in the SEN policy.

**4. Teacher-designed Tasks and Tests** – Setting tasks requires pupils to use certain skills and apply ideas in relation to their next steps for learning, including being reflective about their learning. These tasks and tests could include weekly spelling tests, tables tests, weekly Maths tests in senior classes, termly maths assessments, SESE / Gaeilge / English tasks and tests as deemed suitable by class teachers.

**5. Questioning** – Questioning underpins all classroom assessment methods. Teachers regularly ask pupils oral questions about their work to find out what they have done and why. Teachers use these questions to assess knowledge and understanding and to guide pupils in their learning. Pupils also use questions to help them to learn, for example they pose questions to their teacher and their peers. Part of the teacher's purpose in using questioning as an assessment method is to model good questioning. This in turn helps pupils to become more skilful at asking good questions to aid their own learning. There are many different types of oral questions. These range from closed questions where the teacher anticipates a



single, factual answer to open-ended questions that encourage a more critical, analytical response, and which facilitate multiple solution paths (Bloom's Taxonomy). Pupils should also be provided with time to think about and discuss their responses to questions (pair share ideas/talking partners).

**6. Concept Mapping** – Concept mapping is a process used to make spatial representations of ideas and the relationships between these ideas. The information the teacher gathers through concept mapping can provide important starting points and check-in points for teaching and learning. Concept maps are especially useful in assessing pupil's learning in SESE.

**7. Work Samples, Portfolios and Projects** – Teachers assemble portfolios of pupil assignments, work samples and projects. The content is at the discretion of the teacher, or in some cases the pupils. These portfolios usually represent a yearly gathering of a pupil's work by individual class teachers, returned each June. Whole school work sample initiatives include the 'Book About Me' project from Junior Infants, the Creative Writing hardback from 1<sup>st</sup> Class and the collection of Science experiments from 3<sup>rd</sup> class.

**8. Conferencing & Feedback** – Conferencing in the context of assessment refers to when those concerned with the pupil's learning share their knowledge and understanding of the pupil's work, its processes and outcomes, during a planned or intuitive meeting. During the school year the pupil's work and progress can be the subject of meetings between the pupil and his/her teacher, or the teacher and parents, or teacher and teacher, or all parties together. These take place regularly and are especially useful in an AfL setting for delivering feedback. Feedback is any information that is provided to the pupil, both orally and written, about their learning. In Scoil Mhuire teachers give pupils regular feedback, both orally and through accurate marking, and encourage pupils to respond to the feedback. We include a period of time each week where pupils spend time correcting their errors.

**9. Self-Assessment & Peer Assessment** – Self and peer assessment enables pupils to actively participate in their learning and, through their own assessment of strengths and areas to develop, has a positive influence on the learners' self-esteem, motivation and progress.

- Self-assessment strategies may include: Pupils indicating their level of confidence with a particular learning goal or using systems such as traffic lights where appropriate. This could lead to pupils making their own choices about the tasks and resources appropriate to their need.
- Pupils are encouraged to become involved in the assessment of their own work / progress. This can include KWL (Know, Want to Know, Learned) activities, sharing the learning objectives (sometimes referred to as WALT – We Are Learning To) and developing and sharing the success criteria (sometimes referred to as WILF – What I'm Looking For).
- Peer assessment in particular helps pupils to become clearer about their own expectations through trying to explain strengths and areas for development to others. This may result in the learning of new and more efficient strategies. Strategies such as '2 stars and a wish' may be utilised.



### **Further Notes on Assessment Methods:**

- The above assessment methods are used across the whole school, at the discretion of individual teachers, depending on the requirements of an individual pupil, class or subject.
- The school plan for each curriculum subject addresses the importance of assessment.
- Homework and class work also prove as sources of assessment. Work is ticked and sometimes dated to indicate the teacher has corrected it and comments are written, as appropriate in the form of feedback. Corrections are made as outlined in the English Policy.
- The above assessment data is stored in assessment folders / pupil's copies / portfolios / projects, etc.

### **7. Recording and Reporting Results of Assessment:**

- In the mainstream classroom, teachers have an assessment file, which may include, but not limited to:
  - Work samples (all work should be dated)
  - Checklists
  - Rubrics
  - Photographs of work or displays
  - Teacher comments or observations
  - Worksheets
  - Test scores (including the tracking of scores)
  - Test examples
  - Standardised or Diagnostic test scores
  - AFL samples (KWLs, WALTs or WILFs)
  - Samples of pupil's self-assessment, where appropriate
  - Rating scales
- Standardised test results are stored in the assessment folder and additionally stored on Aladdin.
- All standardised results and end of year testing results are stored in the central file until pupils reach the age of 25.
- Test booklets are stored in the central file for a year at a time. The SENCO shreds the previous year's materials and replaces them with the new test booklets of the current year. Some pupil's test booklets are placed with their individual file for reference purposes.
- Mainstream class teachers shred assessment folders at the end of the year, unless any information contained in these folders is pertinent to next year's teacher.
- Class teachers have a support folder in their classroom also, containing a copy of all support plans for their class.

- Data is sensitive to each pupil and therefore the assessment folder and support folder is locked away at all times.
- The SET team will pass on each pupil's file to the next year's SET teacher.
- Each pupil who has / had a support plan has a file in a locked cabinet in the SET's room. Psychological reports, diagnostic results, end of year testing, examples of work, support plans, etc. are kept in the pupil's file.
- Individual files of the pupils who have received additional support in Scoil Mhuire are placed in the central file at the end of 6<sup>th</sup> class or when they leave the school. SEN files remain in the school indefinitely.
- Psychological reports are stored in the central file indefinitely.
- Class teachers meet parents in November to report standardised testing results.
- Formal report cards from the NCCA are sent home in June. These contain the standardised test results in the form of STens. Report cards for each pupil are kept on file in a locked cabinet until pupils reach the age of 25.
- The SET team liaise with parents in October to form targets for the year, in January to review targets and in June to review the year.
- English reading and Mathematics standardised testing results for all pupils in 2nd, 4th and 6th classes are reported to the Department of Education using the Esinet Portal in June.
- Standardised test results will be presented to the BOM annually to review overall school standards in Literacy/Numeracy.
- This policy has implications for other policies and procedures in the school e.g. SEN Policy, Record Keeping, Data Protection, Reports to parents, etc.

### **8. Primary to Secondary**

- In line with the National Strategy to improve Literacy & Numeracy, standardised test results will be forwarded to the relevant second level school on transfer from Primary to Second Level.
- A meeting is held each year with key staff from the local second-level schools to discuss pupils' performance in their assessment tests and to report on individual pupils. This meeting is attended by the sixth class teachers. This meeting may take place over the phone.
- Parents, pupils and teachers complete the Education Passport and permission is sought from parents to share results and / or reports with secondary schools.

## 9. Staff Development

- Teachers who wish to attend courses relating to Assessment and Reporting are supported by the Board of Management.
- Resources for assessment which are deemed necessary by staff are purchased.
- Opportunities are provided for teachers within the staff to share their expertise relating to Assessment and Reporting with their colleagues.
- The principal has received training in Data Protection and has shared this training with staff members.

**Success Criteria:** This policy is considered successful if;

- A range of informal and formal AfL and AoL assessment approaches are used to place assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning
- Early identification and intervention is achieved
- Clarity is achieved regarding procedures involved in a staged approach
- Procedures are clear, with roles and responsibilities defined
- Parent and teacher feedback on the effectiveness of this policy is satisfactory
- There is efficient transfer of information between teachers
- There is efficient transfer of information between primary and second level
- The pupils teaching and learning is enhanced.

**10. Implementation:** This policy is effective from September 2020.

**11. Review Timetable:** This policy will be reviewed in 3 years' time and amended as necessary.

## 12. Ratification & Communication:

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2020, and communicated to parents thereafter through the website.

Signed: Paul Dooley, Date: 9/6/20

## 13. References:

- NCCA (2007). Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum: Guidelines for Schools.
- NEPS (2007). Special Educational Needs, A Continuum of Support: Guidelines for Teachers. [https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/neps\\_special\\_needs\\_guidelines.pdf](https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/neps_special_needs_guidelines.pdf)
- Assessment Reform Group (2002). Assessment for Learning: 10 Principles [online]. Available: [http://www.qca.org.uk/libraryAssets/media/4031\\_afl\\_principles.pdf](http://www.qca.org.uk/libraryAssets/media/4031_afl_principles.pdf) [10 July, 2009].