



Scoil Chroí Mhuire  
Gan Smál Sinsear

Scoil Chroí Mhuire gan Smál  
Béal an Mhuirthead,  
Co. Mhaigh Eo.

■ **Title**

**ASSESSMENT POLICY**

■ **Introductory Statement**

This policy was put together with the input from all staff members in February 2012 during whole school planning. It was further reviewed and updated in January 2020.

■ **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.

■ **Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School**

Scoil Chroí Mhuire gan Smál adopts a holistic approach to the child's learning and development to regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to the students and their parents. It is furthermore an intrinsic part of our policy to provide for assessment for learning (information to guide a student's future learning) and assessment of learning (information on a student's achievements)

at that point in time).

### ■ **Aims**

- To benefit pupil learning
- To monitor learning processes
- To generate baseline data that can be used to monitor achievement over time
- To involve parents and pupils in identifying and managing learning strengths or difficulties
- To assist teachers' long and short term planning
- To coordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis

### ■ **Guidelines (content of policy)**

#### **(a) Purposes of assessment:**

We cite the following reasons for assessing the work of our pupils:

- To inform planning for, and coverage of, all areas of the curriculum
- To identify 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
- The outcomes of assessment modify our teaching methods, provide feedback on the Curriculum as well as indicate pupil progress

Recent advances in our knowledge of how learning takes place and how learners make their way through classroom activities have led to new understandings of the importance of assessment in the promotion of learning. These new perspectives are having an impact across the curriculum as the focus in assessment activity begins to

move from an emphasis on the assessment of learning to include assessment for learning-providing feedback to learners on how to improve their learning.

<b>Assessment of learning</b>	<b>Assessment for learning</b>
happens after the learning takes place	an integral part of the learning process
information is gathered by the teacher	information is shared with the learner
information is usually transformed into marks or grades	information is available on the quality of learning
comparison with the performance of others	comparison with aims and objectives is important
looks back on past learning	looks forward to the next stage of learning

**(b) Assessment for learning:**

- The following types of informal assessment methods are used in the school?
  - *Teacher observation*
  - *Teacher-designed tasks and tests*
  - *Work samples and projects*
  - *Use of Self-Assessment Portfolios for Learning*
  - *Homework*
  - *Class work*
  - *Checklists*
- Assessment methods are differentiated to take into account such issues as age, level, subject etc.
- Some methods, such as teacher observation and work samples, apply across the whole school. Other types of assessment are at the discretion of individual teachers.
- Where issues or concerns arise as a result of teacher observation, further assessment may take place in conjunction with the Special Education Teacher with a view to putting in place strategies to meet whatever needs may arise.
- The school plan for each curriculum subject address the issue of assessment.
- Teacher-designed tasks/tests are used for all subjects .
- Children are involved in assessment of their own work/progress through self correction, editing exercises, peer-tutoring and correction of each other's work and the use of Self-Assessment Portfolios for Learning.

### **(c) Assessment of learning:**

Assessment of Learning generally involves assessing a child's learning at the end of a given period, such as the end of a unit of work, a week, a term, or a year. Assessment of Learning is more about measuring a child's cumulative progress towards objectives, often in the form of a grade or score. Assessment of Learning also helps the teacher to plan future work, to set new targets, and to provide feedback and information for end-of-year assessment.

### **(d) Standardised tests**

- Preliminary screening from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> Classes takes place in May/June, using a combination of the following:
  - ❖ Micra-T
  - ❖ Sigma-T
  - ❖ Drumcondra Irish
  
- Tests are administered taking into account the differing abilities, backgrounds etc. of all pupils and every effort is made to ensure that no child feels threatened or intimidated by the testing process. Appropriate procedures are in place to cater for pupils who are not taking a test with their classmates.
- The following results are recorded - raw score, standard score, percentile rank, STEN, Reading age. This procedure is uniform across all classes.
- The results are used to decide the allocation of special education teaching hours in the school.

### **(e) Screening:**

- The School Principal and the Special Education Teacher are involved in interpreting the results across the board.
- The school places a strong emphasis on early intervention programmes. The screening tests are carefully scrutinised with a view to specific intervention by the class teacher.

- If a child presents with difficulties in the screening, diagnostic testing is then deemed appropriate. Diagnostic testing may also be deemed appropriate where the class teacher identifies a deficit or delay in the expected learning outcomes of a child.
- Results are communicated to parents at PT meetings and on School Reports. If immediate intervention is deemed appropriate, parents will be contacted and asked to meet with the teachers to discuss appropriate procedures in relation to further testing and support strategies.

**(f) Diagnostic Assessment:**

- Diagnostic tests will be selected from the following:

Quest

Neale Analysis

Schonell Word Reading Test

Aston Index

Maths Tracker

Miscue Analysis

NRIT

Sound Linkage

- The class teacher in consultation with the Principal and Special Education Teacher is responsible for selecting children for diagnostic assessment.
- Parents are contacted and consulted in advance of administering diagnostic tests.
- The Special Education Teacher administers the tests and interprets the results in consultation with the Principal and Class Teacher.
- The school ensures that the results of the assessments inform subsequent school support plan.
- Following testing, where appropriate, information is shared between relevant teachers, parents and relevant agencies with parental consent.
- When deciding which pupils should be referred for additional support, preference is given to the greatest need with priority to those pupils operating at or below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile on a Standardised Test.
- If it is felt necessary to consult a psychologist (NEPS or other) about diagnostic test results, the Principal arranges for such consultation.

**(g) Psychological Assessment:**

- The Principal liaises with parents if it is felt that a psychological assessment or

another assessment is required. The standard NEPS letters and consent forms are used.

- The Principal is responsible for requesting and arranging an assessment from a Psychologist, although a parent may decide to have an assessment done independently. The Principal and/or Class Teacher may recommend an assessment by a Speech & Language Therapist, Audiologist, or other such professional to a parent, who may then proceed with such an assessment through the HSE.
- The results of the assessment will play an integral part in drafting an educational support plan for a pupil.

### **Self-Assessment by Students and Teachers**

Children are involved in self-assessment when they look at their own work in a reflective way, identify aspects of it that are good and that could be improved, and then set personal learning targets for themselves. Self-assessment skills include effective questioning, reflection, problem solving, comparative analysis, and the ability to share thoughts in a variety of ways. Self-assessment can be used by children of all ability levels and in all areas of learning. In age-appropriate ways, it can be used throughout the primary school and across all subjects. Whole class discussions, group situations or one-to-one conferencing are all platforms for self-assessment. These everyday activities place assessments at the very heart of teaching and learning. It enables the child to take greater responsibility for his/her own learning. SALF can be used to document the child's self assessment and reflection on his/her work samples or collections.

Teachers in turn, can also use self-assessment to evaluate how they deliver the curriculum content to the children and by reflecting on how a unit of work was delivered. This reflective practise, coupled with the AfL and AoL mentioned earlier, will help to inform them as to what was successful and if any adjustments may improve the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom.

We will use a variety of ways of involving pupils in assessing their own learning, these may include:

1. Questioning
2. Feedback-individual and/or group feedback
3. Dialogue and Discussion
4. Focused Correction of Work
5. Visual Aids
6. Traffic Light/Smiley face System
7. KWL grid - This can be used orally and/or written, by group and/or class and/or individual
8. Reflective report cards
9. WALT/WILF

### **Early Intervention and Supplementary Teaching**

In the case where a child is selected for support teaching but the parents do not wish for the child to receive such support, a written letter from the parents will be sought outlining that while the school made them aware of the difficulty their child was experiencing and while supplementary teaching was made available, they have decided that they do not wish the child to avail of this support.

### **Recording the results of assessment**

- The school keeps written records of assessment results on file until the child reaches the age of eighteen years.
- There is an agreed terminology used and understood by all teachers.
- Teachers are made aware of the need to record comments in an objective and instructive manner.
- Sensitive data is stored in a locked filing cabinet and managed by the Principal/Deputy Principal.
- Assessment information is shared, where deemed appropriate by the Principal/Deputy Principal.

■ **Success Criteria**

Our success criteria will be based on the achievement of our objectives. We will use staff observation and parental feedback as our benchmark for success or otherwise of the policy.

■ **Roles and Responsibility**

The school principal will be responsible for the implementation and evaluation of the policy. Any feedback received will be recorded and any problems that arise will be taken into account for the purposes of evaluation and review.

■ **Timeframe for Implementation**

The policy is implemented on a continuous basis year to year.

■ **Timeframe for Review**

This policy is reviewed annually.

■ **Responsibility for Review**

The school principal and teaching staff will be responsible for reviewing the policy.

■ **Ratification and Communication**

The Board of Management ratified this policy on the 25<sup>th</sup> of Feb. 2020.

Signed: , (Chairperson, BOM)



## APPENDIX 1



Circular 0138/2006

To Boards of Management, Principal Teachers and Teaching Staff of  
Primary Schools

### **Supporting Assessment in Primary Schools**

The website of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment ([www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie)) sets out a series of publications aimed at re-envisioning assessment in primary schools in the context of the revised Primary School Curriculum and the obligations under Article 22 of the Education Act on schools "to regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to the students and their parents." The publications seek to support the development of a school policy on assessment which would provide for assessment *for* learning (information to guide a student's future learning) and assessment *of* learning (information on a student's achievements at that point in time).

A range of assessment approaches are recommended including teacher observation, questioning and discussion, samples of children's work, portfolios, projects and tasks and tests, self-assessment by the child, standardised tests and diagnostic tests. The objective is to position assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning. This issue has been further highlighted in the Primary Curriculum Review Phase 1 Final Report, in which teachers highlighted their need for more advice on the use of different assessment tools and resources, on recording evidence of assessment and on reporting on children's learning to parents. Building on this work, the NCCA is currently working on the development of

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practical guidelines on assessment, including exemplars of children's work, and on the development of report card templates for reporting children's progress to parents.

The Minister for Education and Science has accepted the advice of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) that, as part of a range of assessment approaches, all pupils should take standardised tests in English reading and Mathematics at the end of first class OR the beginning of second class, AND at the end of fourth class OR the beginning of fifth class.

It is estimated that 95% of schools already use such tests. You are requested to ensure that **standardised testing is implemented in your school on an annual basis in the relevant classes in English Reading and Mathematics beginning in the calendar year 2007**. Pupils may be excluded from the test if in the view of the school principal they have a learning or physical disability which would prevent them from attempting the test, or in the case of newcomer pupils, where their level of English is such that attempting such a test would be inappropriate. Further advice on this issue will be provided as part of the teacher professional development programme to be provided.

There is widespread acceptance of the value of standardised testing as one of a range of modes of assessment that help teachers to make more informed decisions in relation to teaching and learning. The results of standardised tests can be used to inform parents of pupils' progress and to assist in the identification of pupils that may require support.

### **Professional Development for Teachers**

A national professional development programme in assessment for learning will be provided for teachers over a number of years. This will aim to support teachers in placing assessment at the heart of the teaching and learning process, supporting children's cognitive, creative, affective, physical and social development. It is intended that all teachers and principals will have access to the programme on a rolling basis. The intensive phase of the Primary Curriculum Support Programme in regard to the revised curriculum will be completed in 2006/07. From 2007/8 onwards, an ongoing programme of professional development for teachers will be continued, and assessment for learning will be an important national priority in that context.

The first stage of the national programme will focus on standardised testing and will be targeted initially at the relevant class teachers implementing this circular, beginning with one day's provision in the Spring of 2007. The day will provide for a focus on decision-making regarding the application of the tests, and interpretation of the results. Schools will be contacted regarding the detail of these arrangements in due course by the Teacher Education Section. Given the arrangements generally in place for supervision and substitution, and the fact that only the relevant classes are being targeted at this stage, it is envisaged that the employment of substitute teachers during absence for attendance at inservice training will not be necessary in the majority of cases. However, in exceptional cases in small schools, substitution may be allowed where essential. A Certificate of Attendance will be provided by the Support Service where necessary to be used by the school to claim the cost of substitute cover. This should be included with the documentation submitted to the Department when claiming payment of substitution costs.

### **Selection of test instruments**

The selection of the appropriate standardised test instrument is a matter for decision by individual schools, provided that the tests chosen are normed for the Irish population and are consistent with the Primary School Curriculum introduced in 1999. It also is a matter for individual schools whether the tests are applied at the end of first class or beginning of second classes, and at the end of fourth class or beginning of fifth class.

### **Grants available**

A grant of €3.60 per pupil will be issued to all schools to cover the estimated cost of the tests materials in English reading and Mathematics, based on the **overall enrolment** in the school for the previous year. It is expected that some of this funding will be used to purchase materials such as teachers' manuals, test scoring services or test-related software offered by test providers.

The grant will issue to schools before the end of the current calendar year. Any funds remaining after the standardised testing costs have

been met may be spent on diagnostic tests to the extent feasible in accordance with a school's needs.

### **Maintenance of records**

For pupils in the selected classes, the results of the tests should be maintained carefully by the school and should be available for inspection by Department officials. With effect from 2007/8, the results of testing should be reported to parents in respect of their own children in accordance with the reporting template being piloted at present in a number of selected schools by the NCCA. You can view this template at [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie) and communicate your views to the NCCA on it should you wish to do so.

While the results of standardised testing must be available to inspectors conducting evaluations, inspectors will not make references to test data in their reports that might facilitate school comparisons or the compilation of league tables.

### **Programme of national monitoring**

In accordance with NCCA advice, it is intended that the implementation of standardised testing at school level will be complemented by a separate programme of national monitoring undertaken by the Educational Research Centre (ERC). It is envisaged that the monitoring will be carried out by the ERC based on the model currently used to conduct national surveys of reading and mathematics in primary schools. The assessments will be targeted at

- A nationally representative sample of schools
- A representative sample of schools in the School Support Programme of DEIS
- A representative sample of Irish medium schools

It is planned that the national monitoring will be repeated on a cyclical basis, with the DEIS sample being undertaken more frequently. The purpose will be to identify changes in national trends over time for particular categories of school and to inform ongoing policy development. **No individual school results will be identifiable in this process.**

## General

You are requested to make provision for the requirements of this circular in the school development planning process in your school and, specifically, to

- make arrangements for the implementation of standardised testing in English reading and Mathematics on an annual basis for all pupils at the end of first class OR beginning of second class AND the end of fourth class OR beginning of fifth class with effect from the calendar year (January-December) 2007
- ensure that the results of standardised tests are available for inclusion in the Report Card Templates (currently being piloted by the NCCA) which will be used by schools for reporting on children's progress to parents from 2007/8 onwards.

Please bring this circular to the attention of teachers and members of the school board of management. This circular may also be accessed at [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie) under Education Personnel/primary/Circulars and Information Booklets.

Margaret Kelly  
Principal Officer  
Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit  
15 December 2006