

Assessment Policy

Scoil Mhuire an Chroí gan Smál, Leenane

Rationale:

Assessment guides teaching and learning and forms the basis for further work.

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School:

Our approach to testing is sensitive to the needs of our children and is driven by the caring ethos of the school.

At all times in our testing regimes, the child must be the focus of attention. This may mean in some circumstances, a decision being made, not to test or to administer a more appropriate test suitable to the needs of the specific child. These decisions are only made by the school team after ongoing detailed discussion on a case by case basis.

Aims of Assessment:

To inform teaching and learning

To develop specific responses e.g. I.E.P., resource hours

To provide an objective measure

To communicate with parents regarding progress of their child

To create a team spirit in support of the child

Guidelines a) General b) Standardised c) Diagnostic d) Psychological

a) General Assessment

The purpose of assessment is to establish individual teaching methods, and to assess the progress of individual children.

Methods of assessment include, teacher observation, teacher designed tasks and tests, work samples, portfolios, homework, projects and curriculum profiles as well as feedback from other staff members and parents.

A balance will be struck between formal and informal assessment.

Organisational issues such as grouping of children, equipment and resources required will be informed by testing and discussion among the school team.

Parent-teacher meetings will be scheduled towards the end of October or beginning of November.

NCCA report cards are used in conjunction with P/T meeting and end of school reports will be sent home before the summer holidays in June. The school report will inform parents of the child's score on standardised tests during the school year.

A copy of all reports as well as an account of scheduled meetings will be stored centrally in a secure file until the child reaches 21 years of age.

The school has an open door approach where parents are welcomed to discuss their child's progress by appointment at any stage during the year. Informal contact is part of the life of the school.

b) Standardised Tests

Following Circular 56/2011 mandatory testing to take place at the end of 2nd, 4th and 6th classes in May of each year, English-medium schools will be required to implement standardised testing in English reading and Mathematics during the period May/June or all students in 2nd, 4th and 6th classes with effect from 2012 onwards.

The purpose of the standardised tests is to allow teachers to make placement and progress decisions based on assessment results and to develop appropriate interventions for certain children.

The principal teacher in consultation with the class teacher and the learning support teacher is responsible for the purchase, distribution and co-ordination of testing. In the event that a pupil is absent on the day of the test the Learning Support teacher will administer the test at a later date. Pupils may be excluded from the tests if in the view of the principal they have a learning or physical disability which would prevent them taking the test or newcomer pupils, where their level of English is such that attempting test would be inappropriate.

Each child's raw score, standard score, percentile rank, STEN and reading age is recorded.

The results will be analysed at whole school level (using a data analysis grid) and at individual class level, and the information gathered from the tests will be used to inform teaching and learning.

Principal teachers in primary school are required annually to report aggregated assessment data from standardised tests to the Board of Management of their schools. Also the principal teacher must report this assessment data to the Department of Education and Skills on an annual basis. The report will comprise the aggregated results of standardised tests administered in accordance with this circular.

The principal of each primary school must send a copy of the end-of-year report card (including the information from standardised tests) after the child is enrolled to the primary or second-level school to which a student transfers.

This information should only be provided after enrolment in the primary or second-level school has been accepted.

Legislative arrangements have been made to provide for sharing information on progress including the results of standardised test, where students transfer from one school to another. The Education (welfare) Act 2000 (section 28) and the (prescribed bodies) Regulations 2005 allow schools to share relevant information concerning a child transferring between recognised schools without breaching Data Protection legislation.

The result will help determine the allocation of learning support in the school (see learning support policy).

Recording the results of assessment

Test results are recorded on class record sheets and these are stored according to school practices and the Data Protection Act.

Access to records will be determined by school policy on record keeping and the Data Protection Act. See page 95, Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum NCCA (2007)

Teachers have agreed terminology for reporting on children's progress and achievement. Comments and observations will be recorded in an objective and instructive manner.

Assessment information will be safely stored to facilitate access to it by former pupils at any stage until the 21st birthday.

Standardised testing will generally take place in May of the school year, except in unusual circumstances or where directed otherwise by the D.E.S.

Purchase of appropriate tests will be organised by the Principal in conjunction with teaching staff.

Standardised tests used in the school are Micra T/Sigma T/NRIT/Mist/BIAP. Decisions as to which particular tests to use are made on a year to year basis, but in general one age appropriate literacy test and one maths test is administered to each child. The NRIT test will also be administered to 2nd class.

The results are used to inform teaching methods and to keep parents informed of their child's progress. The class teacher will examine the test results and consult with the LST/RT in cases where their input is likely to be required. The tests will be interpreted as part of a global assessment policy and we will look at the results carefully and caringly taking into account other factors which may have affected performance. Once again, all test results will be stored centrally in a secure file until the child has reached 21 years of age. These files may only be accessed by school teaching and administrative staff and by parents on request.

Decisions regarding allocation of children for additional learning support hours are made by this school team in consultation with parents and following DES guidelines.

c) Diagnostic Testing

When specific difficulties become apparent, more targeted testing is done to elicit further information. LST and RT administer tests on referral from class teacher. There is both formal and informal contact with parents who are always the first point of contact regarding the needs of the individual child.

Where necessary the information gleaned from such test may be shared with staff and other relevant agencies-always with parental consent.

Records of these tests are kept centrally in a secure file and are updated and maintained on a regular basis.

All diagnostic testing informs the ongoing planning for the needs of our children.

d) Psychological Testing

From time to time after observation and initial testing by the class teacher and learning support teacher and following consultation with parents – a pupil may be referred for psychological testing. This testing is carried out in cases where a pupil may benefit from additional resource teaching, special needs assistant support or other supports or services.

In such instances the school complies with procedure outlined by NEPS and the HSE and throughout the process there is ongoing contact and consultation with parents.

Following the testing, close contact is maintained with NEPS, SENO, HSE, TUSLA and any other relevant agencies regarding individual pupils, and every effort is made to ensure that the child receive the supports required to meet their individual needs.

The results of the psychological tests inform the IEP for the individual child and have a bearing In determining what resource both in terms of learning support hours and other supports/services may be allocated.

Psychological reports are kept in a centrally located, secure file and may only be accessed by relevant staff and by parents on request. Where necessary the information gleaned from such reports any be shared with other relevant agencies- always with parental consent.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The school management team are responsible for ensuring that the policy is implemented.

Success Criteria:

The success of this policy will be evidenced by the needs of our children being met to the best of our ability within the confines of a multi-class situation and the resources made available.

Monitoring implementation:

Management team, all members of staff: include on agenda for staff meetings at least once a year.

Review and evaluation:

The assessment policy will be reviewed every two years.

This policy was formally ratified by the Board of Management of Leenane National School on 21st May 2013.

This policy was reviewed on _____

This policy will be reviewed again in _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Stephen Coyne

Chairperson, BOM

