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Introductory Statement

This policy was originally drafted in 2017, following an overview of our Special Education Policy and the amalgamation of the two schools. It was reviewed and updated in October 2023 following an overall review of our Special Education Policy.

Policy Rationale

Assessment serves as the crucial process of gathering, documenting, interpreting, applying, and conveying information regarding a child's advancement in developing knowledge, concepts, skills, and attitudes. It is a natural part of the teaching and learning experience, offering teachers invaluable insights into a child's journey through the Primary School Curriculum. The data can be used to monitor pupil's progress over time and to improve the school's teaching practices. This policy endeavours to identify at the earliest possible opportunity, children who may have learning challenges and put in place a school response to their needs. At the heart of this policy lies a steadfast commitment to ensuring *every* child's success in their school endeavours.

Relationship to School Ethos

Scoil Mhuire is dedicated to creating a happy, secure, inclusive and nurturing environment where all members of the school community can grow, develop and achieve their full potential. In doing this, the school adopts a holistic approach to the education and development of each child, and the enhancement of teaching processes. This policy supports the school ethos by providing a framework for pupils to receive early, targeted intervention, thereby helping children overcome any barriers they may face with regards to their education.

Aims and Objectives

- To facilitate improved teaching and pupil learning
- To create a procedure for monitoring progress and achievement over time
- To assist planning for effective interventions for pupils, classes and the school as a whole
- To coordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis, including storage of test results and reporting of same

- To prioritise early intervention

The Assessment Process

All aspects of the school curriculum are assessed in accordance with the curricular objectives outlined in the Primary School Curriculum. Assessment is ongoing, and appropriate to the children's needs and available resources. Information gathered from a variety of assessment methods, over a set period, is used to help create a detailed picture of children's progress and achievement. Both assessment **for** learning and assessment **of** learning techniques are used to measure pupils' achievement and progress.

Assessment Methods (the range of assessment methods used in Scoil Mhuire are outlined here but are *not* limited to these, see Appendix A)

- Teacher Observation (focused, continuous, informed and structured)
- Teacher designed tasks and tests; weekly and termly tests, projects, reports and homework.
- Self-Assessment; e.g. 2 stars and a wish or Peer/Group Feedback
- Discussion / Conferencing
- Concept Mapping
- Checklists / Rating Scales
- Time-Sampling Recording / Event Recording
- Portfolios / Projects
- Digital Portfolios (Google Classroom)
- **Standardised testing** (see below)
- **Diagnostic Testing** (see below)

Standardised Testing

The primary purpose of standardised tests is to provide teachers with accurate information about the reading and mathematical levels of children in their classes to inform teaching and learning. It's important to note that standardised tests measure achievement rather than ability. These tests are typically administered at the end of May by the class teacher. Supplementary tests will also be administered if the class teacher, in consultation with the SET team and Principal, deems it necessary for the benefit of the children.

From 1st to 6th class, the class teacher will administer the Drumcondra Reading test, Drumcondra Spelling test and the Sigma-T Maths test. The NRIT will be administered to 2nd Class during the first term. The class teacher will discuss the outcomes with the SET team in the context of each pupil's general performance in class. Standard, STEN and percentile ranking scores are recorded on Aladdin. The Principal and SET team analyse the results in June or early September, in conjunction with other assessment methods, to identify pupils who may need extra support and to allocate resources to pupils in September. Ms. Brennan is responsible for ordering and distributing the tests.

Diagnostic Testing

Support teachers administer these tests as needed, following referrals by the class teacher or observations made when analysing standardised test results. The administration of these tests aligns with the staged approach recommended by the Continuum of Support. The diagnostic tests used include but are not limited to the following. *See appendix D*

Recording and Storage of Assessments

Class-Based Assessments/Tests: Class tests, portfolios, concept maps, checklists, etc., are typically sent home with pupils at the end of the week/month/school year. A selection of samples will be provided to the incoming teacher to inform their knowledge and understanding of the incoming class. This will include information on where each child stands on the Coreword Spelling Lists. Test results may be securely stored in the classroom filing cabinet by the Class Teacher for reference. These, along with any incidental observation notes by the teacher, are shredded at the end of the school year. *See Appendix C for advice on developing Assessment folder*

Results of standardised tests are stored on the password-protected Aladdin computer system.

Support files, including classroom support files, are stored on Aladdin.

Support teachers maintain additional records as necessary for the children with whom they work. Each child on a School Support Plan has a file in the locked filing cabinets in the support rooms.

Assessment reports from outside agencies are stored on Aladdin. If there is a hard copy, it will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the principal's office. Under no circumstances should these files be photocopied or stored in classrooms or assessment folders. Pupil report cards are also stored on Aladdin.

The Continuum of Support - The Staged approach to Assessment, Identification and Programme Planning (See Appendix B)

Class teachers are best placed to assess their pupils on a day-to-day basis and therefore have primary responsibility for the routine assessment and identification of emerging needs in their students. If a teacher has concerns about a child's progress, they may choose to open a student support file and place the child at *Classroom Support* of the Continuum of Support. The teacher consults with parents' guardians, completes the relevant student questionnaires and devises a class support plan to outline how the child's needs will be differentiated from the whole class setting. A work pack may be sent home to allow parents to support children in the home setting with additional activities, specific to the needs of the child.

At *School Support* the responsibilities for assessment are shared between class teachers and support teachers. Support teachers will assist with the more systematic gathering of information about pupils and monitoring of their progress. At the *School Support* stage the child may receive support from the SET team, either within the class or through withdrawal.

The principal assumes a primary role at *School Support Plus* where a pupil may require an assessment from an outside agency. He/she is responsible for ensuring that the policy procedures are enacted, and

an agreed assessment strategy is in place. In doing so, he/she will be supported by the Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCO). Arrangements are made with outside agencies e.g. NEPS or the HSE in consultation with the parents/guardians to assess children.

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

Implementation

This policy is currently in effect as “best practice” procedures.

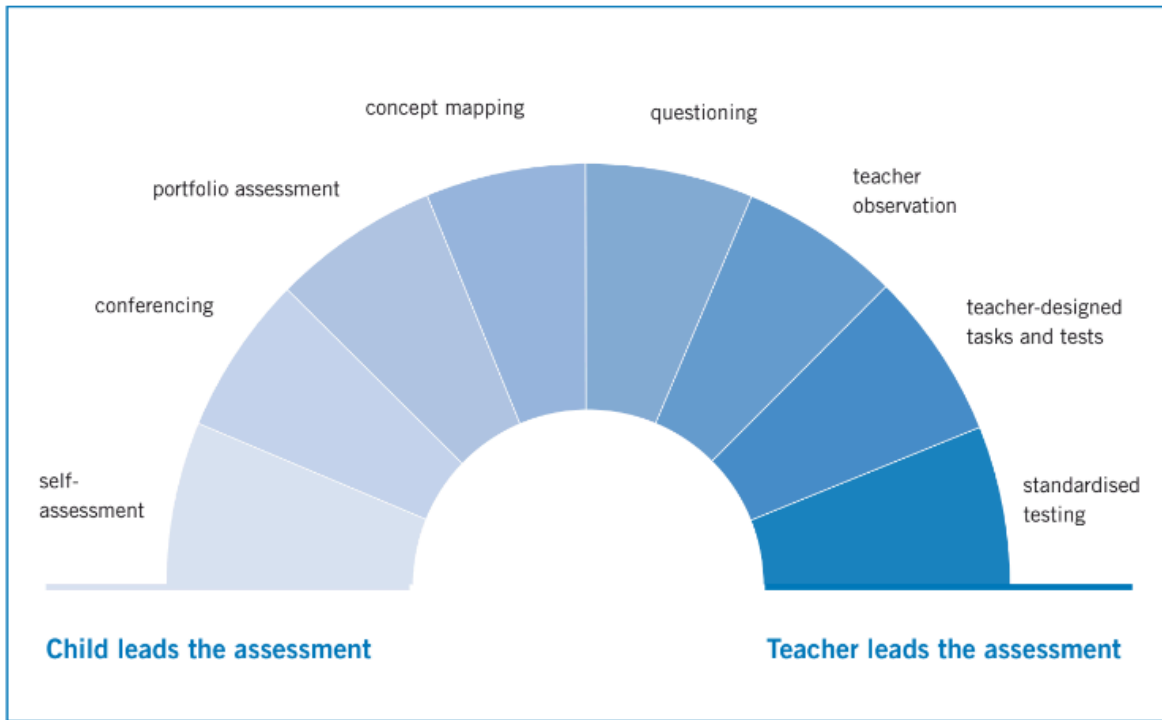
Ratification & Communication

It is proposed that this reviewed policy will be ratified by the Board of Management in Jan ‘24

Review Timetable

This policy will be reviewed in 2 years time and amended as necessary.

Appendix A: Taken from “Assessment in the Primary Curriculum, Guidelines for Schools” [Click here](#)



Appendix B: Identification of Needs through the Continuum of Support Process - (Primary Guidelines, p.9-10)

<p>Classroom Support</p>	<p>The class teacher considers how to differentiate the learning programme effectively to accommodate the needs of all pupils in the class. A classroom support plan is developed and / or adjusted over time for those pupils who do not respond appropriately to the differentiated programme.</p> <p>This is informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parental consultation ● Teacher observation records ● Teacher-designed measures /assessments ● Basic needs checklist * ● Learning environment checklist* ● Pupil consultation - My Thoughts About School Checklist ● Literacy and numeracy tests ● Screening tests of language skills <p>A Classroom Support plan runs for an agreed period of time and is subject to review</p>
<p>School Support</p>	<p>At this level a Support Plan is devised and informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teacher observation records ● Teacher-designed measures / assessments ● Parent and pupil interviews ● Learning environment checklist ● Diagnostic assessments in literacy/numeracy ● Formal observation of behaviour including ABC charts, frequency measures ● Functional assessment as appropriate, including screening measure for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties <p>A support plan at this level may detail suitable teaching approaches including team-teaching, small group or individual tuition. A School Support Plan operates for an agreed period of time and is subject to review</p>
<p>School Support Plus</p>	<p>This level of the Continuum is informed by a detailed, systematic approach to information gathering and assessment using a broad range of formal and informal assessment tools, reports from outside professionals (as appropriate) and may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teacher observation and teacher-designed measures ● Parent and pupil interviews ● Functional assessment <p>Results of standardised testing such as measures of cognitive ability; social, emotional and behavioural functioning; adaptive functioning etc. Data generated from this process are then used to plan an appropriate intervention and can serve as a baseline against which to map progress. A support plan at this level is likely to be more detailed and individualised, and to include longer term planning and consultation</p>

*These checklists are available in the Continuum of Support Guidelines for Teachers

Appendix C: Assessment Folder Building your Assessment Folder

Your Assessment Folder supports your assessment practice by providing a dedicated place for you to gather and record **relevant** information on the progress and achievement of your whole class and individual pupil learning. This information or evidence of learning is gathered using a variety of assessment methods over the course of the year.

Gathering the information in the Assessment Folder is not an end in itself. The use you make of the information is more important. The information can be used to support you when...

- reporting on the pupil's learning progress and achievement to parents, pupil, SET, principal and other professionals. This use of the assessment information is called **Assessment of Learning (AoL)**.
- identifying the next steps for pupils' learning. Teachers need to observe the pupils and assess their work to inform the decisions they make. For example, consideration should be given to the following question: what does this sample of the pupils' work tell me about what I now need to do to help them improve? This ongoing assessment for learning should also be used when providing feedback to the pupils to help them direct their own learning and achieve success. Responsibility for assessment does not only lie with the teacher but also with the pupil and their peers through the use of self-assessment and peer assessment. This approach to assessment is called **Assessment for Learning (AFL)**.

It is important to remember the purpose of the Assessment Folder when making decisions about what you might include in it. Its purpose is to enable the assessment information to be collated, analysed and used to inform teachers' future planning and preparation. Remember, your Assessment Folder should support the teaching and learning in your classroom.

Assessment Folder can be divided into two sections:

Section A: General class records

- This section may include results and analysis of standardised tests, class checklists, class test results, etc.

Section B: Pupil profiles

- This section can be divided into subsections i.e. one per child. The following information may be included for each child:

- Pupil's name, class level
- Interests
- Strengths, learning needs
- P-T meetings: dates, issues, actions taken
- Observations regarding subject areas (dated)
- Selected samples of pupil's work* (dated)

Appendix D

List of Screening and Diagnostic test for Literacy

Early Years	Type of test
Early Literacy Test	Screening
Belfield Infant Assessment Profile (BIAP)	Diagnostic
Early years easy screen (EYES)	Screening
Middle Infant Screening Test (M.I.S.T Test)	Diagnostic
EEE Infant Reading Test	Test
Early Literacy Test	Test
Middle Years 7+	Type of test
Dyslexia Early Screening Test (D.E.S.T)	Diagnostic and Screening
Dyslexia Portfolio	Individual diagnostic assessment
Bangor Dyslexia Test	Screeener
Neale Analysis of Reading Ability (NARA) Revised edition 1997. Comprehension and reading accuracy 7years +	Diagnostic – Individual reading comprehension test.
York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension (Y.A.R.K) Second Edition Manual (Feb 2011)	Individually administered reading assessment AGE 4-16
Graded Word Reading Test (6yrs-14yrs)	Screening and Diagnostic (Individual Word recognition tests)
Quest Diagnostic Tests	Screening & Diagnostic
Jackson Phonics Test	Diagnostic
Rain Sentence Reading test	Diagnostic – Individually administered test of reading achievement.
Schonell Reading Test	Diagnostic
Drumcondra Primary Reading Tests	<u>Group Reading Comprehension Tests</u> Standardised group administered test (1 st -6 th class)

Micra-T	Level 1: Snr Inf-1 st class Level 2: 1 st -3 rd class Level 3: 4 th -6 th class
Cloze Reading Tests manual & cloze reading test 2.	Individual reading test
D.R.A	Diagnostic Reading Analysis
Drumcondra Spelling Assessments Graded Word Spelling Test 3 rd edition	<u>Group/Individual Spelling Tests</u> Class Individual spelling tests (1 st -6 th class)
Diagnostic Spelling Test A+3	Diagnostic
Schonell Spelling Test	Diagnostic
Literary Profile Teacher's Book and pupil record sheet.	Individual test
Collection of Simple Interim Assessments	Phonics, cloze procedures, spelling, reading.
Stareway to Spelling – An Aid to spelling (2002)	Spelling programme age 7+
Alpha to Omega – The A-Z of teaching reading, writing and spelling.	
PSAK – Primary School Assessment Kit	Diagnostic assessment for EAL children

List of Screening and Diagnostic test for Mathematics

Sigma-T (1st - 6th class)	Standardised graded mathematics attainment test
Drumcondra Primary Maths Test	<u>Standardised</u> assessments of mathematics achievement for primary school pupils
Basic Number Screening Test	7-12 years
MALT (Mathematics Assessment for learning and teaching)	Standardised mathematics assessment For screening, monitoring and tracking progress, as well as for individual diagnostic profiling.