

ST. PATRICK'S BOYS' NATIONAL SCHOOL

# School Policy Document

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## Assessment Policy



**Brian Horan**

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# St. Patrick's Boys' National School

Portrane Rd., Donabate, Co. Dublin

Ph/Fax: 8436168

*Scoil Naomh Pádraig (Buachailli)*

Principal: Brian Haran

[www.stpatsbns.ie](http://www.stpatsbns.ie)

Roll No: 16267G



## **Introduction:**

This policy was originally drafted by In-school Management Team during regular planning meetings and using the NCCA *Assessment in the Primary School* guidelines to inform us on how best to fulfill Section 22 of the Education Act. A balanced combination of Assessment for Learning and Assessment of Learning will be used to support assessment of children's progress and achievement and to extend and enrich their learning.

## **Policy 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 school response to their needs. An effective assessment policy is central to this core objective.

## **Aims and Objectives:**

The primary aims/objectives of the policy are;

To facilitate improved pupil learning and outcomes

1. To identify children who are experiencing difficulty/and those who are high achievers with their learning and to put an appropriate response in place for them
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 assist teachers in the reporting of children's strengths and weaknesses to parents

## **Principles**

1. Careful thought is given to the purpose of assessment, adopting a wide range of methods to reflect the whole Curriculum and learning opportunities. The main purpose of assessment must be to facilitate progress in a pupils' learning.
2. Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process, a valuable formative tool.



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3. The range of opportunities for carrying out continuous assessment is increased by good classroom organization, which encourages children to work independently while the teacher is concentrating on a small group.
4. The outcomes of assessment modify our teaching methods, provide feedback on the Curriculum as well as indicate pupil progress.
5. We recognize the potential for assessment in developing a positive self-image in the pupil from positive and constructive feedback and the feeling of success, which encourages further study.
6. Results of assessment are reported in a way useful for pupils, teachers, parents and other interested parties.
7. Assessment records must be easy to interpret, useful, manageable and should be easily accessible.

## **Policy Content:**

This policy is geared towards using assessment 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 progress. These strategies may include pupil self assessment, pupil profiling, two way communication between parents and teachers, modification of teacher programmes and Student Support Plans. See also SEN Policy.

The two principle approaches to assessment are:

### ***Assessment For Learning (AFL)***

Assessment for learning seeks to identify the next steps needed to make progress. It takes into consideration pupils' strengths and weaknesses. It enables continuous reflection on what pupils know and what they need to learn next. It also promotes immediate intervention and enables teachers to meet the needs of individual children more effectively.



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Assessment for Learning include

Teacher Observation,

Conferencing,

Self-assessment,

Concept Mapping, Questioning, KWL (What I Know, what I Want to know, what I have Learned)

Homework assignments

Parental feedback or observations

Teacher designed Tasks and Tests,

Standardised Testing and Diagnostic Testing.

## ***Assessment of Learning (AoL).***

Assessment of Learning provides a summary judgement of what has been learned at a particular point in time. Assessment of learning compares children to externally agreed criteria and standards. It identifies gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. These interrelated and complementary approaches emphasise two aspects of assessment that are central to the work of teachers in our school. The teacher uses evidence on an on-going basis to inform teaching and learning. (AfL). The teacher periodically records children's progress and achievement for the purpose of reporting to parents, teacher and other relevant persons.



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Assessment of learning includes:

The strategies above

Standardised tests

Diagnostic tests

Psychological assessments

These assessment methods demonstrate the diversity of assessment methods available and in use in our school. They include methods which are teacher lead (standardised testing) and child- lead (self-assessment). All curricular areas are assessed using appropriate methods.

Informal Assessment

## 1. Informal Assessment

Homework and class work are marked and comments are made as appropriate. Marks and especially grades are not usually given. Work is ticked to indicate that the teacher has looked at it and a written comment to indicate sources of error, good points etc. will normally be made. Spelling mistakes are corrected as outlined in our 'Whole School to Spelling Guidelines'.

## 2. Class work

'Informal' assessment is ongoing during all lessons in response to oral work, team work, skill development, project work etc.

## Completion of Project work

The completed project or notes on a topic is collected and marked. The marking recognizes excellence and indicates the areas that need improvement.

## Primary to Secondary

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 in consultation with principal/deputy principal.



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For pupils leaving the school, up to date records are passed on to the principal by the class teacher for forwarding to the new school - following confirmation of enrolment.

## **Standardised Testing:**

The school administers Drumcondra (English and Spelling) and Sigma (Maths) to all classes from 1<sup>st</sup> upwards. Drumcondra Gaeilge is administered to 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> on a "gathering information" basis.

The tests are usually administered in the last week of May or first week of June by class teachers and Special Education Team (SET). Standard, sten and percentile ranking scores are recorded on the class record template and stored by each individual teacher with a copy held in the Principal's and Deputy Principal's office. The Special Education Team (SET), in consultation with the Principal analyse the results in June for allocation of resources to pupils in September.

Drumcondra Early Literacy and Numeracy are administered to Senior Infants by the SEN team in May to identify learning strengths and weaknesses.

## **Diagnostic Assessment:**

Diagnostic tests are administered by the SET 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, advice intervention is sought from NEPS 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
- Drumcondra Diagnostic Literacy and Numeracy (Senior Infants & 1<sup>st</sup> class)



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Administered by SEN team to targeted children. Results communicated to parents and class teachers

- WIATT in consultation with NEPS psychologist

## **Screening:**

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

- Belfield Infant Assessment Programme (Junior Infants)
- Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST)
- Non Reading Intelligence Test - 1<sup>st</sup> class (NRIT)
- WRAT IV (Wide Range Achievement Test 4)

These tests are administered individually or on a class basis. The MIST and BIAP are administered on a class basis around Easter of each year, while the WRAT IV is administered individually by a Learning Support Teacher when deemed appropriate.

## **Continuum of Support**

Screening is used by the school to initiate the staged approach to intervention as per Continuum of Support and department guidelines.

Stage 1: Classroom Support

Stage 2: School Support

Stage 3: School Support Plus

If stages 1 and 2 fail to deliver adequate intervention, the Principal will contact the parents for permission to seek advice and/or intervention from NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service). This advice will determine the subsequent level of intervention, be it a differentiated programme, in-class support or a 'Student Support Plan'.



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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 tests are kept by the individual teachers in an assessment box in their room 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.

## **Recording:**

Files are stored in the Principal's office and/or stored electronically in Aladdin. This file records standardised test results and end of year reports. This file is passed from teacher to teacher as the child progresses through the system. Procedures are in place to manage sensitive data.

## **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



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## **Roles and Responsibilities:**

The Principal has overall responsibility to ensure that all tasks and duties in this policy are delivered and completed in an effective way.

The Deputy Principal will co-ordinate standardised testing within the school.

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 is involved at all stages of the continuum of support and 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.

## **Reporting**

Information in relation to the assessment of children will be routinely reported.

Information will be communicated to parents through:-

1. Parent teacher meetings.
2. End of year reports.
3. Standardised tests are reported through the end of year report routinely in 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> class.

Parents are encouraged to contact the school if any more information is required.



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## **Ratification & Communication:**

This policy was reviewed by Staff & Parents.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2018 and communicated to parents thereafter.

## **Review Timetable:**

This policy will be reviewed in 2 years time and amended as necessary by means of a whole school collaborative process.

## **References:**

NCCA Assessment in the Primary School

DES Circular 02/05 - 24/03

DES Learning Support Guidelines 2000

Special Educational Needs - A Continuum of Support

## **Signed:**

*Mrs. Mary Brooks, Chairperson, Board of Management*

*Brian Horan, Príomhoide*