

Policy on Assessment

Introduction:

This policy was drafted by the staff of Scoil Mháirtín.

Policy Rationale:

The core of the policy is that all children should experience success at school. This policy endeavours to identify children who may have learning difficulties at the earliest possible opportunity, 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. An effective Assessment policy identifies early interventions that need to be put in place to ensure that enhancement, increased confidence and raised self esteem are 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:

Assessment is necessary 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 where necessary. These strategies may include:

1. pupil self assessment,
2. pupil profiling,
3. two way communication between parents and teachers,
4. modification and differentiation of teacher programmes
5. drawing up of individual education plans.

Standardised Testing:

The school is currently using the Drumcondra Standardised Tests in Maths and English. All classes from First class upwards are tested. The tests are usually administered at the end of May or early June by the class teacher. Standard and percentile ranking scores are recorded on the class record template and stored by each individual teacher with a copy held in the administration office. The Special Education team analyses the results in June for allocation of resources to pupils in September.

Diagnostic Assessment:

Diagnostic tests are administered by the Learning Support, 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 (acquired in late 2010)
- Jackson – Get Reading Right
- Aston Index
- Schonell
- Rain Test
- Quest
- Dolch Lists

Screening:

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

- Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST)
- SPAR / Parallel Spelling Test
- Non Reading Intelligence Test (NRIT)
- Aston Index
- Drumcondra Reading and Maths standardised tests

These tests are administered individually or on a class basis. The MIST is administered on a class basis during 2nd term of Senior Infants. While the Aston Index is administered individually by the Learning Support Teacher 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**.

Assessment: (see Whole School Policy on Learning Support/Resource)

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. 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.

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 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 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.

Review Timetable:

This policy will be reviewed, and amended as necessary by means of a whole school collaborative process.